

Town of Windsor Plan of Conservation and Development



2025-2035



WINDSOR 2035
BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to Mayor Black-Burke, the Windsor Town Council, the Windsor Town Planning and Zoning Commission, the Advisory Committee (AC) team, members of various Town Boards and Commissions, Town Manager and Town staff, local, regional, and state agencies and institutional partners, and the residents of Windsor who participated extensively in the planning process and helped shape the recommendations of this Plan.

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Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who took part and contributed to this Plan and its development.

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1 INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE POCD

Windsor 2035 is the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), also referred to as the Comprehensive Plan, for the years 2025 through 2035. The Plan documents existing conditions in Windsor and sets forth a roadmap to guide the Town's growth, preservation, and investment over the next decade. It presents a vision for Windsor's future that is grounded in the Town's unique resources and realistic about the challenges and constraints it faces today. The Plan focuses on Windsor's physical character, economic vitality, social well-being, and overall quality of life, while providing a framework for policy decisions and funding priorities that safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of residents.

Windsor 2035 was shaped by extensive community input. Residents, businesses, stakeholders, elected officials, and Town staff all contributed to the planning process. Public engagement was central to the development of the Plan and included pop-up events, public workshops, stakeholder and focus group meetings, and an online survey.

State law requires that every Connecticut municipality update its POCD at least once every ten years to remain eligible for certain discretionary state funding (C.G.S. Sec. 8-23). Accordingly, Windsor 2035 fulfills this requirement while also reflecting the community's shared aspirations for the next decade.

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

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

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

WHY IT MATTERS

Windsor 2035 charts a clear course for the Town's future, ensuring that decisions made today support the community Windsor wants to be tomorrow. By identifying priorities and setting goals, the Plan will help the Town manage growth responsibly, preserve its historic and natural assets, and strengthen its economy. It provides guidance for housing, transportation, open space, and infrastructure in ways that enhance quality of life for all residents. Just as importantly, Windsor 2035 reflects the values and aspirations of the community, serving as both a vision and a practical roadmap for action. With this Plan, Windsor can make informed choices, attract investment, and position itself for a sustainable, vibrant, and resilient future.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Windsor 2035 plan development process was launched in November 2024 under the leadership of an Advisory Committee (AC) made up of board members, commission representatives, and Town department heads. The planning team included Windsor's Planning Department staff in partnership with FHI Studio.

A cornerstone of Windsor 2035 is broad community engagement, ensuring that residents had the chance to share their voices and shape

the Town's future. To achieve this, the planning process employed a range of outreach strategies designed to reach people where they live, work, and gather, including:

- Regular meetings with Town staff to discuss the Plan content, process, and schedule.
- Targeted community engagement, including pop-up events, a project website, and an online survey.
- Public Workshops: Two public workshop were conducted in February and October of 2025. The workshops were conducted in person at the Windsor Town Hall.
- Focus Group Meetings: Five focus group meetings were conducted based on different topics pertaining to the Plan in the spring of 2025.
- Interviews: Six stakeholder interviews were conducted.
- Drafting the Plan: The project team worked together in the preparation and drafting of Windsor 2035. It was an iterative process that included multiple rounds of review.



Public workshop attendees, Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG

Figure 1-1 Plan Development Process, Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Recognizing that a successful Plan must reflect the voices of residents, businesses, and stakeholders, Windsor used a multi-faceted approach to gather ideas, concerns, and aspirations for the Town's future.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AC):

An Advisory Committee of commission representatives, board members, and Town staff met regularly to provide guidance, ensuring the Plan addressed Windsor's diverse needs and opportunities.

BRANDING AND OUTREACH:

A distinctive Windsor 2035 logo and tagline, "Building Our Future Together," helped establish a consistent identity for the project. Outreach included flyers, e-blasts, and social media campaigns such as the Summer of 10,000 Flowers, which blended community pride with project promotion.

PROJECT WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA:

A dedicated website <https://plan.windsorct.com/> served as the central hub for updates, draft documents, and engagement opportunities. Social media and school communications amplified outreach to reach a broad audience.

ONLINE SURVEY:

Open for five months, the survey received over 800 responses, providing valuable insights on community values and priorities. Top themes included protecting farmland and natural resources, enhancing parks and trails, revitalizing Windsor Center, diversifying housing, and addressing affordability challenges.



Plan logo and tagline, Source: Town of Windsor

POP-UP EVENTS:

Two pop-up sessions at major community gatherings, the Winter Wonderland and the Shad Derby, reached approximately 200 residents. These events created informal opportunities to share ideas, map favorite places, and highlight community concerns.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS:

A well-attended workshop in February 2025 introduced Windsor 2035 and featured breakout sessions on Housing, Economic Development, Quality of Life, Cultural & Historic Resources, Open Space & Natural Resources, and Mobility & Infrastructure. Residents discussed challenges such as housing affordability, vacant storefronts, loss of rural character, and infrastructure needs, while also identifying opportunities for revitalization, sustainability, and cultural celebration. A second workshop was conducted in the Fall of 2025, and provided an opportunity to discuss the Plan's vision statement, goals, and strategies.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS:

Five topic-specific focus groups brought together experts, commission members, and community leaders to dive deeper into Windsor's strengths, challenges, and emerging opportunities. Themes included expanding diverse housing options, aligning economic development with community identity, strengthening cultural and historic assets, preserving open space and farmland, and improving mobility and infrastructure.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS:

Conversations with key stakeholders, including Town departments, CRCOG, schools, and conservation organizations, provided additional technical insight and coordination across sectors.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Strong Sense of Community:** Residents value Windsor's diversity, small-town feel, and sense of belonging.
- **Preservation and Sustainability:** Protecting farmland, open spaces, and natural resources is a top priority.
- **Enhancement of Windsor Center:** There is strong community desire to fill vacancies, support small businesses, and create a vibrant downtown hub.
- **Housing Options:** More affordable, senior-friendly, and diverse housing types are needed to meet changing demographics.
- **Quality of Life:** Windsor's history, schools, and cultural assets are strengths, but more youth programming, and cultural events are desired.
- **Mobility and Infrastructure:** Residents want safer pedestrian and bike connections, better transit access, and investments in sustainable infrastructure such as solar and electric.



*Engaging with the community during the Shad Derby,
Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG*

PLAN ORGANIZATION

During the Windsor 2035 planning process, a broad vision statement was crafted to capture the community's aspirations and provide clear direction for the Town's future. This vision serves as a guide for municipal leaders, boards, and commissions as they make decisions that will shape Windsor over the next decade.

The vision is supported by seven guiding principles, that inform the goals and strategies of each of the Plan chapters. Strategies describe the approaches the Town will use to advance these principles, while actions define the specific steps necessary to bring them to life. Together, they create a roadmap that reflects Windsor's values and positions the Town for a sustainable, vibrant, and inclusive future.

Windsor Vision Statement

Windsor is committed to building a thriving, inclusive community that blends its rich history with sustainable growth. It is a vibrant town that supports local businesses, celebrates arts and culture, and fosters a strong sense of community. By preserving historic charm and balancing economic growth with good environmental stewardship, Windsor will remain a welcoming place where residents of all ages can live, work, and thrive.

Vision

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

Goals

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

Strategies

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

Actions

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



Leaf pile on the green
Source: Town of Windsor

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

History – Promote Our History and Identity

Preserve Windsor’s historic character, cultural heritage, and small-town charm while welcoming innovation and change.

Demographics - Foster an Inclusive Community

Ensure that people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds have access to housing, services, and opportunities that support belonging and equity.

Housing - Strengthen Neighborhoods and Housing Choice

Expand affordable housing options for all generations, elevate housing quality, and promote energy efficiency.

Economic Development - Promote a strong local and regional economy.

Support small businesses, attract innovative industries, and create vibrant villages and corridors that reflect Windsor’s unique identity.

Mobility and Infrastructure - Connect People and Places

Expand sidewalks, bike paths, trails, and public transit to make Windsor safer, more accessible, and regionally connected.

Quality of Life

Celebrate cultural diversity, arts, and community events; invest in schools, services, and recreation to ensure Windsor remains a welcoming and engaging place to live.

Open Space and Natural Resources

Balance conservation and development by protecting key resources.

ROLE OF WINDSOR 2035

Windsor 2035 is a long-term roadmap for the Town’s future, guiding decisions on growth, investment, and community priorities. It will help shape policies on housing affordability, land use, infrastructure, sustainability, and quality of life, ensuring that Windsor remains a vibrant and resilient community. The Plan is designed to influence decision-making over the next decade and beyond. Through a collaborative process, Windsor’s guiding principles were developed to ensure that Windsor 2035:

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

STATE AND REGIONAL PLANS

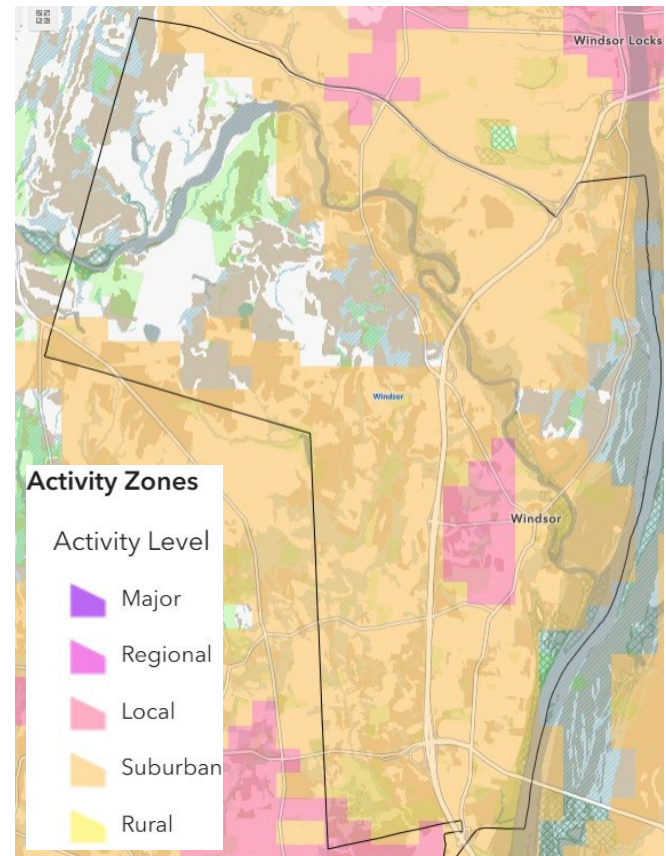
The State Conservation and Development Policies Plan (2025–2030) identifies four guiding principles: Sustainable, Equitable and Just, Vibrant, and Resilient. These principles align closely with the themes of Windsor 2035. The State Plan presents a vision for Connecticut’s future that emphasizes a thriving economy, housing for current and future residents, stewardship of resources, healthy people and places, and connected and inclusive communities. These priorities, along with their vision statements and targets, are fully consistent with the goals and recommendations of Windsor 2035.

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

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

State and regional plans identify Windsor for a mix of residential, commercial, and mixed-use development, reflecting its strong economy, diverse neighborhoods, and access to major transportation corridors. Windsor 2035 aligns with the Capitol Region Plan to promote balanced growth, sustainable infrastructure, and a vibrant, resilient community within Greater Hartford.

Map 1-1 Adopted 2025-2030 Location Guide Map, Source: State of Connecticut



The State Plan Locational Guide Map (above) identifies the Windsor Center as a “local activity” area (shown in pink), which means that this area has many commercial uses and moderate civic and cultural assets. Areas shown in yellow are “suburban activity” areas that include commercial, civic, and transportation related uses.

Map 1-2 Adopted 2024 Land Use Policy Map, Source: Capitol Region Council of Governments

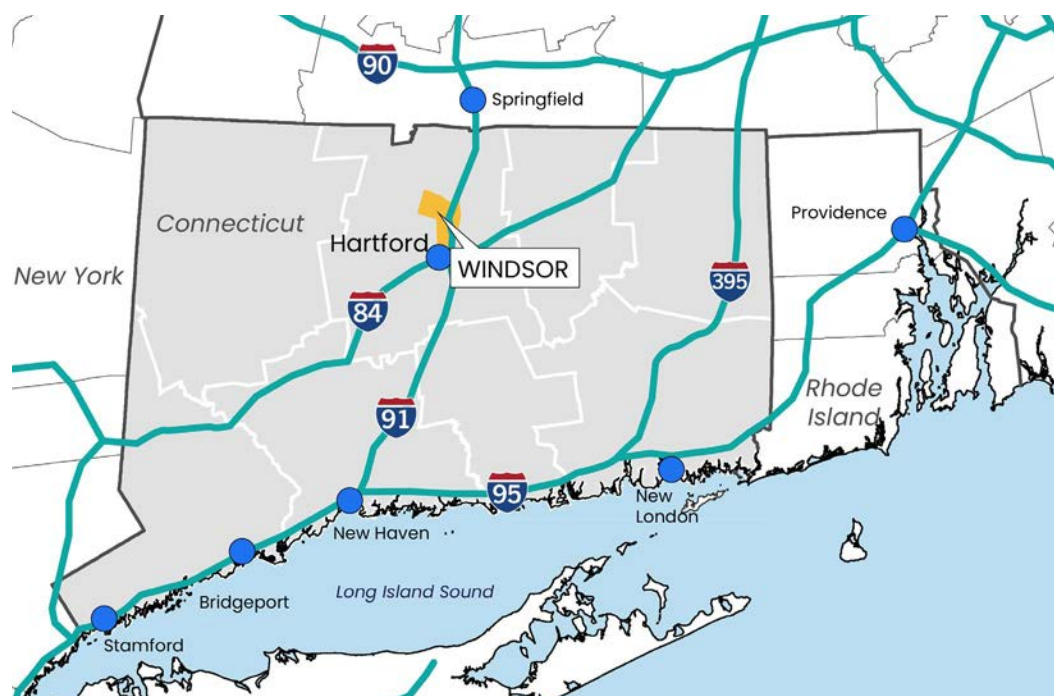


CRCOG's Conservation and Development Policy Map identifies areas suitable for growth and development as well as areas to be preserved. Much of Windsor is designated as appropriate for development, with key conservation areas scattered throughout the community. Route 159 is highlighted as a major transit corridor, and the Windsor industrial area (Day Hill Corridor) is recognized as an area of regional significance.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Windsor is located in central Connecticut along the Connecticut River. Covering approximately 29 square miles, Windsor lies just north of Hartford and is part of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), which includes 38 municipalities in the Greater Hartford area. Major cities such as New Haven, Springfield, and Providence are within a 60-mile radius. The town is well-connected by major transportation routes, including Interstate 91 (I-91) and Route 159, with public transit options such as Amtrak and the Hartford Rail lines, CTtransit bus routes providing connections to Hartford and surrounding communities.

Map 1-3 Windsor's location within the state, Source: Esri World Street Map





2 HISTORY OF WINDSOR

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Windsor, settled in 1633 at the confluence of the Connecticut and Farmington Rivers, holds the distinction of being Connecticut's first town. Long before European arrival, Native American tribes had inhabited the area for thousands of years.

COLONIAL ERA (1600S–1700S):

Windsor grew from a fortified village into an agricultural hub, with fertile soils supporting crops like tobacco. Early industries included gristmills, sawmills, and shipbuilding. By the Revolutionary War, Windsor farmers helped make Connecticut the “breadbasket” of the colonies.

19TH CENTURY GROWTH:

The arrival of the railroad in 1844 and the rise of brickmaking, milling, and tobacco established Windsor as both an agricultural and industrial center. Shade tobacco, pioneered in the early 1900s, became especially significant, with Windsor at the heart of Connecticut's industry.

SUBURBAN TRANSFORMATION (1900S):

Electric trolley lines (1895) connected Windsor to Hartford, spurring suburban growth. After World War II, new highways (I-91 and I-291) and housing development transformed Windsor into a modern suburb while attracting major employers along Day Hill Road. The population nearly doubled between 1950 and 1970.

TODAY:

Windsor has evolved from a farming settlement to a diverse community with strong ties to its history. Its economy has shifted from agriculture and manufacturing to services, technology, and advanced industries, supported by proximity to Bradley International Airport and regional highways. Windsor remains known for its historic character, tobacco barns, and its role as one of Connecticut's most historic towns.

RECENT PLANNING IN WINDSOR

Windsor has a long history of planning to guide growth while preserving its resources. Over the years, plans such as the Plan of Conservation and Development, zoning regulations, and transportation studies have shaped land use, supported economic development, and protected historic and natural areas. Reviewing past initiatives helps illustrate the town's progress and highlight areas where further action is needed to address future challenges and opportunities.

DAY HILL CORRIDOR STUDY (2025)

Windsor's Day Hill Corridor Study examined the future of the town's largest employment and development area in response to high office vacancies and shifting market trends. The study reviewed land use, market demand, and redevelopment opportunities for housing, senior living, industrial and logistics space, retail, and reuse of vacant offices. Key findings pointed to strong potential for multifamily housing, assisted

living, and industrial flex development, while traditional office space and life sciences showed lower demand. The study recommended updating zoning and land use policies to support emerging opportunities and guide reinvestment in the corridor.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN (2022)

In 2022, Windsor adopted its Affordable Housing Plan to ensure that residents of all ages and incomes have housing options that meet their needs. The plan highlights Windsor's strong base of modestly priced homes while recognizing the need for more choices, especially for renters, young adults, and older residents looking to downsize. Key recommendations include expanding multifamily and senior housing, encouraging accessory apartments, and supporting creative reuse of existing buildings. These strategies aim to keep Windsor a welcoming, affordable community where people can put down roots and thrive.

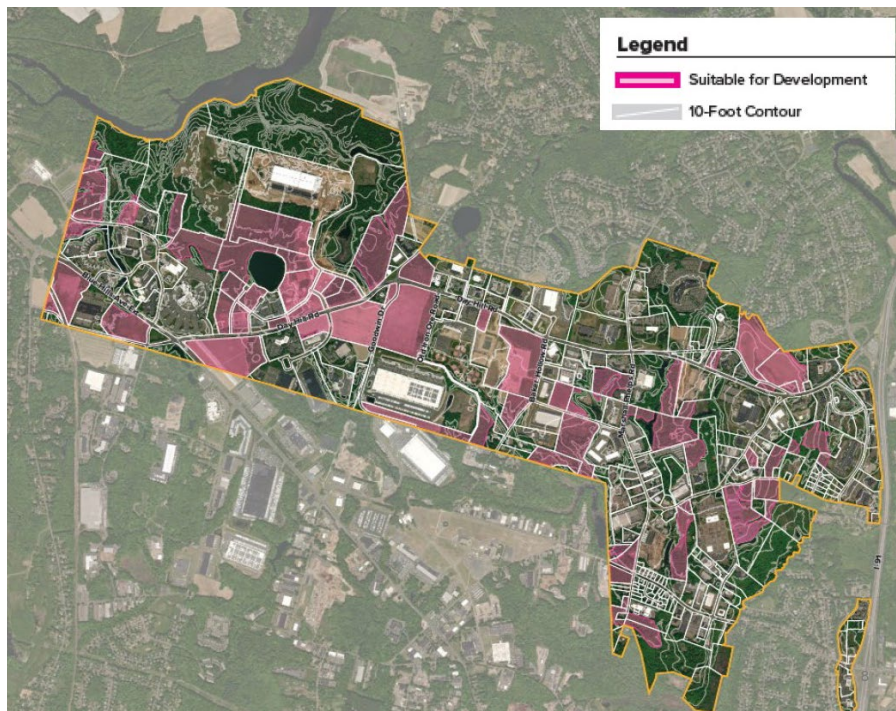


Figure 2-1 Development potential in the Day Hill Corridor study area, Source: Town of Windsor

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (2015)

The 2015 Windsor Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) provides a guide for the town's growth, preservation, and community character over the following decade. It emphasizes sustainable development, balancing economic growth with environmental stewardship, while maintaining Windsor's diverse housing, commercial areas, and cultural and natural resources.

Key priorities include improving transportation and connectivity, expanding and linking over 2,500 acres of open space and trails, and engaging residents and stakeholders to reflect community values. The plan serves as a framework for local boards and commissions, helping Windsor remain vibrant, sustainable, and connected for the future.

WINDSOR CENTER TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) PLAN

The Windsor Center Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan is a strategic initiative to revitalize Windsor Center into a walkable, mixed-use district centered around improved transit access. Completed in 2014, the plan envisions a vibrant hub that supports sustainable living, economic growth, and community engagement. Key elements include encouraging new housing and commercial development near the railroad station, upgrading streetscapes with wider sidewalks and traffic calming, and redeveloping underutilized properties to improve connectivity.

The plan also focuses on parking management and promoting alternative transportation options. Guided by the Windsor Planning Department with support from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the TOD Plan aligns with regional efforts along the Hartford Line corridor to create a more sustainable and connected community. Its ultimate goal is to transform Windsor Center into a convenient, attractive, and active destination for residents and visitors alike.

1. Focus sites for infill development and renovations
2. Re-organized intersections/traffic calming
3. New transit hub
4. Enhanced pedestrian connections



Figure 2-2 Connectivity priorities recommended in the TOD Plan, Source: Town of Windsor

2015 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SUCCESSES

Windsor's previous Plan was adopted in 2015. Since then, many recommendations from the Plan have been implemented, including:

Housing Development

- Approximately 70 single-family homes and 42 townhomes constructed.
- 430 apartment units built.

Ongoing and Approved Projects

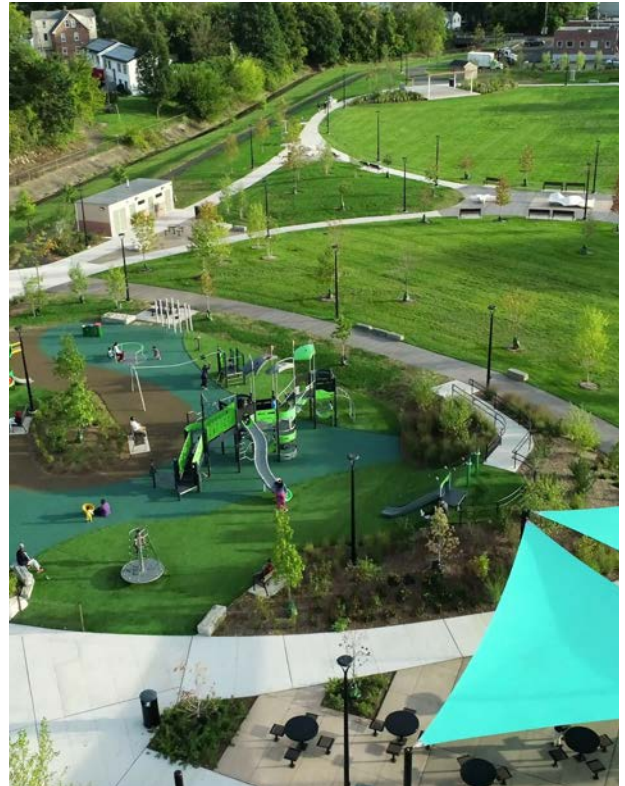
- Two mixed-use developments under construction in Windsor Center with 197 apartment units and ground-floor commercial space.
- 760 additional housing units approved townwide, including 64 affordable units.

Land Conservation and Sustainability

- 67 acres of farmland and 95 acres of open space preserved.
- Windsor was certified as a Sustainable CT Bronze Community in October 2022.

Public Facilities and Recreation

- Completion of Wilson Gateway Park.
- Renovations to Police, Fire, and EMS facilities.
- Improvements to parks and recreational facilities, including:
 - Pools
 - Athletic fields
 - Playgrounds
 - Tennis courts



Aerial view of Wilson Gateway Park
Source: Town of Windsor



Ribbon Cutting at Founders Square
Source: Town of Windsor



3 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

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

POPULATION

Windsor is home to approximately 29,367 residents, with a population density of about 995 residents per square mile. While the Town grew faster than both the State and the Capitol Region between 1970 and 1990, its growth has slowed since 2000, and projections from the CT State Data Center (2016) anticipate a population decline of roughly 3% by 2040. This slowing trend may reflect several factors, including an aging population, limited availability of new housing, regional competition from communities offering newer or more diverse housing options, Connecticut's slower statewide job and population growth, the out-migration of younger adults, and broader cost-of-living considerations that influence where households choose to live.

Windsor's population is slightly older than both the Capitol Region and the State overall, with a

Windsor Population
(1970 - 2023)

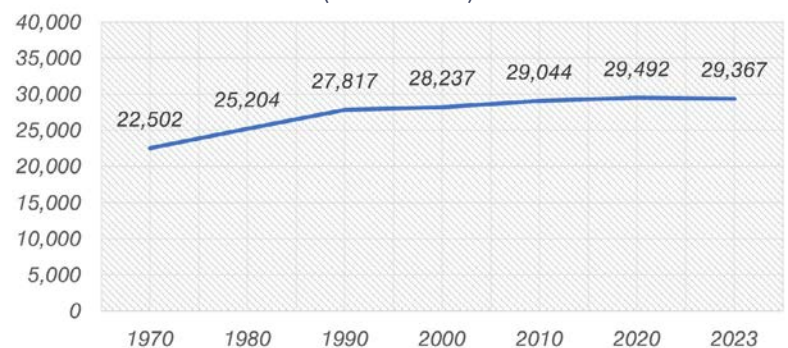


Figure 3-1 Population Change, Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023, Decennial Census

Population Growth

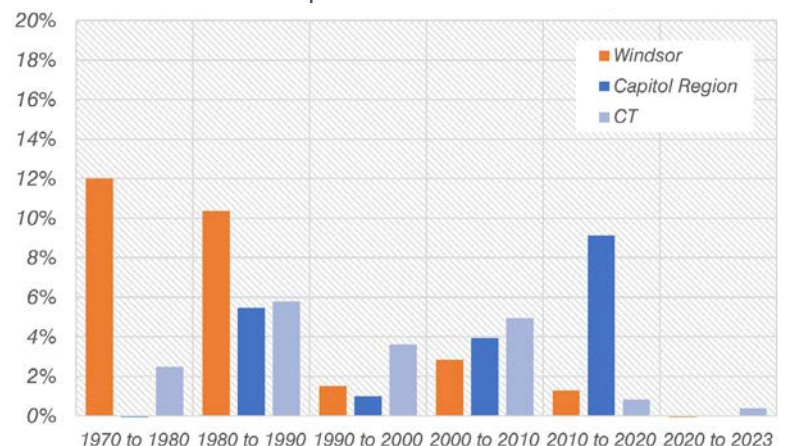


Figure 3-2 Population Change, Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023, Decennial Census

median age of 43 compared to 40 in the Region and 41 statewide. At 25%, Windsor also has a larger share of older adults aged 60 and over when compared to the State and Region. This older demographic profile suggests that Windsor may face increasing demand for age-friendly housing, healthcare, transportation options, and community services. At the same time, it highlights opportunities to strengthen intergenerational connections and plan for a community that supports residents as they age in place.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income in Windsor was \$107,548 in 2023, up from \$79,244 in 2014, an increase of more than \$28,000 over the past decade. Windsor's median household income is higher than both the State and the Capitol Region, exceeding the statewide median by about \$14,000 and Hartford County's median by more than \$11,000. The Town also has a higher share of households earning between \$75,000 and \$200,000 than both the Capitol Region and the State, while maintaining a lower share of households earning below \$35,000.

This income distribution shows that Windsor has a relatively strong and stable economic base, with a broad middle- and upper-middle-income population that supports local housing demand, consumer spending, and municipal revenues. At the same time, the smaller share of lower-income households underscores the need to preserve housing affordability and ensure access to services so residents of all income levels can continue to live and thrive in the community.

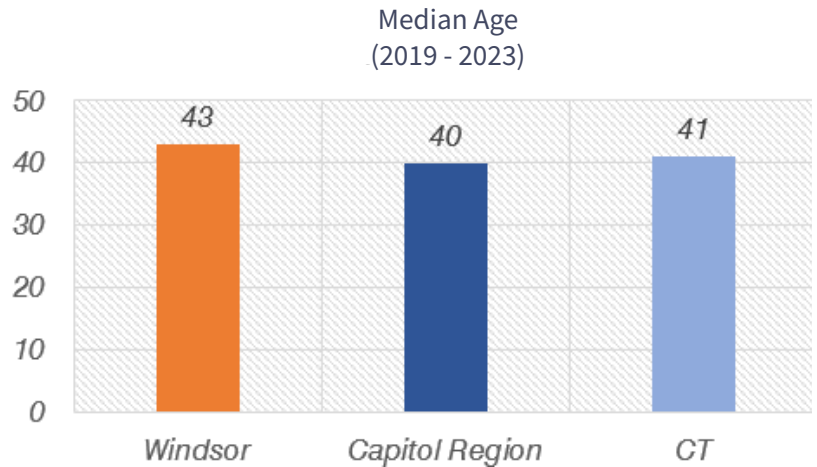


Figure 3-4 Median Age, Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

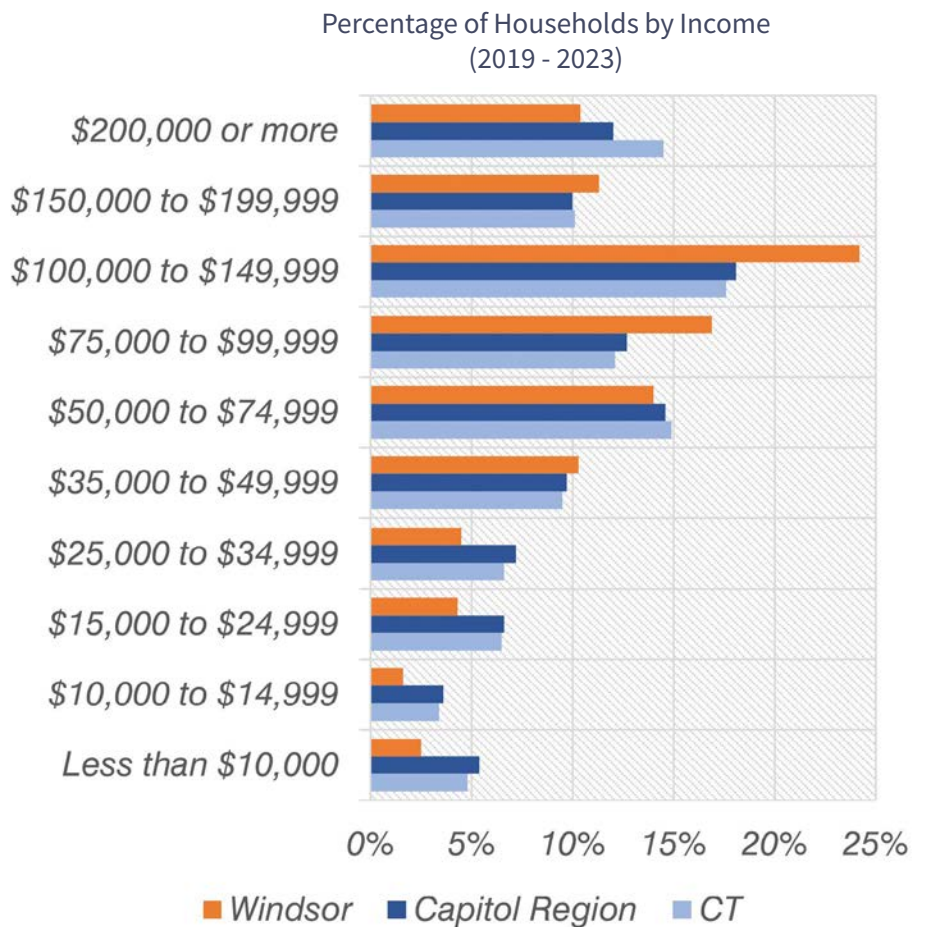


Figure 3-5 Households by Income, Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

EDUCATION

Windsor's public school enrollment has remained consistent over the past decade, even as statewide enrollment declined by approximately 5% during the same period. Projections anticipate stability in Windsor's school-age population, suggesting that enrollment is likely to remain steady in the coming years.

Over the past ten years, Windsor's per pupil expenditures have grown from \$17,380 in the 2014–2015 school year to \$22,687 in 2024–2025, reflecting continued investment in the school system. Windsor's public schools are also more racially diverse than the statewide average, highlighting the importance of maintaining inclusive educational programming that meets the needs of a broad and diverse student population.

Windsor has a higher share of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher compared to both the Capitol Region and the State. The Town also has a smaller proportion of residents without a high school diploma, indicating higher overall educational attainment relative to regional and statewide levels.

Windsor Public Schools K-12 Enrollment

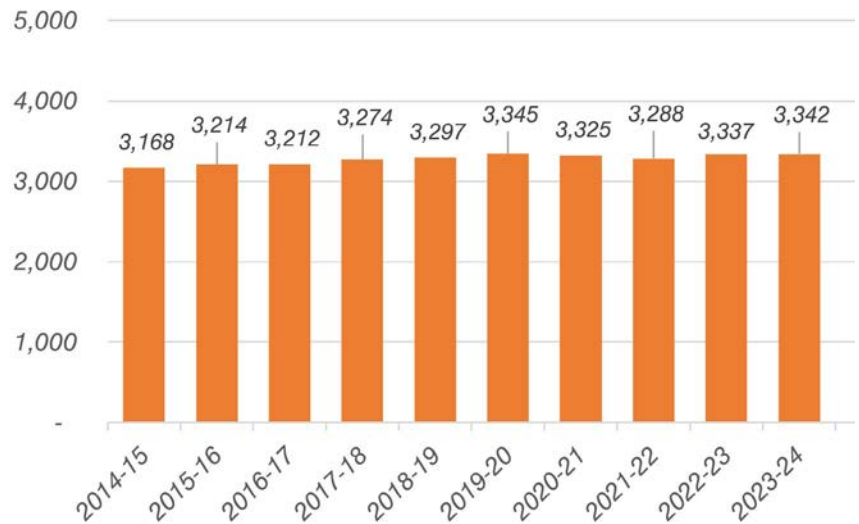


Figure 3-6 Windsor K-12 Enrollment, Source: CT Department of Education, EDSIGHT

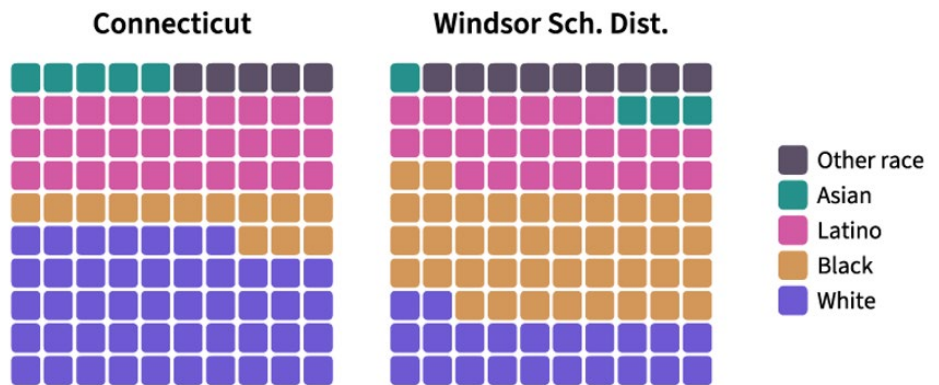


Figure 3-7 K-12 Student Enrollment By Race/Ethnicity Per 100 Students, 2022-23, Source: 2023 Equity Profile, DataHaven and CT Department of Education

Educational Attainment

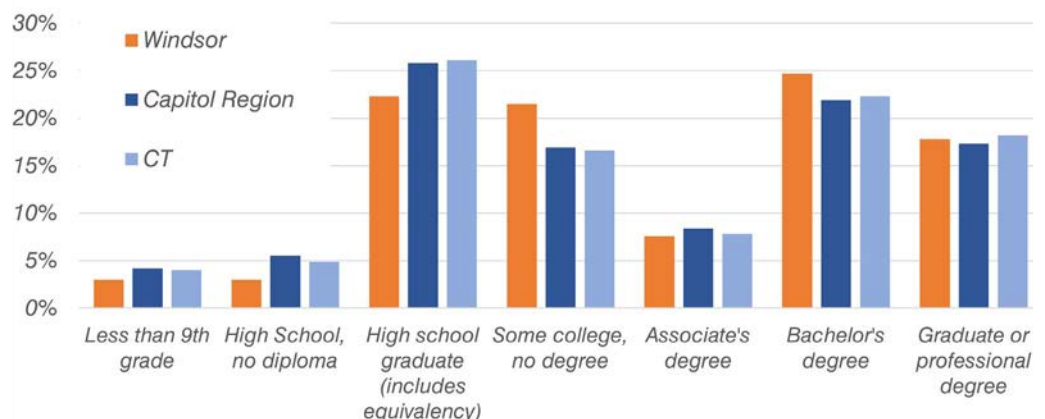


Figure 3-8 Education Attainment, Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

HOUSING TRENDS

Most of Windsor's housing supply (84%) is single-family housing. Duplexes (homes with two units) account for 5% of the town's multi-family housing. Units with 3 -19 units make up 9% of the town's housing stock. Only around 1% of housing is in multi-family buildings with between 20 - 49 units or in buildings with 50 or more units.

