Town of Cheshire

2026 – 2036 Plan of Conservation and Development

Draft 03.06.2026

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Chapter One - Introduction

A. What is a Plan of Conservation and Development?

A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD, the "Plan") is an advisory document that serves as a municipality's official action plan for its future land use, development, and conservation goals. The plan outlines a town's physical, social, economic, and governmental conditions and trends to formulate a community's vision for its future. POCDs contain information on a municipality's housing supply, recreation, transportation, social services and public utilities which assist in identifying community needs pertaining to these areas. The plan is not a mandate but instead aids as a comprehensive set of policies, goals, and implementation strategies that guide the physical and economic development of a municipality. The execution of the PoCD is carried out by the town's staff, boards and commissions, community groups, and private development.

Goals – Broad and overarching vision and core themes for the Town. Goals can incorporate specific objectives and can span across sectors.

Policies – Adopted frameworks which are intended to guide decisions about the desired visions and goals. Policy formulation can coordinate the comprehensive planning efforts by exploring different courses of action to address a problem or achieve a goal.

Implementation Strategies – The process for transforming plans into actions and actions into desired outcomes. Implementation may involve specific prescribed steps and assign designated bodies for completion and monitoring.

B. Statutory Basis and State Plan

Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Chapter 126, Section 8-23, requires every municipality's Planning Commission to prepare, amend, and adopt a Plan of Conservation and Development once every ten years. To ensure that municipal development is in alignment with that of neighboring cities and communities, local POCDs shall be cohesive with state and regional plans.

Each Plan of Conservation and Development must consider:

1) the need for housing, health, education, recreation, social services, utilities, safety, transportation, and communications;
2) the need for affordable housing;
3) the protection of drinking water supplies;
4) the use of clustered and other housing development patterns instead of conventional development patterns;
5) the state and regional Plans of Conservation and Development;
6) the need for energy-efficiency and energy conservation;
7) the protection and preservation of agriculture;
8) and physical, social, economic, and governmental conditions and trends, in general.

Cheshire's Planning and Zoning Commission along with town staff, other boards and commissions, community groups,

private developers, and the general public collaborated to draft this Plan of Conservation and Development. Using data and statistics collected by Data Haven, Connecticut Data Collaborative, the Partnership for Strong Communities, Advance CT and various other organizations, the Commission produced the recommendations and vision for the future of Cheshire set forth in this document.

The first Plan of Conservation and Development in Cheshire was adopted in 1947. The town adopted its most recent PoCD in 2016. The current Plan focused on six main themes. The 2016 PoCD included the following themes:

1. Policy Overview for Commercial Areas
2. Policy Overview for Industrial Areas
3. Policy Overview for Residential Concerns
4. Policy Overview for Community Facilities
5. Policy Overview for Environmental Resources
6. Policy Overview for Historic and Cultural Resources.

Each of these themes listed priority focus areas and recommendations which have guided development and town priorities for the last 10 years. A survey of the Planning and Zoning Commission and follow-up meeting noted that many of the policies and strategies in the 2016 PoCD have been completed.

C. Plan Consistency

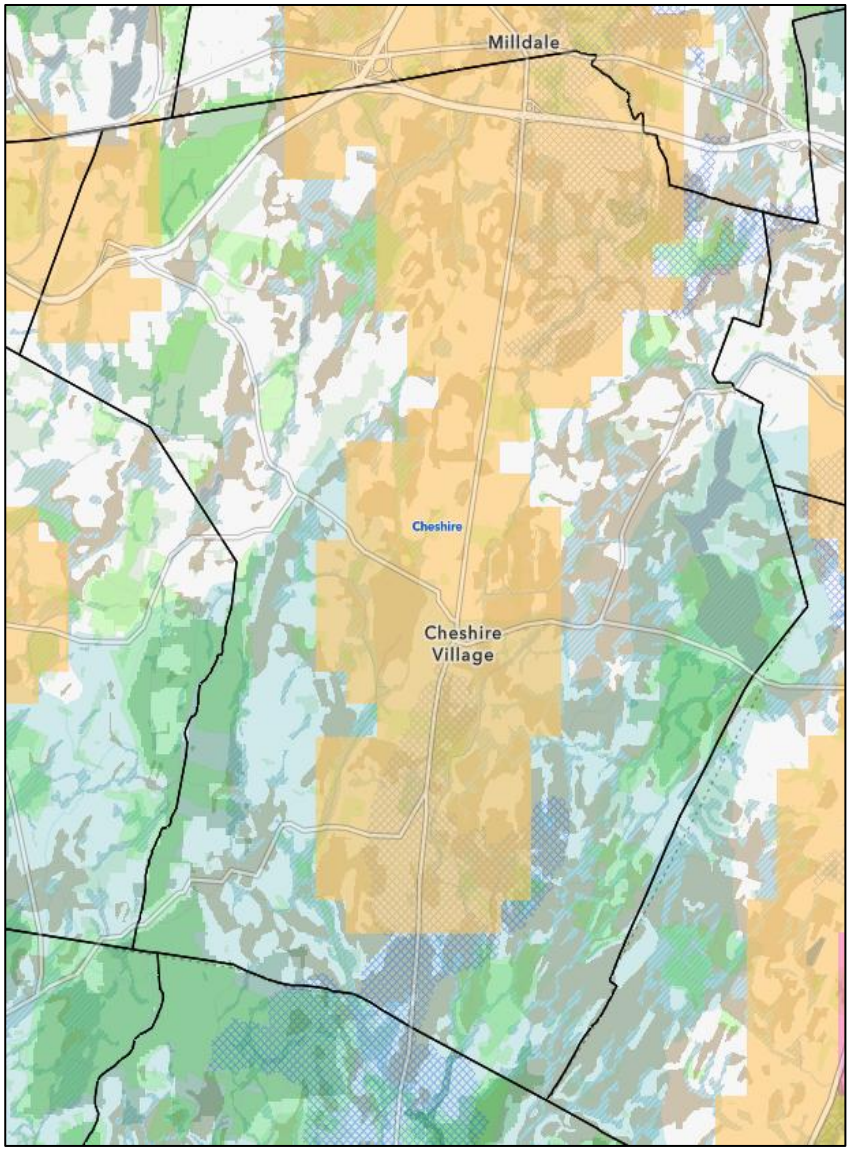
1. 2025 State Conservation and Development Policies Plan

As required by CGS 8-23, this Plan has been reviewed for consistency with the 2025-2030 Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan (State C&D Plan). The 2025 State C&D Plan takes a different approach from those of years past. It places more emphasis on the written document and the policies found within than on the Locational Guide Map (LGM). Historically, state agencies were required to confirm consistency between the local PoCDs and the LGM when considering state funding for local projects. Prior LGMs noted Priority Funding Areas which relied on existing infrastructure availability and were based on census blocks. Census blocks are formed around population density rather than land area and they vary greatly in size. As such, the former

LGM often included whole census blocks in priority funding areas that may have only partly included infrastructure and therefore could be eligible to receive state funding when ground conditions may not align with the policies within the Plan.

The updated LGM is based on activity centers which consider downtown areas, transit stations and corridors, infrastructure, and other public facilities. The map creates a circumference around these activity centers which is based on the considerations for realistic growth around existing built-up areas. This model lends itself to prioritizing development in and around already dense areas and is less likely to create conflict areas where natural conditions may call for conservation priorities, but the census block is noted as a priority funding area for development.

The 2025 State C&D Plan puts a focus on environmental stewardship as the basis for the continued success of the State. Clean air and clean water, as well as reducing the impact of development on the natural environment are key themes that run throughout the plan. This Cheshire Plan includes nature-based same themes found within the State C&D plan including fostering a connected and accessible community; development of a diverse housing stock, creation of a thriving economy by encouraging development in areas capable of supporting it through transportation options, and infrastructure capabilities; and being good stewards of natural resources by maintaining critical



2025 CT Locational Guide Map

infrastructure, encouraging nature based solutions, and protecting and enhancing connectivity of critical habitats and natural lands.

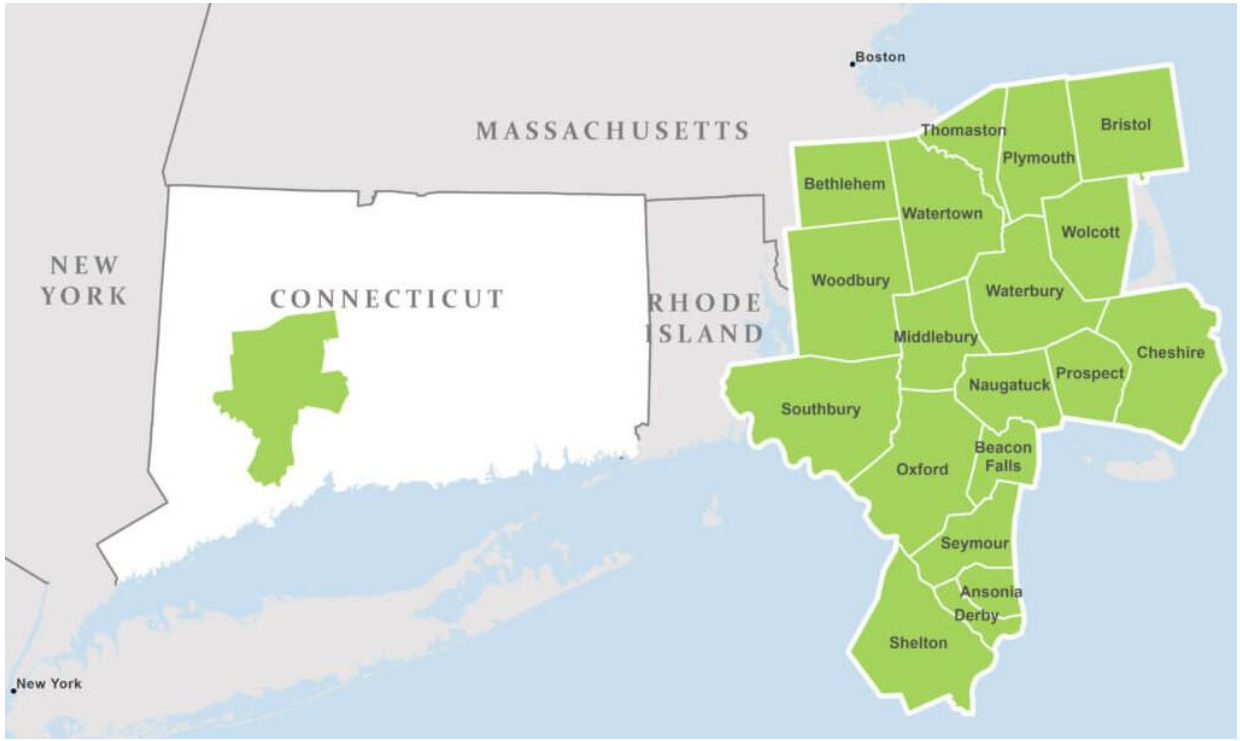
The current LGM, as seen in the map, shows that a large portion of the center of Cheshire, surrounding the Route 10 corridor, as a "Suburban Activity Zone." Suburban activity zones are town centers or areas surrounding more intense activity zones. They include strong commercial, civic, and transportation-related uses and are generally spread over larger areas than local, regional or major activity zones. This is an area that should be the focus of development and redevelopment due to the presence of infrastructure, such as water and sewer, and transportation options.

The Cheshire Plan is consistent with the LGM with future development in town focused within this activity zone. The north end of Route 10, and the industrial district that lies along the northern end of town are the focal points for future economic development and multi-family housing growth.

2. Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments Regional Plan of Conservation and Development

At the time of the creation of this plan, the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG), of which Cheshire is one of 19 member communities, is in the process of developing its first regional PoCD. As such, there is no plan to review for consistency. However, a brief review of available documents related to the drafting of the plan indicates that many of the same themes discussed within the Cheshire Plan will be addressed in the NVCOG plan. A summary of stakeholder interviews published by NVCOG shows that the most mentioned concerns included parks and recreation, downtown/main street revitalization, active transportation, and community events and programs. With the need for additional transportation grants being one of the most important topics.

Top challenges for the region were shown to be roads and highways, water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure, and funding and resource allocation.



NVCOG Region

Source: NVCOG

Chapter Two – Background and Demographics of Cheshire

A. History

The Town of Cheshire is located in New Haven County and is part of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG)

planning region. The Town has a Council/Manager form of Government providing stable and consistent governance. Prior to incorporation as a separate municipality in 1780, Cheshire was part of the Town of Wallingford. Wallingford, Cheshire's parent town, was settled in 1670, largely by people from New Haven. By 1694, farmers began settlements, far removed from one from another. Farmers moving into what is now Cheshire were called the "West Farmers" as they had to travel west from Wallingford. One group of families, the Hall and Curtis families, settled along the Quinnipiac River in Cheshire's northeast corner. Other families, most notably the Brooks, Ives, Doolittles, and Hitchcock families, moved to the southern part of town where Cook Hill Road and South Brooksvale Road are now. The Moss Family settled their farm by the Ten Mile River and received the first Royal Grant from the King of England for their 90-acre tract of land against the "Blue Hills" to the northwest.

The early settlers had a sort of Colonial commute, as they held a permanent residence in Wallingford, but traveled the 10 or so miles west to Cheshire to tend their farms. By 1719, the West Farmers remained prominent in Wallingford and began efforts to establish a

Farmington Canal – Lock 12 Arch

local school. By 1723, Wallingford granted the West Farmers separate village status. Thomas Brooks from Brooksville Road renamed the area New Cheshire, paying homage to his home city of Chester located in Cheshire County, England. The Quinnipiac area, known for its orderly farms along a single road soon became known as Cheshire Street. A year later, in 1724, the new village built their own church. The First Congregational Church Meeting House was built where Lanyon Drive meets South Main Street. The congregation outgrew this small meeting house and built a second location in 1736 on what is now called the Church Green.

After the Revolutionary War, a movement was made to locate an Episcopal Academy in Cheshire. Cheshire Academy has had a long and illustrious career and even served as a military academy in the Civil War. Among its more celebrated alumni are Admiral Foote of Cheshire; Gideon Wells, Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln; Confederate General Joseph Wheeler; and Jay Pierpont Morgan. The 2024 Olympics included Cheshire Academy alumna and sprinter Alexis Holmes.

In 1780, the Connecticut state legislature granted separate town status to Cheshire, which also included modern day Prospect. Prospect eventually became its own municipality in 1837. Like many communities at that time, various mills were located in Cheshire, such as grist mills and sawmills, to support the population. Small brooks emptying into the Mill River and Ten Mile River provided the water power needed to drive those mills, and dams were constructed throughout. Additionally, the nutrient rich soil composition in Cheshire allowed fruit trees and other crops to flourish, establishing a profitable farming community in the area.

In the 19th century, new advancements in transportation helped Cheshire grow. In 1801, a new turnpike, today's Route 10, opened connecting New Haven and Farmington with stagecoach service. Later in 1827, the Farmington Canal opened providing a new inland water route between Northampton, Massachusetts and the New Haven ports. This allowed farmers and other manufacturers to

easily access transport to sell their goods. In 1848, the New Haven and Northampton Railroad opened, bringing locomotive service to Cheshire along the towpath of the canal. This allowed an even faster method of transport for both people and goods to and from Cheshire. As a result, manufacturing grew in Cheshire. Products made in town included oyster kegs, nails, hairpins, metal buttons and stampings, among others (*Source: Town Historian*). The canal corridor continues to be an important aspect of Cheshire, now used as the Farmington Canal Trail. As Americans became more reliant upon automobiles, the State took control of older turnpikes and invested heavily in their upgrades. Route 10 was paved, and railroad usage began to decline; service was limited after 1956, and eventually all service in Cheshire ended by 1987 (*Source: Wikipedia*). Interstate 84 opened with an interchange at Route 70 in 1961, and Interstate 691 was connected through Cheshire to Interstate 84 in 1987 with an interchange at Route 10 allowing for easy access to the north and west ends of Town. These areas have been a focus for commercial and industrial development.