Between 2013 and 2023, median gross rent in Windsor increased by 38 percent, reaching \$1,587. While median rents in Windsor are higher than those for the State and the Capitol Region, the rate of increase over the past decade is similar. A substantial proportion of rental households, nearly 41%, spend more than 30% of their income on rent, indicating a significant prevalence of housing cost burden.

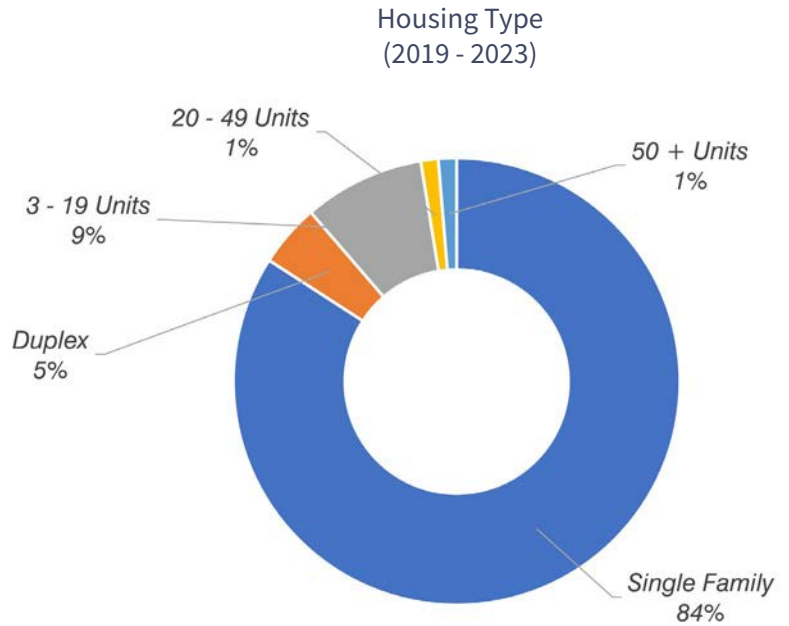


Figure 3-9 Housing Type, Source: American Community Survey – 2023

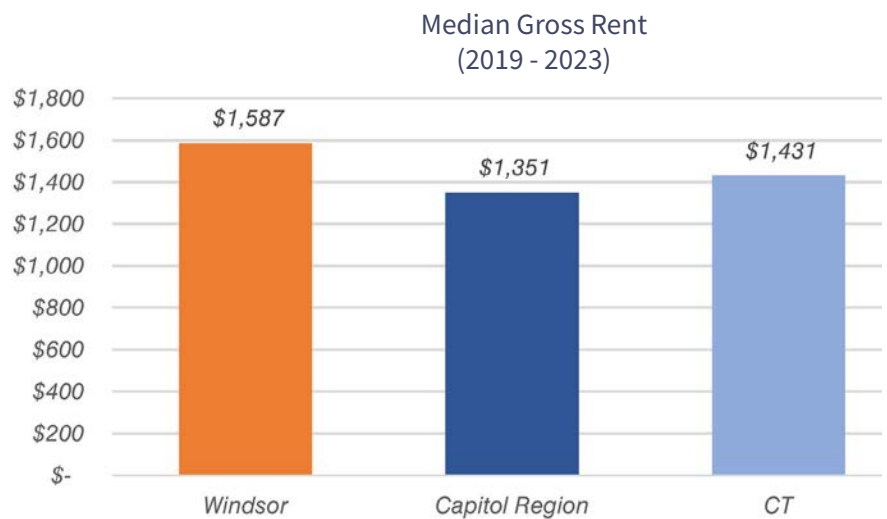


Figure 3-10 Median Gross Rent, Source: American Community Survey – 2023

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Although overall growth in Connecticut has been gradual, reflected in a 7% decline in building permits statewide between 1990 and 2023, Windsor is experiencing a meaningful shift in its housing development patterns. While single-family construction has slowed from 89 permits in 1990 to 5 in 2023 and 3 in 2024, the Town is seeing activity in multi-family housing. In 2024, Windsor issued 117 permits for buildings with five or more units, signaling strong momentum toward more diverse, efficient, and in-demand housing options that better reflect today’s market needs and community priorities. Approximately 53% of Windsor’s housing units were built before 1970.

With a population density of 995 residents per square mile, Windsor is more densely populated than the State overall, which has 743 residents per square mile. However, it is less densely populated than the Capitol Region, which has a density of approximately 1,080 residents per square mile.

RENTERS BURDENED BY COST OF HOUSING

41%

OWNERS BURDENED BY COST OF HOUSING

26%

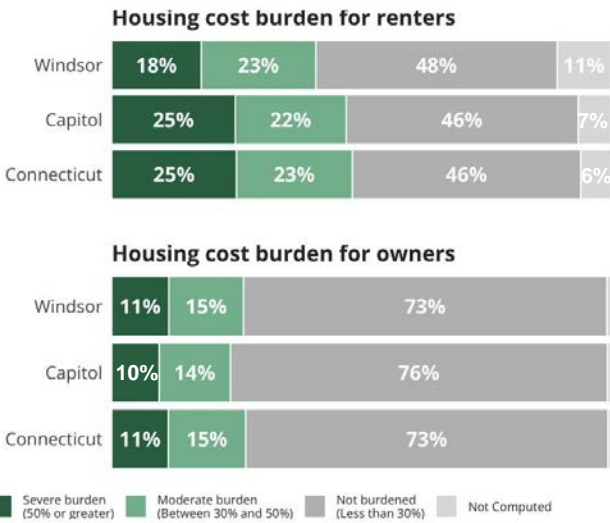


Figure 3-11 Affordability, Source: CT Housing Data Profile, 2024

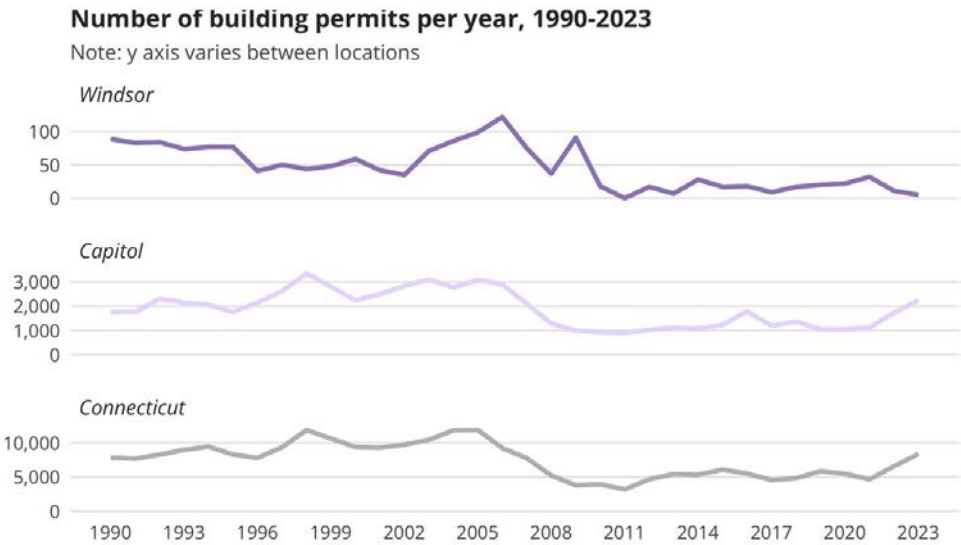


Figure 3-12 Building Activity, Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRY TRENDS

Windsor had a total of 30,137 full and part-time jobs in 2022*. Of those jobs, approximately 2,214 (8%) were held by Town residents. Windsor has 4,000 more workers commuting into Town for employment since 2012. A smaller number of resident workers commute out of the Town for employment than the number of employees who travel to Windsor for work. Approximately 13,400 Windsor residents commute to other towns and cities for work daily. The average commute for Windsor's residents is 21 minutes. The top five work destinations for Windsor's residents (listed in order of frequency) include:

- Hartford
- East Hartford
- West Hartford
- Windsor Locks
- New Britain

Windsor's top industry, employing over 5,830 workers, is Transportation and Warehousing. The next top industry is Manufacturing, which has just over 4,274 employees. Finance and Insurance made the list of Windsor's top industries in 2023, according to Lightcast data, which is a collection of labor market information that includes job postings, compensation, skills, and other metrics.

**Please note: The analysis above draws from multiple data sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau and Lightcast. Because each source uses its own methodologies and analytical approaches, some differences in the results may occur.*

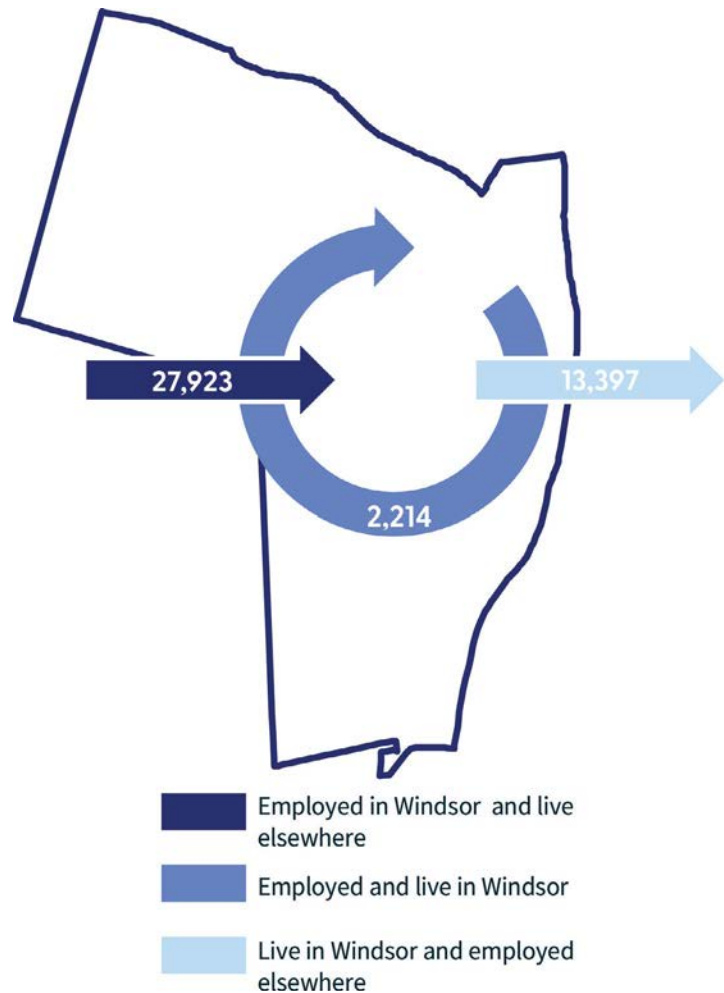


Figure 3-13 Commuting Patterns, Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal 2022 Employer-Household Dynamics Origin Destination Employment Statistics

Top Industries	
Lightcast, 2023 (2 and 3 digit NAICS)	Jobs
1 Transportation and Warehousing <i>Warehousing and Storage</i>	5,830
2 Manufacturing <i>Fabricated Metal Product Mfg</i>	4,274
3 Finance and Insurance <i>Insurance Carriers & Related Activities</i>	3,551
4 Government <i>Local Government</i>	2,187
5 Health Care and Social Assistance <i>Nursing and Residential Care Facilities</i>	1,934
Total Jobs, All Industries	25,628

Figure 3-14 Top Industries, Source: CT Data Collaborative Town Profile 2025, utilizing Lightcast 2023 data



4 LAND USE AND ZONING

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Understanding the distinction between land use and zoning is essential for guiding growth and supporting sustainable development in Windsor.

Land use is shaped by the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), which sets a long-term vision for housing, commercial activity, open space, historic preservation, and community well-being. These policies reflect Windsor's goals for livability, environmental stewardship, and economic resilience.

Zoning translates this vision into enforceable regulations, specifying what types of development are permitted in different parts of town, including residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors such as Day Hill Road, and industrial areas near International Drive. It also sets standards for density, site design, and compatibility.

Aligning land use planning with zoning is key to realizing Windsor's economic potential. Priority growth areas and redevelopment sites identified in the POCD require zoning that allows flexible uses, including mixed-use development and adaptive reuse of underutilized properties. Coordinating zoning with infrastructure access and utilities creates development-ready sites that attract businesses and developers.

By continuing to integrate land use, zoning, and economic development strategies, Windsor can guide growth that is vibrant, sustainable, and respectful of the Town's historic setting.

ZONING IN WINDSOR

Windsor's Zoning Regulations are a fundamental tool for guiding land use and shaping development patterns across the community. They establish the type, scale, and design of new construction and redevelopment to ensure growth supports the Town's planning objectives and reflects its historic and cultural context.

Windsor first adopted formal zoning regulations in 1955, under the authority granted by State law. Since then, the Town has regularly updated and expanded these rules in response to changing growth pressures, evolving development trends, and community priorities.

Approximately 22% Windsor's housing stock was built before these first zoning regulations were in place. Over the years, successive revisions have refined permitted uses, added new zones, introduced design guidelines, and strengthened environmental, historic, and infrastructure protections.

Most recent amendments include:

- A zoning text amendment approved in mid-2025 that allows adaptive reuse of vacant, underutilized, or obsolete industrial facilities including conversion to multifamily housing with a special use permit.
- The Town Planning and Zoning Commission is also considering the creation of a Day Hill Corridor Design Development District to provide more tailored design / land use guidance in the Day Hill Road area.

Zoning regulations define a range of development standards, including:

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

Windsor's zoning regulations also guide site and building design to ensure that new development is compatible with the Town's historic setting and built environment.

The Town is divided into Zoning Districts that group compatible land uses and establish uniform dimensional and development standards. These districts are intended to promote orderly growth while reducing conflicts between different types of uses.

To support high-quality, context-sensitive development, Windsor relies on its Development Team, an interdisciplinary group of Town staff who review development proposals before the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. The team provides guidance on site planning, building design, landscaping, pedestrian access, and overall integration of projects into their surrounding context, helping ensure that proposals align with the goals of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Windsor's residential zoning provides a framework for diverse housing while guiding growth and preserving open space and rural areas. Large-lot, low-density districts in northern and peripheral areas accommodate single-family homes, farms, and open space, supporting agricultural uses and protecting environmental resources.

In village areas such as Windsor Center, Wilson, and Poquonock, smaller-lot residential districts support a diverse mix of housing types and densities. These districts also permit compatible non-residential uses such as schools, parks, and community facilities, promoting walkability, connectivity, and development that aligns with the town's planning goals.

PUBLIC, QUASI-PUBLIC, AND CONSERVATION ZONES

Windsor includes areas dedicated to agriculture, public and quasi-public uses, and conservation, which collectively protect open space, natural resources, and community-serving facilities. These areas guide development while preserving farmland, recreational lands, and environmentally sensitive areas.

AGRICULTURAL (AG) ZONE

The AG Zone protects farmland and supports agricultural operations. Low-density residential uses are allowed, but the focus is on maintaining open space, supporting farming activities, and safeguarding natural resources. Compatible uses such as farm stands, nurseries, and other accessory operations are encouraged to sustain working landscapes and provide community benefits.

PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC (NZ) AREAS

NZ areas include schools, municipal buildings, parks, recreational facilities, and other community institutions. Many NZ sites also preserve open space, providing public access, recreation, and buffers between development and sensitive natural areas. Their location near residential neighborhoods maximizes accessibility while

maintaining environmental protection.

Together, the AG and NZ areas preserve Windsor's natural and community resources, support sustainable growth, and enhance quality of life.

BUSINESS ZONES

Windsor's business zones support economic growth by providing areas for retail, offices, and services while reflecting transportation access and surrounding neighborhoods. The B-1 Neighborhood Business District serves local areas with small-scale, pedestrian-friendly commercial uses. The B-2 General Business District accommodates a broader mix of commercial activities along major roadways. The Professional Office (P) District is intended for office uses. The Restricted Commercial (RC) District allows larger-scale commercial developments but limits certain uses to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas. Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) provide flexibility for integrated residential, commercial, and recreational projects.

INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSE ZONES

Windsor's Industrial and Warehouse zones are intended to support economic development by accommodating manufacturing, distribution, and logistics operations. These zones are concentrated along key transportation corridors, including the Day Hill Road corridor and areas with direct access to I-91, ensuring efficient connectivity to regional and national markets.

The Industrial (I) District allows for a range of industrial uses, including manufacturing and warehousing, fostering job creation while maintaining compatibility with surrounding land uses. The Warehouse (W) District is tailored for large-scale storage and distribution operations, supporting businesses that require extensive facilities and infrastructure. Together, these zones provide strategic locations for industrial growth while protecting surrounding neighborhoods and infrastructure.

Table 4-1 provides a breakdown of acreages for each of Windsor's zoning districts while Map 4-1 displays Windsor's zoning map.

Table 4-1 Windsor's Zoning

Zone	Name	Acreage
A	Residential	1144
AA	Residential	4296
AG	Agricultural	3539
B-1	Business	17
B-2	Business	207
I	Industrial	3053
NZ	Public and Quasi Public	1906
P	Professional	15
PUD	Planned Urban Development	72
R-10	Residential	153
R-11	Residential	648
R-13	Residential	569
R-8	Residential	446
RC	Restricted Commercial	43
W	Warehouse	474

Source: Town of Windsor



EXISTING LAND USE

Windsor's land use is composed of single-family residential neighborhoods, village centers, commercial corridors, industrial and warehouse areas, public and quasi-public facilities, and open space. The town contains a mix of historic village development and suburban residential patterns. Development is primarily concentrated near key transportation routes, including Broad Street, Day Hill Road, Poquonock Avenue, and Interstate 91.

Residential areas include larger-lot, low-density homes in rural and peripheral locations, as well as smaller-lot neighborhoods within village centers such as Windsor Center, Wilson, and Poquonock. Multi-family housing, including apartments, townhomes, and senior housing, is generally located near commercial corridors and areas with transit access. Residential uses account for a significant portion of the town's land area, with density decreasing in outlying agricultural and rural zones.

Commercial and industrial uses are concentrated along major corridors. Commercial areas include retail, office, and service uses, while industrial and warehouse areas, particularly

along the Day Hill Road corridor and near I-91, accommodate manufacturing, distribution, and logistics operations. Public and quasi-public land includes schools, municipal facilities, parks, and recreational areas, many of which also function as open space. Agricultural and rural lands preserve working landscapes and maintain separation between higher-density development.

Overall, Windsor is largely developed, with land use patterns shaped by transportation infrastructure, historic settlement patterns, and topography. Remaining planning considerations focus on infill development, adaptive reuse of underutilized properties, and preservation of open space and agricultural lands to maintain balance across land use types. Windsor's Existing Land Use is shown in Map 4-2.

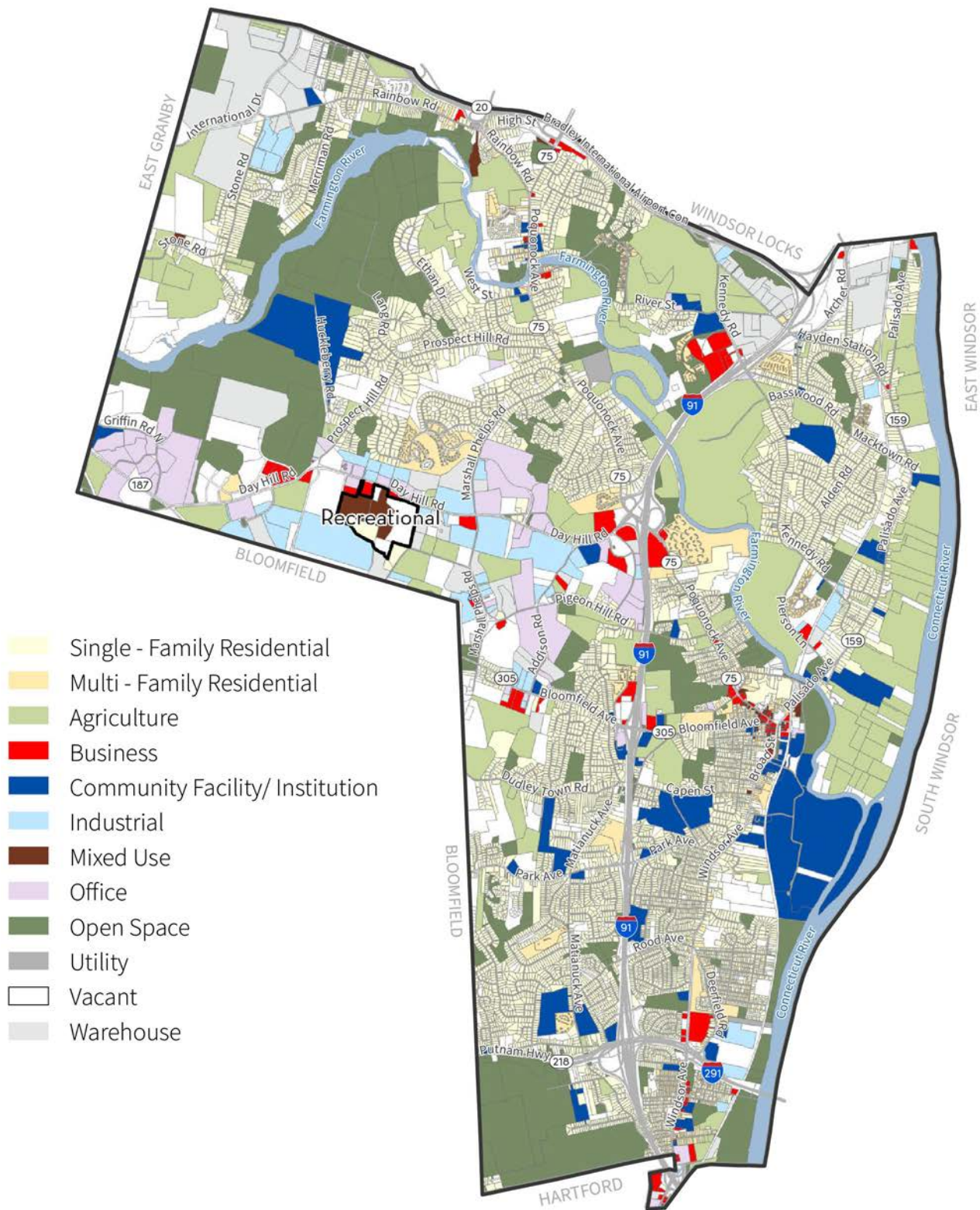
FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map is a central component of this Plan, providing a coordinated vision for Windsor's physical development by linking goals for housing, economic activity, infrastructure, natural resources, and community well-being. As required by state statute, it represents the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendations for the most appropriate land uses and development densities throughout the town. Because much of Windsor is already developed, the map generally reflects existing land use patterns but highlights opportunities for redevelopment, preservation of open space and farmland, and targeted growth in areas with adequate infrastructure and transportation access, such as the Day Hill corridor and village centers. Windsor's future land use categories and descriptions are displayed in Table 4-2 and shown in Map 4-3.



View of Windsor Center
Source: Town of Windsor

Map 4-2 Existing Land Use



Data Source: Town of Windsor





Table 4-2 Future Land Use Category Descriptions

Natural Resources	Description
Open Space	Areas currently preserved as open space, along with lands identified as desirable for future preservation.
Agriculture	Areas that are suitable for agricultural uses.
Residential	
Single-Family Residential	Single-family residential areas consist primarily of detached homes on individual lots, with densities shaped by existing zoning, natural resource constraints, infrastructure capacity, and long-standing development patterns. Accessory dwelling units may also be included where permitted..
Multi-Family Residential	Areas that include apartments, condominiums, congregate housing, and other multi-dwelling units, reflecting existing zoning, infrastructure capacity, natural resource considerations, and established development patterns.
Mixed Use	Areas that are suitable for a mix of uses, including retail, residential, and professional office.
Commercial/ Industrial	
Business	Areas that are suitable for retail, restaurant, service and general offices uses.
Office	Areas that are suitable for professional offices.
Industrial	Areas that are suitable for manufacturing, assembly, warehousing and distribution.
Warehouse	Areas where warehousing uses currently exist.
Other Areas	
Community Facility or Institution	Areas that have developed or are intended to develop with community facilities or institutional uses.
Utility	Areas where utilities exist

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Community feedback emphasized the importance of land use and zoning in shaping Windsor's future. Residents expressed strong support for preserving farmland, open space, and natural resources, while directing new growth to areas with existing infrastructure and services. Enhancement of Windsor Center emerged as a top priority, with calls to fill vacancies, encourage mixed-use development, and create a more active and walkable downtown.

Housing was another major theme, with residents noting the need for more affordable options, senior-friendly housing, and a wider variety of housing types to reflect changing demographics. Participants also highlighted the importance of improving connections between neighborhoods, schools, and commercial areas through safer pedestrian and bicycle access and better transit. Together, these land use and zoning priorities reflect a balance between preservation, reinvestment, and targeted growth.

I like the new housing options, I wish they were more affordable.

We moved to Windsor because of its location and access to major highways. It's close to everything but still retains its small town vibe.

I moved here because it was close to work but I stayed because I love the diversity here.

I like that Windsor has a mix of commercial, residential, and farms and open space - we have it all!

I think Windsor should be open for change but not a modern look. It should still have the history behind the town.

We need more shops now that they're building all these apartments. We need a bakery, more restaurants, ice cream shop, etc.



Discussions during the public workshop
Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG

Goal 4.1 | Promote balanced growth and development that fosters a livable community, enhances economic vitality, and supports healthy, active lifestyles while preserving Windsor’s small-town character and safeguarding its natural resources.

Strategy 1 | Encourage a mix of land uses that promote sustainable land use practices and connected neighborhoods utilizing the 20 minute suburb model.

ACTIONS

1. Promote higher density developments in areas adequately served by transit, community services, utilities and transportation infrastructure.
2. Evaluate the zoning regulations and map with focus on modernization to ensure innovative, sustainable techniques that are used in accordance with the goals and strategies of this Plan.

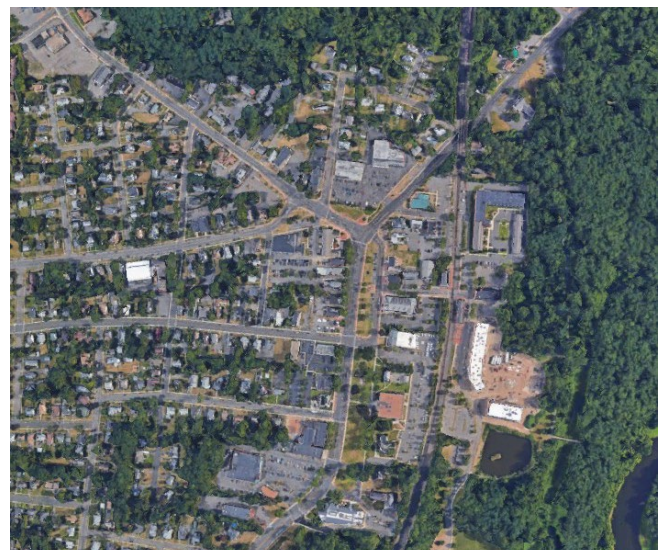
Strategy 2 | Review the zoning and subdivision regulations to increase its usefulness and understandability.

ACTIONS

1. Update zoning regulations to reflect the Future Land Use Plan that will provide for increased development opportunities in appropriate areas, protect the unique attributes of neighborhoods, minimize impacts to Town infrastructure, and preserve agricultural and open space land.
2. Update zoning regulations to enhance sustainability measures such as Low Impact Development (LID) strategies to reduce impervious surface coverage and tree planting guidelines to reduce the heat island effect.
3. Continuously review and evaluate current zoning regulations on definitions, uses permitted, building form standards, setbacks, frontage, lot area, parking, impervious areas, and other such dimensional requirements and any redundant and confusing standards.
4. Revise the current subdivision regulations to align with zoning updates, as needed.

What’s the 20- Minute Suburb?

The 20-Minute Suburb is a neighborhood planning concept that aims to let residents reach most daily needs, such as shops, schools, parks, and work, within a 20 minute walk, bike ride, or transit trip. It focuses on adding local amenities, improving street connections, and making neighborhoods easier to get around without a car, while keeping the suburban feel.



Windsor Town Center

Source: Google Earth, accessed on December 5, 2025



5 HOUSING

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Windsor is primarily a residential community with about 11,900 housing units across a variety of neighborhoods, from historic areas like Windsor Center and Poquonock Village to newer multi-family developments. About two-thirds of homes are single-family, reflecting Windsor's traditional suburban character, while the rest are multi-family units, condominiums, and apartments that provide more housing choices.

Recent development has focused on multi-family and mixed-use projects near major transportation corridors such as Interstate 91 and Route 75, bringing rental and affordable options that expand beyond traditional single-family neighborhoods. Homeownership continues to provide stability and strong neighborhood ties, while rental housing supports young adults, older residents looking to downsize, and workers near employment centers. Windsor's location, amenities, and access to jobs make it an attractive place to live, and maintaining a balanced mix of ownership and rental housing will be key to sustaining a vibrant, inclusive community for the future.



Home in Poquonock Village

Source: Town of Windsor



Founders Square Apartments

Source: Town of Windsor

HOUSING TYPE

Windsor's housing supply is more oriented toward single-family homes than the CROG Region or the State, with about 84% of units in single-family structures. Duplexes account for about 5% of the housing stock, while units in buildings with 3 to 19 units represent about 9%. Larger multi-family developments are limited, with only about 1% of housing located in buildings with 20 or more units. Approximately 77% of homes in Windsor are owner-occupied, a rate higher than the region and state overall.

HOUSING STOCK

A substantial share of Windsor's housing stock is aging. The median year homes were built is 1969, with over 17% of units constructed before 1940 and about 76% built before 1980. Only 16.4% of the housing stock has been built since 1990. Older homes typically require more maintenance, tend to be less energy efficient, and may contain materials such as lead paint or asbestos, which adds to the cost and complexity of upkeep. These conditions can present particular challenges for first-time buyers and households on fixed incomes.

Like many Connecticut communities, Windsor has experienced limited new housing construction over the past several decades, with occasional periods of increased activity. Statewide, the number of building permits issued declined by about 7% between 1990 and 2023. In Windsor, the Town issued 89 permits in 1990 and 122 permits in 2006, reflecting a temporary increase in construction activity. Permit issuance then declined sharply to just 5 in 2023, before rebounding to 120 in 2024. These fluctuations reflect broader constraints on housing development, including high construction costs, limited land availability, and changing housing demand. See Figure 5-3.