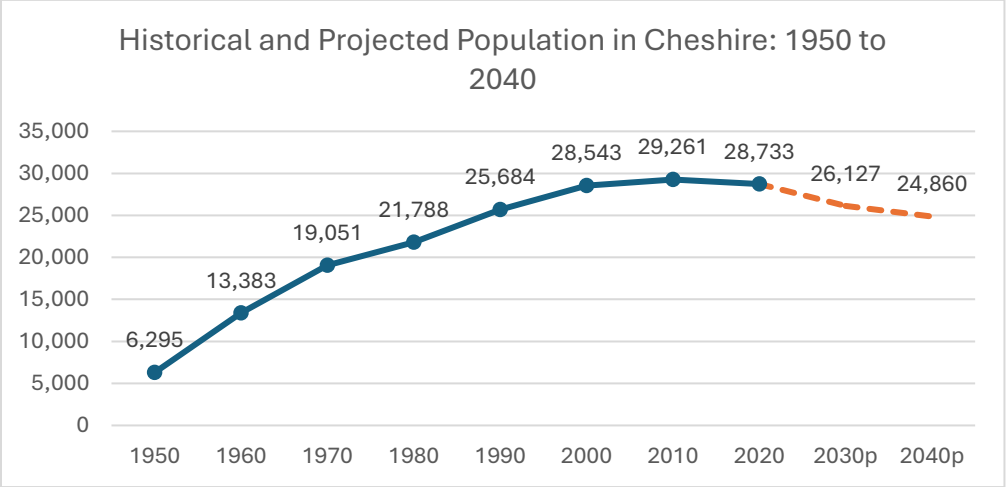
Like much of the rest of Connecticut, Cheshire saw explosive growth after World War II growing from only about 6,200 residents in 1950 to over 29,000 by 2010. Today, Cheshire is a verdant bedroom community with approximately 29,000 residents. Although it has seen such growth, the Town retains its suburban and rural character with numerous active farms and over 4,800 acres of protected open space that have been strategically purchased to balance development and preservation. Cheshire has been named the "Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut" with several large commercial growers managing and operating over 5 million square feet of greenhouses and fields of flowers distributed across the northeast and beyond.

B. Population Profile

Examining a municipality's current and past population statistics, housing stock and business trends can paint a clear picture of a community today and over the last decade. This data is fundamental in assessing progress made towards goals set in the current POCD and refining the process of achieving future goals outlined in this document.

The population of Cheshire in 1900 was only 1,989 people. Between 1950 and 1970, the population grew from 6,295 to 19,051, a 202% increase in 20 years.

As of 2022, Cheshire is home to 29,017 residents (*Source: Partnership for Strong Communities*). This number is expected to decrease by 12% by 2040. In recent years, the population of Cheshire has become more diverse. Between 2010 and 2020, the white population in Cheshire shrank by 7.1% while the non-white population increased by 27%. People of color including the Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Black/ African American and Native American populations make up approximately 20% of Cheshire's population today. It is important to note that because these population figures are from the US Census, they include individuals incarcerated at the Cheshire Correctional Institute and Manson Youth Institution. As of October 2025, there were 1,500 such individuals (Source: CT Dept of Corrections).



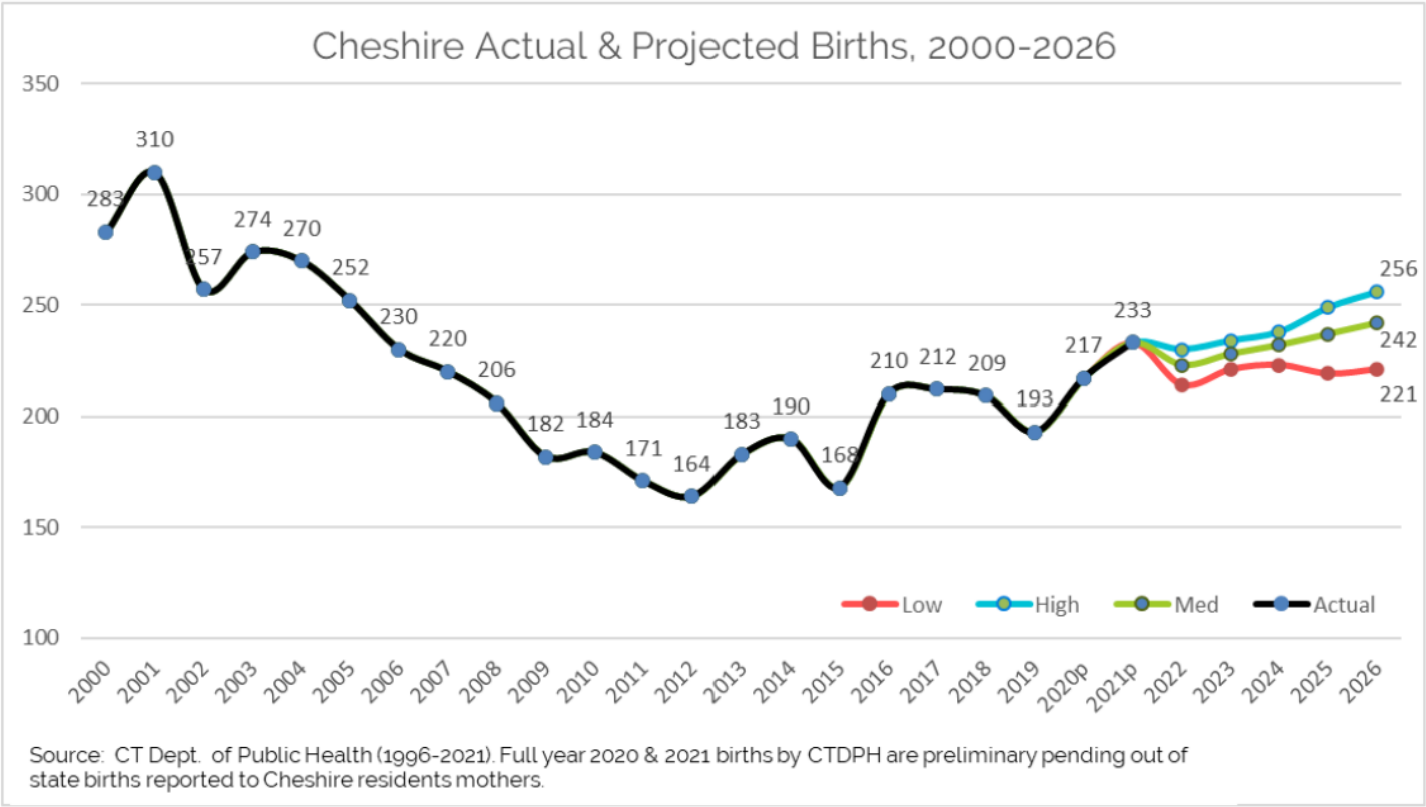
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census, 1950-2020. Projected Population by Connecticut Data Center.

From 2010 to 2020, the child population experienced a decline of about 15.6% while the adult population grew by 2.6%. Currently, residents aged 50 to 59-years-old are the most populous group in town and make up about 16% of Cheshire's population. This is expected to change over the next twenty years, with children aged zero to four years old seeing the largest increase in numbers along with the over 65 population. During that period the 40-64 age group is expected to significantly decrease. Recently approved housing developments are also anticipated to contribute to the school age population in town with one multifamily development projected to bring approximately 90 additional pupils (*Source: Cheshire Public Schools*). While the Cheshire Schools enrollment projection shows an increase in students over the next several years, it remains to be seen whether the increase pans out. Even if the projections are accurate, the schools appear to have enough capacity as enrollment has decreased by over 500 students since 2010. Understanding these differing age demographics will help in planning for future Town services and development such as access to health care, transportation, childcare, education and senior facilities.

Although the US Census population projection shows a downward trend overall through 2040, it is important to note that this is based on 2020 Census Data which was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, and before the ongoing construction of several hundred housing units within Cheshire. The impact that these additional units will have on the

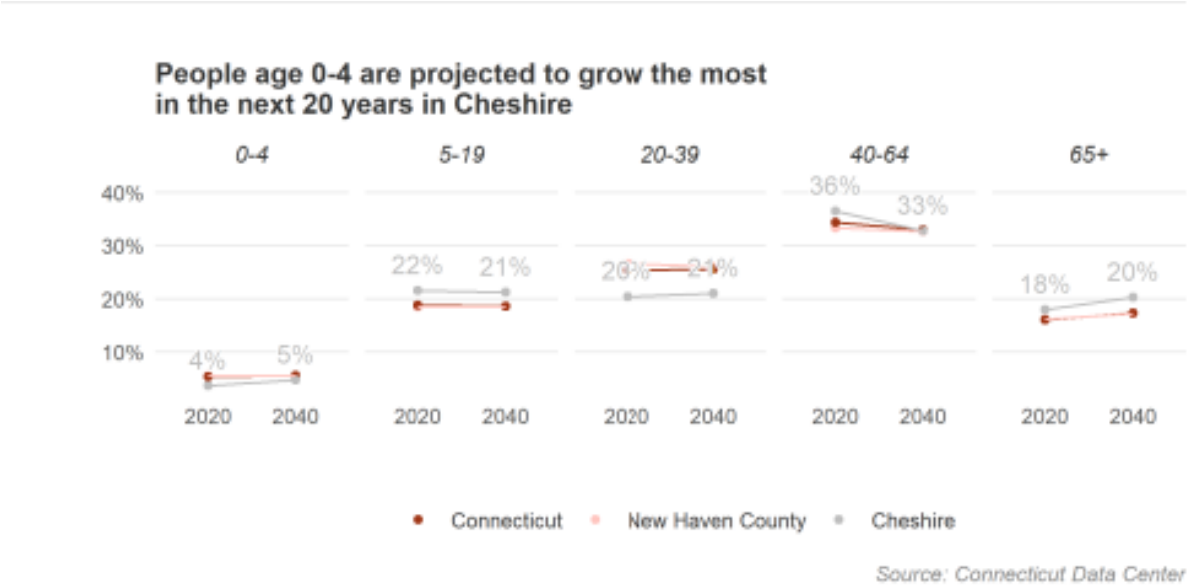
Top: Construction of the New Norton School
Bottom: Construction of the new Barnum School
Source: Cheshire BoE

population is not yet clear; however, the Cheshire Board of Education is projecting an overall increase in school population due to the increase in housing units and an expected increased birthrate. The table below shows actual and projected births between 2000 and 2026 with the latest actual numbers from 2021. The latest available birth numbers from CT Department of Health show that there were 215 resident births in 2022 which appears to align with the low projection in the chart.



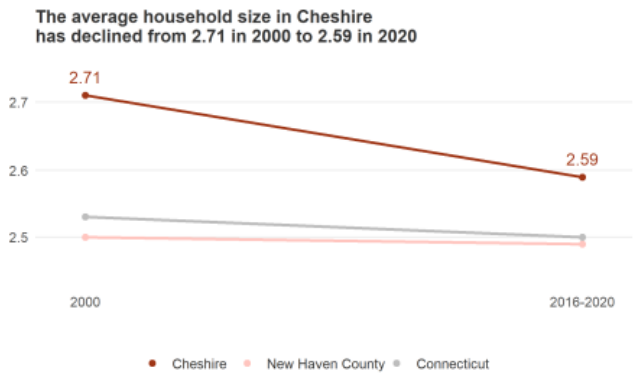
Source: Enrollment Projection Update for Cheshire Board of Education, SLAM Collaborative

Age Cohort Projections 2020-2040



Source: Connecticut Data Center

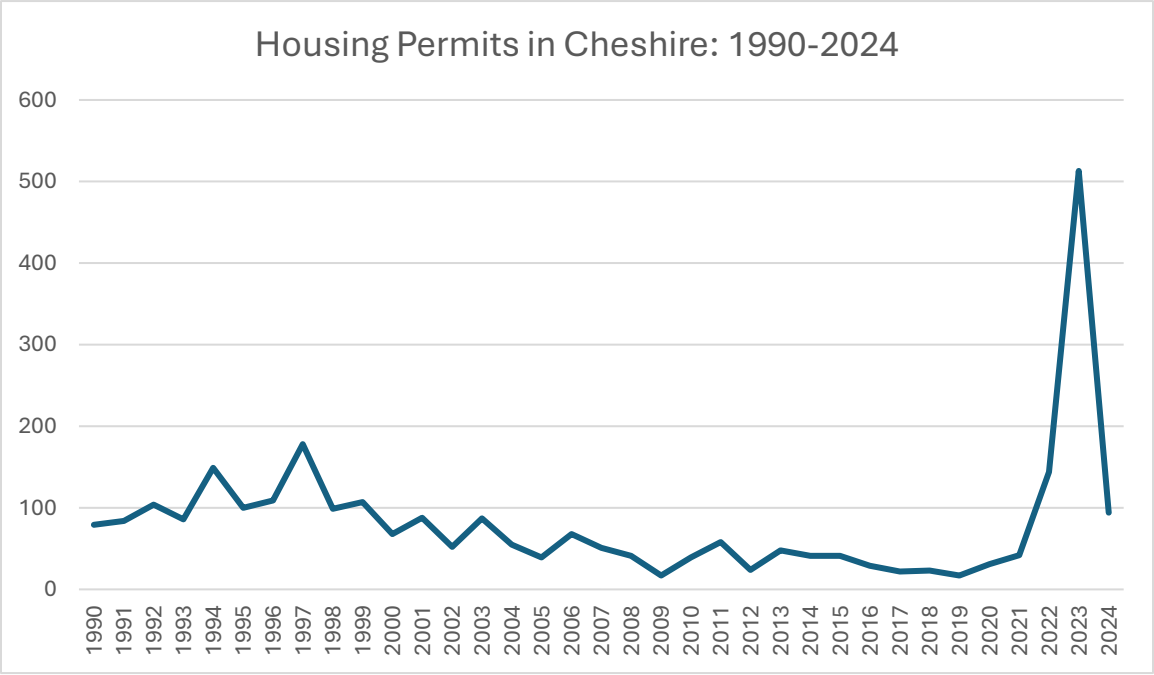
Household sizes in Cheshire are decreasing. Twenty years ago, the average household size in town was 2.71 and by 2020 it was 2.59 which reveals a trend in fewer households having school-age children.



Source: Connecticut Data Center

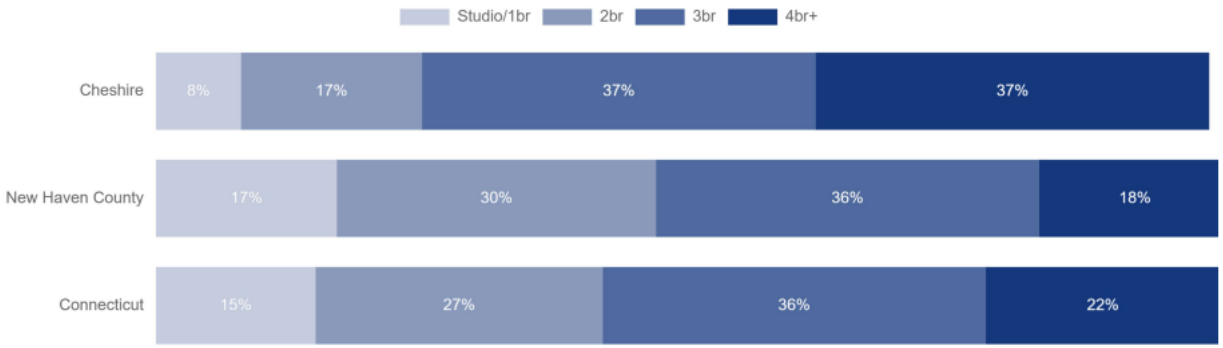
C. Housing

Annual building permit figures presented by the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) can provide detailed information on local economies based on an area's development trends. Although the number of building permits issued in Cheshire peaked in 1997 at 178 permits, a desire for a more diverse housing stock has resulted in the recent uptick of developments currently undergoing construction. In 2021 a total of 42 building permits were issued, all of which were for single family units. In 2022, this number dramatically increased to 144. In the following years this trend continued. In 2023, 39 single family houses were permitted as well as approximately 470 multi-family housing units. In 2024, 34 single family units were permitted along with about 120 multi-family units.



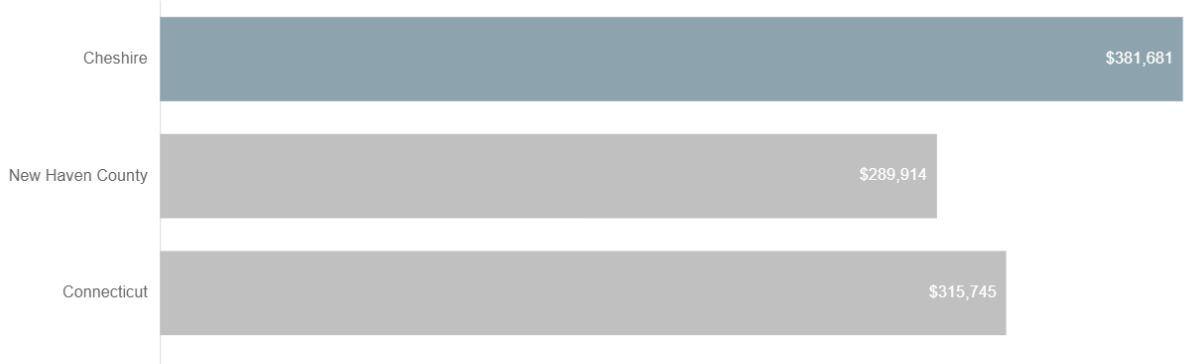
Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

As of 2023, Cheshire has a total of 10,457 housing units and 9,909 households. In other words, about 5% of housing units in town are vacant. About 84% of the housing stock is comprised of single-family buildings while approximately 15% of housing units are in multi-family buildings (Source: Cheshire 2023 Equity Profile). Additionally, almost 37% of housing units have four or more bedrooms. This exceeds both New Haven County and Connecticut. Homes with more bedrooms are desirable for growing families, those who often have guests to accommodate, and provide greater flexibility when conducting renovations. Roughly 80% of housing units in Cheshire are owner-occupied, which impressively exceeds owner-occupied housing statewide and in New Haven County. On the other hand, about 13% of housing units in Cheshire are renter-occupied compared to more than 30% of housing units both in the state and in New Haven County (Source: American Community Survey, 2020).



Source: American Community Survey, 2020

On average, homes in Cheshire are more expensive than in Connecticut and New Haven County. In 2022, the average home in Cheshire cost about $380,000 while the average home in Connecticut cost about $316,000 and in New Haven County, approximately $290,000.



Source: Zillow Home Value Index, 2021

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), households that spend over 30% of their income on rent, mortgage payments and other housing costs are considered cost-burdened. Households that spend 50% or more of their income on housing costs are considered severely cost-burdened. Generally, renters are more likely to be cost-burdened than people who own their homes. The 2020 American Community Survey results reveal that about 30% of renters in Cheshire are cost-burdened compared to 17% of homeowners with a mortgage and 12% of homeowners without a mortgage. Overall, roughly 11% of households in Cheshire are moderately burdened by housing costs, meaning they spend between 30% and 50% of their income on housing. About 7% of households are severely cost burdened and spend even more than 50% (Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020).

The provision of affordable housing for those who are cost-burdened is fundamental to thriving communities. CGS Chapter 126, Section 8-30g define affordable housing as units that receive government assistance, tenant rental assistance, are deed restricted or are financed by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) mortgages. The number of affordable housing units in Cheshire in 2021 was 386 units, nearly 4% of the housing stock. The average rent in Cheshire is comparable to New Haven County and the state. While about 33% of rental units in Cheshire cost $1,500 or more, about 24% of rental units in New Haven County and 28% of units in the state are at this price point (Source: American Community Survey, 2020).

Between the years of 2020 and 2022, Cheshire's Planning and Zoning Commission issued nearly 400 permit approvals for residential units. Notably more than 270 of these approvals were associated with townhouse or apartment developments. Additionally, one 44-unit affordable housing project in preliminary planning stages was presented to the Commission while another 300-apartment unit project awaited final site plan approval. At the time, a multifamily development containing 52 apartments was also pending Commission approval. The five years prior to this saw much less development with only 63 residential units earning approval in that timeframe. Eleven of these were apartment units that were under construction or had completed construction activities, while the remaining were single family residences.

Residential Community within the Stone Bridge Crossing development.

By 2023, a significant increase in development led to approximately 549 housing units in multi-family developments being under construction or anticipated to begin construction in town. Out of the seven development projects, three included units with deed restrictions and qualified as affordable housing. In total, 479 units were expected to be market rate while about 70 units were considered affordable housing.

D. Business and Economy

Understanding a municipality's current business climate and ability to adapt and grow helps to inform the plan of how best to prepare for future economic development. The Town of Cheshire has a full-time Economic Development Director, along with an

Top Industries
Lightcast, 2022 (2 and 3 digit NAICS)

	Jobs	Share of Industry
1 Health Care and Social Assistance	2,630	
Social Assistance		*41%*
2 Retail Trade	2,132	
General Merchandise Retailers		*32%*
3 Wholesale Trade	2,032	
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods		*42%*
4 Manufacturing	1,453	
Transportation Equipment Mfg		*22%*
5 Construction	1,035	
Specialty Trade Contractors		*76%*
Total Jobs, All Industries	14,546	

Source: Advance CT, Cheshire Town Profile, 2024

Stone Bridge Crossing

Economic Development Commission. The Town understands the need to foster a diverse business climate and the need to remain competitive with other Connecticut towns. Cheshire has established a tax incentive policy which can be used in assisting businesses get established and grow within the town. In addition, Cheshire has established the Interchange Zone Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) for the area surrounding the I-691/Route 10 interchange. The TIF allows the town to designate earnings from increased assessed values to a special revenue source to be used only within the district. This funding source can be used in the construction of needed infrastructure to further the development of the district. In 2017, Cheshire adopted a Market Assessment and Marketing Plan for the Community. While some of the findings may be outdated in today's post-covid economic climate, many results and recommendations continue to apply.

Cheshire's central location within the State and along Interstates 84 and 691 make it an ideal location for both commercial and industrial business growth. The north central portion of Town adjacent to I-84 and 691

is dominated by Industrial zoning, and in many ways acts as the economic powerhouse of the town. This area is dominated by warehouse, distribution, and manufacturing facilities, as well as corporate offices. Additionally,

Cheshire maintains its agricultural roots as the center of the bedding plant industry, providing the region with plants throughout the year.

Commercial uses line Route 10, with the balance of the Town being mostly zoned for residential uses. The historic center of Cheshire surrounds the Routes 10/68/70 intersection and includes many traditional downtown shopping and dining options along with civic functions such as Town Hall, the library, fire house, and others.

The Cheshire economy overall is strong, as evidenced by the recent ground breaking of Stone Bridge Crossing, a mixed-use development which, when complete, will include 168,000 sq.ft. of retail space along with a hotel, and over 400 housing units. This project is evidence of the desire to both live and work within Cheshire. New construction across town continues to drive the expansion of the grand list with an increase in new construction value from $80M in FY 2023 to $120M in FY 2024, according to the Building Department records. According to the Cheshire Finance Department, the October 1, 2021, Net Taxable Grand List of $2,965,614,025 was an increase of $87,331,198, or 3.03 percent over the

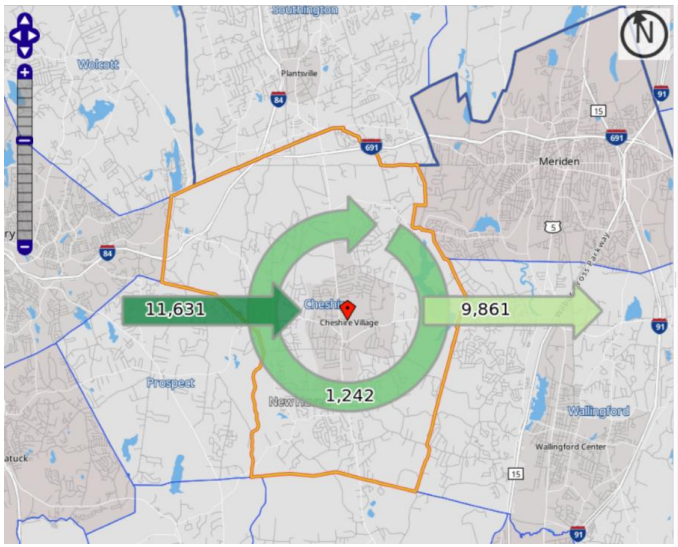
SOTS Business Registrations
Secretary of the State, March 2024

New Business Registrations by Year

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	229	264	279	292	346

Total Active Businesses 2,869

Source: Advance CT, Cheshire Town Profile 2024

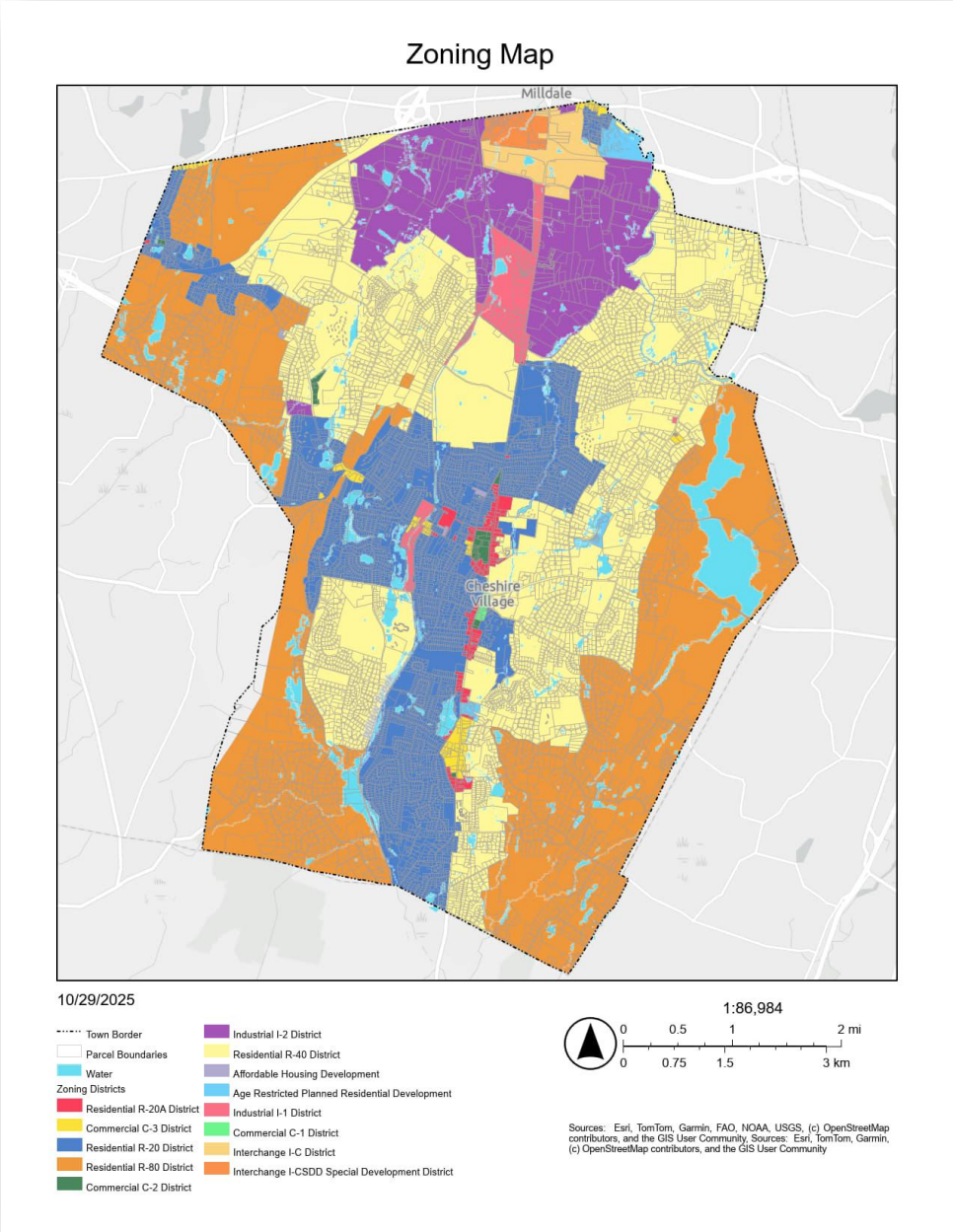


Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (Private Primary Jobs)

	2021 Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	12,873	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	11,631	90.4%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	1,242	9.6%
Living in the Selection Area	11,103	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	9,861	88.8%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	1,242	11.2%

According to the Census Bureau, in 2021 Cheshire imported more jobs than it exported.

Source: Census Bureau, OnTheMap



previous year. Two of the largest commercial real-estate conveyances in the Town's history occurred in 2023; 181 West Johnson Ave sold for $39,000,000 and 475 Knotter Drive sold for $25,250,000.

Major employers in Cheshire include Bozzuto's Inc., Whole Foods North East (Distributor), Macy's Logistics & Operations, Collins Aerospace, and Hanwha Aerospace. IAT Insurance has invested in an expansion to its Cheshire facility making it the home to for its Executive Staff and Training Center. In addition, Hanwha Aerospace has made Cheshire its international headquarters and Bozzuto's has become the largest privately held company in Greater Hartford with over 3,500 employees and $2.6B in sales in 2023.

The Secretary of State's office reports 2,869 business registrations within Cheshire, providing 14,546 jobs across all industries. The number of new business registrations in Town has been rising steadily from 229 new registrations in 2019 to 346 in 2023, the last year for which that data is available. The top industries in Cheshire are similar to those in most of Connecticut, with healthcare and retail trade providing the most jobs in Town.

As of 2023, the labor force in Cheshire consists of 16,069 people, of which only 2.8% are actively unemployed according to the Connecticut Department of Labor. This is better than the statewide unemployment rate of 3.75%.

The tables to the left depict where Cheshire residents work, and where Cheshire workers live. As shown, the highest percentage of commutes for jobs in Cheshire come from neighboring Waterbury (13.1%). Most other commuters come from neighboring and nearby towns, but a small percentage travel from further out such as New Haven (2.3%), and Hartford (1.3%). Conversely, the highest percentage of Cheshire residents traveling out of town for work are commuting to New Haven (11.1%) with much smaller numbers travelling to neighboring towns.

Job Counts by Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.) Where Workers Live - Private Primary Jobs

	2021 Count	2021 Share
All Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.)	12,873	100.0%
Waterbury city, CT	1,692	13.1%
Meriden city, CT	744	5.8%
Bristol city, CT	449	3.5%
Naugatuck borough, CT	352	2.7%
New Britain city, CT	324	2.5%
Cheshire Village CDP, CT	302	2.3%
New Haven city, CT	295	2.3%
Middletown city, CT	271	2.1%
Wallingford Center CDP, CT	224	1.7%
Hartford city, CT	164	1.3%
All Other Locations	8,056	62.6%

Job Counts by Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.) Where Workers are Employed - Private Primary Jobs

	2021 Count	2021 Share
All Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.)	11,103	100.0%
New Haven city, CT	1,227	11.1%
Waterbury city, CT	506	4.6%
Hartford city, CT	391	3.5%
New York city, NY	374	3.4%
Cheshire Village CDP, CT	373	3.4%
Meriden city, CT	349	3.1%
North Haven CDP, CT	328	3.0%
Bristol city, CT	228	2.1%
Wallingford Center CDP, CT	212	1.9%
Bridgeport city, CT	200	1.8%
All Other Locations	6,915	62.3%

Source: Census Bureau, OnTheMap

Chapter Three – The Vision

A. Vision Statement

The Cheshire Planning & Zoning Commission, in developing this 2026 Plan of Conservation & Development (PoCD), is guided by an interest in enhancing the economic, social, and cultural environment of Cheshire, and by the wish to advance policies and practices that will help create a more vibrant, sustainable, welcoming, healthy, and safe community for all who live, work, shop, and play in Cheshire.

Over the next decade, Cheshire seeks to solidify its place as one of the best and most vibrant small towns in Connecticut with an excellent quality of life underpinned by plentiful jobs, good schools, and great places for recreation. To that end, this plan focuses on the following four core principles as it lays out the vision for Cheshire.