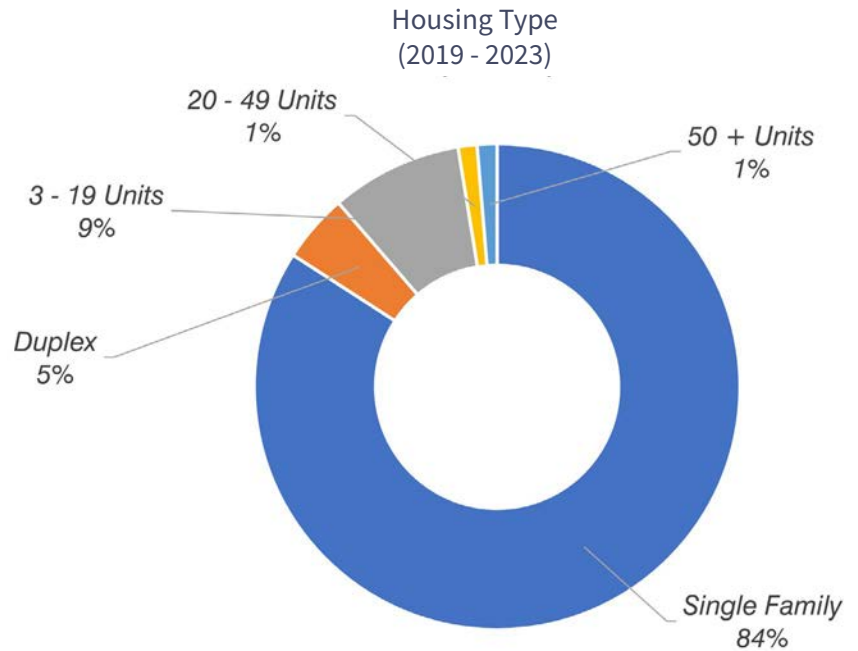


Figure 5-1 Housing Type, Source: American Community Survey – 2023

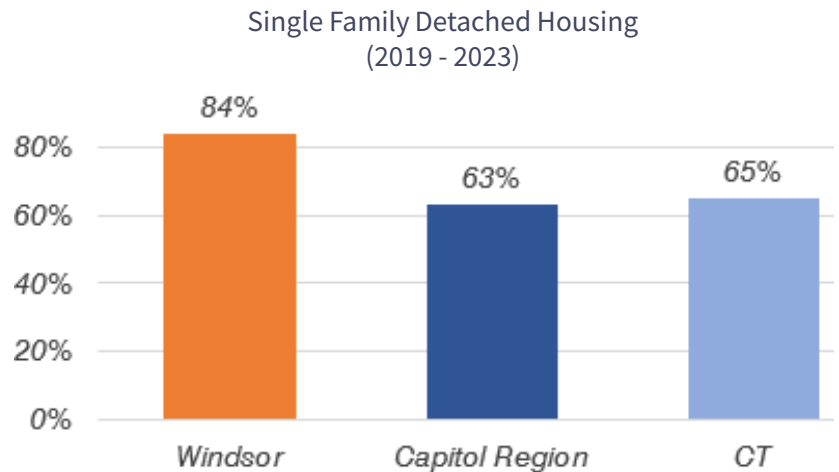


Figure 5-2 Single Family Housing, Source: American Community Survey – 2023

Annual Housing Permit Data by Town,
1900 - 2024

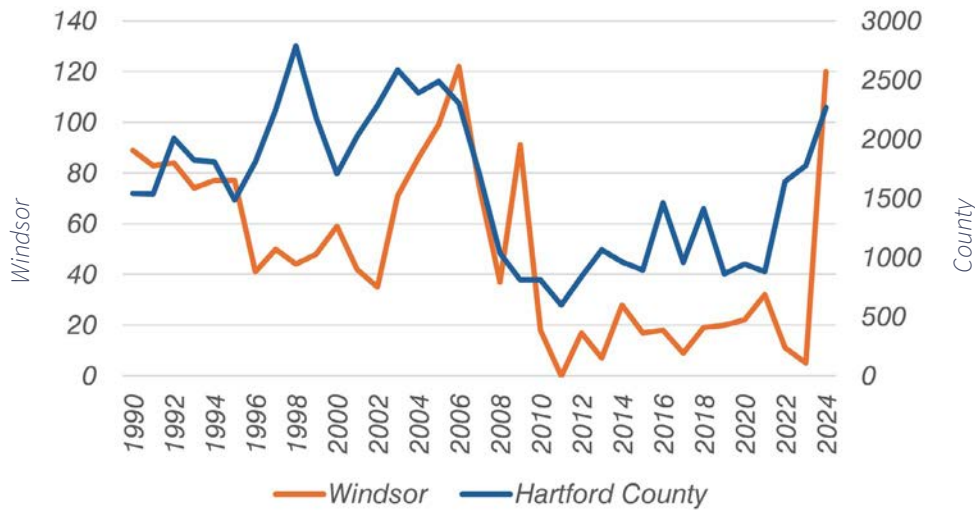


Figure 5-3 Annual Housing Permit Data By Town, 1990-2024,
Source: Department of Economic and Community Development - 2025

HOME OWNERSHIP AND TENURE

Owner-occupied homes make up approximately 82% of Windsor's housing stock, with the remaining 18% being renter-occupied. This homeownership rate is higher than both the regional and state averages, largely due to the town's predominance of single-family detached housing, which tends to correlate with higher ownership levels compared to multi-family housing. See Figure 5-4. Compared to the Capitol Region (74%) and the State (74%), Windsor has a greater percentage of white homeowners.

Approximately 50% of Windsor's households have moved into town since 2010, reflecting a steady level of recent in-migration. In contrast, about 16% of households have lived in Windsor since before 1990, highlighting a strong base of long-time residents with deep roots in the community. This blend of newer and long-term households contributes to Windsor's stability while shaping its evolving housing needs.

Owned vs. Rental Occupancy
(2019 - 2023)

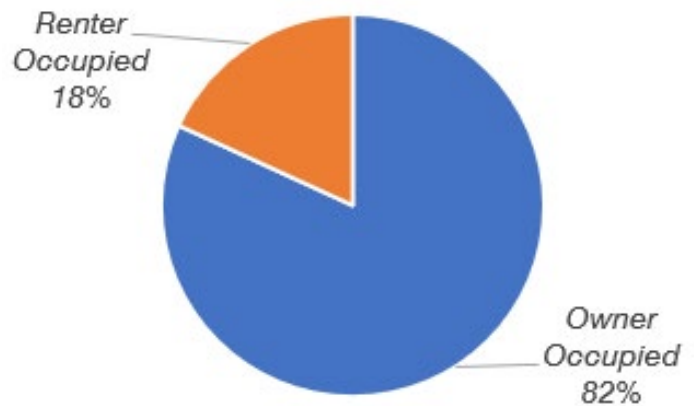


Figure 5-4 Owner and Rental Occupancy Characteristics
Source: American Community Survey- 2023

Home Ownership Rate
(2019 - 2023)

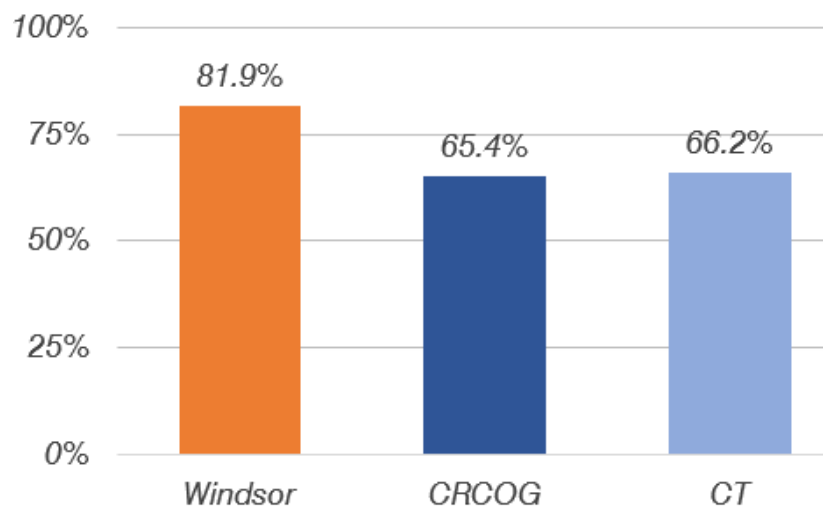


Figure 5-5 Occupancy Characteristics Regionally and Statewide
Source: American Community Survey- 2023

HOUSING COSTS

Between 2013 and 2023, median gross rent in Windsor rose by 38%, reaching \$1,587. This is higher than the median rents in the Capitol Region and the State overall. The proportion of rental units priced at \$1,500 or more has grown significantly, from 17.3% to 56.8%, indicating a shift toward higher-end rental housing. This trend may be driven in part by the growing number of higher-income renter households in the town over the past decade, which is likely contributing to rising rental demand and prices.

As of the most recent data available on Zillow, the average home value in Windsor is \$369,823, representing a 8.6% increase over the past year. Median home sale prices in Windsor are higher than local averages and on par with the broader CROG region, though they remain below the statewide median.

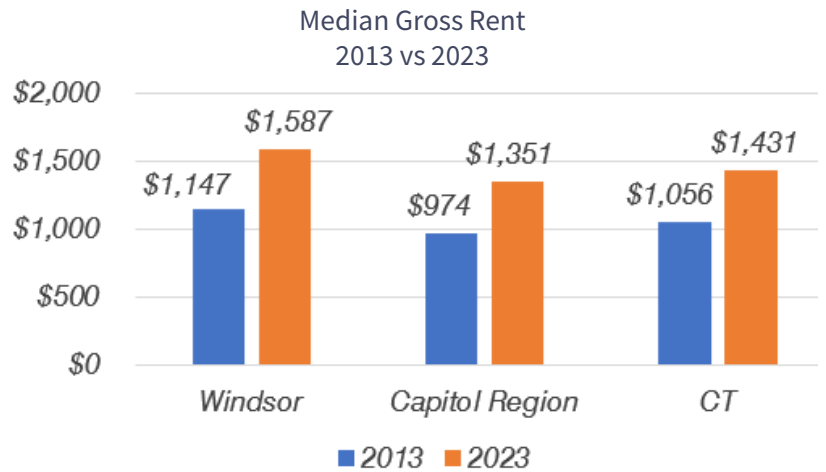


Figure 5-6 Median Gross Rent
Source: American Community Survey- 2023 and 2013

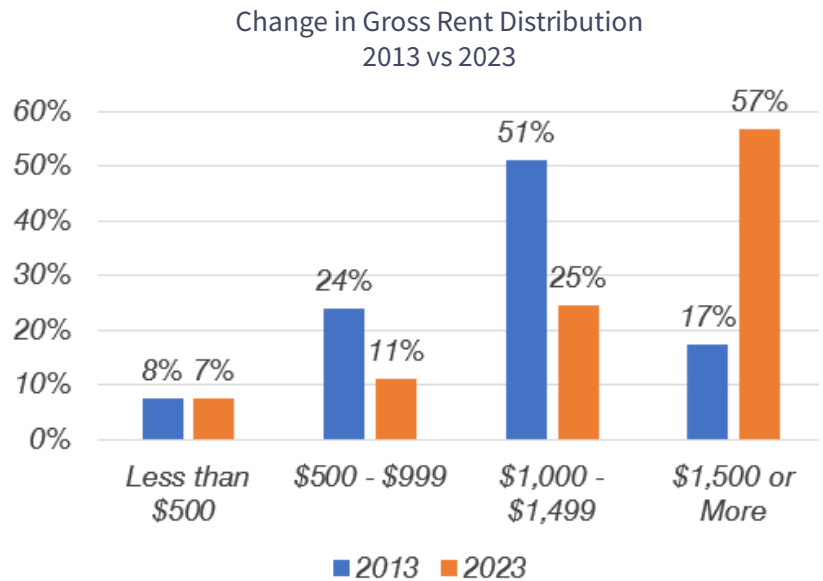


Figure 5-7 Median Gross Rent Distribution Change
Source: American Community Survey- 2023 and 2013

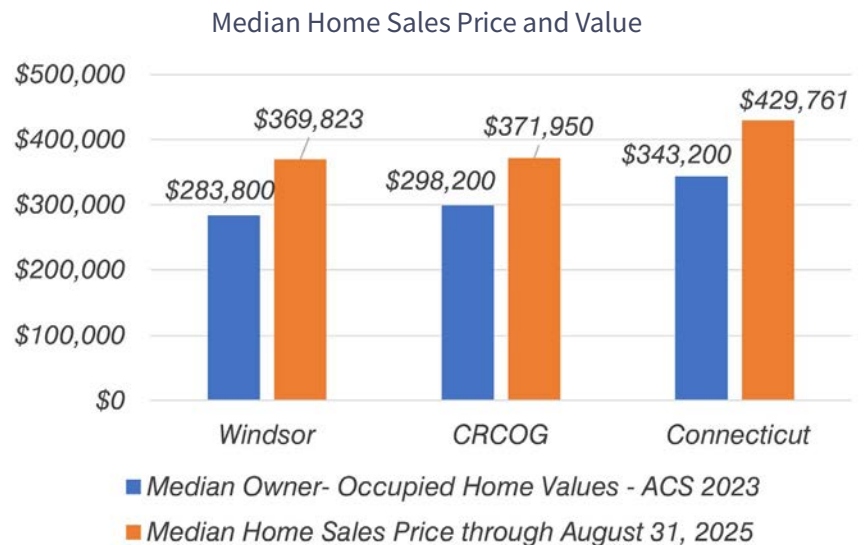


Figure 5-8 Median Home Sales Price and Values
Source: American Community Survey - 2023, Policy Map, Zillow Home Values 2025

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

In 2023, the median household income in Windsor surpassed \$107,000, marking an increase of over \$28,000 since 2013. This is nearly \$14,000 higher than the state median and over \$16,000 above the median income for the Capitol Region. However, despite relatively high household incomes, housing affordability remains a challenge for many residents, particularly renters.

Housing cost-burden occurs when households spend more than 30% of their income on housing. In Windsor approximately 41% of renters are considered to be cost-burdened, compared to 26% of homeowners. The share of cost-burdened renters is lower in Windsor than in both the CROCOG Region and the State, while the share of cost-burdened homeowners matches those same benchmarks. Housing costs extend beyond rents and mortgages. In Windsor, households that rely on electricity spend an average of 3.2% of their income on energy expenses.

As of 2024, 7.38% of Windsor's housing stock qualifies as affordable under Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-30g. This includes government-assisted units, households with tenant rental assistance, CHFA/USDA-financed homes, and deed-restricted properties, totaling 889 units. While the percentage has remained relatively stable in recent years, it has increased since 2013.

Windsor remains committed to expanding its supply of affordable and workforce housing. The Town's current share of affordable housing is lower than that of most neighboring municipalities, with the exception of East Granby and South Windsor. Continued efforts are focused on maintaining and increasing affordability to support a diverse and inclusive community.

Median Household Income (2019 - 2023)

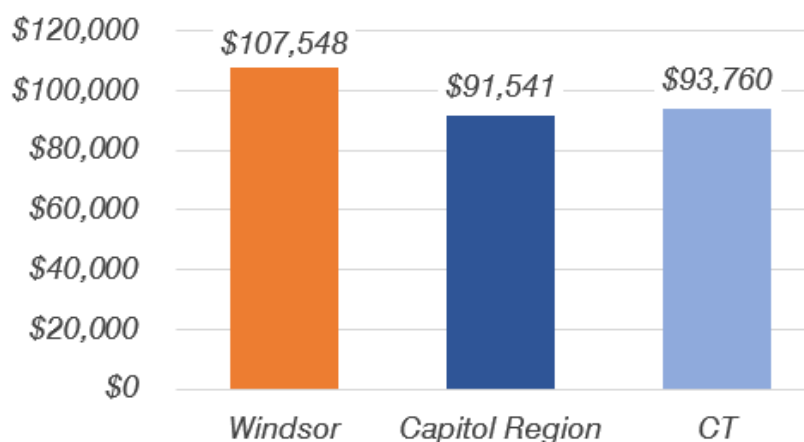


Figure 5-9 Median Household Income
Source: American Community Survey- 2023

Housing Cost Burden Households

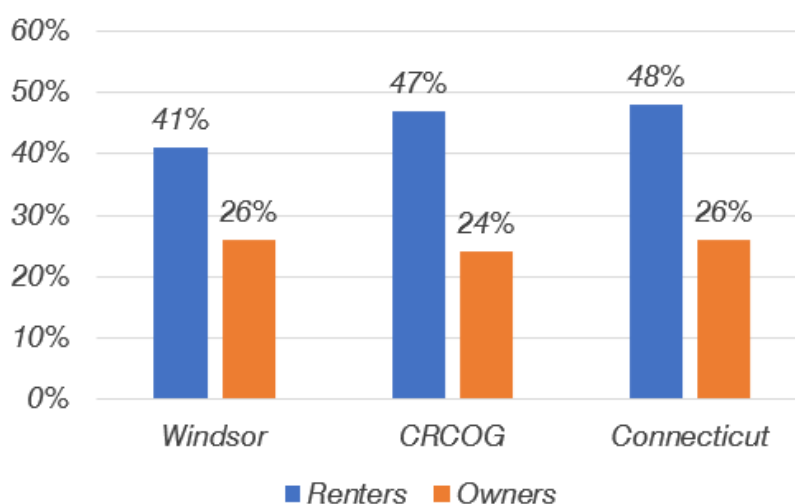


Figure 5-10 Cost Burden Households
Source: Partnership for Strong Communities 2024 Housing Data Profile for Windsor

Table 5-1 Percentage Affordable Housing

Windsor	7.38%
Bloomfield	11.23%
East Granby	5.36%
South Windsor	6.54%
Windsor Locks	12.24%

Figure 5-11 Affordable Housing Appeals List
Source: Connecticut State Department of Housing, 2024

RESIDENTIAL ZONING

Windsor's residential zoning guides development and preservation, balancing environmental, historical, and community values. It supports each neighborhood while accommodating new housing, ensuring growth enhances livability and sustainability.

RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

Windsor's residential zoning includes several districts, each tailored to accommodate different housing types and densities.

AA ZONE

This district is primarily located in the northern part of Windsor and is intended for single-family residential development on larger parcels. This district provides a transition to agricultural and open space areas.

A ZONE

This is a large-lot single-family district, somewhat smaller in scale than the AA zone. It accommodates traditional suburban housing patterns while maintaining open space and lower densities. These areas are often located along the town's edges or adjacent to farmland.

R-8, R-10, R-11, R-13 ZONES

These districts allow for single-family homes with varying minimum lot sizes, providing options for different housing densities throughout the town.

BUSINESS AND MIXED USE ZONING DISTRICTS THAT ALLOW RESIDENTIAL

In addition to Windsor's residential zoning districts, there are business and mixed use zones that allow residential. Descriptions of these zones are presented below.

B-1 BUSINESS ZONE

The B-1 zone is intended for neighborhood-scale commercial uses such as shops, restaurants, and personal services. This district also permits residential units above the first floor, encouraging mixed-use buildings that combine housing with small businesses. The B-1 zone supports walkability and provides local services within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods.

B-2 BUSINESS ZONE

The B-2 zone is Windsor's larger business district, designed for town-wide commercial uses, retail centers, and office space. In Windsor and Wilson centers, the B-2 zone encourages upper-story residential above ground-floor retail, creating a traditional main street environment. This mix of uses supports both economic vitality and a walkable, pedestrian-friendly downtown.

PROFESSIONAL ZONE (P)

The P zone Serves as a transition between residential neighborhoods and higher-intensity commercial areas. The P zone primarily accommodates offices and professional services but allows residential use where it complements surrounding development, such as through the conversion of existing homes or as part of a mixed-use buffer.

RESTRICTED COMMERCIAL ZONE (RC)

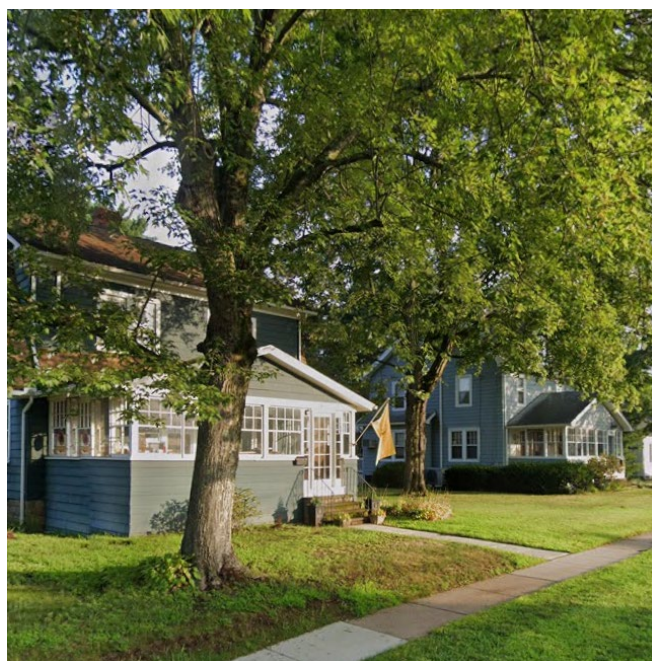
The RC zone is intended for larger-scale commercial and corporate office uses, often along major corridors. While primarily non-residential, the RC zone does allow specialized housing options such as extended-stay hotels. Conventional residential is generally not permitted.

INDUSTRIAL ZONE (I)

The I zone is focused on manufacturing, research, and employment-generating uses. Residential uses are generally not permitted, but recent amendments introduced flexibility in certain locations within in the Day Hill corridor, where mixed-use or housing may be considered. This provides the opportunity to adaptively reuse industrial land while keeping employment as the primary focus.

PLANNED URBAN DEVELOPMENT ZONE (PUD)

The PUD is a district that encourages large-scale, master-planned projects integrating residential, commercial, and civic uses. The PUD zone explicitly allows multifamily housing at defined densities, providing an opportunity for mixed-use communities with coordinated design. Residential uses are integrated with parks, services, and retail, creating walkable, planned neighborhoods.



Residential neighborhood

Source: Google Earth, August 2025 Imagery

HOUSING RELATED INITIATIVES

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

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Several new housing projects are underway or proposed in Windsor. These include multi-unit apartment complexes and the adaptive reuse of former office buildings for residential purposes. Many of these projects include a mix of market-rate and affordable units and often incorporate amenities and community spaces. These developments aim to expand housing options and make use of underutilized land.

Windsor's recent housing efforts reflect a combination of maintaining existing units and adding new housing through redevelopment and new construction. While new developments often include some affordable housing, broader programs also support lower-income households and public housing, helping address ongoing community housing needs.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN

Windsor's 2022 Affordable Housing Plan presents strategies to expand housing access for residents of all ages and needs. It emphasizes multi-family housing, including senior and accessible units, as well as small-scale multi-family homes and accessory apartments for young adults, young families, seniors, and those seeking independent or family-supported living. The plan recommends using zoning updates and financial incentives such as density bonuses, tax abatements, and infrastructure cost-sharing to make affordable housing feasible while integrating with existing neighborhoods. It was developed with input from residents and stakeholders.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Windsor did not opt out of the provisions of Public Act 21-29, which requires municipalities to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) “as of right” on single-family residential lots. This allows homeowners in Windsor to construct ADUs, either attached or separate from the primary home, without special permits, public hearings, or variances, provided the units meet existing lot coverage and setback requirements. ADUs help expand affordable housing options, support multi-generational living, and provide homeowners with the opportunity to generate rental income.

WINDSOR HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Windsor Housing Authority (WHA) provides housing primarily for elderly and disabled residents through three complexes with 152 units. Demand exceeds supply, with waitlists often five times larger than available units, leading to multi-year waiting periods. The WHA administers HUD vouchers that must be used for housing in Windsor. The WHA regularly undertakes renovation projects at its properties, often supported by grant funding. Ongoing maintenance and resident services, such as pest control and building upgrades, remain priorities.

Current services focus on elderly and disabled residents, but gaps exist for low-income families, transitional housing, and congregate housing for older adults needing support without full nursing care. Mental health needs among younger residents are growing, increasing demand for supportive housing.

Future priorities for the WHA include expanding housing availability to allow downsizing, developing family and veteran housing, increasing supportive and congregate options, and pursuing partnerships and funding, including Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Accessibility upgrades, continued renovation, and grant-seeking for infrastructure and resident services are ongoing goals.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

AFFORDABILITY

- Housing costs, combined with energy expenses, particularly in older homes, create financial strain.
- High construction costs constrain new housing development.
- Lower-income households face barriers transitioning from renting to homeownership.
- Energy-efficiency programs could help reduce overall housing costs.

HOUSING OPTIONS & GAPS

- Shortage of smaller units (studios, 1-bedrooms) and larger multi-bedroom homes for families.
- Limited downsizing options for seniors and small households.
- High demand exists for supportive or transitional housing, with long waitlists at the Housing Authority.

DEVELOPMENT & LAND USE

- Preference for adaptive reuse and redevelopment rather than new greenfield construction.
- Higher-density, mixed-use housing near transit corridors and village centers is desirable.

MAINTENANCE & REHABILITATION

- Aging housing stock requires repairs and maintenance support for homeowners.
- Rehabilitation programs can preserve neighborhood quality and existing housing.

COMMUNITY & DEMOGRAPHICS

- Growing need for accessible and supportive housing for seniors.
- Increase in residents with special needs or mental health challenges.
- Strong community desire for aging in place.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Residents noted that Windsor faces several housing challenges, including limited space for new development, aging homes in need of modernization, and high energy costs that drive up housing expenses. The need for more housing options for seniors was emphasized, as well as smaller units that could serve both older adults and younger residents.

Community members expressed support for updating zoning to allow more flexibility, encouraging infill and higher-density development in appropriate areas, and creating more opportunities for mixed-use projects. Expanding affordable and workforce housing, promoting alternative models such as townhomes and accessory dwelling units, and supporting first-time homebuyers were also identified as priorities. Sustainability was seen as important, with calls for energy-efficient construction and programs to help seniors and other residents maintain their homes.

Windsor needs more options for affordable senior housing and aging in place. This is my community, I want to say here!

I do like the changes and apartments being built in downtown Windsor. It will make downtown more vibrant.

I think Windsor should grow and change while maintaining the spirit of what makes Windsor Windsor.

Build more affordable housing and emergency housing please! There is a need.

I would like to see less focus on bringing in new apartments and more focus on the town we already have.

Windsor has done a marvelous job of keeping residential and commercial separate and should continue to do this.



Talking to members of the community during the Shad Derby Pop-Up
Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG

Goal 5.1 | Ensure that Windsor offers a diverse, affordable, and sustainable range of housing options that meet the needs of all residents including seniors, young adults, families, and those experiencing housing insecurity, while preserving neighborhood character.

Strategy 1 | Expand Housing Options for All Ages and Incomes.

ACTIONS

1. Support the Windsor Housing Authority in its efforts to maintain current facilities and provide additional housing options.
2. Conduct a housing needs assessment to identify specific gaps in unit types, affordability levels, and geographic distribution as part of the required periodic Affordable Housing Plan update.
3. Promote access to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority first-time homebuyer assistance programs, including down payment support and homeownership education.
4. Continue to provide financial support to regional agencies addressing the challenge of under- and unhoused individuals. (e.g. Journey Home).

Strategy 2 | Modernize and Sustain the Existing Housing Stock.

ACTIONS

1. Consider devoting additional resources to the Housing Rehabilitation Program so as to include multi-family buildings and energy efficiency enhancements.
2. Encourage energy-efficient design standards above-code performance for all new residential construction and substantial renovations.

Strategy 3 | Encourage Mixed-Use and Innovative Housing Models.

ACTIONS

1. Support the Great Pond campus and other village-style development concepts that mix residential, commercial, and recreational uses.
2. Ensure the Town's Zoning Regulations and Future Land Use Map continue to encourage housing in areas where infrastructure exists to support it, including public water, public sewer, road capacity, and public transit.
3. Encourage development of smaller housing units (1–2 bedrooms) suitable for seniors, young adults, and small households.
4. Work with the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) to conduct a capacity analysis of sewer and water systems to plan for future housing growth.
5. Explore creating a Housing Trust Fund and inclusionary zoning regulations with increased density incentives and fee-in-lieu of affordable housing requirements.
6. Identify opportunities for potential small-scale infill housing and foster public–private partnerships to advance development.

Strategy 4 | Support “aging in place” for older residents.**ACTIONS**

1. Incentivize development of affordable senior housing, assisted living, and “age-in-place” models.
2. Continue to provide social services and other support services for people that choose to remain in their homes as they age.
3. Expand outreach with social workers, visiting nurses, and other resources to reduce social isolation and enhance quality of life for older adults.
4. Develop resources and community partnerships for senior-focused maintenance services (e.g., yard care, minor repairs).
5. Encourage universal accessibility standards for new construction and substantial renovation.

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6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Windsor has focused in recent years on economic development efforts aimed at revitalizing commercial areas, supporting local businesses, and attracting new investment. Key areas of focus include the Day Hill Road corridor and industrial districts, which play an important role in the local economy. With convenient access to major highways, the Town is working to balance growth with the needs of the community and its existing infrastructure.

INDUSTRY

Windsor's strategic location, robust infrastructure (including roads and utilities), strong existing business base, and business-friendly regulations make it well-positioned to retain and attract economic development. The town's leading industry is transportation and warehousing, employing 5,830 workers in 2023, followed by manufacturing with 4,274 workers and finance and insurance with 3,551 workers. See Figure 6-1 for a list of Windsor's top five industries. Business growth in Windsor has been steady, with new business registrations rising over the past five years. According to the CT Data Collaborative's 2025 Town Profile, there are currently 2,594 active businesses operating in the town.

Major employers in Windsor include:

- Amazon
- Walgreens
- SS&C Technologies
- Dollar Tree
- Eversource

Top Industries

1	Transportation and Warehousing <i>Warehousing and Storage</i>	5,830
2	Manufacturing <i>Fabricated Metal Product Mfg</i>	4,274
3	Finance and Insurance <i>Insurance Carriers & Related Activities</i>	3,551
4	Government <i>Local Government</i>	2,187
5	Health Care and Social Assistance <i>Nursing and Residential Care Facilities</i>	1,934
	Total Jobs, All Industries	25,628

Figure 6-1 Top Industries 2025, Source: CT Data Collaborative Town Profile 2025, utilizing Lightcast 2023 data

Table 6-1 Total Active Businesses - 2,594

New Business Registrations by Year					
Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total	335	394	453	446	406

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

When compared to the Capitol Region and the State, Windsor's employment profile shows notable differences across industry sectors. The town has a particularly high share of Manufacturing (20.8%) and Transportation and Warehousing (24.4%) jobs, reflecting its industrial and logistics base. Windsor also has a higher proportion of Finance and Insurance (14.1%) and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (7.2%) jobs compared to the region and state. In contrast, Windsor has smaller shares of Retail Trade (3.3%), Educational Services (5.6%), Health Care and Social Assistance (6.6%), and Accommodation and Food Services (2.7%) relative to regional and statewide averages.

Other sectors, such as Utilities, Information, and Public Administration, account for less than 1% of employment each.

Among Windsor's employed population aged 16 and over, 45.4% work in management, business, science, and arts occupations; 15.3% are employed in service occupations; 22.9% in sales and office occupations; 10.2% in production, transportation, and material moving; and 6.3% in natural resources, construction, and maintenance. See Figure 6-3. Comparing Windsor's workforce with its job base shows a mismatch: while many local jobs are in manufacturing and logistics, a large share of residents work in management,

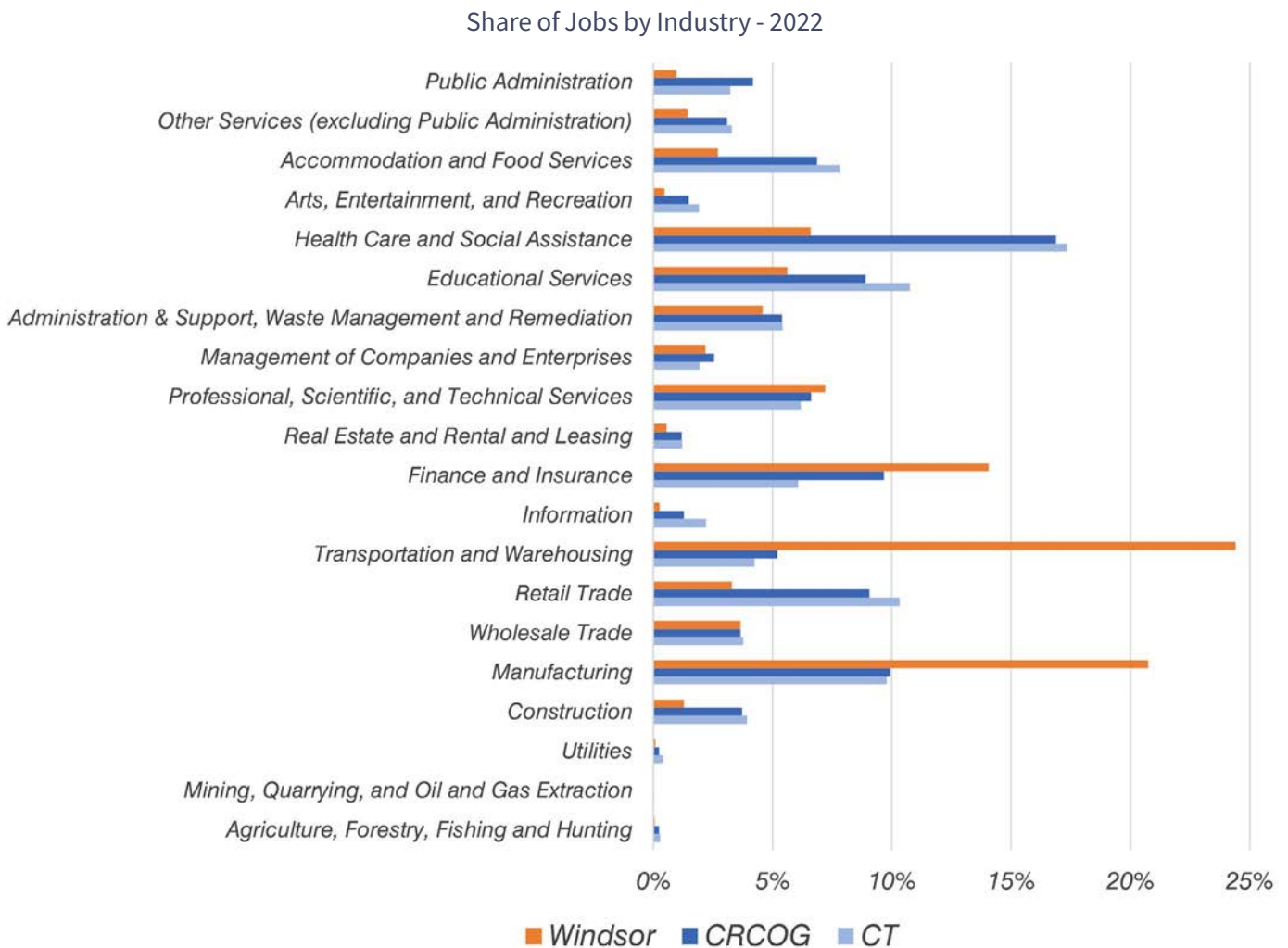


Figure 6-2 Share of Jobs by Industry - 2022, Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal 2022 Employer-Household Dynamics Origin Destination Employment Statistics

professional, and office occupations. This suggests that many residents commute out of town for work or that local job opportunities do not fully align with the community's skill sets.

Windsor has a higher share of well-paying jobs compared with the Capitol Region and the State, as shown in Figure 6-4. In 2023, 64.1% of jobs in Windsor paid more than \$3,500 per month, compared with 61.3% in the Capitol Region and 59.2% statewide. Fewer Windsor jobs are in the lower-paying ranges: 12.9% pay \$1,250 per month or less, and 22.9% pay \$1,251–\$3,500 per month, both below regional and state averages. Overall, Windsor's employment base is concentrated in higher-wage positions, reflecting the town's strong presence in manufacturing, logistics, and professional sectors.