1. We Envision a Cheshire with a strong **Quality of Life and Sense of Place.**
   This plan recognizes that residents are drawn to Cheshire for its excellent quality of life, feeling of safety, and quality education. This plan will lay the foundation to expand the things that have come to make Cheshire a great place to live. It will do so by focusing on strengthening existing design standards, protecting important historic resources, ensuring the preservation of open space and proper maintenance of parks, considering the future needs of the school infrastructure, fostering arts and entertainment for Cheshire residents to enjoy, and ensuring public safety for all residents.

2. We Envision a Cheshire that has a **Diverse and Resilient Development** pattern.
   This plan recognizes the strides that have been made in the past in creating a community that provides a breadth of employment opportunities and housing types. Over the next decade, Cheshire will focus on encouraging and expanding housing and employment options that are planned in such a way to ensure a resilient future. Cheshire recognizes that the most resilient communities are those with a wide array of both employment opportunities and housing options. This plan will also ensure that Cheshire is making the most out of its highway interchange areas which provide access to the rest of the region.

3. We Envision a Cheshire that is **Environmentally Sensitive.**
   Over the next ten years Cheshire will focus on continuing to build sustainability through environmental preservation and stewardship. The vast natural resources and protected open spaces must be properly managed and maintained, both for the enjoyment of Cheshire citizens and for the benefit of the natural environment. This plan recognizes the goals set forth within the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2025-2030 and its focus on mitigating the effects of a changing climate and includes preservation and protection of existing natural resources as Cheshire's best defense against adverse impacts. In addition, Cheshire will focus on preserving key agricultural properties and farmlands, as they connect us to our past and relate to our present as the Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut.

4. We Envision a Cheshire that is **Connected and Accessible**.
   Over the next ten years, Cheshire will continue to develop infrastructure to ensure that it remains connected with the rest of the region and with its own residents. Cheshire will focus on ways to deal with traffic congestion by exploring alternatives such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities and transit options. Cheshire will look to ensure the Town Center is well connected to all of its surrounding areas. Finally, Cheshire will ensure that all of these transportation options will be available for all users.

B. Plan Goals

This plan includes specific goals and implementation items as it pursues the following overall goals as the Town of Cheshire prepares itself to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of the next decade.

1. Continue to pursue the types of development and environment that contribute to the excellent quality of life.
2. Continue to provide adequate housing for a variety of income and family types.
3. Continue to foster the development of new businesses and business growth to provide a range of employment options for Cheshire residents.
4. Ensure the protection of the natural environment for both the enjoyment of Cheshire residents and the benefits it provides in protecting against the adverse impacts of a changing climate.
5. Provide for alternatives to automobile traffic for the purpose of lessening congestion on existing streets and in order to create accessibility to those who are unable or would prefer not to drive

Chapter Four – Cheshire's Excellent Quality of Life and Strong Sense of Place

A. Background

Cheshire is known for its excellent quality of life, drawing families from surrounding towns and states with its natural beauty, plentiful jobs, excellent schools, and easy access to major markets in Connecticut, New England, and New York. As it has grown, Cheshire has continued to maintain its small-town, close-knit community feel, where its residents value connection and neighborly interactions. A variety of family-friendly activities and events are offered throughout the year which appeal to families and help to solidify the town's unique character. Cheshire boasts many recreational facilities including parks, a town pool, walking trails, and over 4,800 acres of open space for passive enjoyment of the outdoors. In the next ten years, Cheshire strives to continue to strengthen its characteristics that make it a desirable place to live by finding ways to reduce congestion on its streets, adding additional amenities, and improving community-wide facilities to be enjoyed by all of its inhabitants.

1. Community Facilities and Schools

Overall, Cheshire's community facilities have been well-maintained and are positioned to support the town as it continues to grow. In recent years, voters approved the construction of two new state-of-the-art elementary schools in order to consolidate the number of school buildings and provide the town's students with learning environments that meet current and future educational needs.

The Town Hall, located on Elm Street, is approximately 40,000 square feet in size and houses all of the town departments. It is a historic building, which has been expanded several times, most recently in 1988. There are 77 on-site parking spaces, which is sufficient for most functions. Overflow parking is available at the nearby grange, and on-street parking.

The Cheshire Public Library was most recently expanded in 1996. A shared parking agreement with nearby property owners is important to maintain in order to continue to provide sufficient parking. More recently, the front entrance area, and lower level were updated to provide a more modern and updated look, more streamlined check-out process, and new maker spaces. The library is well-positioned to continue to serve the community into the future.

Bartlem Park and Cheshire High School

As previously noted, two new schools were recently approved and are under construction at the time of the creation of this Plan. Currently, there are eight schools serving the community, five elementary schools, one middle school, the primary high school and an alternative high school for students in need of a non-traditional learning environment. In 2022, Cheshire Public School commissioned an updated enrollment projection. This projection shows an increased student population over the next ten years and was used to influence the design and size of the new elementary schools. It will be important to monitor student enrollment as the town continues to grow to ensure there are enough seats for students in the appropriate locations based on class size. School facilities should continue to be monitored and maintained.

The high quality of Cheshire's schools is a significant factor in the quality of life and a major reason families choose to move to Cheshire. The schools have consistently high ratings and high graduation rates. According to the Superintendent of schools, the schools have risen from 35th in educational attainment in 2016 to 9th in 2025 out of the state's 166 school districts.

Cheshire's younger school aged populations performed well in school with Pre-K through 12th grades having a 95% 4-year graduation rate compared to the state's 89% 4-year graduation rate. Of the students enrolled in Cheshire Public Schools between 2022 and 2023, 74% of pupils met or exceeded expectations in math while 76% of students met or exceeded expectations in English language arts (*Source: CT Department of Education*).

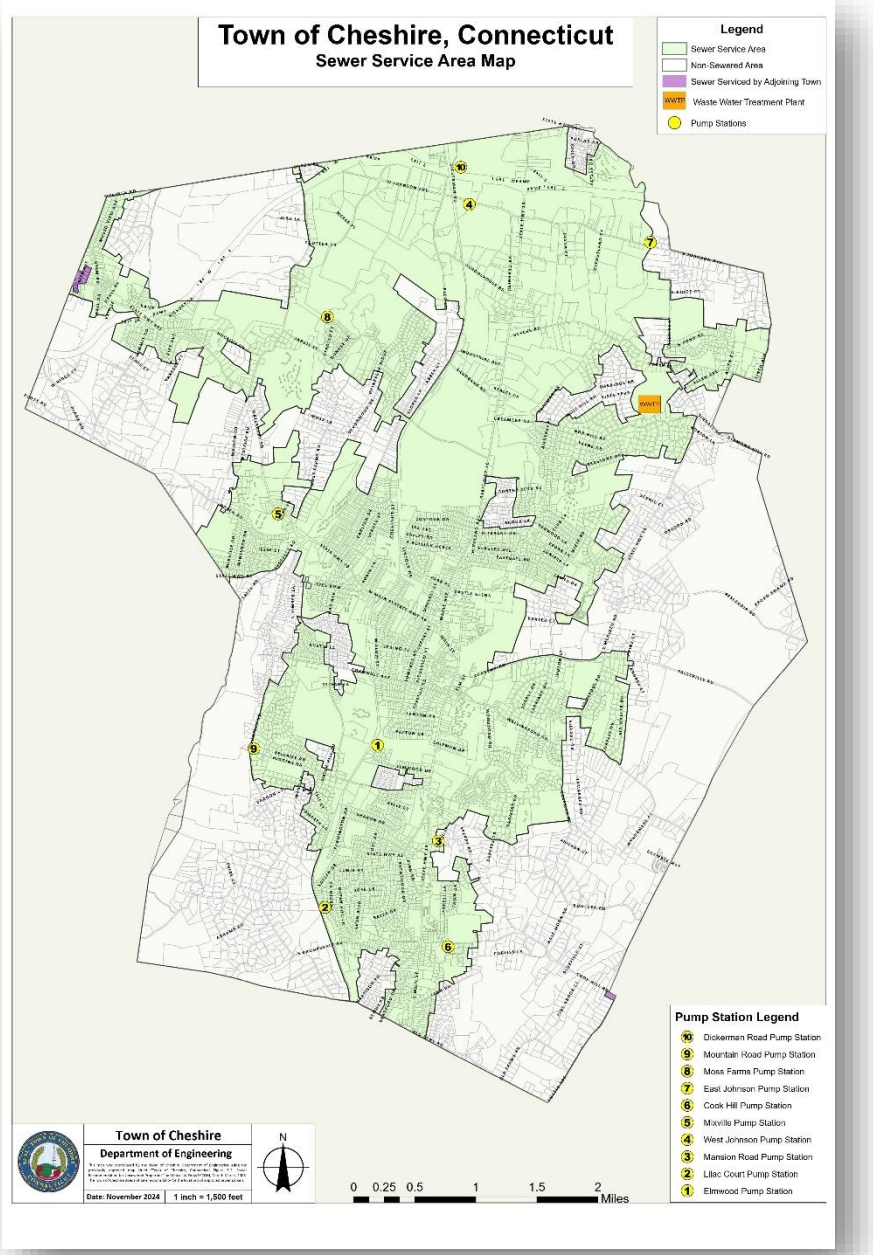
School Districts	Available Grades	Total Enrollment	Pre-K Enrollment	4-Year Grad Rate (2021-22)
Cheshire School District	PK-12	4,224	116	95%
Statewide	-	512,652	19,530	89%

Smarter Balanced Assessments
Met or Exceeded Expectations, 2022-23

	Math	ELA
Cheshire School District	74%	76%
Statewide	42%	48%

Source: CT Department of Education, 2023-24

Much of Cheshire is fortunate to be served by both water and sewer service. Water is provided by the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, which is headquartered in New Haven. Water is sourced from various reservoirs and well fields throughout the region. This service will need to be monitored in order to ensure it can continue to provide water service to areas throughout



town as growth continues. In addition, Cheshire is home to the Broad Brook Reservoir which serves the City of Meriden. Its large, protected watershed lies in the easterly portion of town. Finally, watershed areas for Lake Whitney, which provides water to Hamden, lie within the southern portion of Cheshire.

Sewer service is provided to a large portion of town, primarily in the Route 10 corridor and surrounding area. This service is controlled by the Cheshire Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), which operates a water pollution control plant in town. The facility underwent a major upgrade in 2015 and continues to provide sufficient capacity. The WPCA will need to continue to monitor growth and development to ensure their system can continue to operate efficiently. Active monitoring of facilities and equipment is also paramount to ensuring adequate public safety going forward.

2. Public Safety

Public Safety, including adequate fire protection, police coverage, and emergency medical services contributes to the overall quality of life in a community through ensuring a sense of safety and security among the residents. Cheshire is served by the Cheshire Police Department, which consists of three divisions, Administrative, Patrol, and Support Services. Personnel consist of 48 sworn officers, eight dispatchers, four administrative personnel, and two Animal Control Officers.

There are seven Specialized Units including ATV Patrol, Bicycle Patrol, Honor Guard, Crash Reconstruction Squad, Motorcycle Patrol, Special Response Team, and Warrant Service Squad. The department is located at 500 Highland Avenue, where administrative offices, dispatch, and the vehicle fleet are located. The facility is well maintained and includes two solar carports under which cruisers are housed.

Cheshire Fire Headquarters

Cheshire Fire Department has served Cheshire since 1912. Its main headquarters and support offices are located at 250 Maple Avenue in the center of town. The department is comprised of two organizations, the Cheshire Municipal Fire Department (CMFD), and the Cheshire Fire Department, Incorporated (CFDI). CMFD was established in 2004 and has six employees which include the Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, two Deputy Fire Marshals, and two Administrative Assistants. The CFDI is comprised of 75 entirely volunteer members that operate seamlessly with the staff of the CMFD. The Fire Department responds from three stations and currently operates with seven Engines, one tower ladder, two heavy rescue trucks, one brush truck, one collapse unit, one boat, and several staff and support vehicles. In 2024, the department responded to a total of 1,012 incidents (*Source: Cheshire Fire Dept*).

The department is served by three stations. The main headquarters, located on Maple Avenue, was built in 1982 and houses the department's administrative, fire marshals, and public relations divisions. Several apparatuses are stationed there as well. Located on the northwestern edge of the town is Company 2. The Cheshire Heights Neighborhood Association originally founded this station in 1954 as a small two-bay station in response to the growing number of residential structures located in their immediate area and the demand for increased fire protection on the west side of town. In 2005, this Station was completely rebuilt, remodeled and

expanded to include a new four-bay apparatus floor, expanded living, bunk room, and meeting space. Today, the Station is first-due to the western half of town and Interstate 84, which is located only 1/8 mile from Company 2.

Located in the south end of Cheshire, is Station 3, which was constructed in 1970 as a sub-station for Fire Headquarters and provides apparatus to the southern half of the town. Station 3 underwent an extensive overhaul in 2007 and has been completely renovated and expanded to house multiple apparatus as well as additional living, bunk room, and meeting space.

Ambulance services are provided by a variety of service operators, including Trinity Health of New England Mobile Healthcare and American Medical Response (AMR), both of which are private entities contracted by the Town to provide coverage.

Overall, Cheshire is well protected, adding significantly to its quality of life. However, nationwide, volunteers are becoming more difficult to find to staff necessary departments, and Cheshire is no different. The Town will need to continue to monitor volunteer rates. Incentives such as reduced tax rates or annual stipends should be explored in an effort to attract volunteers, and if necessary, the town may need to evaluate the need for additional paid staff in the future to ensure adequate fire coverage.

3. Parks and Open Spaces

Cheshire takes pride in providing a variety of parks and outdoor open spaces for its residents to enjoy and boasts over 1500 acres of preserved land for outdoor enjoyment. In 2024, Cheshire spent nearly $8M to purchase land and expand Bartlem Park, providing new playing fields, recreation picnic area, walkways, and a new bathroom facility. The project also provided additional parking spaces, including near the pool. The park includes facilities for baseball, soccer, and other field sports, skateboarding, picnic areas and a band stand which is used throughout the summer for outdoor concerts. It is a major attraction for residents and is centrally located along South Main Street across from the High School.

Bartlem Park

Another significant recreational facility in Cheshire is the Farmington Canal Trail. This multi-use trail follows a former railroad and connects New Haven to Northampton Massachusetts. In Cheshire, it runs parallel to Route 10 and provides opportunities for bicycle and foot traffic. This path is mostly used for recreational purposes, but can also serve as an alternative commuting option, especially with its proximity to major job centers in the north end of town and its connections to Southington and Hamden.