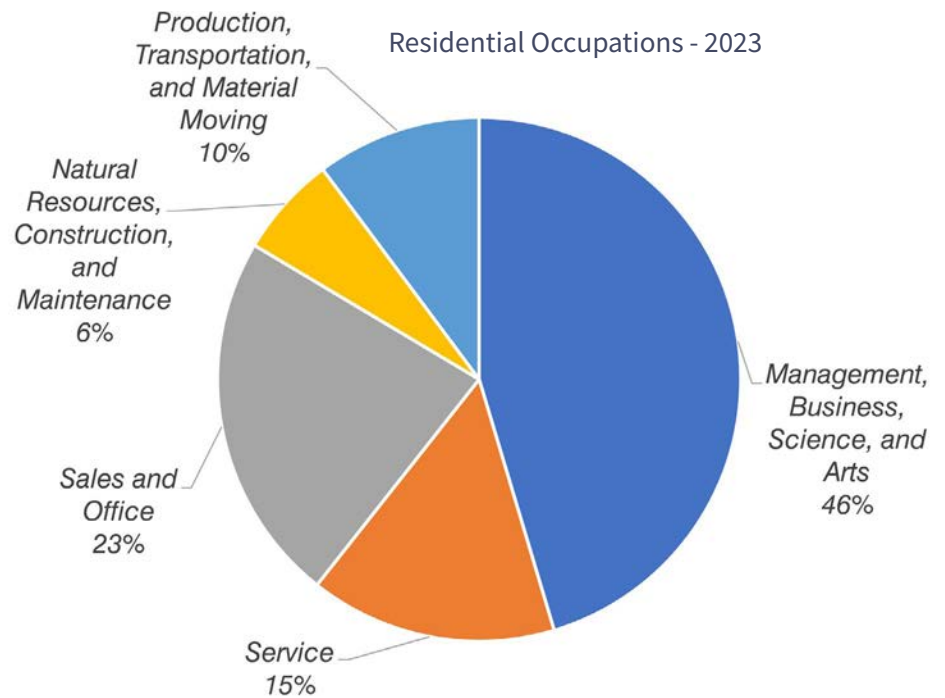


Figure 6-3 Residential Occupations - 2023,
Source: American Community Survey – 2023, Policy Map

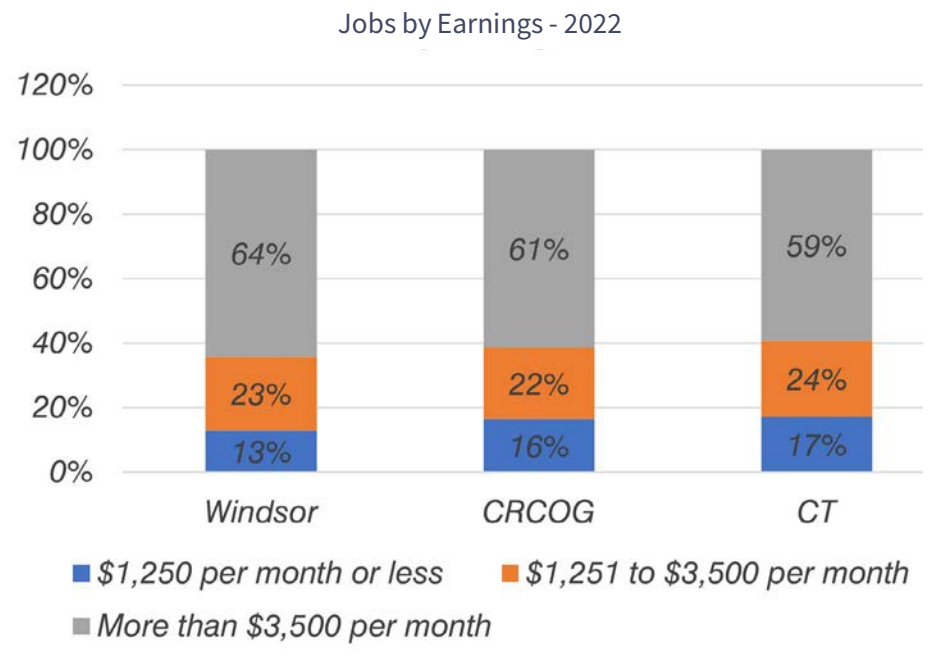


Figure 6-4 Jobs by Earnings - 2022,
Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal 2022 Employer-Household Dynamics Origin Destination Employment Statistics

LABOR FORCE

Windsor’s labor market remains strong, with an unemployment rate of 3% compared to the statewide rate of 4%. The town has 16,046 employed residents and 567 unemployed. However, Windsor’s labor force has declined by about 400 workers since 2016, a trend also seen across the state. This contraction suggests that a portion of the population may no longer be counted in unemployment statistics, as they are not actively seeking work. Factors likely contributing to this shift include early retirement, increased childcare responsibilities, and a population aging out of the workforce. Windsor’s unemployment rate has declined from 5.5% in 2016 to 3% in 2024, reflecting an overall improvement in local employment conditions over the past several years.

Compared to neighboring communities, Windsor has a strong employment base, with 0.87 jobs for every resident, reflecting a robust local economy. See Figure 6-6. Among its neighbors, only Bloomfield has a higher jobs-to-resident ratio, highlighting Windsor’s role as a regional employment hub while maintaining a balance between local workforce and residential population.

Windsor		
Employed - 16,046	Unemployed - 567	3%
State of Connecticut		
Employed - 1,842,285	Unemployed - 67,181	4%

Figure 6-5 Labor Force and Unemployment Rate - 2024
Source: CT Department of Labor

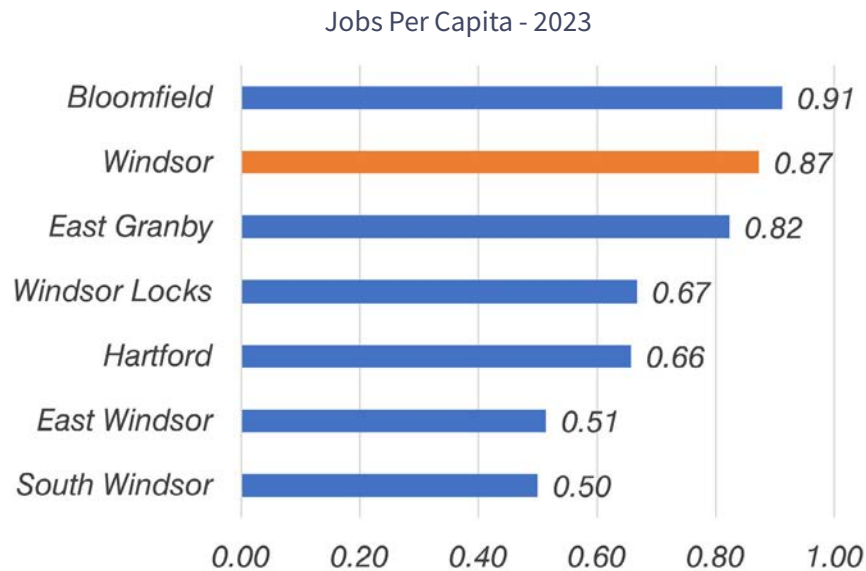
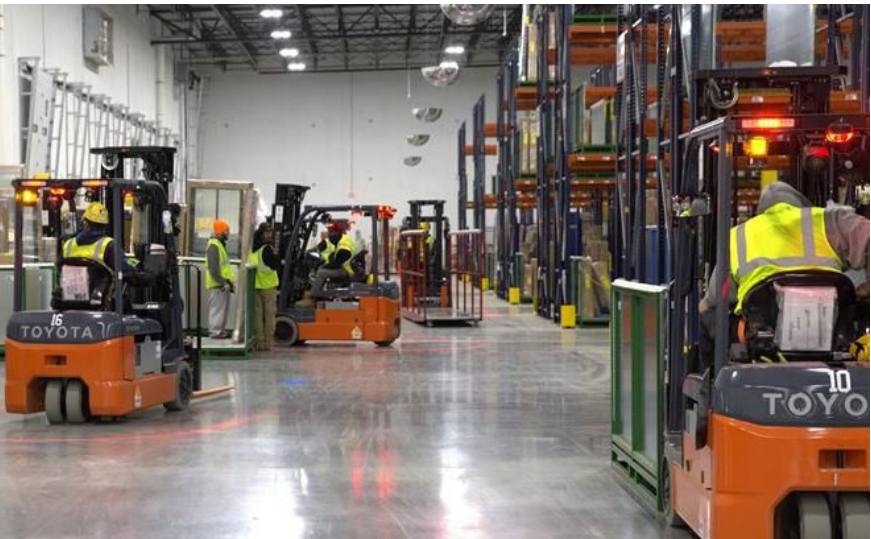


Figure 6-6 Jobs Per Capita- 2023
Source: CT Data Collaborative Town Profile 2025, utilizing Lightcast 2023 data



Workers at the Amazon distribution facility
Source: Town of Windsor

COMMUTING TRENDS

Windsor had a total of 30,137 full and part-time jobs in 2022. Of those jobs, approximately 2,214 (8%) were held by Town residents. Windsor has 4,000 more workers commuting into Town for employment since 2012. A smaller number of resident workers commute out of the Town for employment than the number of employees who travel to Windsor for work. Approximately 13,400 Windsor residents commute to other towns and cities for work daily. The average commute for Windsor's residents is 21 minutes. The top five work destinations for Windsor's residents (listed in order of frequency) include:

- Hartford
- East Hartford
- West Hartford
- Windsor Locks
- New Britain

As expected, Windsor's jobs are concentrated along its primary commercial and industrial corridors, including Day Hill Road, Kennedy Road, International Drive, and Broad Street in the Town Center. These areas are zoned for commercial, business park, and mixed-use development, making them key employment centers within the town.

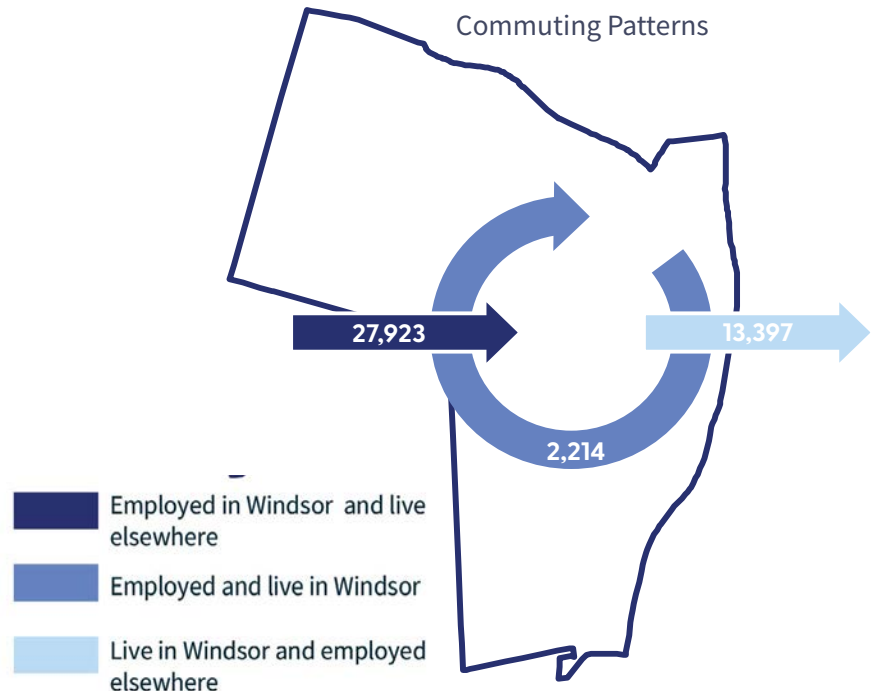


Figure 6-7 Commuting Patterns, Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal 2022 Employer-Household Dynamics Origin Destination Employment Statistics

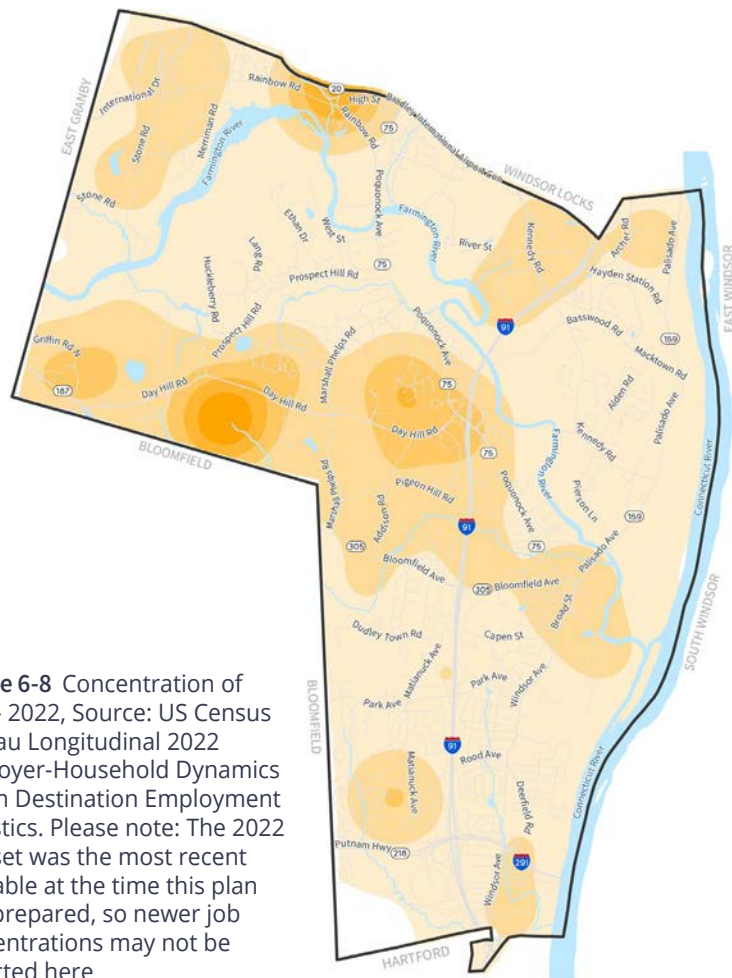


Figure 6-8 Concentration of Jobs - 2022, Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal 2022 Employer-Household Dynamics Origin Destination Employment Statistics. Please note: The 2022 dataset was the most recent available at the time this plan was prepared, so newer job concentrations may not be reflected here

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ZONING

Windsor has a range of zoning districts designed to support economic development, encourage mixed-use areas, and accommodate a variety of land uses. These districts regulate permitted uses, building forms, and development intensity across the community. From small-scale village businesses to larger commercial, office, and industrial areas, each district plays a specific role in shaping Windsor's land use and business environment. The following summarizes the primary business, commercial, office, and industrial zoning districts in Windsor. A map of the Town's business and commercial zoning districts is shown in Map 6-1.

B - 1 BUSINESS

Windsor's B-1 (Neighborhood Business) district is intended for small-scale commercial and mixed-use development that serves the needs of nearby residential areas. Permitted uses include retail, personal services, professional offices, restaurants, and residential units above the ground floor.

B - 2 BUSINESS

The B-2 (General Business) district is intended for larger-scale commercial and office uses that serve a broader area beyond the immediate neighborhood. Permitted uses include retail, restaurants, professional offices, personal services, and certain institutional uses.

I - INDUSTRIAL

The I (Industrial) district is intended to accommodate light and heavy industrial uses, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and related commercial activities. Permitted uses include manufacturing, research and development, wholesale trade, and certain service-oriented businesses that support industrial operations. Special Permit uses allow flexibility for operations that may require additional review to address environmental, traffic, or aesthetic considerations.

P - PROFESSIONAL

Windsor's P (Professional) district is intended for office, professional, and institutional uses that do not generate significant traffic or noise impacts. Permitted uses include professional offices, medical and dental offices, financial institutions, and certain community or civic facilities. The P district provides space for professional and administrative activities while maintaining a scale and identity appropriate to its context.

PUD - PLANNED URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The PUD (Planned Urban Development) district is designed to allow flexible, comprehensive planning of large-scale, mixed-use developments south of Kennedy Road, adjacent to Interstate 91. The district encourages a mix of residential, commercial, office, and recreational uses within a unified development plan, allowing variation from standard zoning requirements. Development within a PUD is subject to detailed review and approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission, including site plans, layout, density, open space, and infrastructure.

RC - RESTRICTED COMMERCIAL

Windsor's RC (Restricted Commercial) district is intended to accommodate small-scale commercial uses that are compatible with adjacent residential areas. Permitted uses typically include limited retail, hospitality uses, personal services, professional offices, and neighborhood-oriented businesses.

W - WAREHOUSE

Windsor's W (Warehouse) zoning district is intended for warehouse, distribution, and related industrial uses. The district permits uses such as warehousing, distribution, and related activities, subject to development standards and permitting processes. The Town has established regulations for new warehouses and logistics centers to address concerns about traffic, infrastructure, and environmental impacts.



KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

OVERALL ECONOMIC CLIMATE

- Windsor has a strong economic base and opportunities to grow with emerging industries.
- Windsor serves as a regional employment hub, providing a foundation to expand local opportunities.
- The Town benefits from a highly educated population, supporting innovation and workforce development.

DOWNTOWN AND COMMERCIAL AREAS

- Vacant storefronts and offices reduce vitality. Desire for redevelopment in Windsor Center.
- Historic properties can be costly to maintain and reuse.

FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

- Interest in biotech, clean energy, and mixed-use redevelopment. Concerns were raised about large scale data centers and warehouses.
- Infrastructure needs include EV charging, traffic management, and renewable energy.
- Suggestions include business incubators, Wi-Fi access, and local hiring/fair wage policies.

TOURISM, CULTURE, AND AMENITIES

- Parks, festivals, and historic sites are strong attractions that draw visitors from across the region.
- Opportunities exist to enhance dining, entertainment, and visitor services to maximize tourism's impact.
- Coordinated marketing and promotion can further showcase Windsor's cultural and natural assets.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- Diversify economy to reduce reliance on residential taxpayers.
- Enhance the downtown and underused properties.
- Align growth with community character and quality of life.
- Update zoning and infrastructure as needed to support sustainable development.



Local business in Wilson Center
Source: Town of Windsor



Voya Financial Services
Source: Town of Windsor

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

The Windsor community emphasized the need for jobs that match local skills, including opportunities for teens and young adults, and for businesses that serve residents so they can shop locally. Residents highlighted opportunities in sectors such as clean energy and biotech, along with the importance of revitalizing underused properties and promoting mixed-use, transit-oriented development. Creating vibrant third spaces, community events, and other opportunities for fun was seen as essential for fostering interaction and placemaking.

Leveraging cultural and natural assets, including the Connecticut River and historic sites, is viewed as a way to enhance tourism, while investments in infrastructure, and amenities are key to supporting sustainable growth and a vibrant, forward-looking town.

Windsor is a great business environment with convenient access to major highways. Its location helps my business succeed.

I think Windsor should grow based on the needs of its residents and to retain those who already live here.

We need more shops and services for residents, especially in Windsor Center.

Growth is good but I want Windsor to retain the small town feel that it currently has.

We need more diverse businesses. We need more diverse options for eateries and restaurants.

There are a lot of great things happening in Windsor. I'm excited to see what the future brings, especially in the Day Hill area!



Attendees at the first public workshop
Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG

Goal 6.1 | Promote sustainable economic growth by creating high-quality jobs, enhancing underutilized commercial areas, and building vibrant, mixed-use places that honor Windsor’s historic character and natural assets.

Strategy 1 | Promote Economic Growth in Industrial Zoned Areas.

ACTIONS

1. Inventory and market available land and buildings to target industries such as manufacturing, financial and insurance services, information technology, clean-energy and bioscience.
2. Partner with regional and state economic development agencies to promote Windsor opportunities.

Strategy 2 | Align Job Growth with Local Workforce Strengths.

ACTIONS

1. Partner with local schools, colleges, the Chamber of Commerce and the regional workforce development board to expand work-based learning (school-to-career pathways, internships, and apprenticeships).
2. Continue regular communication and partnerships between the Town and major employers to encourage local hiring and workforce alignment.

Strategy 3 | Prioritize Smart, Infill-Based Development.

ACTIONS

1. Facilitate mixed-use and infill development in appropriately zoned locations throughout the community.
2. Inventory, market, and support redevelopment of properties on the Priority Redevelopment Properties list, as amended annually.
3. Continue to offer design and planning assistance to property owners pursuing redevelopment or mixed-use conversions.
4. Pursue brownfield grants by targeting sites and showing how cleanup enables community-focused redevelopment.

Strategy 4 | Support Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

ACTIONS

1. Assist small businesses to identify available spaces and facilitate occupancy.
2. Refer businesses to programs offering micro-grants or low-interest loans to help small, minority- and women-owned businesses launch or grow.
3. Partner with small business resource centers to provide regular business training workshops focused on digital marketing, finance, and operations.



7 LOCATION BASED HIGHLIGHTS

FOCUS AREAS

During the development of Windsor 2035, specific areas were identified as locations that warranted additional focus. These locations were chosen based on their potential for future development and reuse and are highlighted in Map 7-1.

DAY HILL CORRIDOR

The Day Hill Road Corridor is Windsor's primary commercial and industrial area, extending across roughly 3,000 acres. The corridor contains a mix of office parks, light industrial facilities, and logistics centers, reflecting its long-standing role as the town's employment hub. Its location west of Interstate 91 and proximity to Bloomfield Avenue and Poquonock Avenue provide strong regional access for both freight and commuters. While the corridor has historically supported corporate and industrial uses, recent market shifts, including higher office vacancies and changing business models, have prompted a reevaluation of future land use and development strategies.

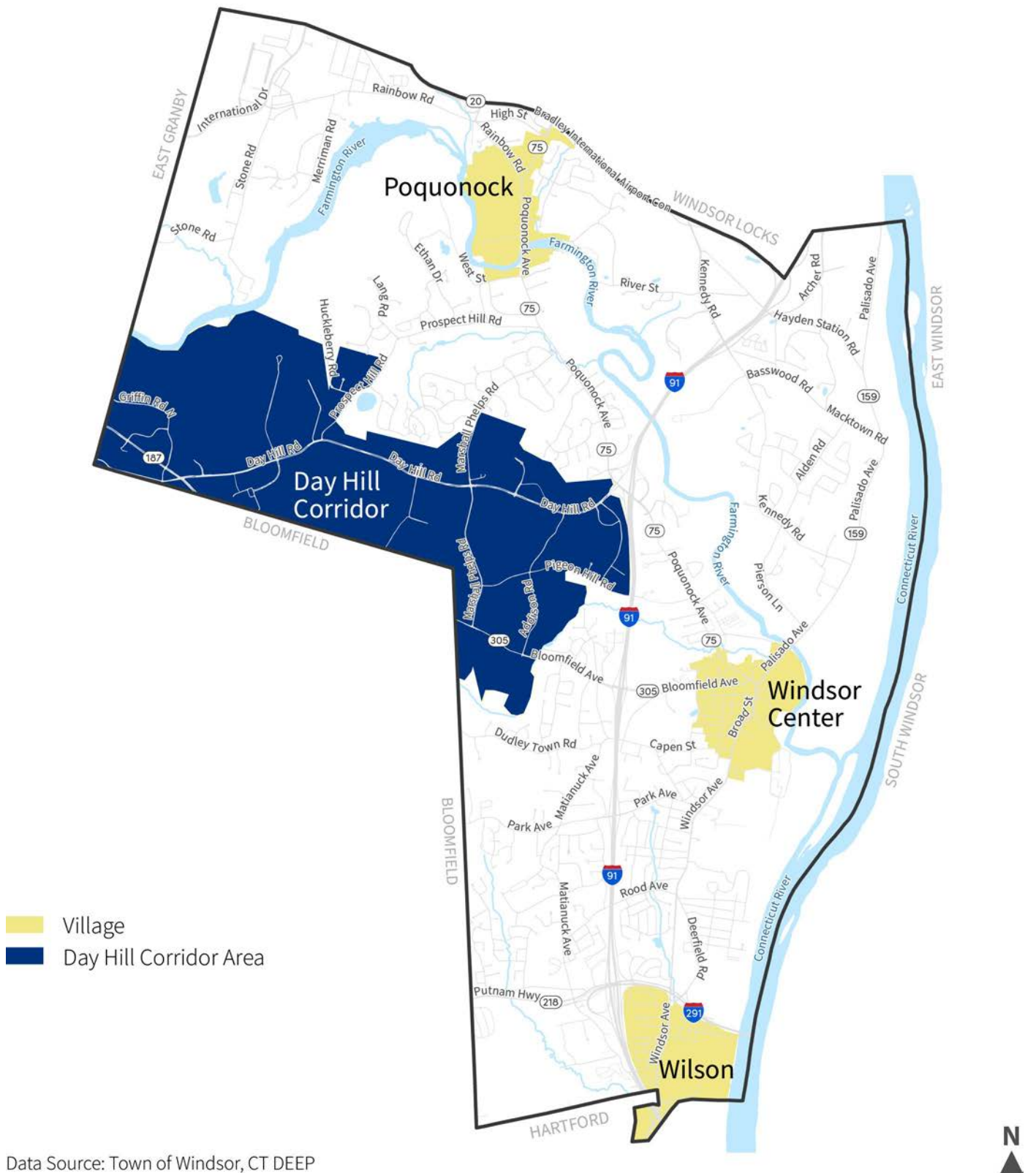
To address these changes, the Town completed the Day Hill Corporate Area Planning Study in 2025. Building on the 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development, the study examines how the corridor can continue to serve as a center of economic activity while adapting to current

trends. It identifies opportunities for reinvestment, including the reuse of underutilized office properties, the integration of mixed-use and multifamily housing where appropriate, and the continued expansion of industrial operations in designated areas. The study also recommends transportation and infrastructure improvements such as better transit connections, enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access, and traffic management strategies to balance commuter and freight needs.

The Day Hill Road Corridor is primarily zoned Industrial (I), with additional Business (B-2) zones that support a range of employment-generating uses. See Map 7-2. These districts accommodate manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office activities, as well as limited commercial and service uses that support the workforce. Development standards regulate building scale, setbacks, landscaping, and buffering to ensure compatibility with nearby residential areas. Certain locations also include overlay or special development zones, such as the Great Pond Village District, that allow for a mix of uses under coordinated design and development guidelines.

A key development within the corridor is Great

Map 7-1 Villages and Day Hill Corridor Area

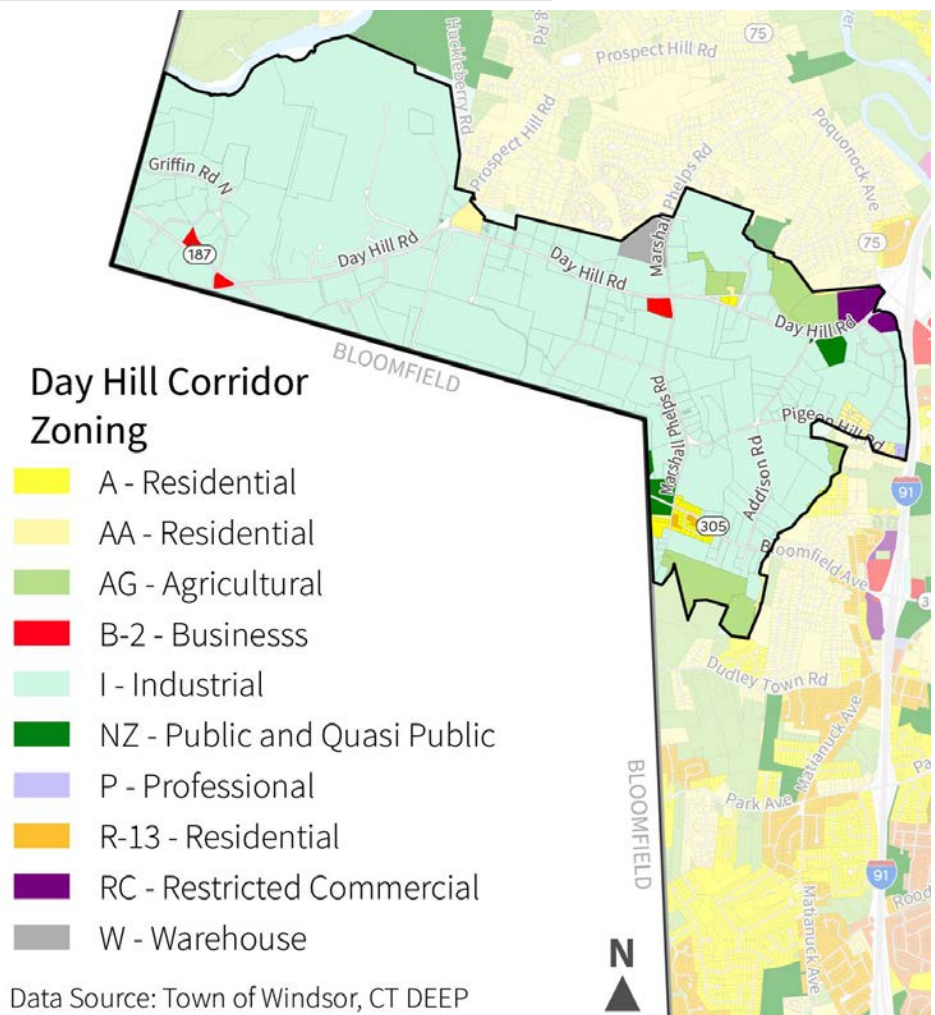


Pond Village, a long-term mixed-use development on a 650-acre site along Day Hill Road. The plan includes up to 1,500 residential units, 45,000 square feet of retail space, and more than one million square feet of commercial and industrial space, along with 365 acres of preserved open space and parkland. Modeled after a form-based code, the project emphasizes walkability, design consistency, and environmental stewardship. Construction is underway, with residential units completed and new industrial and convenience retail phases advancing.



Existing Business located in the Day Hill Corridor area
Source: Town of Windsor

Map 7-2 Day Hill Corridor Zoning



WINDSOR CENTER

Windsor Center is the historic core of the town, originating as an early trading post and later developing into a center of commerce, government, and community life. The area supported a range of industries over time, including brick manufacturing, tobacco shade tent production, and firearms and electrical component manufacturing. Residential development began during the colonial period, expanded modestly with local employment, and later took on the form of a streetcar suburb before reaching near full build-out prior to the postwar housing era. Like many traditional centers, Windsor Center has experienced changes in land use and economic activity associated with suburbanization and automobile-oriented development.

Planning efforts, including the 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development and the 2014 Windsor Center Transit-Oriented Development Plan, have focused on maintaining the Center's historic scale and mix of uses while accommodating reinvestment. These efforts emphasize adaptive reuse of existing buildings, context-sensitive infill development, and improved pedestrian and transit connections.

Zoning in Windsor Center includes a combination of B-2 Business, multiple Residential districts, and Public and Quasi-Public zones. This mix allows a variety of land uses, including retail and service businesses, offices, multifamily and single-family housing, civic and institutional uses, and limited industrial activity. Development standards are intended to maintain compatibility between commercial and residential areas by regulating building scale, setbacks, landscaping, and parking placement.

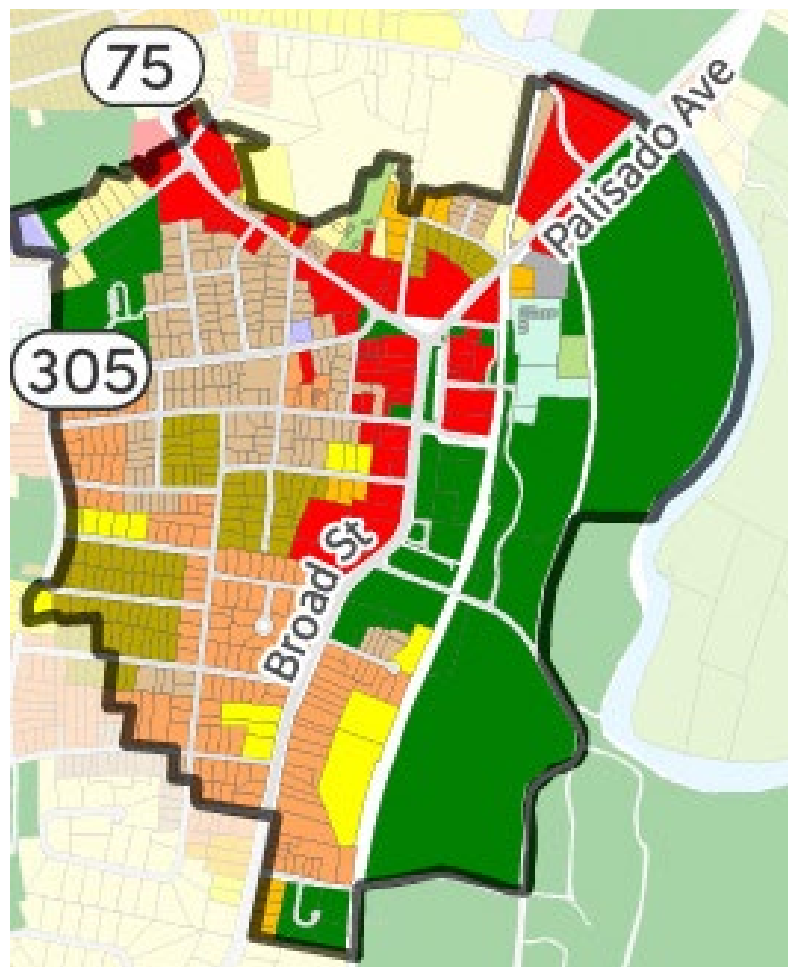
Map 7-3 Windsor Center Zoning

Windsor Center Zoning

- A - Residential
- AA - Residential
- AG - Agricultural
- B-2 - Business
- I - Industrial
- NZ - Public and Quasi Public
- P - Professional
- R-10 - Residential
- R-11 - Residential
- R-13 - Residential
- R-8 - Residential
- W - Warehouse



Data Source: Town of Windsor, CT DEEP



Development in Windsor Center promotes a walkable street pattern while carefully managing the transition between higher-intensity commercial uses and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Center has a well-established street network and access to public transit, including commuter rail service at the Windsor train station and local bus routes that connect to other parts of town and the region. Civic and institutional buildings such as the Town Hall, library, post office, and several churches remain defining features of the area.

Recent development activity has included new housing and mixed-use projects as well as streetscape and pedestrian improvements. These changes reflect an incremental approach to revitalization, guided by existing zoning and planning policies that seek to balance reinvestment with preservation of Windsor Center's historic form and community function.

Windsor Center...Did you know...?

- The Windsor Train Station dates back to 1869 and now houses artist studios.
- The Town Green is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and hosts annual community events like the Shad Derby and summer concerts.
- Windsor Center's volunteer fire company dates back to 1830, when 20 men each subscribed \$5 to start it.
- The oldest surviving tombstone in a Connecticut cemetery is in Windsor's Palisado Cemetery, marking the grave of Reverend Ephraim Huit (died 1644).
- One of Windsor's historic houses, the Deacon John Moore House, was built in 1664 and is one of the oldest in the state.



Windsor Public Library and Grace Episcopal Church
Source: Town of Windsor

WILSON

Wilson developed initially around brick manufacturing and later as a streetcar suburb of Hartford, resulting in a dense pattern of mixed-use and multifamily housing. The neighborhood became a commercial node along Windsor Avenue. Flood control efforts and redevelopment altered portions of the area, giving commercial activity a strip development pattern.