Municipal Parking Lot Improvements

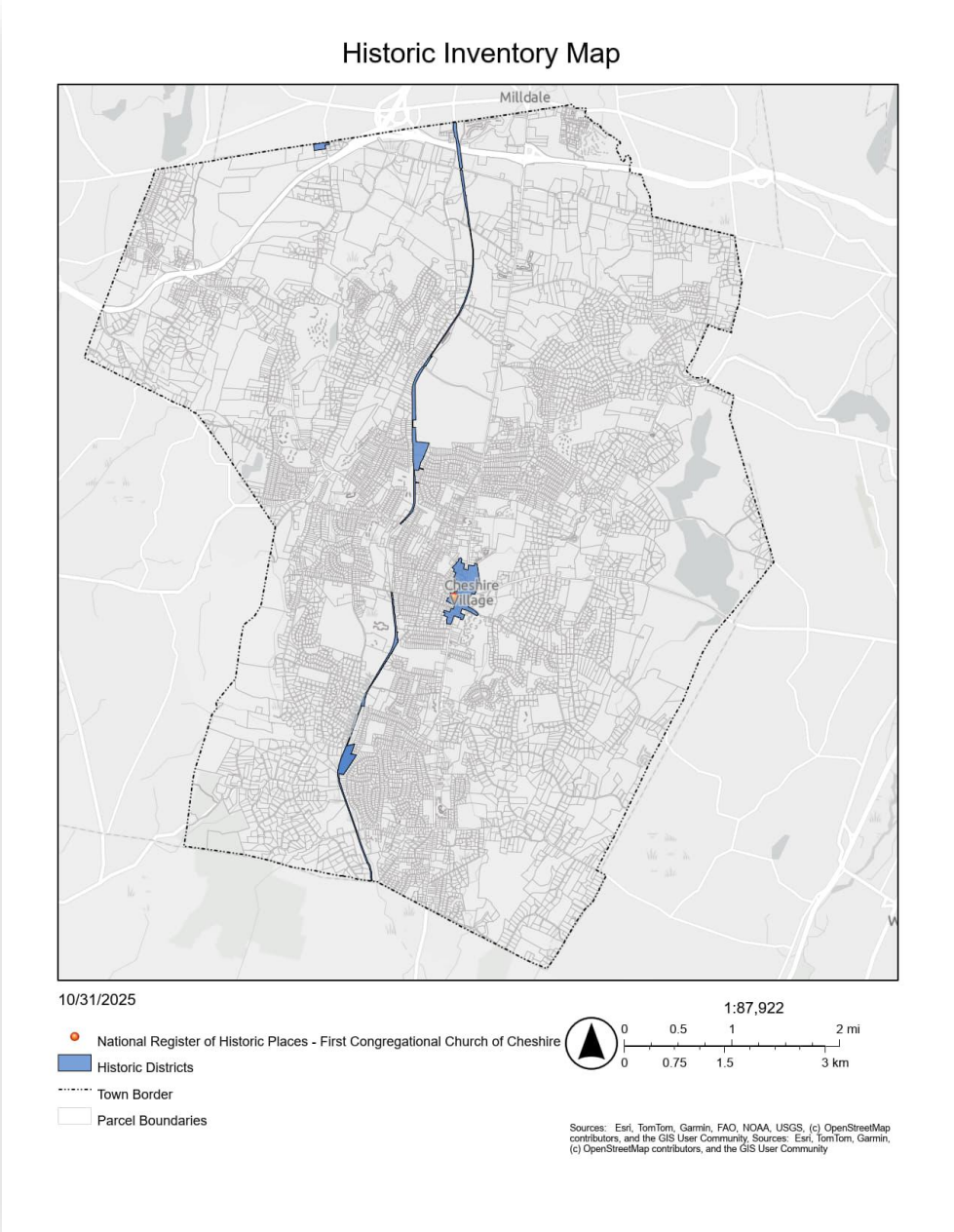
Several large open space parcels throughout town providing a more passive outdoor experience. The DiDominicis Preserve, Dime Savings, and Ten Mile Lowlands are just a few of the larger properties. There are other, smaller open space parcels throughout town offering hiking trails and the ability for residents to embrace the outdoors and enjoy nature.

More discussion regarding the Town's robust open space parcels can be found in Chapter 6.

A focus over the next ten years is to maintain these parcels in order to preserve their natural character and continued enjoyment. Controlling the illegal use of open space parcels, particularly by ATV riders, which can cause significant damage to the land, will be crucial. Adding property boundary signs, along with posting rules at each open space property should be explored. In addition, managing invasive species, flooding from nearby development, and protecting the properties from intrusion of adjacent property owners are just a few of the management obstacles facing the town.

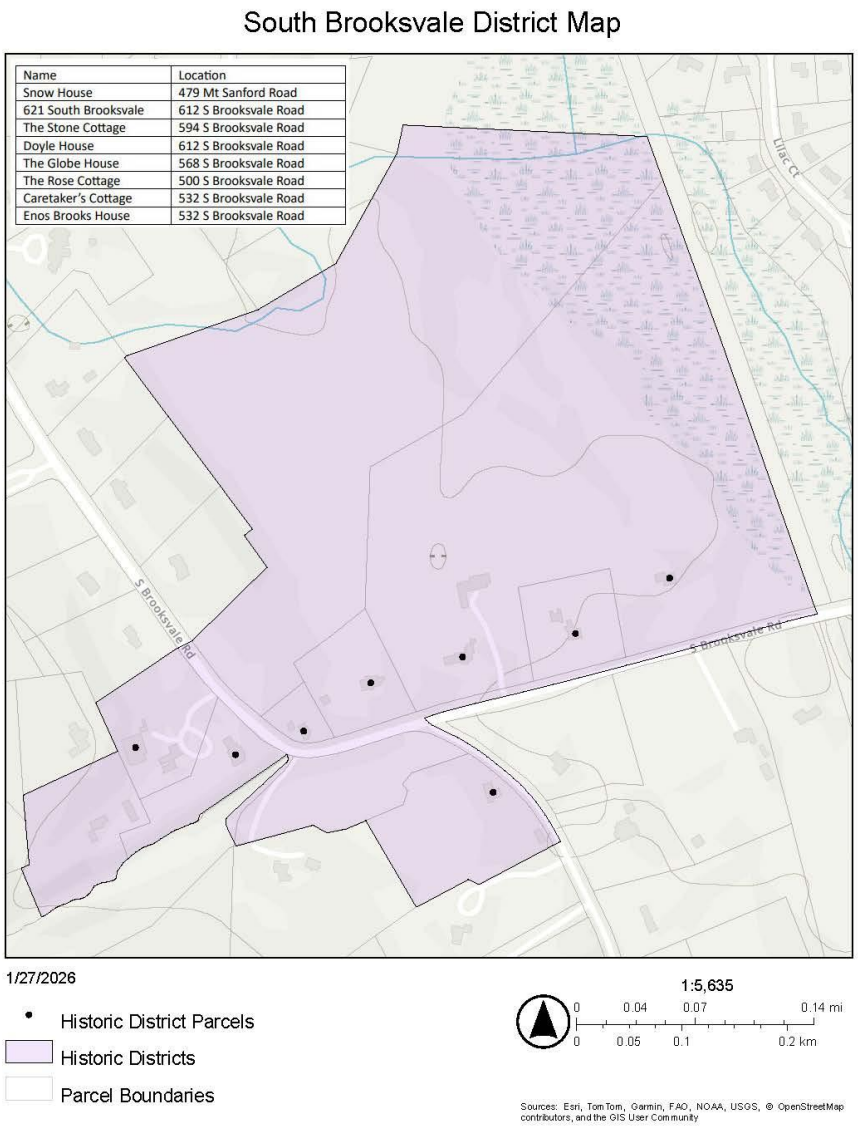
4. Design Standards and Historic Preservation

The Cheshire Zoning Regulations include Design standards throughout which apply to a limited area in town, primarily as it relates to affordable housing developments and parking throughout the commercial areas. The Town should consider adopting design standards for all commercial areas in order to require architectural design that



meets the desires of the community and creates harmony within the surrounding areas. Design standards could be developed for each area, for example standards along West Main Street surrounding the Ball and Socket factory may be different from those developed for the village center area near the Town Hall, while another set of standards could be developed for the South Main Street commercial area in the area of the Big Y. In addition to creating these standards, the Town should consider an Architectural Review Committee to review proposed development and ensure adherence to the design standards.

The Town Beautification Committee currently has an annual budget of $30,000 to supplement the efforts of the Department of Public Works. These funds are focused on beautification, mostly focused on replacing street trees, improving gateways and creating small parklets. A previous streetscape project resulted in a focus along Route 10 and the installation of Bradford Pear trees, which are now considered invasive. In an effort to require thoughtful and beneficial landscaping, the Town should consistently review and monitor development proposals with regard to landscaping plans and requirements. Street trees, plantings around parking areas, and



landscaping near buildings should be reinforced and verified before Certificates of Occupancy are issued. The Planning and Zoning Commission should review its landscaping standards to ensure that they are sufficient to achieve the desired goals. In addition, the Town should publish a list of accepted trees to guide developers to use local, non-invasive species in their planting plans. In addition, the Town should continue to fund beautification efforts, which in addition to working with developers would continue to improve the streetscape along Route 10.

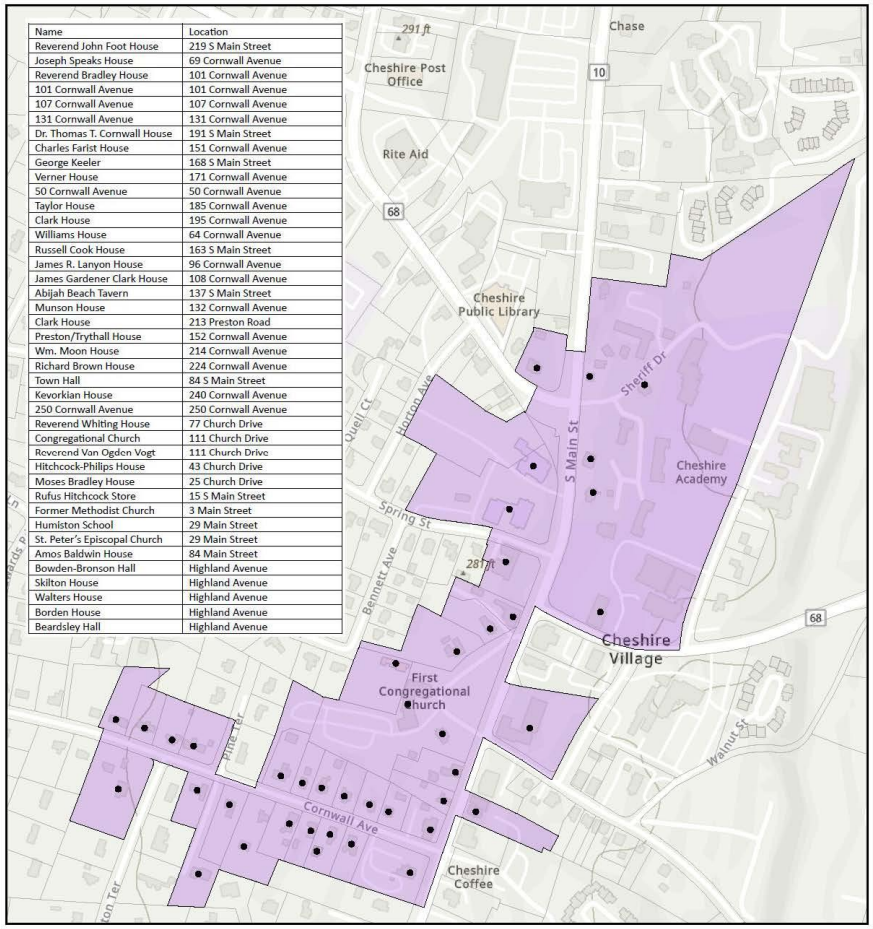
Historic Preservation is an important component to the overall sense of place in Cheshire. Its many historic homes and buildings, especially those surrounding the town center and along West Main Street, are a direct link to the past. In addition, continuously used agricultural lands hearken back to Cheshire's agrarian past. Preservation of both historic buildings and land helps to solidify the identity of the place in which they exist and help residents and visitors understand its past.

In an effort to preserve these historic buildings and properties, the Town should implement the proposed Demolition Delay Ordinance. Such an ordinance would require a waiting period between the filing of a demolition permit and the actual start of demolition.

This would allow for a determination to be made whether the building is architecturally significant and allow for an alternative plan to demolition to be enacted, such as relocating the building. Preservation Connecticut has a model demolition delay ordinance that can be used as the basis of a local ordinance. According to Preservation Connecticut, 59 of the States 169 towns have enacted such an ordinance.

In addition, the Town could consider expanding the local historic district, in order to offer better protection to more of the historic buildings in town. Currently, there are two local districts, the South Brookvale Historic District, which encompasses eight properties along South Brooksvale Road and Mt. Sanford Road, and the larger Cornwall Avenue – Town Center Historic District which encompasses 41 properties along South Main Street from Main Street to Cornwall Avenue. The Cheshire Historic District Commission is charged with preserving properties and the historic characteristics within these districts through conducting reviews of development proposals including new buildings, renovations, and parking areas. The Town should consider an additional historic district, or expanding the existing Town Center District, to encompass portions of Main

Town Center/ Cornwall Avenue District Map



Name	Location
Reverend John Foot House	219 S Main Street
Joseph Speaks House	69 Cornwall Avenue
Reverend Bradley House	101 Cornwall Avenue
101 Cornwall Avenue	101 Cornwall Avenue
107 Cornwall Avenue	107 Cornwall Avenue
131 Cornwall Avenue	131 Cornwall Avenue
Dr. Thomas T. Cornwall House	191 S Main Street
Charles Farlst House	151 Cornwall Avenue
George Keeler	168 S Main Street
Verner House	171 Cornwall Avenue
50 Cornwall Avenue	50 Cornwall Avenue
Taylor House	185 Cornwall Avenue
Clark House	195 Cornwall Avenue
Williams House	64 Cornwall Avenue
Russell Cook House	163 S Main Street
James R. Lanyon House	96 Cornwall Avenue
James Gardener Clark House	108 Cornwall Avenue
Abijah Beach Tavern	137 S Main Street
Munson House	132 Cornwall Avenue
Clark House	213 Preston Road
Preston/Trythall House	152 Cornwall Avenue
Wm. Moon House	214 Cornwall Avenue
Richard Brown House	224 Cornwall Avenue
Town Hall	84 S Main Street
Kevorkian House	240 Cornwall Avenue
250 Cornwall Avenue	250 Cornwall Avenue
Reverend Whiting House	77 Church Drive
Congregational Church	111 Church Drive
Reverend Van Ogden Vogt	111 Church Drive
Hitchcock-Phillips House	43 Church Drive
Moses Bradley House	25 Church Drive
Rufus Hitchcock Store	15 S Main Street
Former Methodist Church	3 Main Street
Humiston School	29 Main Street
St. Peter's Episcopal Church	29 Main Street
Amos Baldwin House	84 Main Street
Bowden-Bronson Hall	Highland Avenue
Skilton House	Highland Avenue
Walters House	Highland Avenue
Borden House	Highland Avenue
Beardsley Hall	Highland Avenue

1/28/2026

Historic District Parcels
Historic Districts
Parcel Boundaries

1:7,002
0 0.04 0.09 0.17 mi
0 0.05 0.1 0.2 km

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Street and West Main Street to the area of Ball and Socket and the Farmington Canal Trail, where numerous historic structures lie.

5. Arts and Entertainment

Access to local arts and a variety of entertainment options can positively impact on the quality of life of any community. Cheshire currently has ample opportunities for outdoor entertainment, including Bartlem Park and Lock 12 Historical Park, which showcases a restored section of the Farmington Canal, small museum, helicoidal bridge, and a hiking trail. Cheshire is also home to the Barker Character, Comic, and Cartoon Museum, which houses a large variety of collectible items from various forms of entertainment. There are also several performing arts spaces, including Ball and Socket Arts, a community-led non-profit which is transforming a former industrial campus into an arts destination offering maker space, galleries, workshops, classes, and lectures for all ages. Artsplace Performing & Fine Arts, a town-owned arts school offering classes, workshops and camps for learning lies within the Ball and Socket complex and is focused on providing an arts space for children as young as 3 up to young adults. Finally, the Nelson Hall Performing Arts at Elim Park offers concerts and events throughout the year, open to the public. Cheshire Youth Theater is a program supported by Nelson Hall, offering theater classes to youth actors culminating in a live production.

Cheshire also benefits from other nearby large entertainment venues including the Bushnell Performing Arts Center in Hartford, Shubert Theater in New Haven, and the Toyota Oakdale Theater in nearby Wallingford, all of which attract world class entertainment.

The Town should continue to foster and grow the arts community as it seeks to create a live/work/play community. A review of the regulations should be conducted to ensure that the types of entertainment options and venues that the town desires are currently allowed in the proper zones. While it will be up to the local market to determine what is viable in town, the Commission should ensure that a variety of options are allowed. In addition, the Town should continue to work with Ball and Socket to ensure that the goals for recreating the space can be met.

B. Goals

Over the next decade, Cheshire will pursue the following goals in order to carry forth the vision of strengthening the already excellent quality of life and ensuring the continued strong sense of place.

1. Continue to provide excellent public safety to all residents, workers, and visitors of Cheshire.
2. Continue to preserve the scenic and historic beauty that is cherished by residents and visitors alike.

3. Support and encourage the high quality of education of Cheshire's students through well-maintained and updated school facilities.
4. Manage and maintain parks and public lands for the continued enjoyment of Cheshire residents and to mitigate the impacts of invasive species and climate change.
5. Monitor the illegal use of open space parcels by ATVs and other motorized vehicles and review options for preventing their entry on to the property.
6. Foster and encourage new arts and entertainment options within Cheshire.