Current land use in Wilson is a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. Zoning generally supports residential development along streets that intersect Windsor Avenue. Commercial and industrial zones are concentrated near the northern and southern edges of the neighborhood, including parcels along Windsor Avenue and near I-291 and Exit 34. See Map 7-4. Planning emphasizes stabilizing residential areas, supporting upgrades to older housing, and preventing incompatible commercial development from encroaching on core residential streets. The 2025 opening of Wilson Gateway Park provides new recreational space that enhances neighborhood amenities and connectivity.

Transportation and connectivity remain priorities. Sidewalks exist along Windsor Avenue and western streets and a sidewalk was constructed along Meadow Road that connects to the Connecticut River Trail. Transit access via bus routes and proximity to I-91 support mobility for residents and businesses. Redevelopment opportunities include select parcels near I-291 at the north end of Wilson and commercial sites near Exit 34, which could support mixed-use, community-oriented development while discouraging highway-oriented retail that increases traffic through residential areas.



Streetscape along Windsor Avenue in Wilson
Source: Town of Windsor

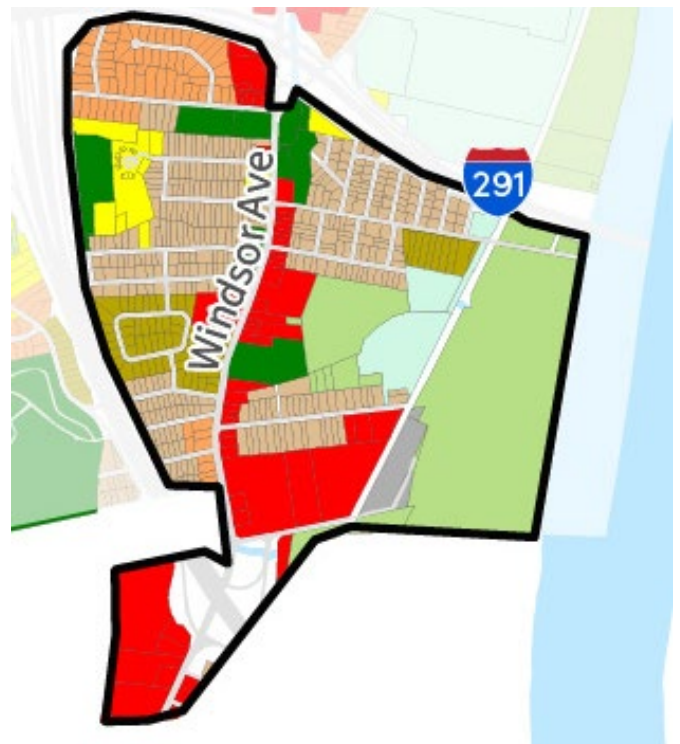
Map 7-4 Wilson Zoning

Wilson Zoning

- A - Residential
- AG - Agricultural
- B-2 - Businesss
- I - Industrial
- NZ - Public and Quasi Public
- R-10 - Residential
- R-11 - Residential
- R-8 - Residential
- W - Warehouse



Data Source: Town of Windsor, CT DEEP



POQUONOCK

Poquonock Village is a historic former mill village in northern Windsor, with roots in early agriculture and local commerce near the Farmington River. Its development grew around small mills and associated worker housing, giving the village a compact, walkable pattern. Today, Poquonock features a mix of residential, small-scale commercial, and institutional, and recreational uses, reflecting its continued role as a neighborhood hub. Its development pattern is low-density and village-scale, resulting in a compact environment.

Zoning in Poquonock supports primarily residential uses, with limited commercial areas along main corridors to serve local needs. Institutional anchors, such as schools and churches, provide focal points for the community. See Map 7-5. Planning priorities focus on preserving the village's agricultural heritage, supporting neighborhood-serving businesses, and enhancing a walkable, connected environment.

Recommendations from the 2015 POCD include enhancing recreational amenities, green spaces, and pedestrian connections to strengthen placemaking and support community activity. Redevelopment should aim to enhance local businesses and preserve the village's scale and character while accommodating modest, compatible growth.

SUMMARY

Collectively, Windsor's villages reflect a range of historic development patterns and community priorities. Across Windsor Center, Wilson, and Poquonock, key goals include preserving village-scale development, supporting mixed-use growth where appropriate, improving connectivity through pedestrian and transit infrastructure, enhancing public spaces, and guiding redevelopment to strengthen local economies and neighborhood vitality. In contrast, the Day Hill Road Corridor serves as Windsor's primary industrial and corporate corridor, with zoning and infrastructure designed to accommodate

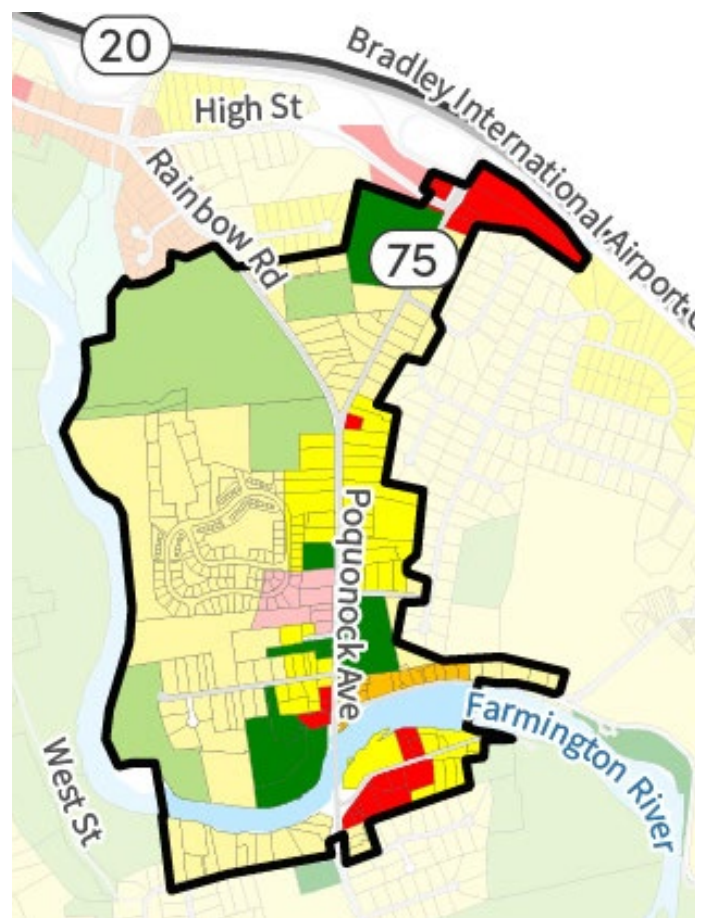
distribution, and large-scale commercial uses. While different in scale and function from the villages, the Day Hill area balances Windsor's land use needs by providing space for employment and economic activity, complementing the residential, neighborhood-serving, and mixed-use functions of the historic villages.

Map 7-5 Poquonock Zoning

Poquonock Zoning

- A - Residential
- AA - Residential
- AG - Agricultural
- B-1 - Business
- B-2 - Business
- NZ - Public and Quasi Public
- R-13 - Residential

Data Source: Town of Windsor, CT DEEP



KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

TRAFFIC AND FREIGHT

- Truck traffic has increased, particularly along Day Hill Road, raising concerns about congestion and safety.
- Community interest in limiting high-velocity warehouses.

VILLAGE SCALE AND IDENTITY

- Preserve village-scale development and maintain the unique character of each village.

VILLAGE CONNECTIVITY AND RECREATION

- Desire for more recreational amenities and open spaces that connect Windsor's villages.
- More convenience services such as a coffee shop, restaurants, and neighborhood serving businesses are desired in Wilson.

TRANSIT AND MOBILITY

- Need for transit improvements and enhanced bike and pedestrian infrastructure within and between villages.

TRAFFIC CALMING AND STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS

- Support for traffic calming measures and streetscape improvements, particularly at key gateways in Windsor Center and at the town's borders.

ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Promote neighborhood businesses and local-serving uses.
- In Poquonock Village highlight the agricultural heritage.



Saint Joseph Church in Poquonock
Source: Town of Windsor



Musical performance in Windsor Center
Source: Town of Windsor

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Community input highlighted the need to create more active, connected places across Windsor's villages. In Windsor Center, residents emphasized attracting new businesses, supporting existing ones, and strengthening neighborhood-serving uses to make the area more vibrant. Improving parks and pedestrian connectivity, particularly around Wilson Gateway Park, was also a priority. In Poquonock Village, preserving the area's agricultural heritage while encouraging local-serving uses was seen as important. Across all villages, residents want development that balances economic activity with livability, enhances walkability, and maintains the unique identity of each village.

For the Day Hill corridor, the community recommended following the strategies outlined in the Day Hill Corporate Area Planning Study to guide future development and business growth.

I would like to see the vision for the Day Hill Corridor fully achieved. It could be great!

Windsor center... make a thriving, walkable center with small businesses, restaurants, coffeeshops, etc. We have a beautiful green

I would like to see more transit oriented development in Windsor Center.

Wilson area needs the same attention that the rest of the town enjoys.

We need more diverse businesses. We need more diverse options for eateries and restaurants.

I think its time to open businesses in the center that have been closed for years. With all the apartments, businesses are needed and will thrive.



Community event in Wilson
Source: Town of Windsor

Goal 7.1 | Guide investment to Day Hill Corridor, Windsor Center, Wilson, and Poquonock Village to deliver distinctive, walkable districts with high-quality design, strong local businesses, housing near jobs and transit, resilient infrastructure, and memorable public spaces.

Day Hill Corridor Vision | A regional employment center, incorporating new housing, recreational and mixed-use opportunities to augment traditional industrial, office and hospitality uses.

Strategy 1 | Land Use & Development Framework

ACTIONS

1. Utilize the Guiding Principles outlined in the Day Hill Corporate Area Planning Study when making land use decisions in the corridor.
2. Utilize the Day Hill Design Development District overlay for focus areas called out in the Day Hill Corporate Area Planning Study.
3. Facilitate office-to-housing or mixed-use conversions.
4. Further development in Great Pond based on the form-based code and regulating plan.
5. Partner with Great Pond Village to facilitate development of planned “village center”.
6. Limit development of large scale AI data centers and high velocity warehouses.
7. Reserve land on the southside of Day Hill Road for flex industrial uses outside of the recreation/service node and hotel sites.

Strategy 2 | Walkability, Access Management, and Network Connectivity.

ACTIONS

1. Complete the Day Hill multi-use path with connections to key employment, mixed-use and transit locations.
2. Review and update access-management standards (shared driveways; consolidated curb cuts) along Day Hill Road.
3. Upgrade bus stops with shelters, seating, and real-time information; require end-of-trip bike facilities in new projects.
4. Designate and manage truck parking/operations to reduce conflicts.

Strategy 3 | Blue-Green Infrastructure, Identity, and Placemaking.

ACTIONS

1. Formalize connected open space and trails along the Farmington River from the Bloomfield town-line to Northwest Park.
2. Encourage adoption of energy efficiency improvement and use of renewable resources in existing buildings and new construction.
3. Seek opportunities to add amenities to the Corridor that will help attract businesses and residents to the area.

Windsor Center Vision | A lively, walkable, historic town center with more residents, destination retail, dining, arts and culture, strong transit, and attractive public spaces.

Strategy 1 | Implement Recommendations from the Windsor Center Transit Oriented Development Master Plan.

ACTIONS

1. Pursue Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Safety Improvements on Broad Street.
2. Identify and implement streetscape and safety improvements to locals Streets.
3. Promote appropriately scaled infill and renovations, with shared landscapes, parking and walkways.
4. Develop shared parking opportunities with private sector.
5. Monitor State of Connecticut plans regarding the train station area.

Strategy 2 | Enhance Windsor Center Gateways

ACTIONS

1. Improve the look, feel and functionality of the roadway and associated land uses along Palisado Avenue from the Farmington River into the Center.
2. Improve the look, feel and functionality of the roadway and associated land uses along Poquonock Avenue from Pigeon Hill Road area into the Center.

Strategy 3 | Enhance Center Business District

ACTIONS

1. Explore providing financial assistance including loans and grants for commercial façade treatments, tenant space improvements.
2. Review current and future town center parking needs and consider public private partnerships to meet short and long term needs.

Wilson Vision | A vibrant neighborhood business district with safe streets, everyday services, a range of housing choices, and attractive public spaces.

Strategy 1 | Enhance Neighborhood Business District

ACTIONS

1. Promote appropriately scaled infill and renovations, with shared landscapes, parking and walkways
2. Explore providing financial assistance including loans and grants for commercial façade treatments and tenant space improvements.

Strategy 2 | Pursue Park Development and Connectivity Projects

ACTIONS

1. Assist Riverfront Recapture’s efforts to establish a new park at the end of Meadow Road.
2. Further the Keney Park Connectivity Project and East Coast Greenway Preferred Route to link Keney Park to the new Riverfront Recapture Park.
3. Improve public amenities at the East Barber Street Boat Launch.
4. Partner with community groups to activate Wilson Gateway Park.

Strategy 3 | Develop Plans for Key Properties along Rail Line

ACTIONS

1. Determine appropriate uses for land along the rail line at the end of Meadow Road, Wilson Avenue and Garden Street, make required zoning changes and identify opportunities for connectivity to public spaces.

Strategy 4 | Support Quality Services at Neighborhood Anchors

ACTIONS

1. Support ongoing programming and services at 330 Windsor Avenue Community Center including Adult Daycare.
2. Support programming at the Wilson Branch Library.

Poquonock Village Vision | A Village with historic charm, small-scale mixed-use, a nod to its farming heritage, connection to the Farmington River.

Strategy 1 | Enhance the village district

ACTIONS

1. Assess potential improvements to signage, tree planting, street furniture, façade improvements, and planters to add visual interest, slow traffic, and improve pedestrian comfort.
2. Fill gaps in sidewalk network and improve pedestrian safety
3. Encourage local-serving commercial uses that enhance the village's attractiveness.
4. Promote Village-scale infill and renovations, with shared landscapes, parking and walkways.
5. Explore providing financial assistance including loans and grants for commercial façade treatments and tenant space improvements.
6. Facilitate Agro-tourism, river related activities and park utilization.

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8 MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Windsor's transportation network includes a mix of local, state, and federal roadways, as well as sidewalks and multi-use paths. The Town is well-connected to regional destinations and major employment centers such as Hartford and Springfield via Interstate 91 (I-91) and Route 159. Windsor is served by both Amtrak and CTtransit, and commuter rail service on the Hartford Line provides convenient access to Hartford, New Haven, and Springfield. The Town also features a growing network of bike paths and multi-use trails, including sections of the Windsor Center River Trail and planned links to the future Riverfront Park in Wilson. Continued investments in sidewalks, bike routes, and trail connections are helping to strengthen mobility and expand safe, accessible options for walking and biking throughout the town.

STREET NETWORK

There are 160 miles of local roadways in Windsor, that are maintained by the Town. These roadways include 86 miles of sidewalk infrastructure and 7 at grade railroad crossings.

- In addition to the locally maintained road network, Windsor is traversed by more than 30 miles of state-maintained roads and highways,

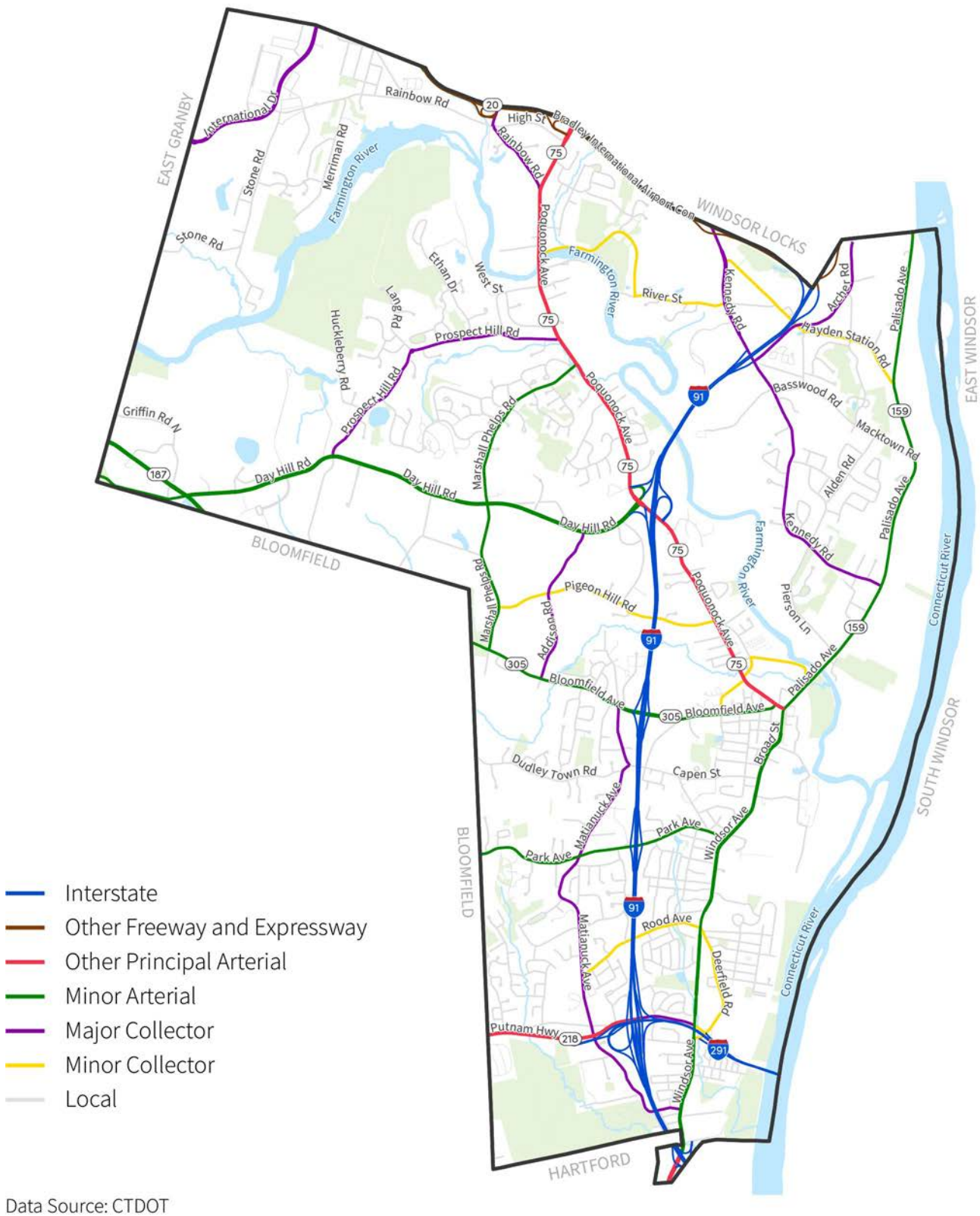
excluding I-91. These include:

- Bloomfield Avenue, Rt. 305
- Broad Street, Rt. 159
- Palisado Avenue, Rt. 159
- Park Avenue, Rt. 178
- Poquonock Avenue, Rt. 75
- Putnam Highway, Rt. 218
- Windsor Avenue, Rt. 159

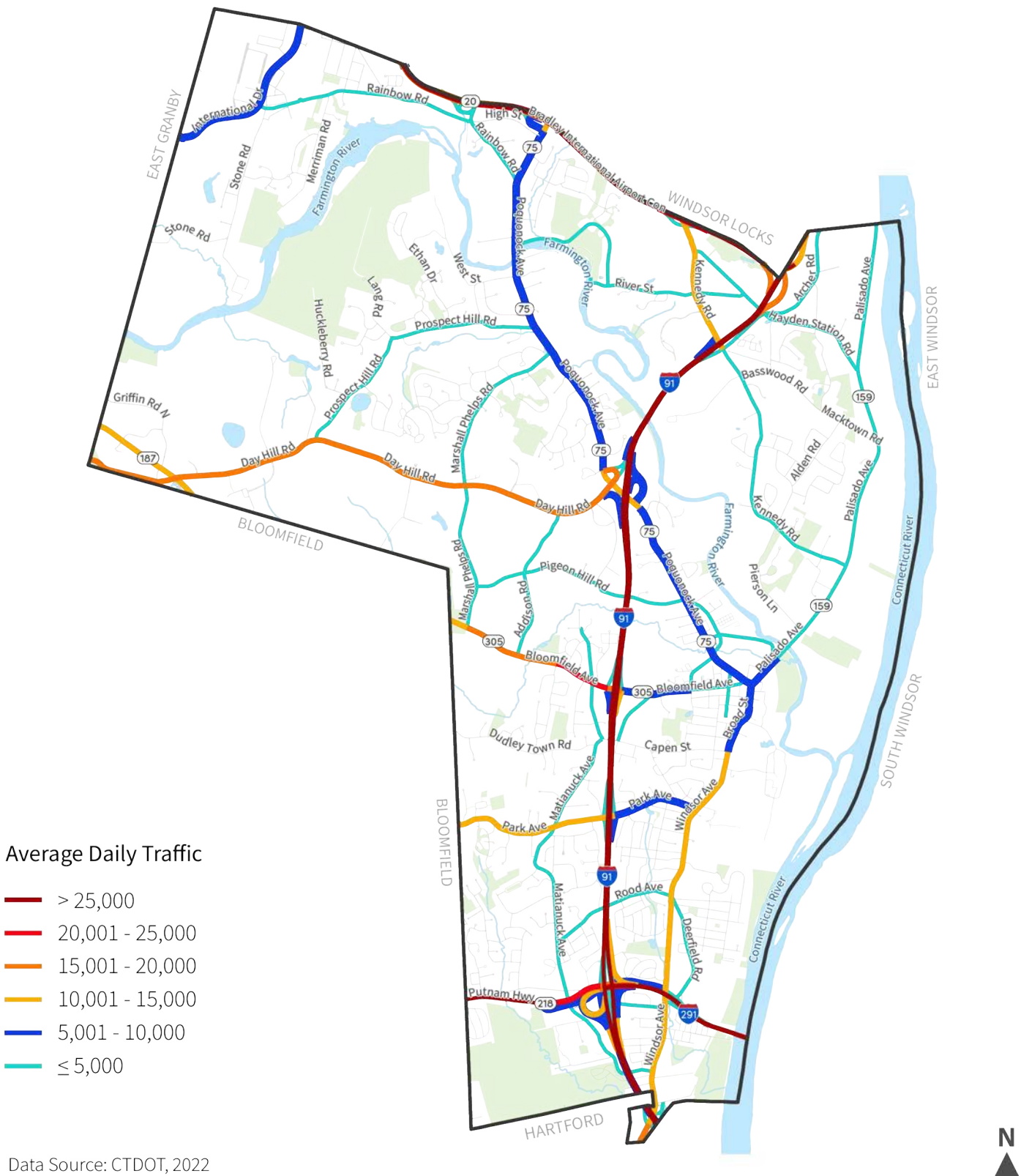
Windsor's roadways, both State and local, are classified by the State Department of Transportation (CT DOT) under the Federal Functional Classification System, which classifies roadways as interstates, principal arterials, minor arterials, collector, or local roadways. The State functional classification map, shown in Map 8-1, is the official classification, which is used in the selection of design standards and in State funding considerations.

Traffic volumes in Windsor are highest along major corridors, particularly Windsor Avenue, Day Hill Road, and Bloomfield Avenue. These roadways carry the bulk of local and commuter traffic and serve as key connectors within the town's overall transportation network. Traffic volumes are displayed in Map 8-2.

Map 8-1 Roadway Functional Classification



Map 8-2 Traffic Volumes



TRANSIT

Windsor is served by many transportation options connecting residents and visitors to Hartford and surrounding communities. CTtransit provides several bus routes through Windsor, primarily along major corridors such as Windsor Avenue and Day Hill Road. These routes include the 32, 34, 36, 24, and 905, serving regional shopping areas, employment centers, and transit hubs. See Map 8-3. They offer access to downtown Hartford, Windsor Locks, Bradley International Airport, and other nearby destinations. Greater Hartford Transit District also provides service in the town. The Windsor train station is a stop on Amtrak's New Haven–Springfield Line and the CTrail Hartford Line. The station serves as a hub for regional travel, connecting passengers to Springfield, Hartford, and New Haven.

Windsor's Senior Services Department provides time-specific, door-to-door transportation for residents aged 60 and older, as well as for individuals with disabilities. This service is available for trips within town and to the Caring Connection Adult Day Health Center. The service also provides trips to Bradley International Airport. The program uses specially equipped vans operated by experienced drivers, ensuring accessibility for passengers in wheelchairs.

PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Windsor has approximately 86 miles of sidewalk infrastructure located within the Town and State right-of-way, all of which is maintained by the Town. The sidewalk network is most continuous along major roadways such as Windsor Avenue, Kennedy Road, Broad Street, and Bloomfield Avenue. Many of the town's residential neighborhoods also include sidewalks, though gaps remain in the network, and ADA-compliant ramps are lacking on some of the older sidewalks. Residents engaged through the community engagement process expressed a desire for additional sidewalks, particularly along residential streets and in locations that would improve connections to shopping areas, schools, and recreational resources.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

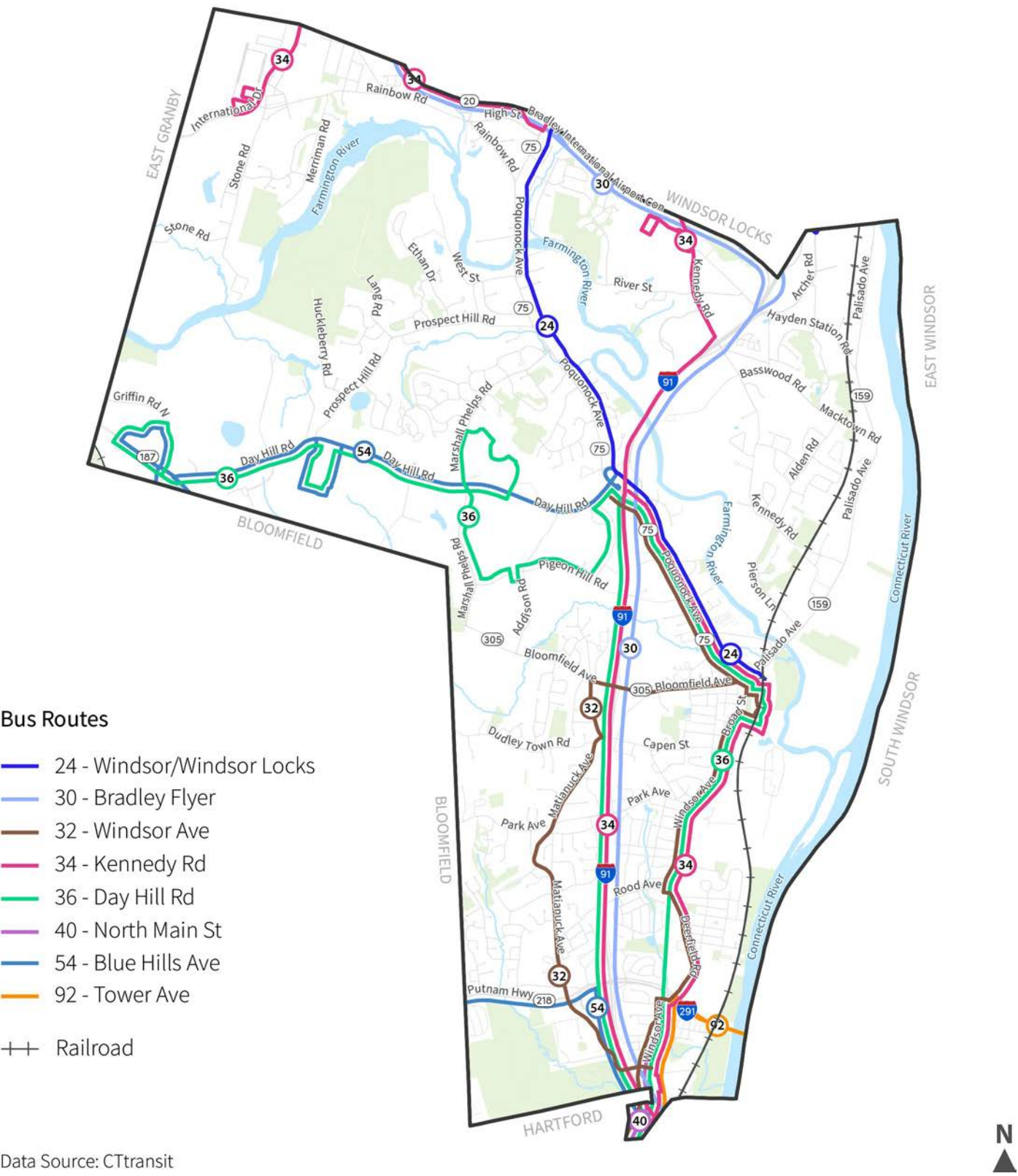
Windsor offers a range of bicycle facilities for both recreational and commuter cyclists. Existing infrastructure includes multi-use trails such as the Windsor Center River Trail, which runs between Mechanic Street and Palisado Avenue, adjacent to the Farmington River, providing a scenic route for biking, walking, and running. Trails in Windsor Meadows State Park and Northwest Park provide off-road opportunities with varying terrains suitable for mountain biking. The Bloomfield Greenway Multi-Use Trail also extends from Day Hill Road in Windsor to Route 189 in Bloomfield, providing a 1.8-mile paved route for biking, walking, and inline skating through scenic woods and fields. The Day Hill Multi-use path, in development, will provide a dedicated route for walking and biking along Day Hill road, improving connectivity between neighborhoods, workplaces, and local amenities.

Community engagement has highlighted strong interest in expanding bicycle infrastructure throughout the town. Residents expressed a desire for bike lanes, additional multi-use paths, and improved connectivity between neighborhoods, commercial areas, and recreational destinations. There is also support for adopting a Complete Streets policy to ensure that future roadway projects accommodate all users, including cyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders.

Did You Know?

A state grant is helping to bring the Joe Marfuggi Riverwalk closer to completion, connecting Windsor to Hartford along the Connecticut River. This 2.2-mile, 12-foot-wide paved trail will feature six scenic overlooks, benches, and interpretive signage, enhancing public access to the riverfront. The project, led by Riverfront Recapture, is expected to finish by 2027, offering a new recreational corridor for walking, biking, and nature appreciation.

Map 8-3 Public Transit



PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACTIVITY

Pedestrian activity in Windsor is concentrated in areas such as the town center, schools, parks, and public buildings. High foot traffic is particularly evident along Windsor Avenue, Broad Street, and Bloomfield Avenue. These areas serve as community hubs, drawing significant pedestrian activity due to their proximity to essential services and recreational spaces.

Bicycle activity is higher along corridors such as Windsor Avenue, Kennedy Road, and Bloomfield Avenue, which are used by both commuters and recreational cyclists. Routes near the Connecticut River and the town's historic district are also popular for cycling. In contrast, state routes such as Route 75 and Route 291 see comparatively lower bicycle activity, likely due to traffic volumes and roadway conditions such as speeds.

Strava data was used to assess bicycle and pedestrian activity in the town. Strava is a web-based platform that allows users to track cycling and running routes through a mobile application. The platform aggregates these recorded trips and provides publicly accessible maps showing where people walk and bike, as well as the number of trips along specific routes over a given period. It is important to note, however, that not all trips are captured, as only activities voluntarily logged by Strava users are included. Individuals who do not use the app are not represented in the data.

Source: Strava Heatmap, 2025

Activity Level



Pedestrian Activity

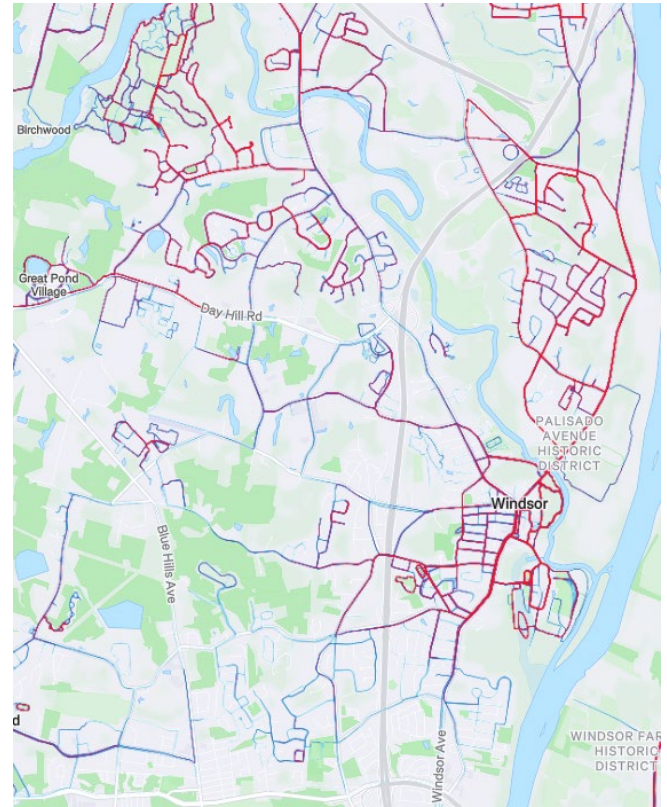


Figure 8-1 Pedestrian Activity: January- October 2025
Source: Strava Heatmap, 2025

Bicyclist Activity

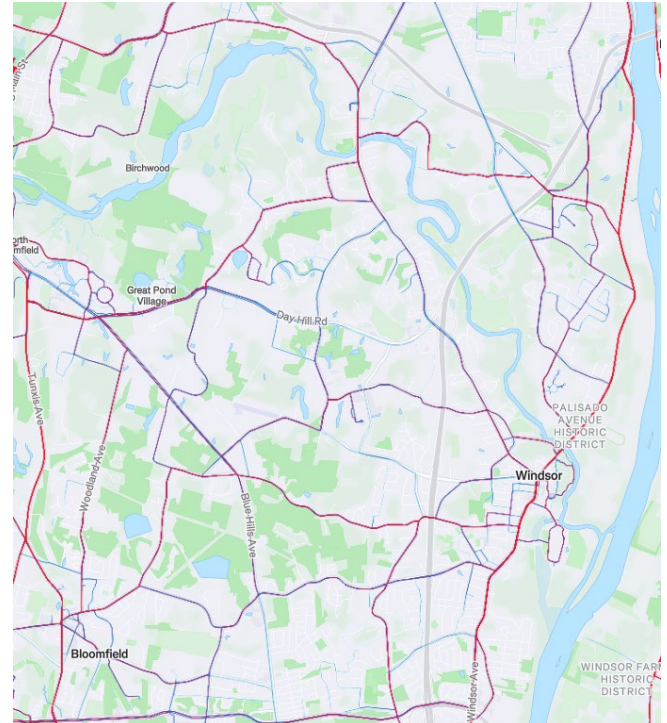


Figure 8-2 Bicyclist Activity: January- October 2025
Source: Strava Heatmap, 2025

COMMUTING PATTERNS

Most of Windsor's workers (81%) commute to work by driving alone or carpooling. The remaining workers either use public transportation (2%) or walk or bike (3%) to commute to work. As of 2023, over 14% of Windsor's workers worked from home, an increase of nearly 250% above numbers for those working from home in 2019 (4%). The share of workers driving alone to their place of employment is aligned with that of the Region and the State's and results in a heavy demand on Windsor's roadway network and local highways such as Interstates 91 and Routes 305 and 179.