C. Actions

1. Monitor the space needs of Town departments to ensure adequate space is available at Town Hall well into the future.
2. Monitor the needs and volunteer rates of the Cheshire Fire Department and consider incentives to attract volunteers such as tax breaks, stipends, or increased pensions rates or; be prepared to add additional paid staff if volunteer rates drop; or work collaboratively with nearby towns to ensure adequate coverage.

3. Support ongoing maintenance of town wide fire hydrants.
4. Maintain existing police and fire facilities and ensure Capital Improvement Plan includes adequate replacement vehicles and equipment.
5. Investigate the need for a public safety complex in the north end of Town.
6. Develop maintenance plans for large open space parcels which consider drainage and flooding, invasive species, tree health, and public access.
7. Review zoning regulations and pursue changes which require or strongly encourage bike and pedestrian friendly elements in new developments.
8. Work to revitalize Mixville Park using Master Plan prepared by Weston and Sampson.
9. Review opportunities for the development of additional playing fields and sufficient maintenance crews.
10. Construct a bridge across the canal and connect it to a trail to provide a direct connection between the High School and the Farmington Canal heritage Trail.
11. Adopt design standards targeted at commercial and historical areas in town to ensure new and re-construction is aesthetically cohesive with its surroundings.
12. Work with Town Beautification Committee to ensure that developers are adhering to the list of approved plantings in order to avoid the introduction of invasive species.
13. Review proposed landscaping plans and ensure they are followed before issuing final approvals.
14. Consider an expansion of the Cornwall Avenue – Town Center Historic District, or an entirely new district in order to better protect historic properties along Main Street and West Main Street.
15. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance using the model ordinance prepared by Preservation Connecticut.
16. Leverage funds available for preservation through the Certified Local Government program.
17. Review the zoning regulations to ensure that arts and entertainment venues are allowed which meet the needs and desires of the town.
18. Review the potential for adaptive reuse of Chapman School for Town facilities.

Chapter Five – Cheshire is Diverse and Resilient

A. Background

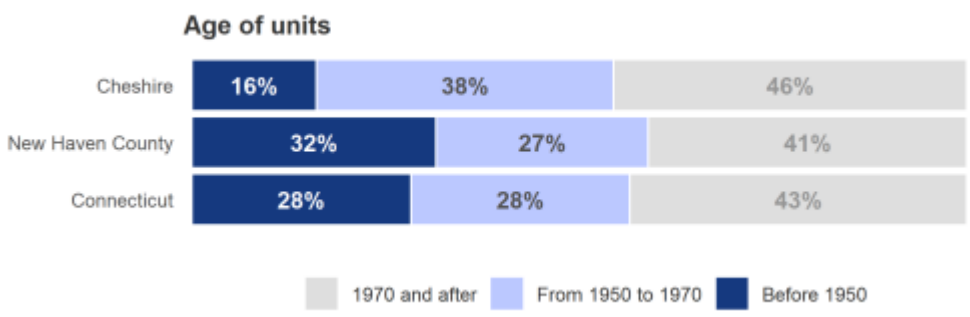
As in all communities, housing and economic development are intricately connected in Cheshire. The local economic conditions, including prevalence and diversity of jobs, directly impacts the demand for a diverse housing stock. A wide range of housing types and price range is essential to providing an opportunity for employees to live close to where they work. In order for Cheshire to continue to thrive, it must focus on continued growth of its local economy and at the same time ensuring there are ample opportunities for a large range of employees and family types earning a broad range of incomes.

1. Housing

Examining a community's housing stock is crucial in determining and planning for its future development needs. Knowing the quantity and availability of housing in a town can assist local leaders and community members with identifying areas for future investment, ensuring that housing needs continue to be met despite changing demographics. In recent years, Cheshire's housing stock has multiplied, displaying the town's desire for more diverse housing options. Cheshire's central position and excellent school system make it an attractive location to many people. According to DataHaven's 2023 analysis of US Census data, there is an estimated total of 10,457 housing units in Cheshire (both occupied and vacant) and 9,909 households, of those, 84% were single-family units while 15% were multi-family units (Source: *US Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census*). Starting in 2023, various multi-family developments have been approved, some of which have since begun construction. In 2023, three large multi-family developments got underway, including one at Kensett Square containing 15 residential units, one on South Main Street containing six rental units, and another on Hazel Drive containing 114 apartments, 23 of which are deed-restricted and considered affordable in accordance with State Statute. In addition, another four development projects totaling 414 units, 47 of which have deed restrictions and qualify as affordable housing, were also approved and anticipated to break ground. In 2024, growth continued with the approval of 34 single-family houses and 60 permits for multifamily developments, adding 537 housing units in town.

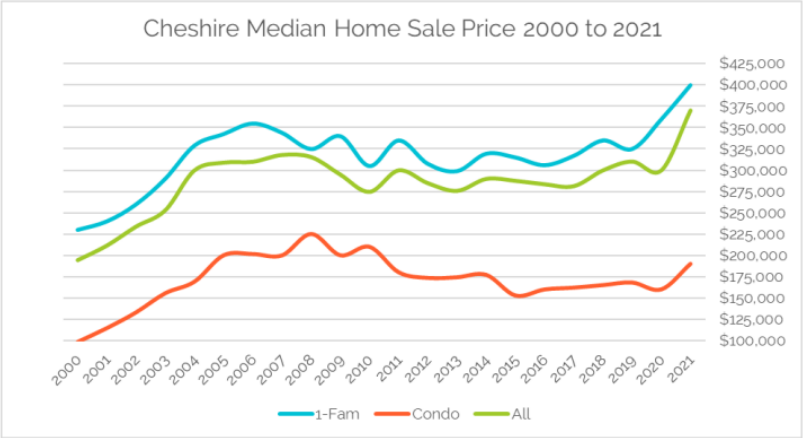
The age of housing units in a town can signal the quality of housing options available and impact on the affordability of the community. In Cheshire, just 16% of housing units were built before 1950, 38% of units were built between the years of 1950 and 1970, and 46% of units were built after 1970. Compared to Cheshire, larger portions of the county and state's housing stock are older with more than half (59%) of housing units in New Haven County built before 1970. 32% of housing in New Haven County and 28% of

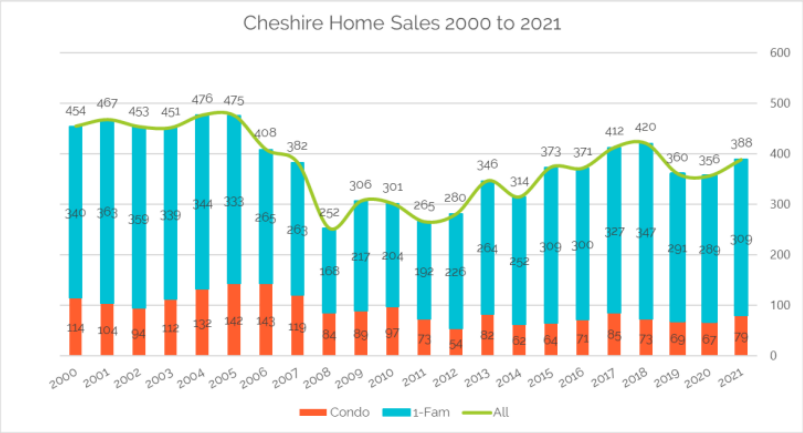
housing in the state was built before 1950 (*American Community Survey, 2016-2020*). Newer homes tend to be more energy-efficient and better able to withstand the damaging effects of climate change events, reducing the financial burden on homeowners. Those living in housing units built before 1960 also spend a larger portion of their income on fuel oil or coal, contributing to environmental degradation processes. These older homes are also more difficult and more costly to maintain due in part to older materials, less efficient windows and doors, and lack of sufficient insulation. Due to changes in building and health codes, roof replacements and siding upgrades can be more costly and involve hazardous materials. Older homes can also be subject to higher insurance and mortgage rates, driving up overall ownership costs. These homes often cost more to heat and may have higher electric costs due to the lack of newer, more efficient materials.



Source: Cheshire 2022 Housing Data Profile

The cost of housing in an area can reveal much about a town's economic vitality. In recent years, the value of homes in Cheshire has increased, highlighting their sustained value despite their age. Between 1990 and 2019, although there were periodic spikes, new home construction in Cheshire was on an overall decline. This changed after the COVID-19 pandemic caused a boost in construction in 2020 and 2021. In 2021, the median sale price for a single-family house in Cheshire was $375,000 and by 2022 this rose to $400,000, a more than 6% increase (*Source: SMARTMLS*). As of December 2024, the typical home value in town was $482,851, again approximately 6% more than the previous year (*Source: Zillow*). Since 2019, the median sale price for single family homes has increased by more than $75,000 (or 23%), the largest increase seen in the past two decades (*Source: Enrollment Projection Update & Elementary Facility Plan, CPS*). During these years, housing inventory and competition amongst buyers were key factors influencing total sales and prices of homes.



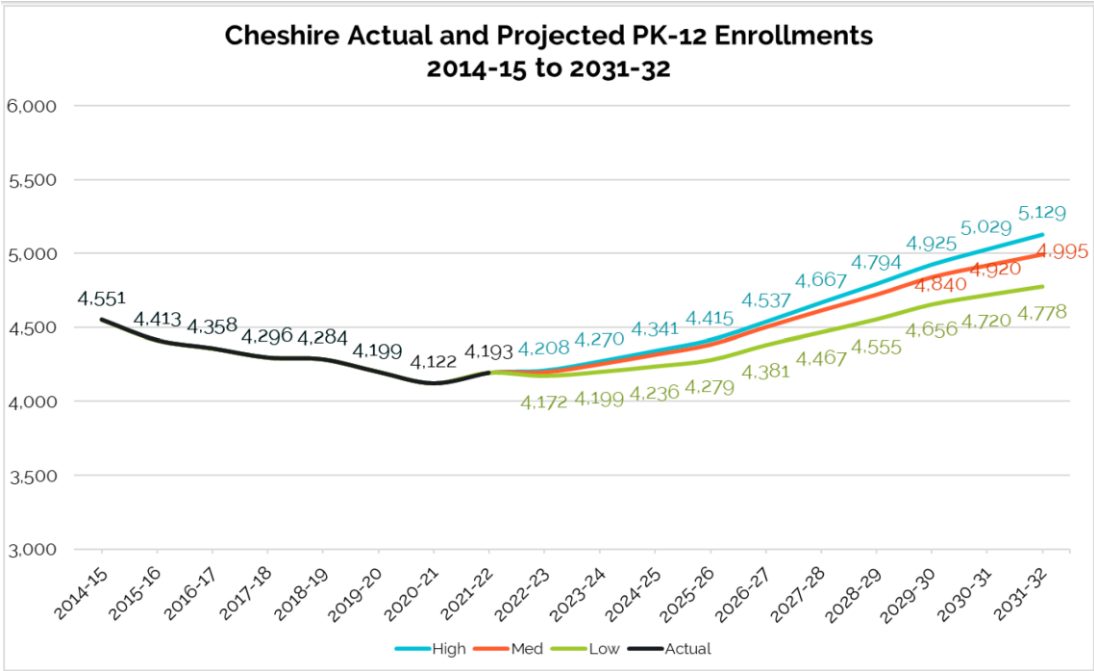


Median Home Sale Prices and Home Sales, 2000 – 2021. Source: CPD Enrollment Projection Report

As people moved away from cities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for houses in rural and suburban areas grew. According to the Economic Investment Group in their analysis of US Census Bureau data, there has been a net negative change in the population of young families residing within the country's largest metro areas since 2020. There have been steep declines in the number of children under the age of 4 in all types of communities, with the exception of those considered exurban. The largest decline is found within large urban areas (NYC, LA, Chicago, etc.). While the largest decline started during the pandemic and continued to 2023, the trend appears to be continuing. The Census Bureau's estimates are not limited to just young families, however. There has been an exodus of all ages from the cities to less populated locales. The data suggests that the fastest growing places are on the far outskirts of metro areas, so called exurbs. According to the data, what this has meant for Connecticut is a modest population growth in all areas of the state except Southeast Connecticut. Much of this growth can likely be explained by the population loss experienced in the New York City metro area. While it is unclear if this trend will continue, this added population puts a strain on the already tight housing market that exists within much of the state. The Open Communities Alliance suggests that Connecticut needs an additional 110,000 housing units to accommodate the population already living in the State.

As families with young children look to leave larger cities, they will be in search of communities to move to. Those with high performing school districts and spacious homes (both characteristics of Cheshire) are particularly attractive to homebuyers. In 2024, 18% of homebuyers considered the quality of the school district when selecting a neighborhood (*Source: 2024 Home Buyers and Sellers Generational Trends Report*). Analyzing the composition of planned developments can help draw predictions on where those

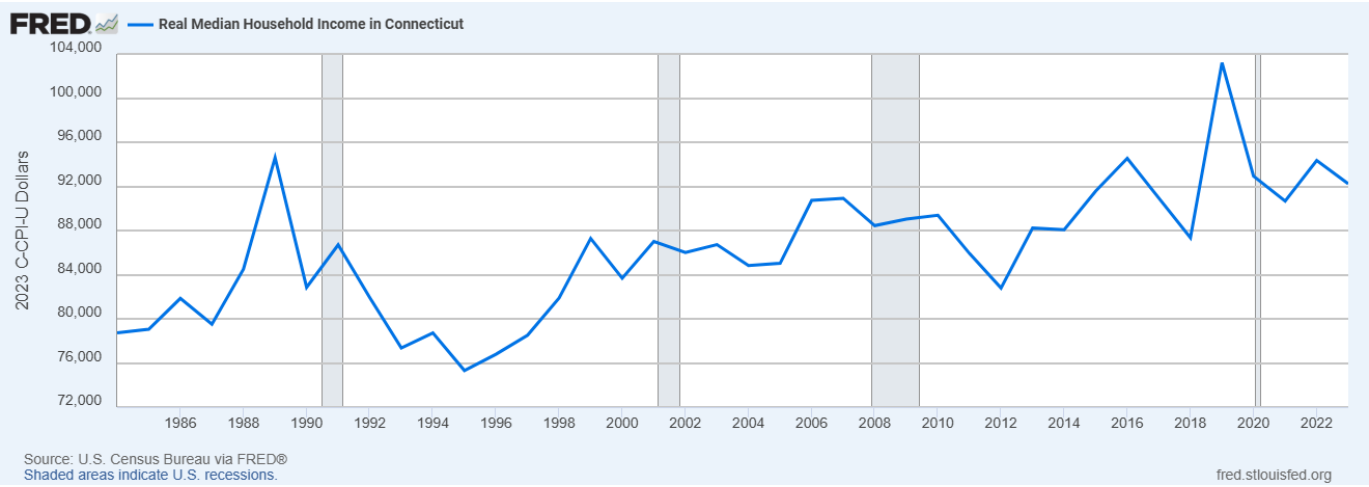
relocating may be aiming to move. For example, although the development on Hazel Drive is expected to be primarily studios and one-bedroom units which are not as likely to attract families with school aged children, another planned development for the North End parcel comprised of townhouses and multi-family units is estimated to bring almost 100 pupils to the district (*Source: Enrollment Projection Update & Elementary Facility Plan, CPS*).