The average commute time for Windsor's workers is about 21 minutes, which is shorter than the average commute statewide (26 minutes). Hartford, East Hartford, and West Hartford are the primary commuting destinations for Windsor's workers. Over 13,000 workers commute to locations outside of Windsor while nearly 28,000 people who live elsewhere commute into the town for work each day.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

The number of vehicle crashes in Windsor has decreased in the past six years. In 2019, Windsor saw a high of 1,242 crashes. Crashes dropped dramatically in 2020 and remained suppressed in 2021, likely as a result of less travel due to the pandemic. During this six-year time period there were 20 fatal crashes and 46 serious injury crashes. In 2024, there were 1,101 crashes in Windsor—a reduction of nearly 12% from 2019. These trends very closely mirror trends across the State, although the State saw an increase in crashes in 2024. See Figure 8-4.

Windsor's vehicular crashes are strongly associated with areas and corridors that have the highest traffic volumes and the greatest density of intersections. These areas include Windsor Avenue (Route 179), Bloomfield Avenue (305), and Kennedy Road, as well as along Interstates 91 and 291 (I-91 and I-291) as displayed in Map 8-4. During this six-year period, there were 13 crashes involving bicyclists and 38 crashes involving pedestrians as shown in Map 8-5.

Means of Transportation to Work

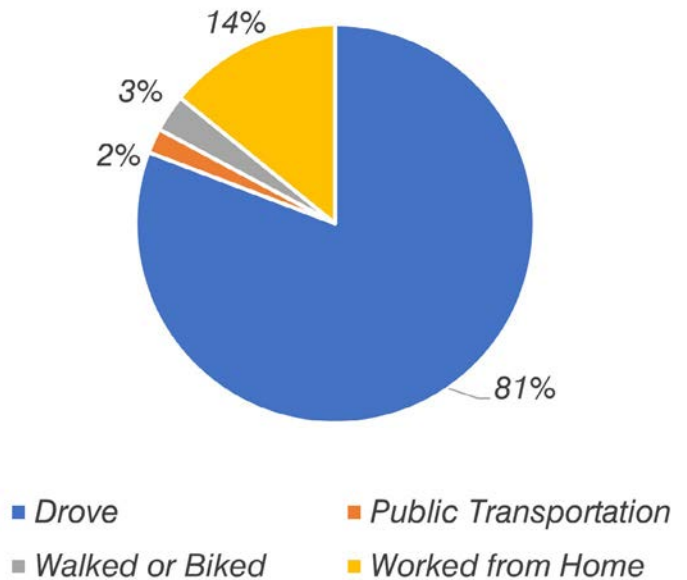


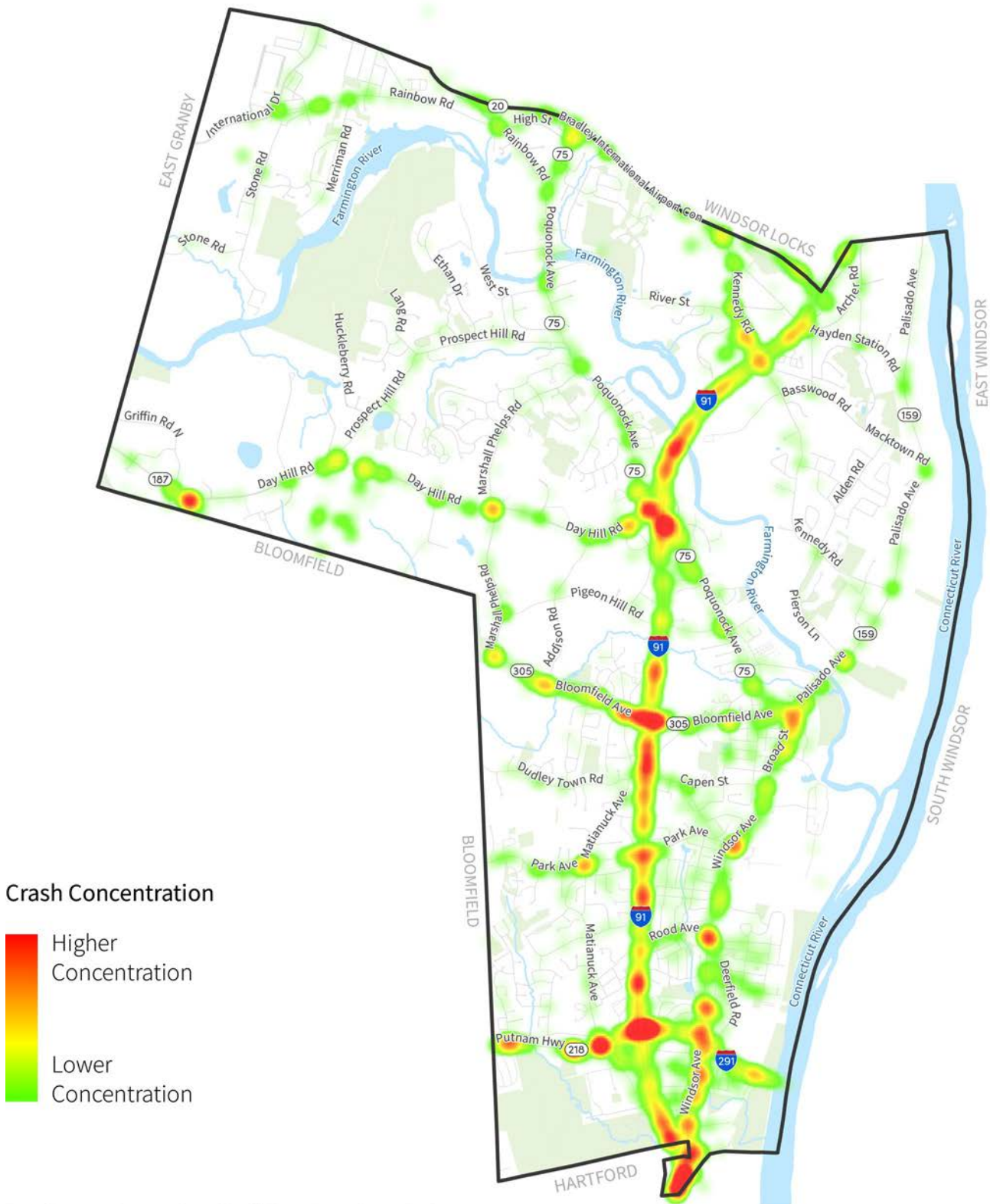
Figure 8-3 Means of Transportation to Work
Source: American Community Survey, 2023



Figure 8-4 Crash Activity Compared to State Totals
Source: Connecticut Crash Data Repository, 2019 - 2024

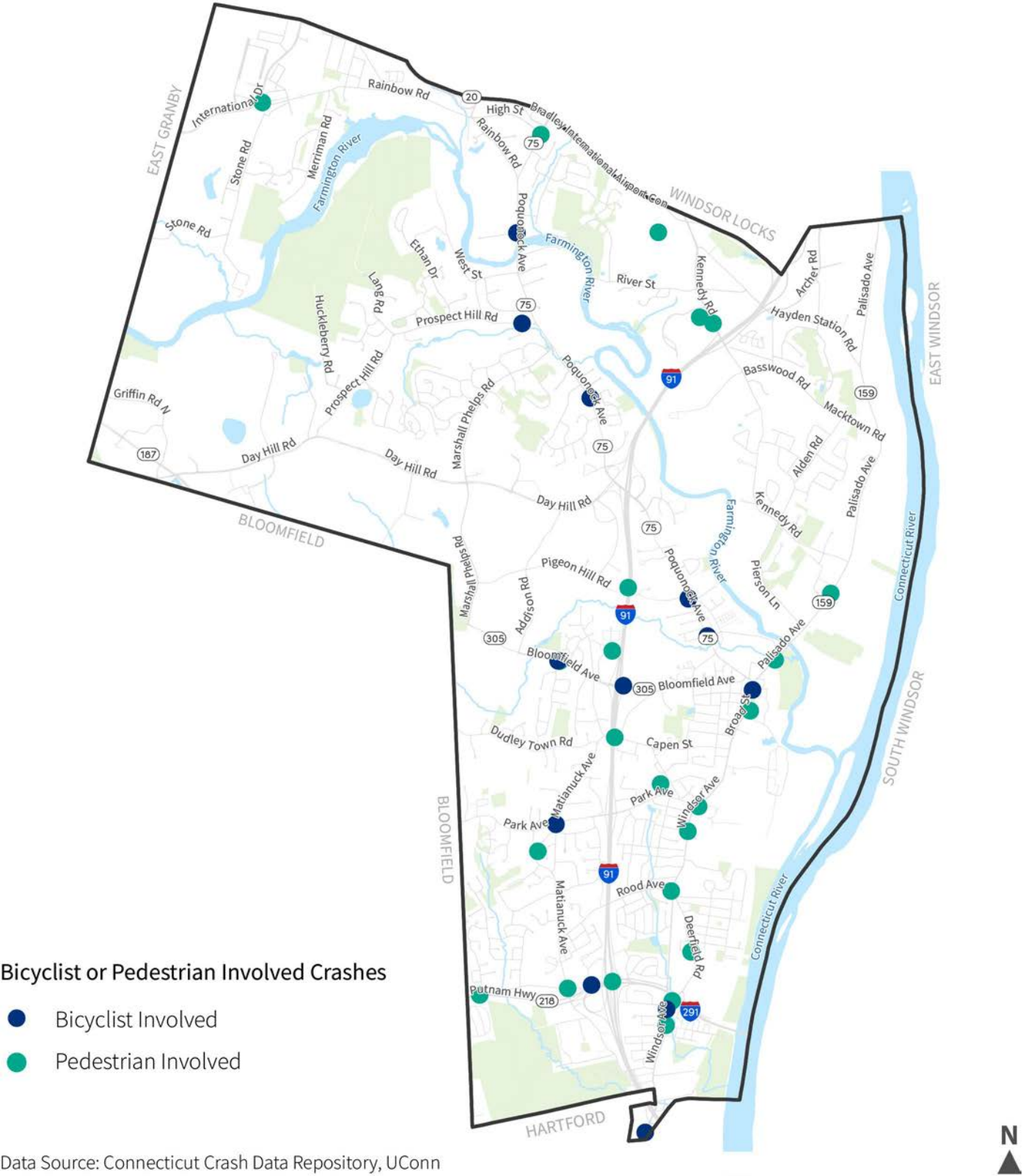
Injuries were reported for most of the crashes and there was a fatal pedestrian crash that occurred in 2020.

Map 8-4 Crash Heat Map (2019 - 2024)



Data Source: Connecticut Crash Data Repository, UConn

Map 8-5 Crashes Involving Bicyclists or Pedestrians (2019 - 2024)



INFRASTRUCTURE

Windsor has an established infrastructure system that serves the needs of residents and businesses. The Town continues to invest in infrastructure improvements to support safe, functional, and sustainable growth for the community.

STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Windsor's stormwater infrastructure includes an extensive network of pipes, catch basins, and outfalls that discharge to local watercourses and ultimately into the Connecticut River. The Town is responsible for stormwater infrastructure and ensuring compliance with state and federal water quality standards. In 2009, Windsor adopted a Floodplain Management Ordinance to help reduce the risk of flooding and protect property and natural resources. As a regulated community under the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4), Windsor is required to develop, implement, and enforce a stormwater management program focused on improving water quality. This includes adopting best management practices to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff, conducting public education and outreach on pollution prevention, and operating a program to detect and eliminate illicit discharges. The Town also monitors and addresses stormwater discharges into impaired waters, including those affected by nitrogen, phosphorus, bacteria, or mercury, and where Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) have been established under Section 303 of the Clean Water Act. Together with MDC's infrastructure support and the Town's ongoing efforts, these initiatives help protect local waterways and contribute to regional water quality improvements.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY AND SANITARY SEWER

Windsor's public water supply and sanitary sewer system is provided by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), serving nearly all homes and businesses in town with treated drinking water from regional reservoirs. MDC maintains the water and sanitary sewer infrastructure, including mains and hydrants, and ensures water quality and reliability. A small number of properties rely on private wells. Most new development in Windsor connects to MDC service, though existing wells may remain in some outlying areas. See Map 8-6.

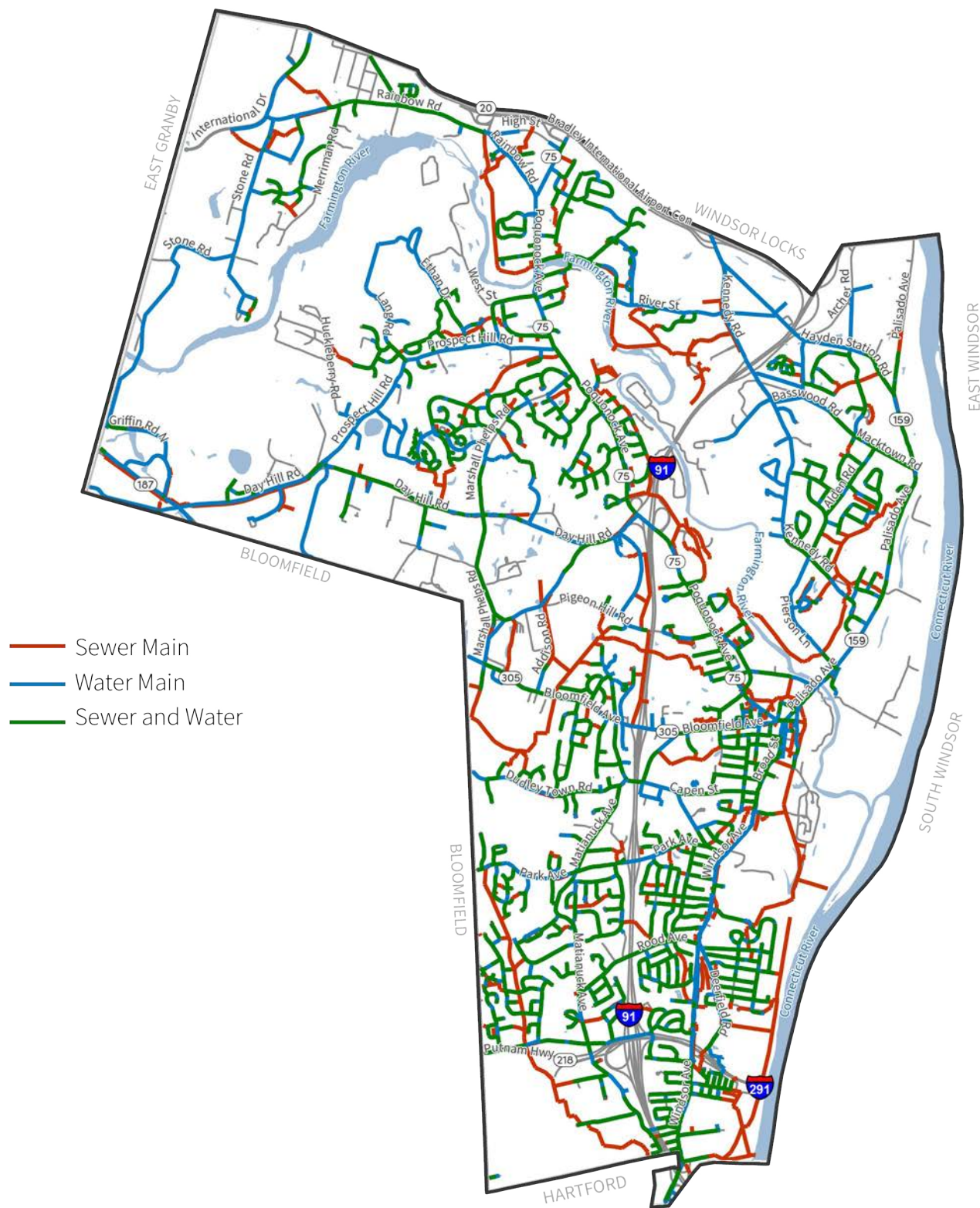
ELECTRIC AND NATURAL GAS

Windsor residents receive electrical, telephone, and cable services through wired utilities, with some areas having these utilities installed underground. Eversource is the primary electric utility provider for Windsor and the surrounding region. Broadband internet access is widely available across the town, with providers such as Comcast and Frontier offering high-speed service. Natural gas is also provided by Connecticut Natural Gas (CNG) and Yankee Gas, and much of Windsor's residential and commercial areas are connected to the natural gas network.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

The Windsor Public Works Department manages the Town's solid waste and recycling programs, including post-closure care of the former landfill and operation of the Transfer Station. The landfill, which operated from 1972 to 2014, is monitored for environmental impacts such as methane emissions. The Transfer Station accepts municipal waste, brush, leaves, demolition debris, and recyclables including metals, electronics, paints, and textiles, while leaves and brush are processed into mulch and a food scraps program diverts organic waste. These efforts help the Town manage waste, support recycling, and maintain environmental safeguards in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Map 8-6 Water and Sewer Service Areas



Data Source: Town of Windsor

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

MOBILITY, SAFETY, AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Pedestrian and cyclist safety are major concerns, especially along Windsor Avenue, Broad Street, and Poquonock Avenue.
- Crosswalks are faded or missing, and long stretches lack sidewalks or safe bike routes.
- Traffic calming and improved crossings are needed, particularly in village and commercial areas.
- Shuttles to employment hubs and senior facilities, and a Windsor CTfastrak spur, were suggested.
- Getting around without a car is difficult; more ADA-compliant infrastructure and Dial-a-Ride capacity are needed.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE

- Roads are generally well maintained, but sidewalks and pedestrian bridges need upgrades.
- Aging school facilities require reinvestment, while police and fire stations are in better condition.

TRAFFIC, TRUCKS, AND INDUSTRIAL IMPACTS

- Heavy truck traffic on Bloomfield Ave and near Day Hill creates noise, safety, and quality-of-life issues.
- Trucks cut through residential areas and park on ramps; better enforcement and buffering are needed.
- Warehouses should provide adequate on-site truck parking and screening.

SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE MOBILITY

- Few public EV charging stations despite logical sites at shopping areas and commuter lots
- Support for transitioning the town fleet to electric, adding solar canopies, and expanding carpool or vanpool programs.
- Bike sharing and other green modes are supported but depend on safer bike infrastructure.
- Residents see mobility improvements as essential to attracting younger residents and improving overall livability.



Windsor Train Station

Source: Bradley Development League



Crosswalk on Broad Street

Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Community members identified key challenges in transportation safety, connectivity, and accessibility in Windsor. Pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure is incomplete or showing wear along major corridors, including Windsor Avenue and Poquonock Avenue, creating barriers to non-motorized travel. Traffic calming and improved crosswalks are needed. Public transit is limited and infrequent, with insufficient connections to neighborhoods, employment centers, and essential services. Accessibility for seniors, people with disabilities, and residents without vehicles was noted as a critical gap.

Aging and overburdened infrastructure is also a concern. Roads are generally maintained, sidewalks and schools require upgrades. Heavy truck traffic along industrial corridors, particularly Bloomfield Avenue, poses safety and quality-of-life issues. Residents also identified opportunities to expand sustainable transportation infrastructure, including electric vehicle charging and bicycle facilities, to improve multimodal access and system resilience.

Windsor should be a place where we prioritize multimodal transportation.

Windsor must incorporate speed and red light cameras to deal with the speeders. It needs to augment its police and traffic control personnel.

Increase the accessibility of downtown to pedestrians and bikers and work towards greener policies.

Windsor has easy access to transportation by plane, train and automobile. It is a great location and access to transportation and shopping is important.

We need more transportation options for seniors who no longer drive and need to get to appointments.

I would love to see the construction of new bike paths and sidewalks in areas where they are not currently available.



Attendees discussing mobility and infrastructure during the workshop
Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG

Goal 8.1 | Expand transportation options and infrastructure to improve mobility and accessibility for all residents. Prioritize upgrades to transportation networks, utilities, and public facilities to create a resilient, sustainable community capable of meeting both current and future needs.

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

ACTIONS

1. Develop a multi-year plan to evaluate and reinvest in the pedestrian access network throughout the town and complete the segments of missing sidewalks. Provide improvements to sidewalks and pedestrian crossings as needed including ADA accessibility, crosswalk markings, signage, signal enhancements, and lighting enhancements.
2. Implement traffic calming measures and continue traffic safety enforcement.
3. Provide appropriate bicycle facilities (shared roadway, bicycle lanes, etc.), as feasible, when road improvements are undertaken.
4. Continue to foster strong partnerships with CT DOT, DECD, CRCOG, and other local and regional partners to implement a balanced and sustainable multimodal transportation system.
5. Adopt a Complete Streets policy and coordination framework with CTDOT/CRCOG to standardize design and access potential funding.

Strategy 2 | Support the expansion and improvement of transit services across Windsor and the region.

ACTIONS

1. Work with CT transit to identify improvements to increase accessibility and service on intra- and inter-town transit routes.
2. Upgrade bus shelters through CTDOT's bus stop enhancement program and town resources.
3. Coordinate with regional partners to maintain and expand town dial-a-ride services for older adults and persons with disabilities
4. Exercise long term lease extension of Train Station and Freight House with Amtrak and Greater Hartford Transit District.

Strategy 3 | Promote Low-Carbon Transportation Alternatives.

ACTIONS

1. Continue to plan for transitioning the municipal fleet to electric vehicles and equipment where cost effective.
2. Pursue grant opportunities for installing electric vehicle charging stations at municipal sites and commercial areas.
3. Work with major employers to mitigate the use of single occupancy vehicles through carpooling, ride sharing, biking/walking to work, and using transit service.
4. Implement Safe Routes to School and walk/bike-to-work/errand initiatives to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips.
5. Add secure bike parking and end-of-trip facilities at civic destinations and employment centers.

Strategy 4 | Maintain and Enhance Utility Infrastructure.

ACTIONS

1. Coordinate with the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) to improve and, where appropriate, expand public water and sewer service—to ensure capacity and water quality, bolster fire protection, reduce inflow/infiltration, and align line replacements with roadway projects to minimize costs and construction disruption.
2. Explore potential for placement of powerlines underground when opportunities present themselves.
3. Plan for increased maintenance, repair and upgrades for town-owned stormwater system.



Cyclists and pedestrians enjoying a fall evening
Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG

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9 QUALITY OF LIFE

BASELINE CONDITIONS

The Town of Windsor provides a wide range of services to residents, property owners, and visitors, aimed at supporting a high quality of life while preserving the town's historic charm and welcoming community atmosphere.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Windsor maintains many public facilities to support Town services and community use. These include municipal buildings such as Town Hall and the Police Department, public schools, the Windsor Library, and community centers like the LP Wilson Community Center and the Milo Peck Center, as well as multiple parks and recreational sites. These facilities provide space for local government operations, education, public safety, recreation, and community programs. Windsor's public facilities are shown in Map 9-1.

TOWN HALL

Windsor Town Hall serves as the central hub for local government operations. Located in Windsor Center, it houses key municipal offices including the Planning Department, Town Manager, Town Clerk, Assessor, Economic Development, Health, and Engineering Departments, among others.

WINDSOR PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Windsor Public Library system, which includes the Main Library on Broad Street and the Wilson Branch Library, offers a variety of services to residents. These include access to print and digital collections, public computers, and space for study, meetings, and community programs. The library provides programs for all ages, including storytimes, summer reading initiatives, book clubs, and technology help sessions. Materials available for checkout include books, DVDs, audiobooks, and digital resources such as eBooks and streaming services. The library also supports research and learning through databases, interlibrary loan, and staff assistance. With regular programming and access to diverse materials, the Windsor Public Library system serves as a key community resource for information, learning, and enrichment.

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Windsor has two community centers that provide programs and services for residents of all ages. These include the LP Wilson Community Center and the 330 Windsor Avenue Community Center. The 330 Windsor Avenue Center offers the RISE after-school program for children, teen activities such as drop-in basketball and gaming, adult drop-in basketball, and seasonal events like the

Winter Bazaar. The LP Wilson Community Center provides fitness classes, senior programs, and arts and cultural activities. Both centers offer meeting spaces and resources for community programs, serving as local hubs for recreation and public services.

SENIOR CENTER

The Windsor Senior Center, located within the LP Wilson Community Center, provides programs and services specifically for older adults. Offerings include fitness classes, social and recreational activities, educational workshops, and wellness programs. The center also serves as a gathering place for seniors, providing opportunities for social engagement, community connection, and access to resources that support independent living and overall well-being.

COMMUNITY SWIMMING POOLS

Windsor has three community swimming facilities: Goslee Swimming Pool, Veterans Pool at Windsor High School, and Welch Park and Pool. These pools provide residents with opportunities for lap swimming, open swim, and swim lessons. They are also used for seasonal programs and recreational activities, serving as public resources for exercise, water safety, and community use.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Windsor Public Works Facility, located at 99 Day Hill Road, serves as the central hub for the Town's infrastructure and maintenance operations. It houses departments responsible for road repair, snow removal, stormwater management, fleet maintenance, and other municipal services. While the Windsor Transfer Station is located separately at 500 Huckleberry Road, it is operated by the Public Works Department and provides residents of Windsor and Bloomfield a location to dispose of household waste, recyclables, yard waste, and certain bulky items. The Public Works Department manages the transfer station and recycling operations, ensuring these services are integrated with the Town's overall infrastructure and maintenance programs.

WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Windsor operates a public school system that includes six schools: four elementary schools, one middle school, and Windsor High School. As of the 2023–2024 school year, the district serves approximately 3,342 students, with a staff of about 400 full-time equivalents. Windsor High School enrolls roughly 1,119 students in grades 9 through 12. In addition to the public school system, Windsor is home to the Windsor Montessori School, which provides an alternative approach to early and elementary education.

Enrollment in Windsor Public Schools has remained consistent over the past decade, even as statewide enrollment declined by approximately 5% during the same period. Projections anticipate stability in Windsor's school-age population, suggesting that enrollment is likely to remain steady in the coming years. Over the past ten years, per pupil expenditures have increased from \$17,380 in 2014–2015 to \$21,646 in 2023–2024, reflecting continued investment in the school system. Windsor's public schools are also more racially diverse than the statewide average, highlighting the importance of maintaining inclusive educational programming that meets the needs of a broad and diverse student population.



*Chair Yoga class through the Senior Services Department
Source: Town of Windsor*

WINDSOR BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Windsor Board of Education oversees the public school district, setting policies and guiding its strategic direction. The district includes seven school buildings, four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and the LP Wilson Center, which hosts the Spark Program for special education. Many schools are aging, requiring ongoing maintenance, and the Board is considering a long-range planning committee to plan for maintenance upgrades and space needs.

It was noted during a stakeholder interview that the district faces space challenges, including limited gym and sports facilities and a growing need for full-day pre-K. School Resource Officers are present in all elementary schools, and Windsor High School offers ROTC and Career and Technical Education programs. Partnerships with local businesses and the Town provide internships and apprenticeships for students, with plans to expand these opportunities. Regular Board meetings are open to the public to encourage transparency and community engagement.



Students at the RISE After-School Program
Source: Town of Windsor

SUSTAINABILITY

Windsor has worked to incorporate sustainability into its community planning and operations, earning Bronze Certification through the Sustainable CT program in 2020 and 2022. The Town has made significant strides regarding clean energy, with about 54% of the Town's electricity uses sourced from non-fossil energy.

Key initiatives include energy efficiency upgrades such as LED lighting, solar panel systems, and high-efficiency heating and cooling in municipal buildings. The Town also supports green infrastructure projects, sustainable land use practices, stormwater management to reduce flooding, and environmentally conscious transportation options. These efforts aim to reduce environmental impacts, enhance resource management, and improve overall quality of life for residents.

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



KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

- Concern over loss of Windsor's small-town feel and character.
- Strong consensus that Windsor Center is the community hub and should be enhanced to support residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Preservation of historic architecture and town charm is viewed as critical to maintaining identity.

HOUSING AND CHILDCARE OPTIONS

- Need for additional daycare and childcare options to support families.
- Demand for affordable senior housing to meet the needs of aging residents.
- Housing and service availability linked to overall quality of life and community retention.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND YOUTH RESOURCES

- Town services such as library, EMS, police and fire, and schools are highly valued.
- Support for promoting school district strengths to residents and newcomers
- Identified gap in youth-focused resources: employment, programs, and dedicated facilities.
- Evaluation of community spaces needed to guide improvements and new amenities.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND AMENITIES

- Desire for more public events and activities, better visibility of Town events, and enhanced access to recreational facilities.
- Residents see active civic engagement as key to strengthening community connections and pride.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Priorities include town-wide Wi-Fi and increased parking at public facilities
- Accessibility and convenience improvements seen as essential to ensure residents can easily access information, services, and amenities.



Thursday night summer concerts on the green
Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG



Youth Services Bureau Volunteers
Source: Town of Windsor

Community members emphasized the importance of maintaining Windsor's strong sense of community while modernizing and expanding facilities and services to meet evolving needs. Safety, accessibility, and connectivity were recurring themes, with gaps noted in pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, public transit, and ADA-compliant spaces. Seniors require age-friendly programs and improved transportation options to remain active and independent, while youth need more resources, programs, and access to recreational facilities such as Northwest Park. Recreation spaces are outgrowing existing facilities, with demand for multi-use, intergenerational programming, fitness and wellness opportunities, and updated technology. Accessibility improvements, including ramps, sensory rooms, and gender-neutral bathrooms, were highlighted as essential, along with scholarships and partnerships to ensure programs remain inclusive and affordable.

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I value Windsor's relatively affordable cost-of-living, walkable town center, parks and open spaces, and sense of community.

I would like to see more solar panels, particularly on the public school and municipal building roofs; and over the parking lots already in place.

To me Windsor is a pinnacle of success in diversity, and I would like to see us embrace that strength that we have.



Goal 9.1 | Deliver high-quality, fiscally responsible services and facilities that adapt to the evolving needs of residents at every stage of life, while fostering a vibrant community and promoting civic pride.

Strategy 1 | Provide excellent services to residents, property owners, and businesses.

ACTIONS

1. Monitor the evolving needs of the community and seek input on desired services that could benefit Windsor's residents.
2. Advance a multidisciplinary Aging-Friendly Windsor plan (housing, adult daycare, mobility, caregiving, health).
3. Pursue shared-service partnerships with regional partners where quality and cost savings are demonstrable.

Strategy 2 | Promote events and activities that contribute to community pride and spirit.

ACTIONS

1. Continue to promote community events throughout all of Windsor to support community cohesion and vibrancy.
2. Promote and encourage volunteerism in town agencies and civic groups.
3. Continue to develop partnerships for sponsoring community events.



Community Block Party Basketball
Source: Town of Windsor

Have you been to the Block Party?

Windsor's community block parties bring neighbors together for food, music, games, and local fun, creating a lively and welcoming atmosphere for residents of all ages. These events foster connections across the town, strengthen community spirit, and give people a chance to celebrate Windsor's diversity and sense of togetherness in a relaxed, festive setting.

Strategy 3 | Prioritize improvements to the Town’s facilities to meet diverse program needs.

ACTIONS

1. Conduct a comprehensive Town and School facilities plan which evaluates current and future needs.
2. Continue to implement an asset-management program with preventive maintenance schedules and life-cycle costing for town and school facilities and parks through annual budgeting and the Capital Improvements Program.

Strategy 4 | Advance sustainability and resilience.

ACTIONS

1. Implement MS4 Stormwater Management Plan tasks and report annual progress.
2. Embed green infrastructure in public projects and adopt Low Impact Development (LID) standards in zoning/subdivision and inland wetlands regulations.
3. Pursue higher Sustainable CT certification with a cross-department “green team.”
4. Partner in regional/state climate initiatives (heat, flooding, air quality) and align emergency shelter/back-up power plans.
5. Incentivize resident actions (rain barrels, native plantings, composting, home energy audits) through workshops and rebates.



10 OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Windsor's commitment to sustainability requires balancing growth with the protection of vital environmental resources. The Town's diverse open spaces, such as Northwest Park, Deerfield Park, Washington Park, and the newly opened Wilson Gateway Park, are essential for preserving its quality of life. Windsor has nearly 700 acres of municipal park space, offering residents abundant opportunities for recreation, community gatherings, and connection with nature which are shown in Table 10-1.

Windsor is also home to portions of two state parks: Windsor Meadows State Park, a 155-acre floodplain along the Connecticut River offering trails, wildlife viewing, and scenic open space, and Matianuck State Park, a smaller, largely undeveloped natural area that adds valuable habitat and green space within the town. In total, Windsor has over 2,500 acres of dedicated or managed open space, accounting for about 12% of its land area. To protect these assets, it is crucial for the Town to continue prioritizing open space acquisition, management, and preservation, ensuring that these lands remain protected from over development and continue to benefit future generations.

OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Windsor's open space resources are shown in Map 10-1. The parks and open spaces described here and on the following pages are Windsor's largest and most frequented public spaces. These areas contribute to the Town's natural character and provide opportunities for outdoor activities, community gatherings, and wildlife habitat. Additional information about the Town's other municipal facilities can be found in Chapter 9, Quality of Life.

NORTHWEST PARK

Northwest Park is Windsor's largest park at 465 acres, offering a mix of natural areas, trails, athletic fields, and picnic facilities. The park features walking and biking paths, a playground, sports fields, and open spaces for community events and outdoor recreation. Windsor's Recreation and Leisure Services Department programs a variety of activities and events at Northwest Park, providing opportunities for residents of all ages to stay active and engaged.

MILL BROOK OPEN SPACE

Mill Brook Open Space is a 95-acre conservation area emphasizing ecological connectivity and passive recreation. The Greenway, which is adjacent to over 3,700 feet of Mill Brook, was designated as a State Greenway in 2014, recognizing its regional ecological and recreational value. The Greenway's goals include natural resource protection, enhancing recreational opportunities, and promoting educational connections between cultural resources and the brook. The Greenway is approximately 6.2 miles in length, allowing safe south-to-north travel across the town. While significant progress has been made, work continues to fill in missing pieces and fully connect the Greenway for both wildlife and community use.

LANCASTER PARK

Lancaster Park is a neighborhood park located in the northern part of Windsor. The park features a playground, an outdoor basketball court, and a large open field suitable for informal sports and gatherings. It serves as a local green space for nearby residents, offering opportunities for outdoor activities and community events.

LP WILSON

LP Wilson Park is located on the grounds of the LP Wilson Community Center and includes a variety of outdoor recreational spaces. The park features softball fields, soccer fields, tennis and pickleball courts, and a half-mile walking path. It provides open space for sports, walking, and other community activities, serving as a central outdoor hub for the surrounding neighborhood.

WASHINGTON PARK

Washington Park is a neighborhood park of approximately 15 acres. It includes a pond, walking paths, a playground, and open grassy areas for informal recreation, providing a natural space for outdoor activities and community use.

WILSON GATEWAY PARK

Wilson Gateway Park is a newly opened community park located on Windsor Avenue. The park officially opened in 2025 and offers a variety of amenities for residents and visitors. Features include a playground, walking paths, and open green spaces for recreational activities. The park also provides seating areas and pavilions for gatherings and events. Wilson Park serves as a vibrant addition to the community, offering a space for outdoor enjoyment and social interaction.

OTHER RESOURCES

BROWN'S HARVEST FARM

Brown's Harvest Farm is a privately owned, family-run farm in Windsor with over 150 years of agricultural history. The farm sits on approximately 61 acres and was permanently protected by a conservation easement in 2019, ensuring the preservation of its farmland and natural resources. Brown's Harvest grows a variety of seasonal produce, including strawberries, blueberries, asparagus, pumpkins, and mums, and hosts family-friendly activities such as a corn maze, sunflower picking, and a fall festival, providing both agricultural and recreational value to the community.

THRALL FARM

Thrall Farm is a 12.2-acre farm in Windsor that was permanently protected by the Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy (TRLC) in late 2023. The property, originally acquired in 2007 as part of a corporate development set-aside, included two deteriorating barns, one of which is a rare historic potato barn. To restore the land and preserve the barn, TRLC partnered with a local farm family through an equity lease, allowing the farmer to gain ownership by revitalizing the farm while TRLC retained a conservation easement. This agreement ensures the land remains in agricultural use and can only be sold to another farmer.

WINDSOR CENTER RIVER TRAIL

Windsor Center River Trail is a paved trail about 1.25 miles long along the Farmington River. It passes through a 43-acre wooded area and provides access to roughly 2,000 feet of riverfront. The eight-foot-wide trail is suitable for walking, running, and biking and is wheelchair accessible. Scenic overlooks and bridges along the trail offer views of the river and surrounding natural areas.

KENEY PARK

Keney Park spans Hartford and Windsor, with about 110 acres located in Windsor. One of the largest municipal parks in New England, the Windsor portion includes forests, meadows, and the Keney Park Golf Course. Multiple entrances from Windsor provide access to walking trails, open spaces, and recreational areas.

MATIANUCK STATE PARK

Matianuck State Park is a 270-acre state-owned preserve featuring ancient sand dunes formed by Glacial Lake Hitchcock. The park offers trails for hiking and nature observation through woodland areas and dunes. It is largely undeveloped and not heavily maintained, so rough or overgrown conditions can be expected.

WINDSOR MEADOWS STATE PARK

Windsor Meadows State Park is a 155-acre park located on a Connecticut River floodplain. It features open fields, forested areas, and riverfront access, providing opportunities for walking, picnicking, and wildlife observation. The floodplain supports diverse habitats and helps manage seasonal river flooding. The park will also connect to a future riverfront park, a planned 60-acre community space designed to provide greater access to the Connecticut River, extend the regional trail network, and offer nature-based and water-based activities while linking directly to nearby neighborhoods.

OPEN SPACE INITIATIVES

Windsor prioritizes creating a cohesive and meaningful system of open spaces rather than simply acquiring land as it becomes available. While individual parcels may have merit on their own, the Town carefully evaluates how each property fits into an overall open space strategy, focusing on connectivity, public access, and long-term community benefit. Efforts include preserving natural resources, providing recreational opportunities, and supporting wildlife corridors.

Windsor is expanding its greenway and trail network along the Connecticut and Farmington Rivers to connect open spaces and improve access. These corridors protect natural and cultural resources while supporting recreation and non-motorized travel. The Town also partners with major property owners and the Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy to integrate private land into the system.

The Town has several mechanisms to acquire open space. Residential subdivisions are required to set aside a portion of land for open space, which is ideally deeded to the Town. Fees-in-lieu of open space allow the Town to consolidate resources and purchase parcels that better serve the community's open space objectives. Windsor has also established an Open Space Fund to support purchases, which can be supplemented by municipal contributions, bond issues, grants, or tax-deductible donations from residents.

Additionally, Windsor encourages philanthropy, including donations of land, easements, or development rights, as a way to preserve important parcels while providing tax benefits to donors. By leveraging grants, public-private partnerships, and strategic acquisitions, Windsor aims to build a connected and functional open space system that enhances quality of life, conserves natural resources, and strengthens the Town's environmental stewardship.

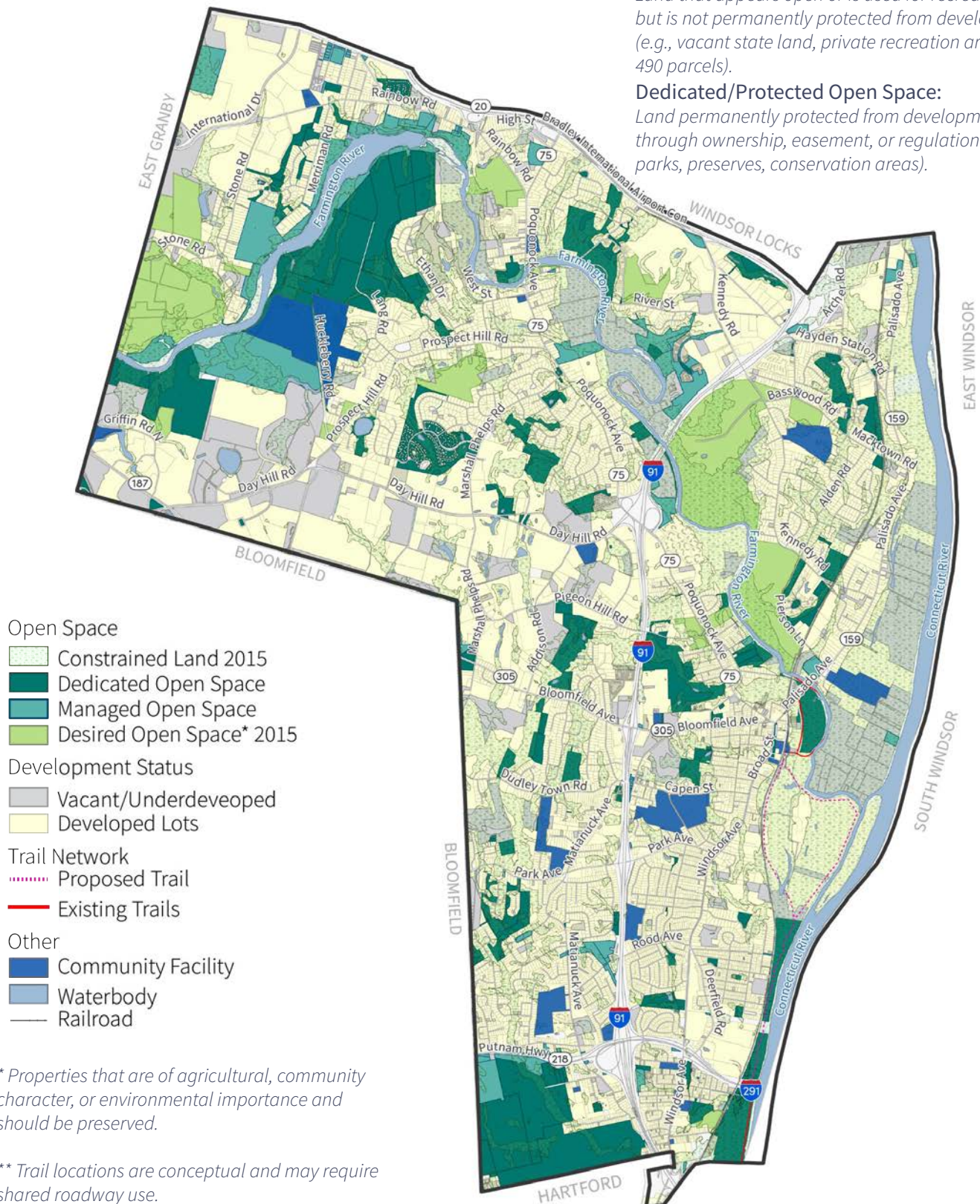
Map 10-1 Open Space

Managed Open Space:

Land that appears open or is used for recreation but is not permanently protected from development (e.g., vacant state land, private recreation areas, PA 490 parcels).

Dedicated/Protected Open Space:

Land permanently protected from development through ownership, easement, or regulation (e.g., parks, preserves, conservation areas).



Data Source: Town of Windsor

Table 10-1 Town Parks

Parks/Trails	Address	Total Acreage
Custer Park	58 Custer Drive	4
Deerfield Park	70 Colton Park	2
Fitch Park	180 Bloomfield Avenue	7.6
Lancaster Park	95 Lancaster Drive	36.2
Northwest Park	145 Lang Road	465
Sharson Park	48 Skitchewaung Street	12
Stroh Park	685 Windsor Avenue	10
Trent Park	40 Trent Drive	5
Washington Park	18 Lenox Avenue	14.6
Welch Park	45 Niles Road	9.6
LP Wilson	599 Matianuck Avenue	31.4
Mill Brook	147 Pigeon Hill Road	95
Bissel Bridge Trail	265 East Barber Street	
Windsor Center Trail	52 Palisado Avenue	
Wilson Gateway Park	458 Windsor Avenue	5.7
Total Acreage of Parks		698

Windsor's Land Acquisition Fund

Windsor maintains a land acquisition fund to support open space preservation. The Town has used this fund, along with proceeds from property sales, to purchase land and conservation easements that protect natural resources and provide recreational opportunities. Windsor also partners with nonprofit organizations like the Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land to acquire and preserve open spaces, such as the Mill Brook property, which involved a combination of Town funds and a state grant.



Northwest Park's Wee Wanderers program invites children ages 2–5 and an adult companion to explore the park through seasonal, hands-on nature activities and meet its resident wildlife. Source: Town of Windsor

WATER RESOURCES

Windsor is located within the Connecticut River Watershed and the Farmington River Watershed, along with several smaller subregional watersheds that drain into them. See Map 10-2. The Connecticut River forms the town's eastern boundary, while the Farmington River flows from town's western edge, eventually emptying into the Connecticut River. These waterbodies provide critical habitat and recreational opportunities. Smaller streams and tributaries throughout Windsor contribute to a diverse network of waterways that support local ecosystems.

Protecting riparian corridors along these rivers and streams is important for maintaining water quality and preserving aquatic habitats. Town land use and conservation agencies implement strategies aligned with watershed management plans to safeguard these resources. The Connecticut River is classified by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) as Class SB waters, supporting fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, and navigation. The Farmington River is classified as Class A waters, suitable for drinking water, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreation. While most waterways in Windsor are in good condition, some areas may experience challenges from stormwater runoff or other sources of impairment.

WETLANDS

Inland wetlands and watercourses have been a regulated natural resource in Windsor since the adoption of the Town's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations in 1989. The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC) oversees activities that may impact these resources and enforces the provisions of the regulations. Wetland soils, defined as poorly drained, very poorly drained, or floodplain soils, are primarily found along the Connecticut and Farmington Rivers, as well as near Rainbow Brook, Mill Brook, and other tributaries throughout town. These wetland locations are illustrated in Map 10-4. The protection of wetland soils and

watercourses are important for a variety of reasons including:

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

VERNAL POOLS

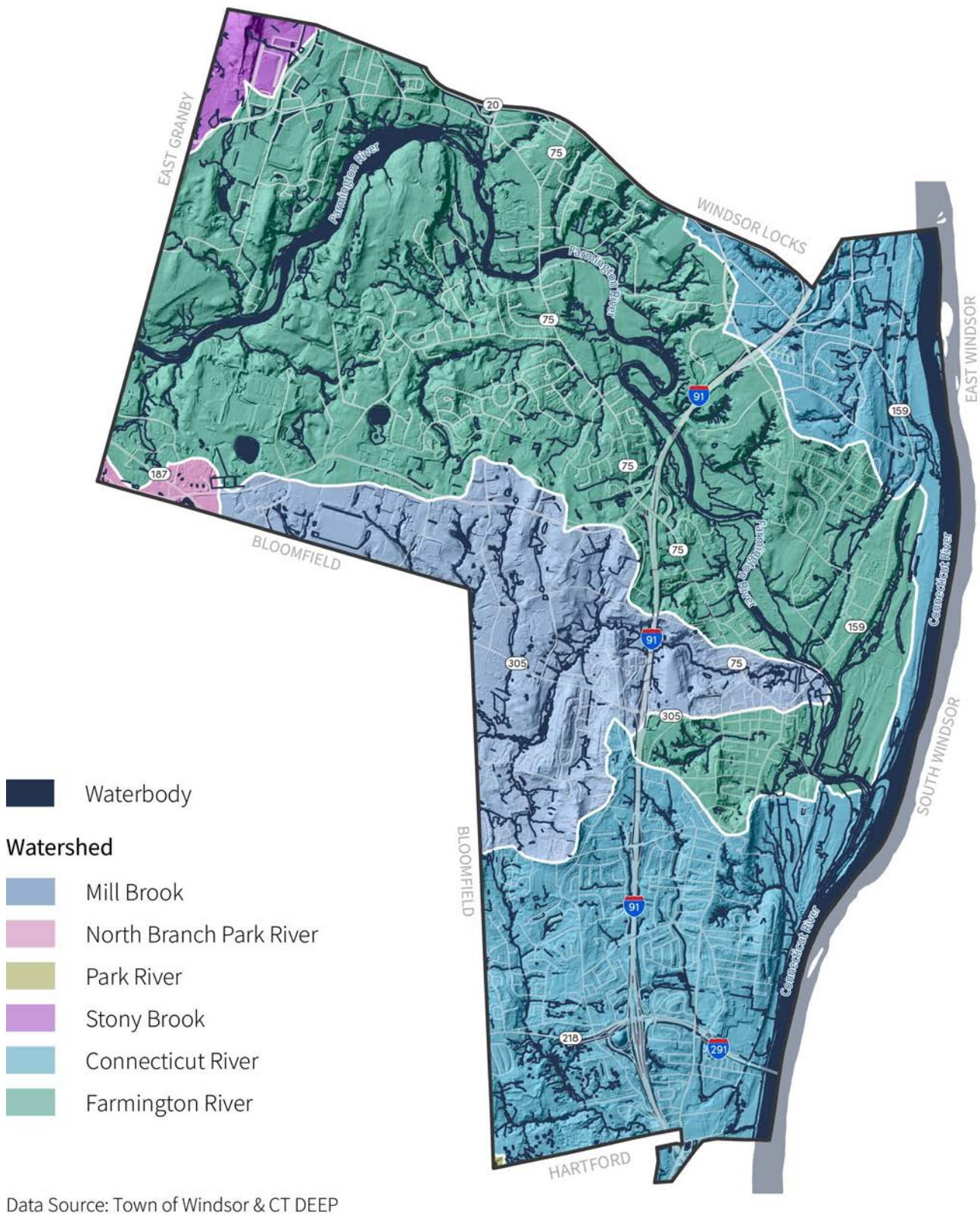
Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands that fill with water in the spring and often dry up by summer. Despite their temporary nature, they provide critical breeding habitat for amphibians, invertebrates, and certain plant species that rely on fish-free environments. Vernal pools also contribute to overall wetland health by supporting biodiversity, improving water quality, and helping regulate local hydrology. They are often found in forested areas, depressions within wetlands, or low-lying sections of open space and preserved farmland, making protection of these areas important for maintaining connected and resilient wetland ecosystems.

HYDROLOGY

Windsor is home to an extensive network of waterways that shape the town's natural environment. These rivers provide scenic views, recreational opportunities such as boating and fishing, and vital habitats for fish, birds, and other wildlife. Rivers and streams are shown in Map 10-4.

Additionally, smaller streams and tributaries flow throughout Windsor, including Rainbow

Map 10-2 Watersheds and Water Resources



Brook, Mill Brook, Phelps Brook, Hayden Station Brook, and Deckers Brook. These waterways help shape the town's wetlands, floodplains, and ecological systems, playing an important role in water management, flood control, and sustaining natural habitats. They also serve as wildlife corridors and contribute to the overall ecological health of the community.

GROUNDWATER

The majority of Windsor has GA-rated groundwater, meaning it is suitable for human consumption without treatment. Some areas may have GB-rated groundwater (in the vicinity of Windsor Train Station), which is considered less suitable for drinking due to potential contamination from urban and industrial sources. While Windsor does not have designated Aquifer Protection Areas, regulations help protect recharge zones through zoning restrictions, stormwater management requirements, state well construction standards, and environmental reviews for certain developments. Public drinking water in Windsor is supplied by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), which draws water from reservoirs outside the town and provides water and sewer services to nearly the entire community.

SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

Windsor has a variety of soil types, with much of the town consisting of well-drained soils suitable for residential, agricultural, and other land uses. Prime farmland soils are found primarily along the Connecticut and Farmington Rivers, supporting the town's agricultural heritage. Windsor works to preserve these areas through Agricultural Preservation zoning, which promotes farming, maintains open space, and allows limited low-impact residential development while helping prevent urban sprawl.

The town's elevation generally rises from east to west, with steeper slopes in areas such as near Rainbow Brook and areas along the Farmington River. These steeper areas can present challenges for development due to erosion and

drainage concerns. Local zoning and subdivision regulations discourage construction in these locations to protect natural resources and manage flood risk. See Map 10-3.

PLANTS AND WILDLIFE

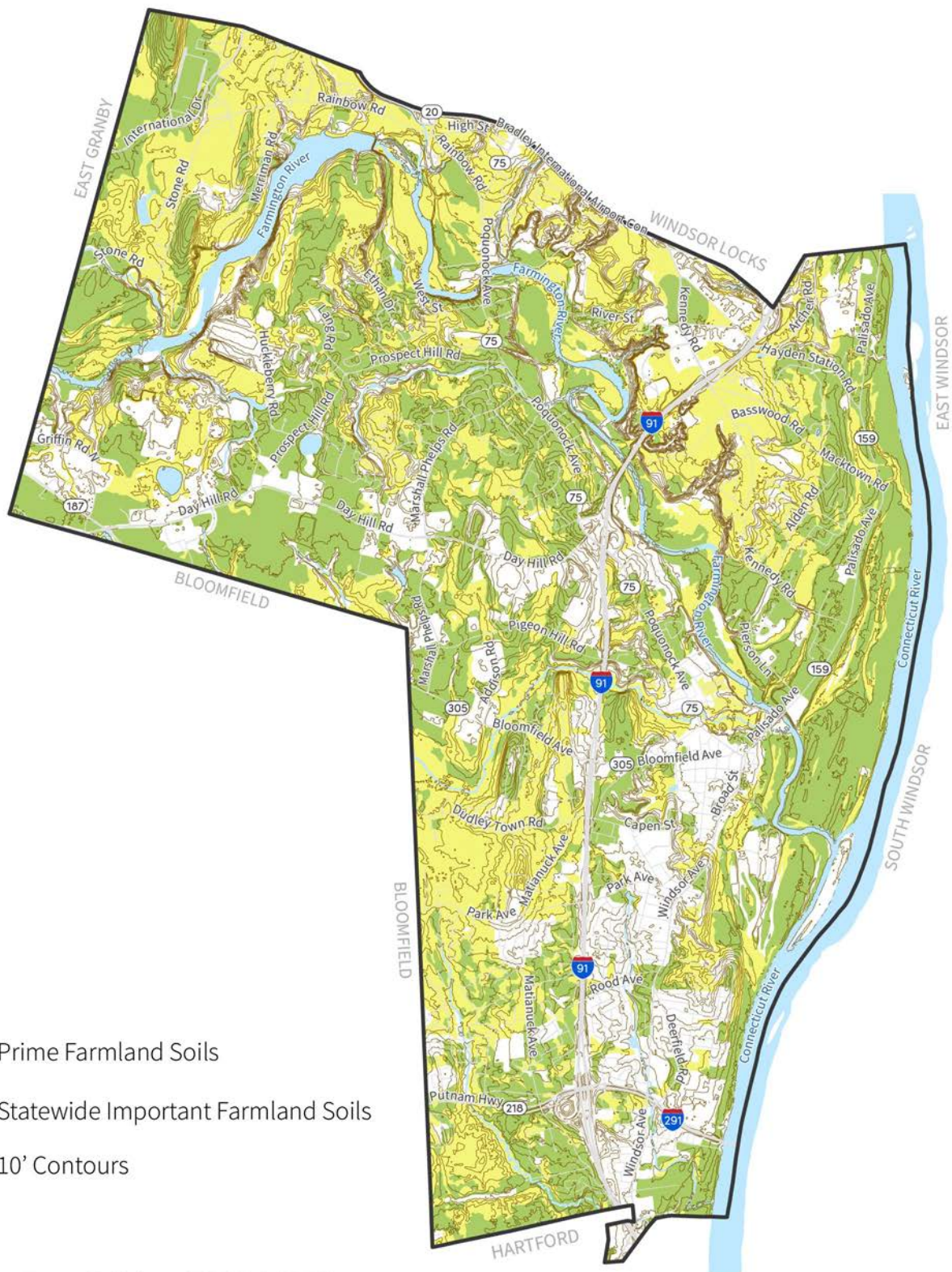
The Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB), maintained by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), compiles over a century of biological inventories from the Connecticut Geological and Natural History Survey. It tracks rare plant and animal species and significant natural communities, providing information for conservation and planning. The database is continually updated with data from ongoing field research, universities, biologists, naturalists, and conservation organizations. Critical habitats are areas that contain physical or biological features essential for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and may require special management or protection (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).

As of June 2025, Windsor has several areas included in the NDDB, with approximately 466 acres designated as critical habitat. These areas, along with associated wetlands, are



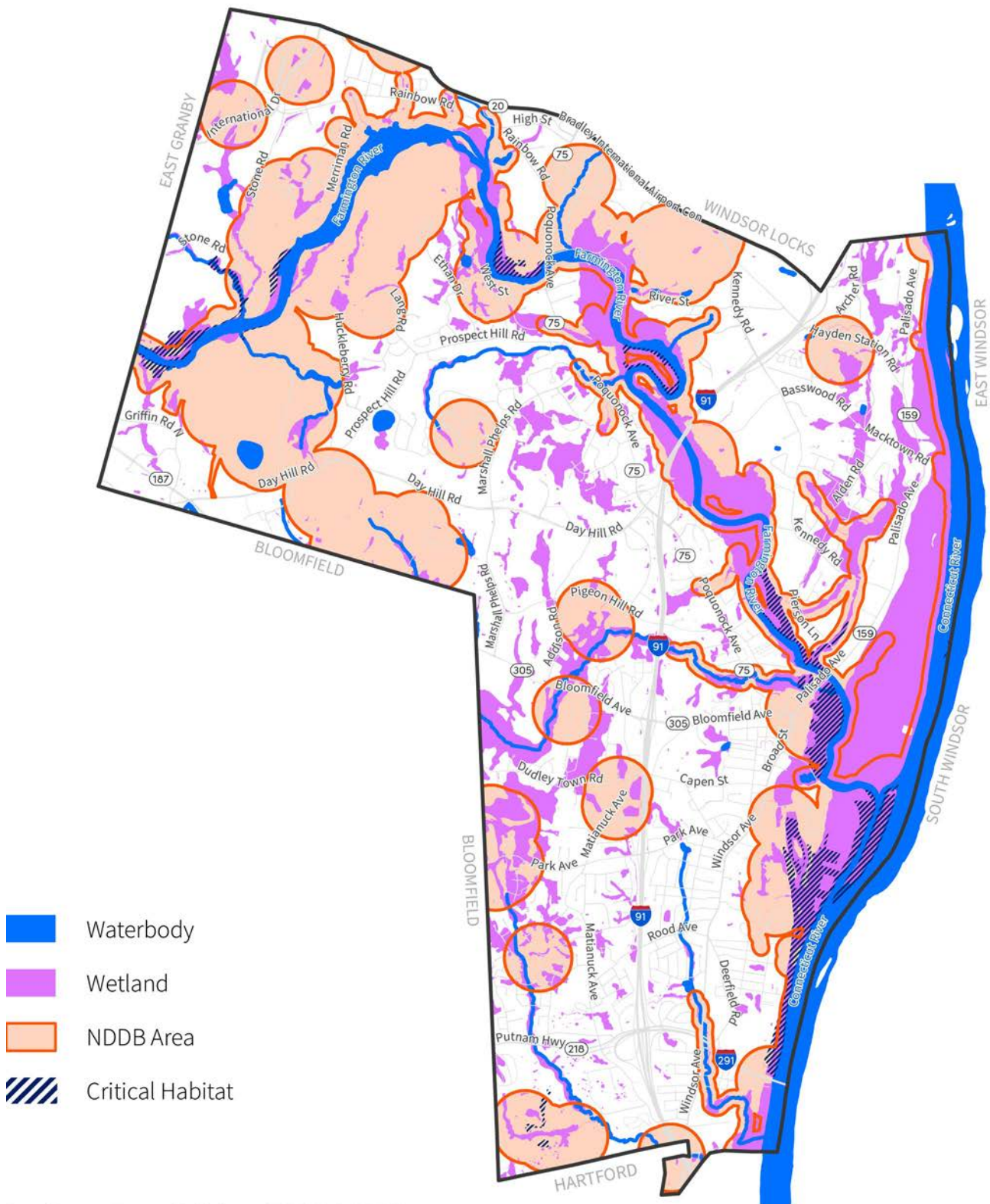
*Group hike led by the Conservation Commission, discussing invasive species while walking the Bissell Bridge Trail.
Source: Town of Windsor*

Map 10-3 Soils and Topography



Data Source: Town of Windsor, CT DEEP & CT ECO

Map 10-4 Wetlands and Habitat



Data Source: Town of Windsor, CT DEEP & CT ECO

primarily concentrated along the Connecticut and Farmington Rivers and are important for supporting biodiversity and guiding conservation and land-use planning in the town. See Map 10-4.

FARMLANDS AND AGRICULTURE

Windsor has a long agricultural heritage, historically including tobacco farming, nurseries, orchards, and vegetable production. Today, active farms continue this tradition, providing open space, local food, and a connection to the town's rural past. Notable examples include Brown's Farm, which was protected by a conservation easement in 2019, and Thrall Farm, both of which help preserve farmland and support ongoing agricultural uses in Windsor.



Tobacco Barn
Source: Town of Windsor

1985 - 2015 Land Cover Change



Figure 10-1 1985 - 2015 Land Cover Change

University of Connecticut's Center for Land Use Education and Research. (March 04, 2022). 1985-2015 Land Cover Change. <https://clear.uconn.edu/projects/landscape/ct-stats/change19852015/> (most recent data available)

LAND COVER

Between 1985 and 2015, Windsor lost approximately 4.7% of its forest cover, primarily due to development. This decline is slightly higher than the statewide loss of about 4% over the same period, according to UConn's Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR). During this time, Windsor also experienced a reduction in agricultural land, losing roughly 2.5% of its farmland, compared with a statewide loss of about 16%. These trends reflect ongoing pressures from development and highlight the importance of planning to manage changes in forests and farmland. See Figure 10-1.

AIR QUALITY

Windsor's air quality is influenced by local automobile emissions and its location between the major urban centers of Hartford and Springfield, which contribute additional pollutants. Transportation, electricity, and residential heating account for most of Connecticut's greenhouse gas emissions. Poor air quality can increase asthma, respiratory illnesses, and lung cancer. In 2024, Hartford County received a C rating for ozone levels from the American Lung Association. Forests, wetlands, and open spaces help reduce pollutants, making their conservation essential for healthier air.

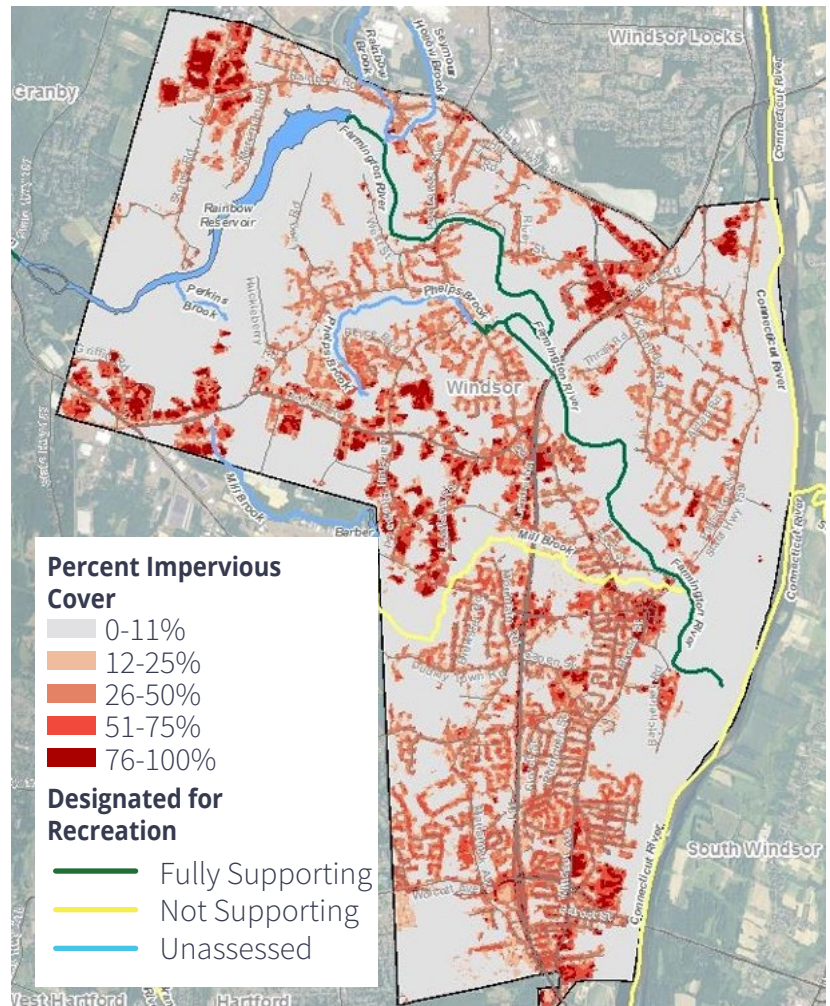
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

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

In general, the higher the percentage of IC in a watershed, the poorer the surface water quality. Research in Connecticut strongly suggests that aquatic life will be harmed when the IC within a watershed exceeds 12%. Stormwater pollution from IC is a likely cause of impairment. Approximately 37% of Windsor's land area has impervious cover that exceeds the 12% threshold. See Figure 10-2 and Figure 10-3 and which were developed utilizing CT DEEP's Town of Windsor Water Quality and Stormwater Summary. In Figure 10-2, impervious coverage (IC) is shown in red on the maps. Dark red areas indicate a higher percentage of IC, lighter red areas have less IC, while the grey areas indicate very little or no IC. The report also designates waterbodies by their ability to support recreation, showing the health of the waterbody. The Farmington River fully supports recreational uses, while the Connecticut River and Mill Brook have been designated as not supporting recreational uses.

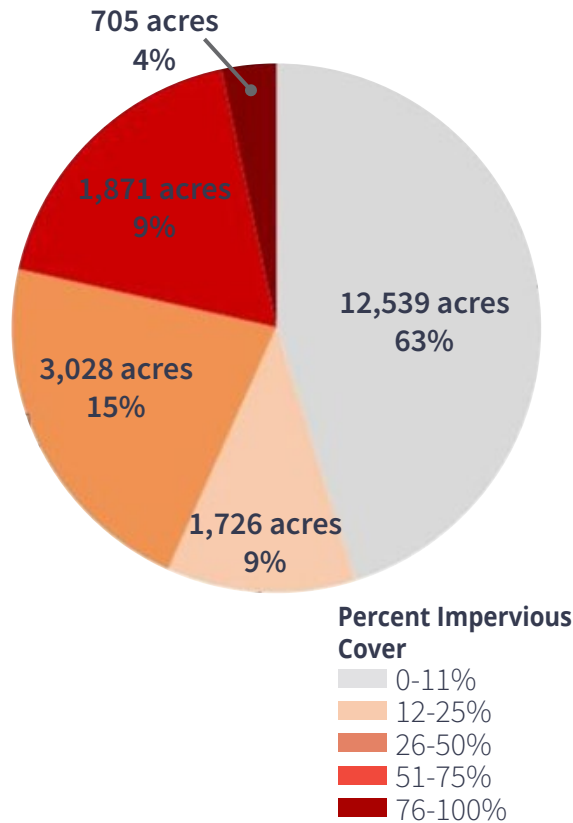
Stormwater runoff is a significant contributor to water quality issues, as it collects contaminants from surfaces such as driveways, parking lots, rooftops, and fertilized lawns, which then pollute local waterways. In response, Windsor developed a Stormwater Manual in 2009 and

Figure 10-2 Impervious Coverage, Unknown date of data
Source: CT DEEP Water Quality and Stormwater Summary



adopted a Stormwater Management Plan (SMP) in 2017 to meet the requirements of its MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) permit. The plan outlines steps to reduce stormwater pollutants, improve water quality, and protect the town's rivers, streams, Connecticut River, and Long Island Sound. It includes best practices for public education, community involvement, pollution prevention, and managing stormwater at construction sites and municipal operations. A key component of the SMP is the promotion of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, which focus on using natural systems to manage stormwater and reduce its impact on the environment. This approach encourages practices like rain gardens, permeable pavements, and green roofs to absorb and filter stormwater where it falls, rather than directing it into traditional drainage systems. Complementing these efforts, Windsor's zoning regulations incorporate impervious cover limits and

Figure 10-3 Town Area (Acres) by % Impervious Cover,
Source: CT DEEP Water Quality and Stormwater Summary



LID requirements in certain districts, guiding site design, redevelopment, and new construction in ways that help reduce runoff, protect water resources, and support long-term watershed health. Windsor submits an annual report on these efforts to the state, as required by the MS4 permit.

FLOODING AND RESILIENCY

Different parts of Windsor face varying levels of exposure to storms, flooding, and other climate-related hazards such as heat waves. Heavy rains can cause riverine flooding, particularly along the Connecticut and Farmington Rivers and their tributaries. FEMA flood zones identify areas most at risk, including the 1% annual chance flood zone (commonly referred to as the 100-year floodplain), the 0.2% annual chance flood zone (500-year floodplain), and the floodway. The floodway encompasses the river channel and adjacent land needed to safely convey floodwaters and

is subject to the highest level of floodplain regulation. Windsor's flood zones are shown in Map 10-5.