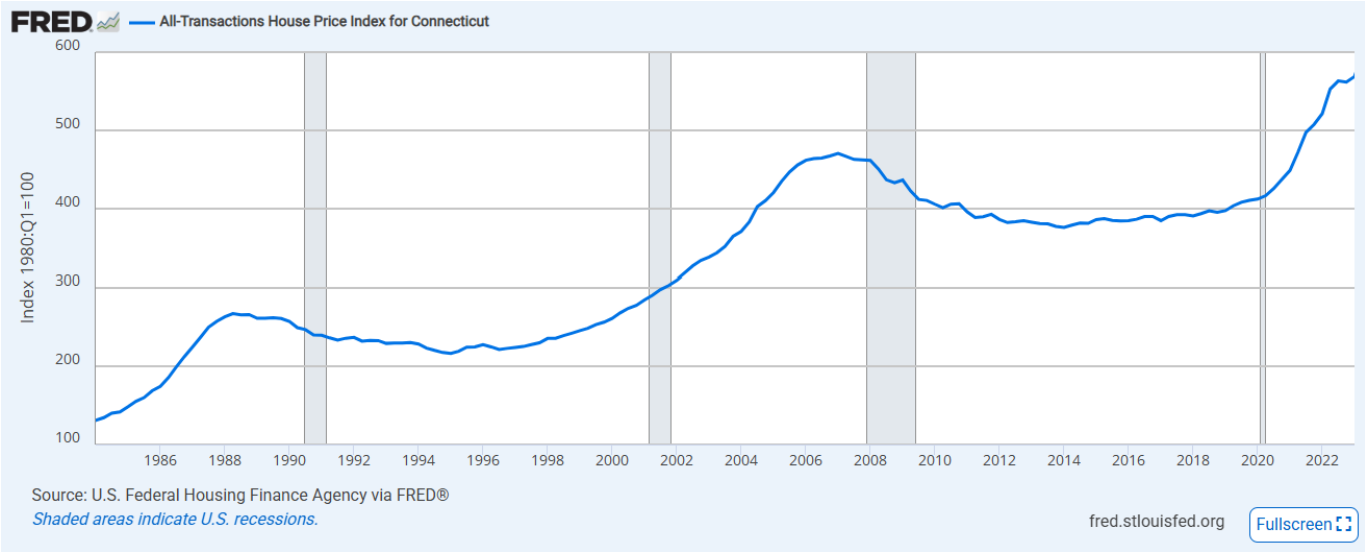
Source: Enrollment Projection Update & Elementary Facility Plan, CPS

Housing affordability statistics present detailed figures on how the cost of housing for renters compares to wages in the area. This data is critical for state and local governments looking to expand housing supply and decrease costs for renters. In 2022, the hourly pay that a full-time worker needed to afford a modest, two-bedroom rental unit capped at 30% of their income in Cheshire was $27.83, similar to the state's housing wage of $27.80 (*Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)*). According to NLIHC's Out of Reach 2024 report, no full-time employee making either federal, state or local minimum wage can afford a decent two-bedroom rental unit at fair market rent. This data sheds light on how out of reach affordable housing is for low-income earners. Over the past 20 years, the cost of housing (for both renters and homebuyers) has risen faster than incomes across most regions of the United States (*Source:*

Rent, House Prices, and Demographics, U.S. Department of the Treasury). Real median household income within the state has not adequately kept pace with the increased cost of housing, especially in the era since the COVID-19 pandemic. As housing costs have risen, particularly since, the median income has moved little. The graphs below show the Median Household Income and the average sales price of a home from 1986 through 2022; the gray bars indicate periods of economic downturn. Between 1984 and 2023, the price index for all house transactions in CT rose over 330 percent, while the median household income has only increased 17% adjusted for 2023 dollars. There has been a 38% increase in the price index just since January of 2020, but median income has decreased by 7% in that time.

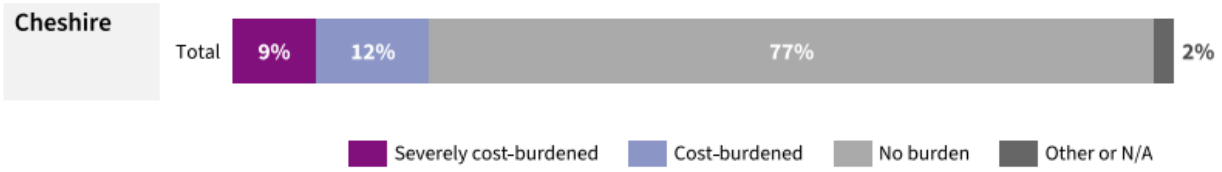


Real Median Household Income, January 1984 – January 2023. Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis



House Price Index, January 1984 – January 2023. Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

Increasing access to affordable housing provides more opportunities to boost Cheshire's local economy. With less income spent on housing, residents can allocate more funds to services and businesses in town. By 2021, 386 units or 4% of Cheshire's housing stock was considered affordable; this includes 168 federally assisted units. Affordable housing, as defined by CT State Statute, is housing that costs less than 30% of the annual income of the family residing within. There are several methods for creating affordable housing, which include mortgage assistance programs, such as those offered by the Connecticut Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), rental assistance programs, such as Section 8 vouchers and subsidized housing usually maintained by a local housing authority, and deed restricted units which limit the sale or rental price to no more than 30% of individuals who earn no more than 80% of the median income of the community in which they exist. For the purpose of this plan the term affordable housing is generally used to describe the latter of these three, housing units with deed restrictions. Fifty percent of renters and 16% of homeowners in Cheshire are burdened by the cost of housing (*Source: CT Department of Housing*). A household that is cost-burdened spends more than 30% of their income on housing. Moreover, severely cost burdened households encompass those that spend more than 50% of their income on expenses associated with housing. This includes utilities, maintenance, property insurance and other related fees.



Source: Cheshire Equity Profile, 2023

Approximately 23% of Cheshire households are considered asset limited, income constrained and employed (ALICE). ALICE households are those that are fully employed and able to meet all of their financial responsibilities but are essentially living paycheck-to-paycheck. These are households that would not be able to sustain a financial emergency and would have to make difficult decisions about what bills get paid. According to the United Way, these households often include family members who need care and assistance, including two householders working full-time, and are often in jobs where wages are not keeping up with the rising cost of living. Overall, in Connecticut out of 1.4 million households, approximately 29% are considered ALICE. In most communities, these are the households that benefit the most from the construction of additional affordable housing.

In 2022, Cheshire's Planning and Zoning Commission adopted an Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) to increase the affordability and diversity of housing options offered in town. Along with strengthening the economic security of those who live in Cheshire, the plan aims to support the senior population, provide greater access to the exceptional schools in Cheshire, assist with housing stability and decrease the negative health effects associated with those experiencing housing insecurity. Various methods of achieving these goals in Cheshire are discussed in the AHP and continued commitment to achieving them will result in the sustained efficiency of the town's housing stock in meeting its residents' needs.

2. Economic Development

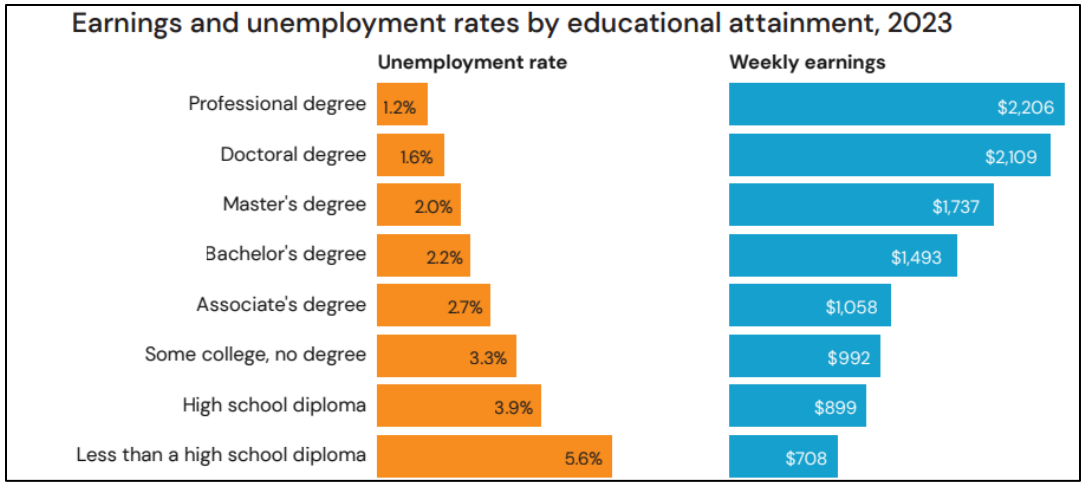
Labor force statistics and school data provide crucial insight into a town's economic health. In 2022, there were a total of 14,546 jobs in Cheshire (*Source: Lightcast, 2022*). The largest employment sectors in town include health care and social assistance, retail trade, wholesale trade, manufacturing and construction. Of these, key employers in 2024 were Bozzuto's Inc, Whole Foods North East, Macy's Logistics & Operations, Collins Aerospace and Hanwha Aerospace USA. While the average annual pay for employment in these top areas ranges from $42,445 to $92,482, overall, the median household income and educational attainment rates in Cheshire are impressively higher than that of the state as whole. Cheshire has a median household income (MHI) of $147, 969, approximately $57,000 more than the statewide MHI of $90,213 (*Source: ACS, 2018-2022)*.

Jobs and Wages in Cheshire's 5 Largest Employment Sectors

	Connecticut		Cheshire	
Sector	Total jobs	Avg annual pay	Total jobs	Avg annual pay
All Sectors	1,591,760	$77,816	15,643	$64,183
Health Care and Social Assistance	267,984	$60,835	2,357	$42,445
Wholesale Trade	57,254	$111,239	2,014	$77,546
Manufacturing	152,860	$89,604	1,365	$76,379
Transportation and Warehousing	60,450	$50,348	947	$55,079
Construction	59,323	$77,099	921	$92,482

Source: Cheshire Equity Profile, 2023

Likely related to the relatively high MHI, a greater share of Cheshire's population holds postsecondary degrees with 32% of the town's population having earned a bachelor's degree and 30% of the population holding a master's degree or higher. Across the state, 23% of residents have bachelor's degrees while 19% of residents have master's degrees or higher (*Source: ACS, 2018- 2022*). U.S. Department of Labor Statistics findings depict how an educated workforce drives economic progress. Employment data shows that bachelor's degree holders face less than half the unemployment rate and earn more than double the income of those who do not complete high school. Overall, a quality education is key to succeeding in today's labor market, with higher educational attainment serving as a catalyst for increasing the economic value of one's skills and knowledge as well as adding value to the social networks and relationships of those that pursue post-secondary education – contributing to long-term economic growth (*Source: Goulas*).



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023; The Brookings Institution

CT Department of Labor data also provides important self-employment and unemployment figures. Although nationwide unemployment rates spiked at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, by early 2023, the number of jobs in the state reached nearly back up to pre-pandemic levels. In 2023, there were 346 new business registrations in Cheshire, accounting for 12% of the 2,869 total active businesses in town. The self-employment rate was 12%, slightly higher than the state's 10% self-employment rate (*Source: 2024 Town Profile*). In 2023, 15,627 people in Cheshire were employed while 442 people did not have jobs; this equates to an unemployment rate of approximately 3%.

Cheshire imports more workers than it exports, with over 15,000 people travelling into town for work as opposed to just under 13,000 leaving town for work. Just over 1,900 people live and work within Cheshire. Workers mostly travel into Cheshire from nearby towns, with the largest majority coming from Waterbury (12.4%) and Meriden (5%). On the other hand, people living in Cheshire tend to travel further for jobs if they leave, with the largest share going to New Haven (10.3%). Approximately 3.3% of workers are employed in New York City, meaning these people either have lengthy commutes, or work from home for a company based in the city.

Of the employed population, 81% of workers drive to work, 15% work from home, and 3% walk or cycle to work; the remaining 1% use alternative means such as ride-sharing or public transportation. Survey results showed that no residents in Cheshire reported

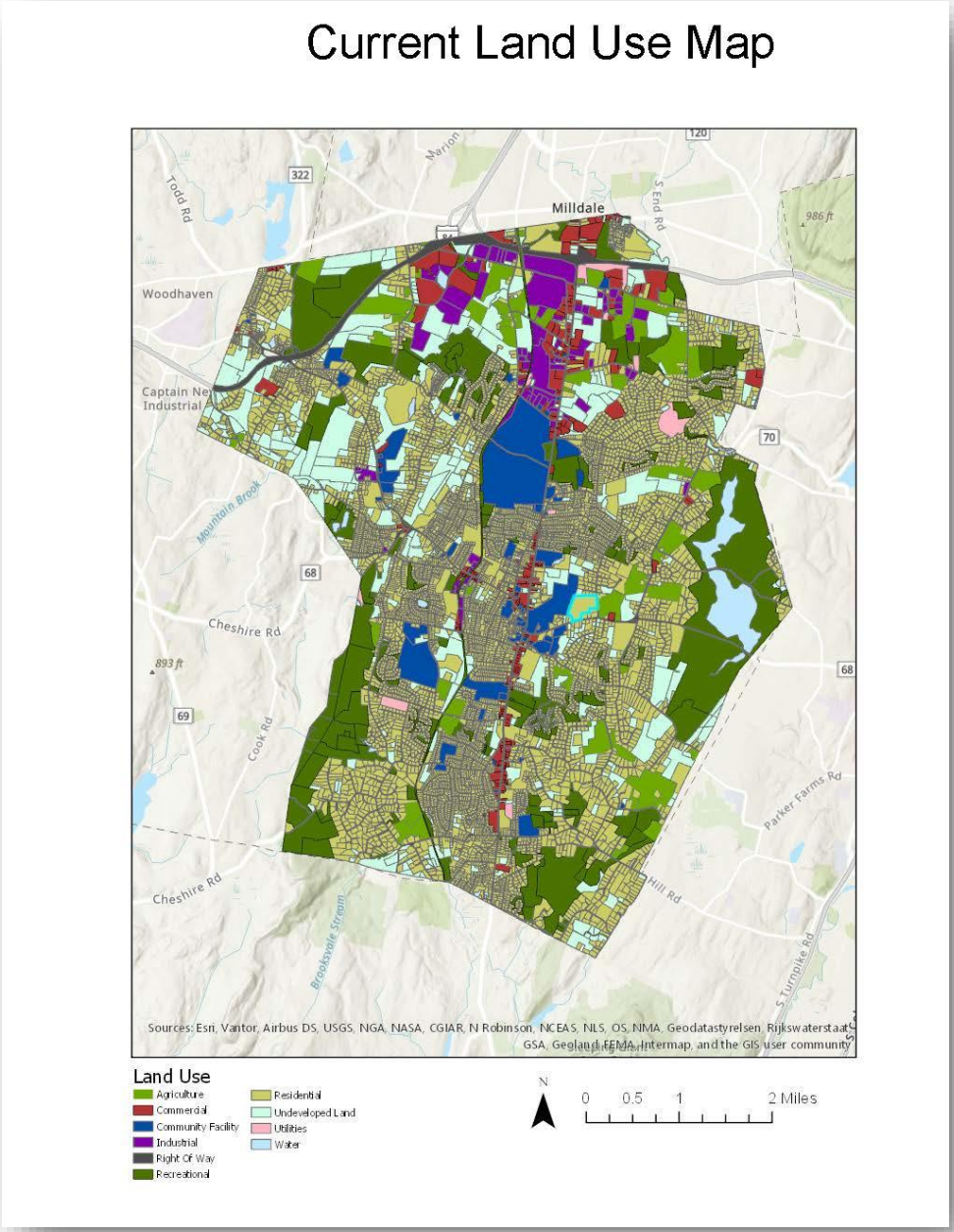
using public transportation to get to work while statewide data indicates that 4% of state residents relied on public transport. The average commute time in town is on par with the state at an average of 26 minutes spent travelling to work.

It's worth noting that 5% of Cheshire residents report having no access to a car and 6% have no internet access. These are slightly lower than state levels which reveal that 9% of CT residents do not have access to a car and 8% report having no internet access. A 2021 survey conducted by Morning Consult which focused on the role of car ownership in socioeconomic mobility within the US found that those who had cars were more likely to have greater access to job opportunities and an increased sense of financial security compared to non-car owners. 67% of respondents said owning a car expanded income opportunities that they otherwise would not have had, while 34% reported having to turn down a job opportunity because they did not have access to a car. Over half (58%) of survey respondents agreed that their cars allowed them to find or take on new and better job opportunities (*Source: Drivers of Opportunity).*

Cheshire is the Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut

Other financial indicators like the town's municipal revenue and expenditures can reveal more about Cheshire's fiscal health. Based on data from the CT Office of Policy and Management, the town's total revenue in FY 20-21 was $124,648,771. The total property tax revenue was $94,843,375. Municipal expenditures totaled $123,650,910 and the overall revenue to expenditure ratio was 101%.