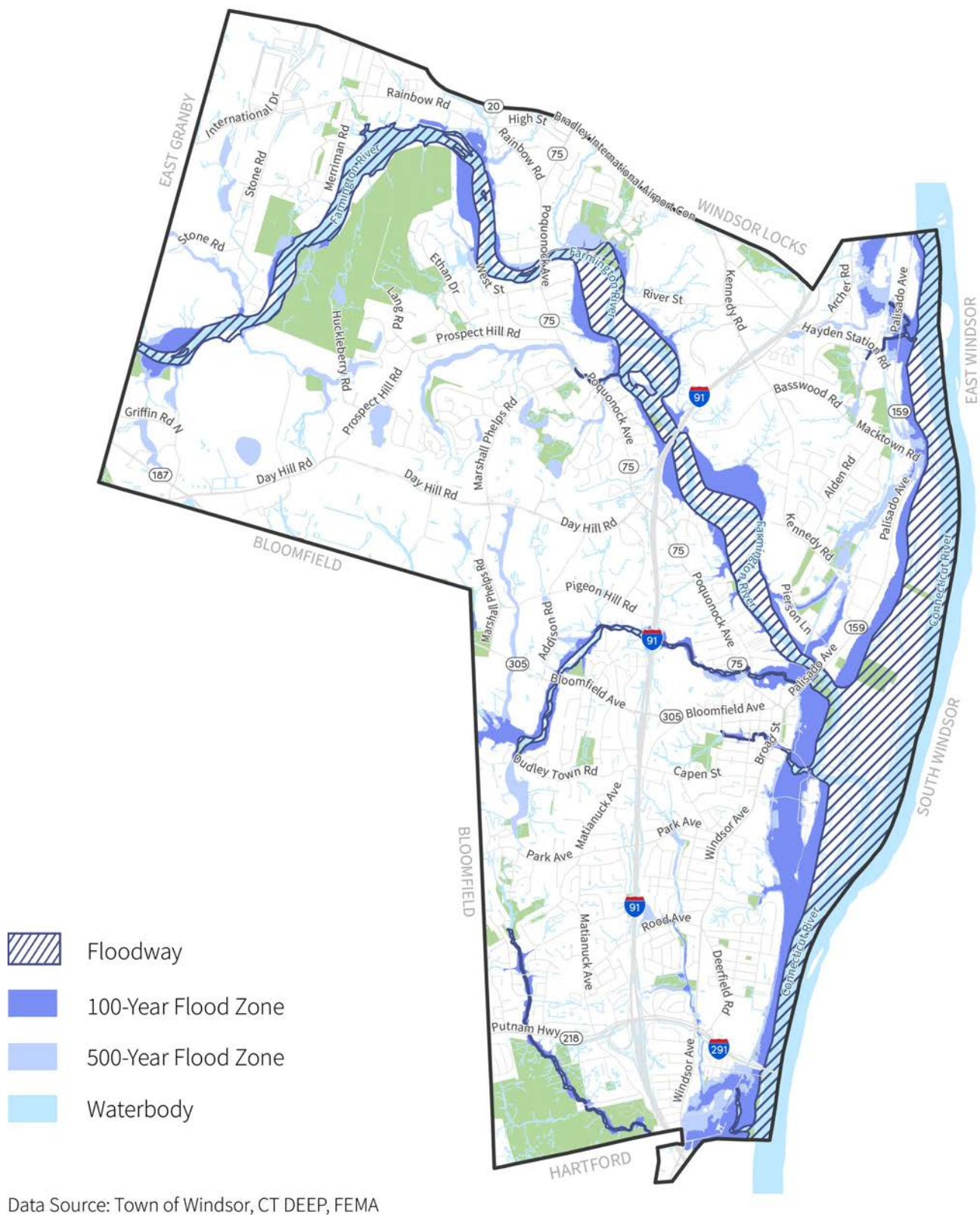
According to UConn's Connecticut Physical Climate Science Assessment Report, the Region is expected to face rising temperatures, more frequent heat waves, and increased heavy rain fall through 2050, with conditions beyond mid-century depending on greenhouse gas reductions. To address extreme heat, the Town has opened cooling centers at the L.P. Wilson Community Center and Windsor Public Library and may need to expand these services as climate impacts grow.¹

Building climate resilience means strengthening the community's ability to prepare for, withstand, recover from, and adapt to events such as floods, storms, and extreme heat. Preparation involves planning for emergencies, educating residents, and maintaining essential supplies. Withstanding impacts depends on durable infrastructure and informed residents. Recovery focuses on effective emergency response and rebuilding efforts, while adaptation involves modifying infrastructure and strategies to reduce future risks — such as upgrading stormwater systems or revising response plans as conditions evolve.

Windsor works with the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG) on hazard mitigation planning to enhance its resilience to natural disasters and climate-related hazards. This partnership includes assessing local vulnerabilities, identifying priority projects, and maintaining an up-to-date Hazard Mitigation Plan. Ongoing efforts focus on improving drainage systems, reinforcing critical infrastructure, enhancing emergency response capacity, and securing grants to support resilience projects. Through these initiatives, Windsor aims to safeguard its residents and property while building a community that can recover quickly and thrive despite changing climate conditions.

¹ *Connecticut Physical Climate Science Assessment Report (PCSAR), August 2019*

Map 10-5 FEMA Flood Zones



KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

ENVIRONMENTAL AND AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION

- Protect rivers, streams, wetlands, and Class A farmland.
- Prioritize parcels near waterways and preserve wildlife corridors.
- Support working farms to maintain landscapes and local food production.

CONNECTIVITY, ACCESS, AND RECREATION

- Expand trails, sidewalks, and bike paths to link open spaces and neighborhoods.
- Improve access to Farmington River.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

- Promote electrification, green infrastructure, and sustainable practices.
- Plan for impervious surface reduction, flood resilience, and climate impacts.
- Consider a dedicated sustainability staff position.

SUCCESS STORIES

- Mill Brook Open Space: protected habitat and enhanced public access.
- Brown's Farm: farmland preserved via conservation easement and local farming.

KEY TRENDS

- Balance growth with preservation through infill development and conservation.
- Emphasize connectivity, sustainability, and heritage protection.
- Maintain environmental, cultural, and recreational assets while planning for climate and community needs.



View from River Street Park
Source: Town of Windsor



Northwest Park
Source: Town of Windsor

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

The Windsor community values its open spaces, parks, and historic Town Greens as central to the town's identity and quality of life. Residents emphasized the importance of preserving farmland, rivers, wetlands, and forested areas while maintaining access to recreational facilities and trails. There is strong support for enhancing connectivity through expanded sidewalks, bike paths, and trails, improving access to the Farmington River and other open spaces, and activating underutilized facilities like Mill Brook Open Space and Northwest Park. Protecting wildlife corridors, maintaining natural habitats, and managing invasive species were also highlighted as priorities.

Community members also stressed the importance of sustainability and climate resilience. Ideas included electrifying town vehicles and equipment, incorporating green infrastructure such as solar energy and green roofs, reducing impervious surfaces, and planning for flood and climate impacts. Success stories like the Mill Brook Open Space and Brown's Farm demonstrate the value of partnerships and innovative approaches to conservation and farmland preservation. Overall, residents want Windsor to balance growth with preservation, ensuring that environmental, recreational, and cultural resources are protected and accessible for current and future generations.

Continue to fight the expansion of industrial scale solar installations on historic farmland and find suitable locations that do not impact the wildlife or residents.

Protect the wild and scenic Farmington River, make it an attraction for people to use, also protect vernal pools.

Planting native flowers in unused green space, along highways, etc.

Wildlife habitat!! The bird population is declining, cutting down forests is cutting down homes for animals.

We need to prioritize the health of natural resources and trees to prevent future environmental deterioration.

Prioritize the removal of invasive species in our waterways and wooded areas.

A note on the importance of tree coverage...

Trees are a vital part of Windsor's landscape, covering roughly 48% of the town and providing essential environmental, social, and economic benefits. They help cool neighborhoods, improve air quality, reduce stormwater runoff, support wildlife habitat, and enhance overall community health and well-being. Maintaining and expanding tree canopy in Windsor is key to sustaining these benefits, promoting resilience to climate impacts, and ensuring a healthy, livable environment for all residents.

Goal 10.1 | Protect and enhance Windsor’s open spaces and natural resources to support a healthy environment and promote sustainability. Expand greenways, conserve farmland, and encourage environmental stewardship.

Strategy 1 | Conserve Sensitive Lands, Greenways and Public Access.

ACTIONS

1. Partner with Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy and other entities to acquire and maintain open space and sensitive lands.
2. Pursue opportunities to implement a greenway plan for the Connecticut/Farmington corridors and key spines.
3. Work with major property owners to secure reasonable public access and trail segments.
4. Analyze open-space ownership/management with intended use and maintenance capacity.

Strategy 2 | Resilient Facilities & Clean Energy.

ACTIONS

1. Ensure critical facilities remain operational during storms, floods, and heat waves.
2. Partner with the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) to continue hazard mitigation efforts and emergency preparedness.
3. Continue to upgrade town facilities to be more energy efficient and to install alternative energy sources where financially feasible.

Strategy 3 | Storm water, Flooding & Water Quality.

ACTIONS

1. Fund and build priority drainage/culvert upgrades; monitor sensitive areas and enforce approvals.
2. Implement watershed-based practices and MS4 requirements.
3. Consider participating in FEMA’s Community Rating System.
4. Educate property owners on flood proofing and resilient construction.
5. Expand public education on water-quality practices (e.g., fertilizer/pesticide reduction).

Strategy 4 | Working Farms & Farmland Preservation.

ACTIONS

1. Preserve farmland via development-rights purchases/easements and pursue available funding sources.
2. Encourage open-space subdivision patterns that retain agricultural fields and lower infrastructure costs.
3. Strengthen farm-to-community outlets (Farmers Market, CSA) and agro-tourism to support farm incomes.



11 CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Windsor, settled in 1633, is Connecticut's oldest town. The area was originally home to Indigenous peoples before English settlers established a community trading post at the meeting of the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers. Through the colonial period, Windsor developed as an agricultural community, making use of its fertile soils. By the 19th century, the town became a center for tobacco farming, particularly shade-grown tobacco, which influenced the local economy and landscape for many decades. Industrial and transportation corridors later expanded along the river valleys, shaping patterns of settlement and development. Today, Windsor's landscape continues to reflect this layered history of agriculture, industry, and community growth.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AND DISTRICTS

Windsor is home to numerous historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service. The National Register is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects considered significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Windsor's historic resources include

individual buildings, cultural landscapes such as tobacco barns, and historic districts that reflect the town's long and varied history. Listing on the National Register is an important form of recognition, but it does not limit how property owners may use or modify their property. The following tools are available to support the preservation and stewardship of historic and cultural resources:

- Review of federally funded or licensed projects that could impact historic properties listed on the National Register.
- Make owners of historic properties eligible to apply for federal grants-in-aid (when available) for preservation activities.
- Encourage the rehabilitation, through tax credits, of income-producing historic properties that meet preservation standards.
- Provide protection from unreasonable destruction of historic/cultural resources through use of the environmental protection provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Windsor's properties, sites and districts currently listed on the National Register are shown on the Historic Resources map (Map 11-1) and summarized on the following pages.

PALISADO AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Palisado Avenue Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987 in recognition of its historic and architectural significance. The first English settlers in Windsor and the Connecticut Valley lived along Palisado Avenue on either side of the Farmington River, and the Palisado Green remained the center of civic and ecclesiastical life until the 1750s. The district includes buildings from the early 18th through the early 20th century, representing styles such as 18th Century Vernacular, Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Victorian Vernacular, Queen Anne, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival. The district is also notable for its high concentration of 18th- and 19th-century brick construction.

BROAD STREET GREEN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Broad Street Green Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999 for its historic and architectural significance. The district encompasses the historic town center, which is organized around the Broad Street Green, and which served as the civic and social heart of Windsor from the 18th century onward. It includes a mix of residential, civic, and religious buildings that reflect the town's development over more than two centuries. Architecturally, the district features a variety of styles, including Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival. The Broad Street Green Historic District illustrates Windsor's long history as a center of government, commerce, and community life, with buildings that collectively convey the character and evolution of the town.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK - OLIVER ELLSWORTH HOMESTEAD

National Historic Landmarks are sites, buildings, structures, or objects recognized by the federal government for their exceptional value in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. These landmarks represent the highest level of recognition for historic properties. While designation highlights national significance, it does not place restrictions on private property owners.

The Oliver Ellsworth Homestead, located at 778 Palisado Avenue just north of the Palisado Avenue Historic District, is the town's only National Historic Landmark. Built in 1781, it was the home of Oliver Ellsworth, a founding father, drafter of the U.S. Constitution, third Chief Justice of the United States, and U.S. Senator from Connecticut. The property is significant for both Ellsworth's contributions to the early federal government and its well-preserved late 18th-century architecture. Operated as a museum by the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution, the Homestead offers tours, private tours by request, and event rentals in Matthies Hall.



Oliver Ellsworth Homestead
Source: Daughters of the American Revolution

STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

A listing on the State Register of Historic Places provides honorary recognition and helps highlight the historic significance of a site or structure. This listing encourages consideration of the impact of land use decisions on these properties. State Register-listed buildings may also receive special consideration under the State Building Code. All sites listed on the National Register are also recognized on the State Register. Currently, Windsor has 26 properties listed on the State Register, with many located near the town center and within the Palisado Avenue and Broad Street Green Historic Districts. There is also a cluster of tobacco barns located within Northwest Park that are listed on the State Register. The State Register listing process is typically quicker than the National Register process, making it a valuable interim recognition while National Register designation is being pursued.

PALISADO AVENUE LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

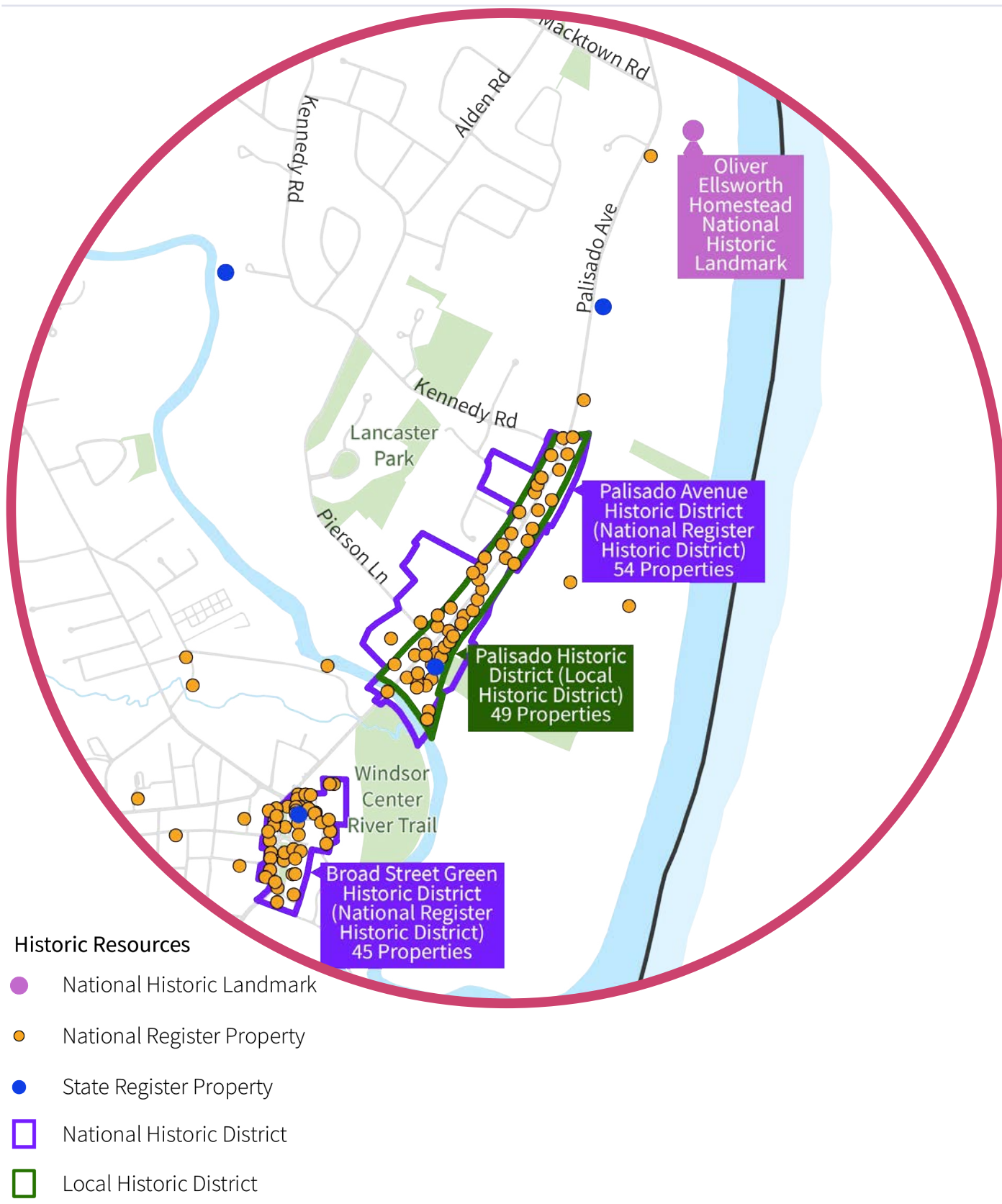
Local historic designation carries legal authority to regulate the exterior appearance of buildings and sites as seen from public streets and spaces. In Windsor, the Historic District Commission reviews proposed projects within local historic districts to ensure that changes align with the district’s historic character. The purpose of local designation is to protect and preserve the distinctive architectural and historical features of buildings, streetscapes, and other places of significance.

The Palisado Avenue Local Historic District encompasses a focused area along Palisado Avenue, including the historic village core and Palisado Green, where Windsor’s earliest settlers lived and conducted civic and religious activities. Local designation gives the Historic District Commission authority to review and approve exterior changes to buildings and sites visible from public streets, helping maintain the historic appearance of the area. While part of the broader Palisado Avenue National Register Historic District, the local designation carries regulatory power to guide preservation and ensure the district’s historic character is maintained.

Table 11-1 Historic Districts and Resources		
Name	Type	Resources
Broad Street Green Historic District	National Register District	45 Properties
Palisado Avenue Historic District	National Register District	54 Properties
Oliver Ellsworth Homestead	National Historic Landmark	Home
State Register Properties	State Register of Historic Places	26 Properties
Palisado Avenue Historic District	Local Historic District	49 Properties

Source: DECD, CT State Historic Preservation Office

Map 11-2 Palisado Avenue area Historic Resources



CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Windsor became a Certified Local Government (CLG) in 1991, earning recognition from the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for its commitment to preserving historic resources. The CLG program is a partnership between federal, state, and local governments that provides technical support, training, and funding opportunities for local preservation efforts.

This designation allows Windsor to access a range of tools to help protect and promote the historic character of its neighborhoods, including the Palisado Avenue Historic District. CLG status strengthens the town's ability to maintain its historic heritage while encouraging community involvement in preservation planning and activities. Benefits of the CLG Designation include:

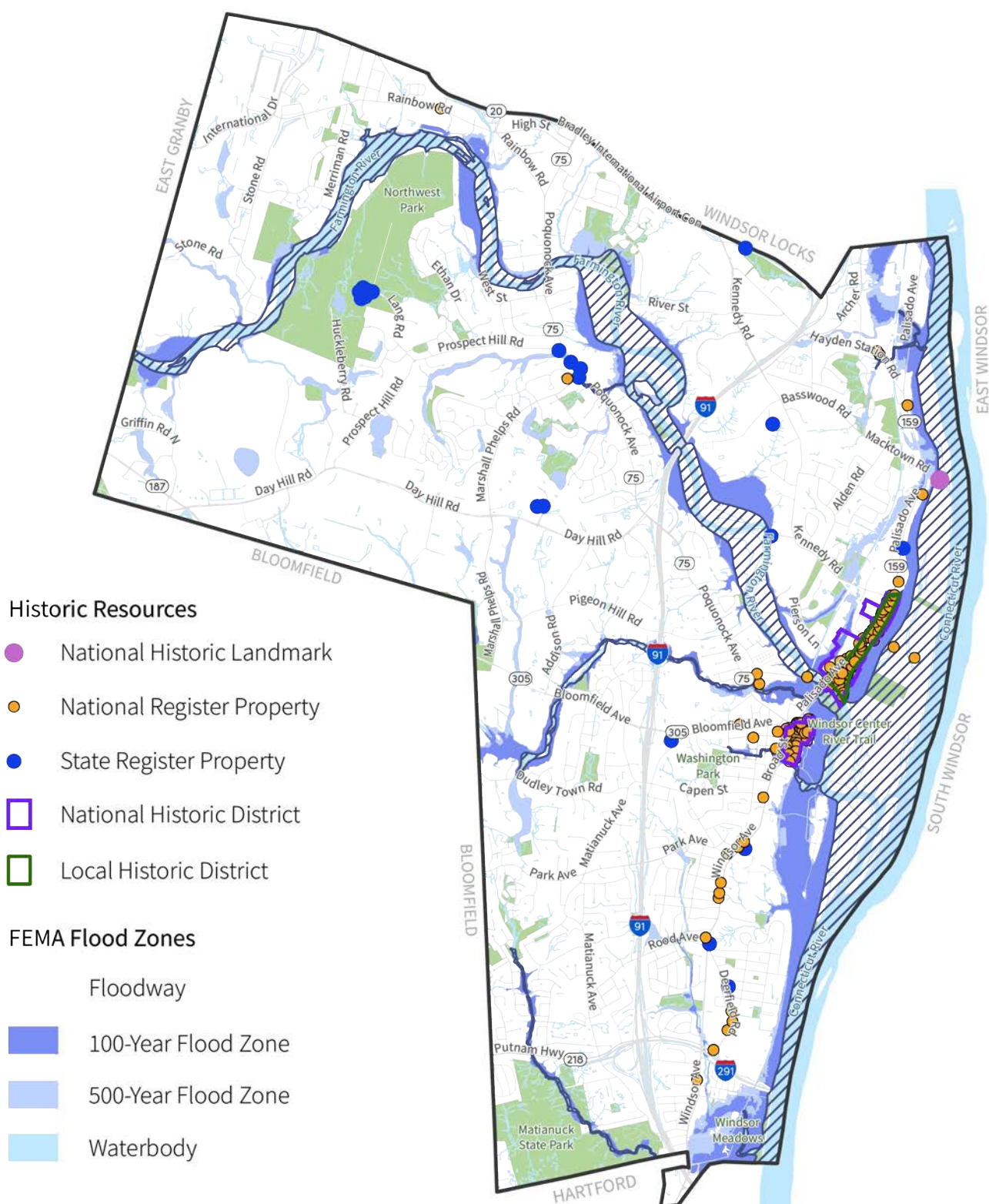
- **Access to Preservation Grants:** CLGs are eligible for federal and state funding for projects such as historic surveys, preservation planning, and restoration of historic structures.
- **Technical Assistance and Training:** Windsor's Historic District Commission (HDC) will receive expert guidance,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

RESILIENCY PLANNING FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES

Over the past decade, climate change has become a concern for historic preservation in Windsor. Increasingly severe storms, sea level rise, and environmental changes such as higher temperatures and shifting seasonal cycles threaten historic buildings and landscapes. Storms and flooding can damage properties and sea level rise and associated flooding risks may require adaptations such as elevating or weatherproofing buildings. Environmental changes also accelerate deterioration and introduce new challenges, including invasive species. SHPO provides guidance and resources to help protect, maintain, and rehabilitate historic properties in ways that incorporate resiliency and sustainability.

Of the 153 historic resources documented in Windsor, 53 structures (including the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead) are located within FEMA flood zones as shown in Map 11-3.

Map 11-3 Historic Resources and Flood Zones



Data Source: Town of Windsor, State Historic Preservation Office, National Park Service, FEMA

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Windsor's cultural resources include historic sites, public art, and local events that preserve the town's heritage, celebrate its identity, and provide educational and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. A selection of Windsor's cultural resources are described below.

WINDSOR ART CENTER

The Windsor Art Center, located in a historic downtown freight-house building, provides space for visual arts exhibitions, music performances, and community workshops. It hosts rotating art shows, educational programs, and public events, offering opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with local artists and the town's cultural life.

WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

The Windsor Historical Society preserves and interprets the town's history through its museum complex, which includes the 1758 Strong-Howard House, the 1767 Hezekiah Chaffee House, and exhibition galleries. The Society maintains archives, artifacts, and educational programs, providing resources for research, tours, and community engagement with Windsor's historical heritage.

OLIVER ELLSWORTH HOMESTEAD

The Oliver Ellsworth Homestead operates as a museum showcasing period furnishings, artifacts, and exhibits related to 18th-century life. Visitors can tour the house and its grounds, explore curated displays, and participate in educational programs and events designed to interpret the historic setting for the public.

LUDDY TAYLOR CONNECTICUT VALLEY TOBACCO MUSEUM

The Luddy Taylor Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum, located within Northwest Park, presents exhibits on the region's tobacco farming heritage. The museum displays historical

farming equipment, tools, and artifacts, offering visitors insight into agricultural practices and the cultural significance of tobacco cultivation in the Connecticut River Valley.

VINTAGE RADIO & COMMUNICATIONS MUSEUM

The Vintage Radio and Communications Museum features exhibits on the history of radio and communications technology. The museum displays vintage radios, transmitters, and related equipment, and hosts events such as swap meets and educational programs that explore the development and impact of radio and electronic communication.

WINDSOR TRAIN STATION

The Windsor Train Station serves as both a transportation hub and a historic landmark. Its preserved architecture and ongoing use connect the community to regional rail networks, while its presence contributes to the town's cultural identity and heritage, reflecting Windsor's long history as a center of travel and commerce.



*Display at the Vintage Radio & Communications Museum
Source: Vintage Radio & Communications Museum*

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Windsor is home to a variety of cultural landscapes that reflect the town's history, values, and traditions. These places, including historic sites, farms, parklands, and long-established neighborhoods, have been shaped by people over generations. They help preserve the town's story and maintain a connection to the past, while also contributing to Windsor's identity.

AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

Windsor has a long agricultural heritage dating back to its early settlement along the Connecticut River, where fertile floodplain soils supported farming for centuries. The town became known especially for tobacco cultivation, which shaped its landscape, economy, and cultural identity well into the 20th century. Today, farms, community gardens, and agricultural programs at places like Northwest Park continue to highlight this history. Local farm stands and growers maintain the tradition of producing fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops, reflecting Windsor's enduring connection to its agricultural roots.

TOBACCO BARNs

Windsor's tobacco barns are a recognizable feature of the town's agricultural landscape, reflecting its history as a center of tobacco cultivation in the Connecticut River Valley. These long, narrow wooden barns with adjustable side slats were designed for air-curing tobacco leaves, a process that shaped both the region's economy and its rural scenery. These barns remain visible across Windsor's fields and farm edges, serving as reminders of the town's long-standing agricultural heritage.

BRICK MAKING

Brick making was an important early industry in Windsor, supported by the town's clay-rich soils along the Connecticut River. Local brickyards produced bricks for homes, public buildings, and mills throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, shaping the look and durability of many

structures that remain today. The prevalence of brick architecture in Windsor reflects this history and contributes to the town's distinctive built character.

THE CONNECTICUT AND FARMINGTON RIVERS

The Connecticut River and Farmington River have played central roles in Windsor's development, shaping settlement patterns, agriculture, and transportation. Their fertile floodplains supported early farming, including tobacco cultivation, and their waterways connected Windsor to regional trade networks. Today, both rivers remain important natural and cultural features, providing scenic views, recreational opportunities, and a tangible link to the town's history and heritage.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Windsor celebrates its diversity through a variety of historically and architecturally significant houses of worship. These include First Church, St. Gabriel's Church, St. Rose of Lima Church, Temple Beth Hillel, and others, each contributing to the town's rich cultural and religious heritage.

LOOMIS CHAFFEE SCHOOL

The Loomis Chaffee School, founded in 1874, is a historic private school in Windsor whose campus contributes to the town's cultural landscape. Its expansive grounds, including landscaped gardens, open fields, and tree-lined avenues, are an important part of the local environment, while the school's historic buildings reflect architectural styles from different periods.

TOWN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

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

ARTS COMMISSION

The Windsor Arts Commission supports local arts programming and community access to the arts. The Commission coordinates rotating art exhibits at Town Hall and other municipal spaces, showcasing work by local and regional artists. It also helps facilitate public art projects, cultural events, and occasional workshops or performances in partnership with community organizations and schools. The Commission's role focuses on providing opportunities for residents to experience and participate in the arts in everyday community settings.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

The Windsor Historic District Commission (HDC) is an appointed body responsible for preserving the historic character of the Windsor Historic District, which generally extends 250 feet on either side of Palisado Avenue between the Farmington River and Bissell's Ferry Road. The Commission regulates the exterior appearance of buildings and other structures visible from the street within this area. Property owners must apply to the HDC for a Certificate of Appropriateness when proposing exterior changes, new construction, or demolition. Through this review process, the Commission works with applicants to ensure that alterations are compatible with the architectural and historic qualities of the district.



Art classes at the Windsor Art Center
Source: Windsor Art Center

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Windsor's partner organizations, including local businesses, cultural institutions, and event organizers, play an important role in supporting the town's cultural and tourism initiatives. These groups work together to highlight Windsor's history, heritage, and community events, helping to attract visitors and engage residents in preserving and celebrating the town's distinctive cultural assets.

WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Windsor Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and sharing the town's rich history. It manages several historic properties, including the Strong-Howard House and the Hezekiah Chaffee House, where it offers exhibits, educational programs, and events that highlight Windsor's past. The Society engages the public through research, collections, and outreach, fostering an understanding of the town's heritage. In

collaboration with local organizations, it helps host tours and events that celebrate Windsor's history, ensuring the town's cultural and historical resources are preserved for future generations.

CONNECTICUT CENTRAL REGIONAL TOURISM DISTRICT

The Connecticut Central Regional Tourism District is a Designated Marketing Organization focused on increasing tourism revenue across its 65-member cities and towns. The District promotes the region through marketing initiatives, visitor information services, and programs designed to enhance visitor experiences. Its efforts target out-of-state leisure and business travelers, aiming to boost overnight stays and raise awareness of tourism's economic impact on the region.



Windsor Historical Society Headquarters
Source: Town of Windsor

Cultural Districts in Connecticut

Connecticut allows towns to establish Cultural Districts in areas with a concentration of historic, cultural, and artistic resources. These districts strengthen local identity, support creative businesses, attract visitors, and improve walkability, while providing access to marketing and funding opportunities. For Windsor, a Cultural District would highlight its history, arts organizations, and cultural sites by connecting museums, galleries, performance venues, and public spaces, creating a cohesive cultural experience and promoting local events.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

COMMUNITY IDENTITY & HERITAGE

- Cultural resources foster community connections and a distinct sense of place.
- Historic milestones, like the 400-year anniversary, offer engagement and learning opportunities.
- Popular events (Shad Derby, concerts, farmers markets) need better promotion.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Feeling that preservation lags behind nearby towns; some historic sites are at risk.
- Recommendations include expanding the demolition delay ordinance and increased volunteer/youth involvement.

ARTS & PROGRAMMING

- Demand exists for more live events, social activities, and arts education.
- Windsor Arts Center is key but needs improved outreach.
- Family-friendly events help boost participation.

COLLABORATION & OUTREACH

- Better coordination among local organizations can increase engagement.
- Improved promotion through community calendars and regional networks is needed.

CULTURAL TOURISM & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Highlight local history, expand walking tours, and connect to nearby cities via rail.
- Enhance amenities (restaurants, river access) to attract visitors and strengthen Windsor's cultural profile.



Windsor Train Station
Source: Town of Windsor



Historic Elm Grove Cemetery
Source: Town of Windsor

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Community members emphasized that Windsor's cultural resources are central to the town's identity and sense of place. Residents value historic milestones, such as the upcoming 400-year anniversary, and enjoy events like the Shad Derby, farmers markets, and concerts, though many believe that better promotion could expand participation. Historic preservation remains a concern, with some homes, tobacco sheds, and heritage brick sites at risk, and residents want more opportunities for youth and volunteers to engage with local history. Support for the arts exists, with a desire for more live events, social activities, and programming, along with improved outreach from institutions like the Windsor Arts Center. Participants also highlighted unique assets like the Windsor Vintage Radio Museum and opportunities linked to train tourism, which could be leveraged to attract visitors. Ideas to strengthen cultural tourism include promoting local history themes, expanding walking tours, enhancing amenities, and connecting Windsor's cultural offerings to nearby cities to make the town a more vibrant destination.

I feel like we could add so much art. How about classes and pottery at the art center, murals painted by individuals and / or groups?

We need to be more active in identifying key historic private properties and supporting their preservation.

I think all of our historic buildings and areas in town should be maintained.

Historic district should be emphasized and made walkable and accessible.

Need options for those with older homes to receive funding assistance when needed for low interest physical improvements.

How are we preventing the loss of tobacco sheds and historic farming land/structures?



Participants at the Winter Wonderland Pop-up
Source: FHI Studio, now IMEG

Goal 11.1 | Safeguard, promote, and celebrate Windsor’s cultural and historic resources for future generations by encouraging the preservation of historic landmarks and properties and supporting the growth of cultural assets within the community.

Strategy 1 | Promote the preservation of Windsor’s historically and architecturally significant resources.

ACTIONS

1. Ensure publicly owned properties (sites, artifacts, structures and buildings) of historical and architectural significance are protected and preserved.
2. Assess risks and vulnerabilities of historic properties located within floodplains and work with CT DEEP and SHPO to reduce those risks while preserving the property’s historic character.
3. Continue to update and maintain a list of the Town’s historic properties, including national and state register properties and historic resources inventory (survey of the -town).
4. Encourage adaptive re-use of existing historic sites, buildings, and structures.
5. Determine and implement appropriate protection measures for barns and tobacco sheds, including pursuing funding opportunities to preserve and maintain town-owned tobacco sheds.

Strategy 2 | Support and promote arts, entertainment, and cultural organizations.

ACTIONS

1. Continue to ensure that arts and cultural events are well advertised through the Town’s websites and social media channels.
2. Continue to work with local schools and community organizations to ensure that Windsor’s youth have access to arts, cultural, and entertainment programs.
3. Take advantage of technical assistance offered by the state and non-profit arts, culture and preservation organizations.

Strategy 3 | Continue to educate residents and visitors about Windsor’s importance as a historic community.

ACTIONS

1. Encourage and support owners of historical properties to properly steward them by providing educational programs on preservation resources.
2. Provide education and training opportunities for commissioners such as those provided through Preservation Connecticut’s Local Historic District Training.
3. Highlight Windsor’s history through the use of various mediums to reach a broad audience.

Strategy 4 | Continue to promote Windsor’s historic and cultural resources as tourism destinations.

ACTIONS

- 1. Continue to market Windsor’s history and celebrate its heritage through community events.
- 2. Become a Cultural District through the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to leverage Windsor’s arts, cultural assets, and promote tourism.