A standing concern is the lack of public transit in and around the north end of town, which is in many ways the economic engine of Cheshire. Workers without access to cars are forced to either walk from one of the existing bus stops along Route 70, or from their home. The lack of sidewalks in the area makes walking conditions dangerous. This lack of public transit limits employment opportunities for both employees and employers. In addition, recently approved



housing and mixed-use developments in the north end will increase the need for transit in this area. While the Farmington Canal Trail provides a linear bicycle and walking path through town, there are very few connections to it, particularly in the north end of town near employment centers. Additional sidewalks and bike lanes could encourage more use of the trail for local commuters and increase safety for those needing to walk from existing bus stops.

Continued economic growth is expected in Cheshire, particularly due to its central location within the State and its positioning at the interchange between two interstate highways. The Commission, along with the EDC, is actively pursuing form-based code and regulatory changes to the West Main Street corridor to encourage village style redevelopment and new economic opportunities. There continues to be parcels available for development within the Commercial and Industrial zones in the north end of town which could support growth. In addition, there are parcels available for development and redevelopment in the commercial areas lining Routes 10 and 68/70. Cheshire has established business incentive programs to foster growth, including Tax Increment Financing opportunities and tax deferment programs. Cheshire employs a

full-time Director of Economic Development & Grants, a position which is charged with assisting business get established and succeed in town.

To ensure that continued growth is sustainable, the Town should consider infrastructure needs, including water and sewer in preferred growth areas. Limited availability of either could be a hindrance to future growth. In addition, the transportation network should be evaluated for its ability to handle added traffic from both residential and commercial/industrial growth. In addition, public transit connections, particularly in the north end of town and connecting to Meriden, should be considered.

After the completion of I-691 in 1984, the Town of Cheshire adopted the Interchange Zone (I-C) to allow and encourage various types of large and campus style developments. The zone allows for corporate headquarters, laboratory space and manufacturing, hotel conference centers, and limited residential development. The concept was to encourage large development opportunities with easy access to the highway at a time when many corporate headquarters were moving out of central cities. As the economy has changed over the last forty years the Town has come to realize that the I-C has not been as successful as hoped. The only major development that has taken place within the original zone area is the Stone Bridge Crossing mixed-use development, which required a text amendment and change to a new zone. The ten-acre minimum lot size and large setbacks make much of the zone impractical for development.

In considering the desired future of the area surrounding the I-691 interchange, the Commission should determine whether the zone still meets the purposes it was originally meant to serve. Consideration should be given to changing the zone to I-2 to allow for additional industrial development or allowing the expansion of the I-CSDD.

B. Goals

Over the next decade, Cheshire will pursue the following goals in order to carry forth the vision of continuing to diversify its housing stock and economy for a more resilient future:

1. Continue to foster the creation of affordable housing, with a particular focus on housing for young families and the older population.
2. Continue to support the creation of diverse housing types, including apartments, duplexes, and senior housing.
3. Increase the amount of open space to be preserved through encouraging cluster developments over standard subdivisions.
4. Prioritize infrastructure to promote economic growth.

5. Expand CT Transit to major employment areas.
6. Encourage additional economic growth opportunities, particularly near the interstate highway interchanges.

C. Actions

1. Investigate the potential to remove housing as an allowed use from the C1, C2, and C3 zones.
2. Strengthen Section 44A of the Zoning Regulations and consider other approaches to encourage the development of affordable housing with municipal oversight in lieu of 8-30g applications.
3. Review Chapter 44A with the consideration of adding design standards.
4. Review the Special Design district to consider removing housing as an allowed use.
5. Review the ADU regulation with consideration for more flexibility in occupancy and ownership.
6. Review the cluster subdivision regulation for potential changes to encourage or require its use and to preserve additional open space. Consider possible density bonuses and changes to the way the total number of lots is calculated.
7. Consider allowing Cluster Developments in areas without water and sewer as determined by site conditions.
8. Review Section 5.5 of the subdivision regulation relating to rear lots and consider changes to allow more flexibility.
9. Consider expanding and supplementing a business incentive program for both new and existing businesses in town.
10. Evaluate infrastructure improvements that can support business development and prioritize town resources based on taxpayer funded improvements vs. grand list growth.
11. Work with the internet service providers to continue to improve access to high speed and broadband internet.
12. Explore adopting new TIF district areas (West Main Street Business District, South End Commercial District, et.al.) and what infrastructure needs might exist within each unique area.
13. Investigate and collaborate with EDC to amend existing regulations to promote quality commercial industrial development or redevelopment resulting in net positive grand list growth.
14. Continue to work with CT Transit to increase bus service to major employment areas in town.
15. Study specific geographic focus areas of the community to encourage appropriate scaled and complimentary development. For example: Town Center, West Main Street Center, North End Industrial Corridor, South End Commercial District.
16. Evaluate the need for regulatory changes to accomplish specific placemaking goals.
17. Encourage the expansion of sewer service in areas identified by WPCA as being in the sewer shed.
18. Encourage Regional Water Authority to extend service where applicable.

19. Encourage the expansion of Eversource Gas services where feasible.
20. Investigate coverage gaps and determine practical locations for infrastructure improvements to cellular service.
21. Review the I-C zone and consider potential changes or elimination to encourage further development.
22. Review the potential for adaptive reuse of the current Darcey School for housing.

Chapter Six – Cheshire is Environmentally Sensitive

A. Background

1. Natural Resources and Conservation

An abundance of natural resources are located in Connecticut, and every municipality plays an important role in helping to achieve statewide conservation goals aimed at preserving these. Concerted efforts to **protect** and increase the inventory of undisturbed natural habitats across the state ensure residents can enjoy the scenic beauty and ecological diversity of these landscapes well into the future. The protection of natural resources not only mitigates the effects of climate change but also boosts the local and state economies by attracting and growing businesses, leverages ecotourism, and improves the quality of life of those who have access to them.

Protected Open Space is:

(1) land acquired for the protection of natural features of the state's landscape or essential habitat for endangered or threatened species; or

(2) land acquired to support and sustain non-facility-based outdoor recreation, forestry or fishery activities, or other wildlife or natural resource conservation or preservation activities.

Source: CT ECO

Cheshire has a variety of natural and open space resources in town including hiking trails, passive recreation fields, farms, forests, meadows, wetlands, and rivers. The town's Environment Commission, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission along with The Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire are just some of the groups working to ensure the integrity of these resources and the future health of the overall town's ecosystems over the next decade .The collaboration of these groups along with consistent public participation is integral to the maintenance and protection of the town's natural environment, and the quality of the town's water, air, wildlife and soil.

NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

OPEN SPACE IN CHESHIRE, CT

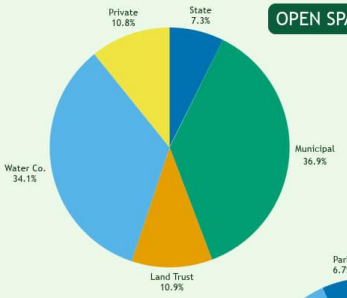
QUICK STATS

OPEN SPACE
- Total Open Space Acreage: 4517.25 acres
- Percentage of Land that is Identified as Open Space: 21%
- Total Number of Open Space Properties: 179
- Open Space Acres per Capita: 0.16

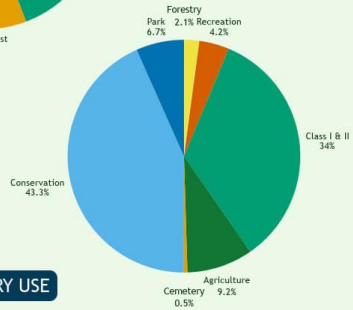
PROTECTED OPEN SPACE
- Total Protected Open Space Acreage: 4037.06 acres
- Percentage of Land that is Identified as Protected Open Space: 19%
- Total Number of Protected Open Space Properties: 105
- Protected Open Space Acres per Capita: 0.14

PARCEL SIZE
- Avg. Size: 25.23 acres
- Min: 0.27 acres
- Max: 475.66 acres

OPEN SPACE BY OWNER TYPE



OPEN SPACE BY PRIMARY USE



NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Cheshire enjoys a blend of open space belonging to the State, the municipality, Cheshire Land Trust, water companies, and several private owners. Many of these parcels connect with each other to create conservation corridors, like the chain of Thomas Pool Memorial (land trust), Bens Homestead (State), the Puchalski property (municipal), the Mountain Road tract (water company), and the Roaring Brook Estates open space (homeowners' association). On the opposite side of Cheshire, over 1,000 acres of watershed land belong to the City of Meriden's Water Division, hosting large reservoirs. Another striking open space feature is the State-owned Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, which runs the full length of Cheshire from north to south and bisects the Town.

The Town maintains a number of parks, including Bartlem, Mixville, historic Lock 12, Cheshire Park, and Quinnipiac Recreation Area. Bartlem in particular is well-loved for its accessibility and sports fields, playgrounds, community garden, indoor recreation center with a swimming pool, and skate park. The Town, however, also manages some of its open space as conservation land, like Dime Savings and as agricultural land, like Boulder Knoll.

The Town of Cheshire contains approximately 4,700 acres of open space dedicated to passive recreation; this is about 22% of the land in town (*Source: Town of Cheshire*). In addition to the 1,500 acres of municipally owned open space, other protected land in town includes 1,307 acres owned by the Meriden Water Company, 810 acres held by private landowners, over 600 acres owned by the Cheshire Land Trust, 323 acres owned by the State of Connecticut, 146 acres owned by the Regional Water Authority, and 25 acres owned by the Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society (*Source: Town of Cheshire*). These open spaces include the Boulder Knoll Property, the Casertano Property, Cheshire Park, the DeDominicis Property, Farmington Canal, Yankee Expressway Highlands, Mixville Hills, the Quinnipiac River Walk, Roaring Brook and Ten Mile Lowlands (*Source: Town of Cheshire*), all of which have hiking trails for residents to enjoy a range of foot paths for leisure, exploration and exercise. The Conservation Commission's webpage contains more information regarding these important open space resources, how to access them and descriptions of their importance on the Town's website.

These open spaces also contain trees, shrubs and other vegetation that act as a natural buffer between higher intensity land uses and the notable bodies of water that run through town. Prioritizing the acquisition of land that abuts the town's water resources provides crucial habitat

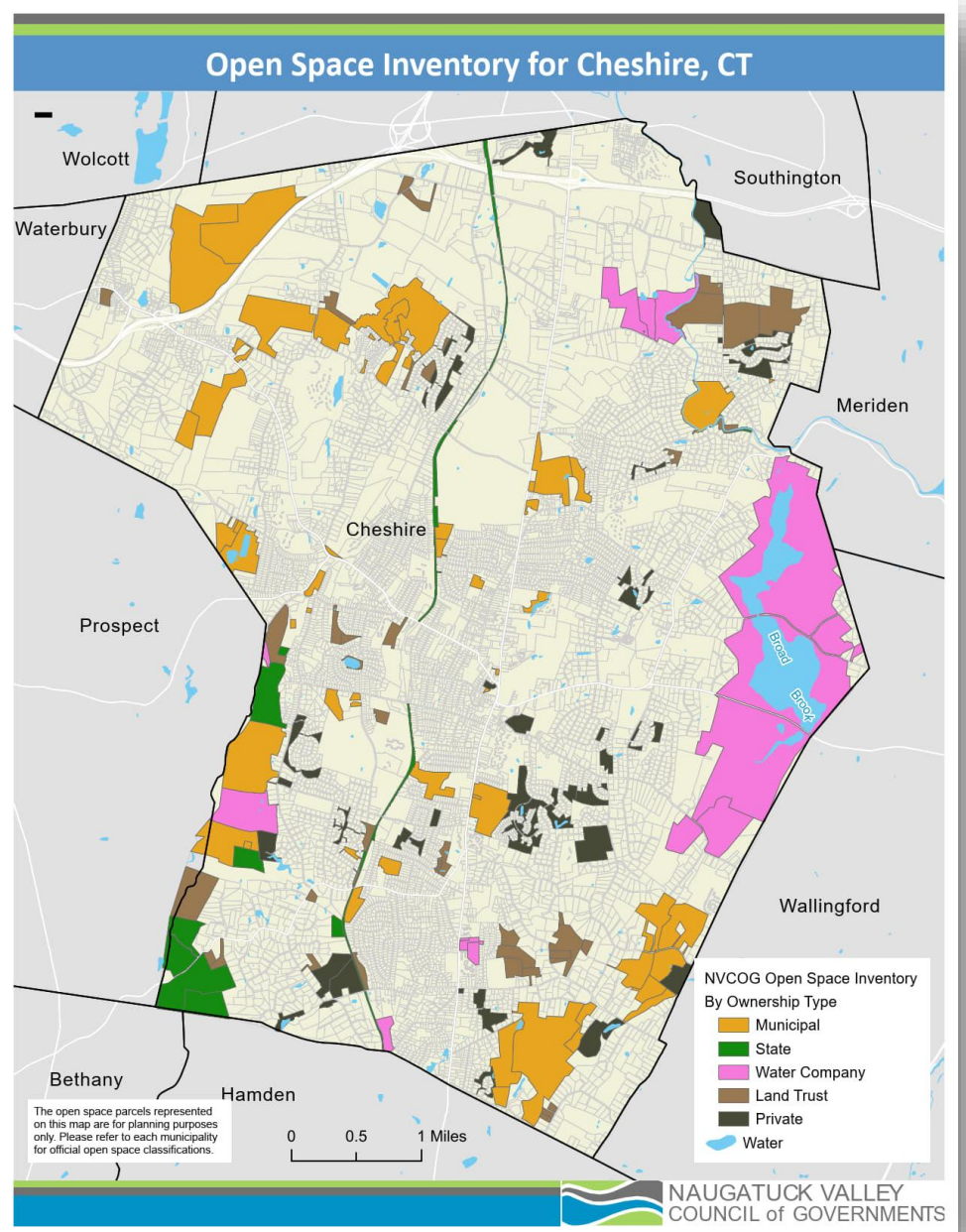
CHESHIRE FEATURED OPEN SPACE

Farmington Canal Heritage Trail
Abandoned railroad tracks have found new life in the form of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. One of the most impressive trails in Connecticut, the strip of State property runs for 80 miles starting in New Haven and ending well into Massachusetts. The paved, multiuse trail snakes through the center of Cheshire and intersects significant roads like West Main, spurring economic development in the form of trailside services. It also connects to Lock 12 Historic Park, a restored lock from the original Farmington Canal, which contains a picnic area, a helicoidal bridge, and a small museum.

Tenmile Lowlands
A haven for wildlife, this nearly 150-acre property is rife with wetlands, streams, and vernal pools. The Tenmile River runs along the western border and serves as habitat for amphibious life, including salamanders, frogs, and turtles. Visitors are welcome to hike on the unblazed trail and enjoy stunning views of the watercourses. The lowlands are situated within a largely residential area and connect to other land trust- and privately-held open space.

Ives Farm
Ives Farm spans three properties and approximately 150 acres in northeast Cheshire near the Quinnipiac River. The Cheshire Land Trust leases the fields to local farmers in keeping with the community's agricultural heritage, and even produces some of the fresh food served in Meriden's public schools. Behind the fields are woods that include public hiking trails. Cheshire Land Trust holds events throughout the year to engage the public, many of which take place at the red barn on the Ives property - bike races, a waterfowl presentation with live animals, farm equipment shows, tag sales, guided hikes, historical tours, fish releases, birding excursions, horseback rides, and even a Regional Land Trust Summit.

for a variety of fish and wildlife species while building resilience against extreme weather events. An example of this is the Mill River, one of the town's most significant natural resources with 7,377 acres (or 34.9%) of Cheshire located within its watershed. The river's main stem is about 12 miles long and flows from Cheshire to the Long Island Sound (*Source: Mill River Watershed Based Plan*). In 2020, the town, in partnership with The Regional Water Authority (RWA) and Cheshire Land Trust (CLT) acquired 45.15 acres of land on Fenn Road along the Mill River for passive recreation (*Source: Cheshire Land Trust*). The acquisition of this land creates an essential connection between the DeDominicis open space and the Old Farms property (*Source: Cheshire Land Trust*). Over the last ten years, the town also acquired an area on Mountain Road along the Prospect Ridge and purchased the 10-acre Chapman Farm property in 2016 which allowed for the expansion of Bartlem Park to better serve youth and high school sports programming and provides more space for all residents to enjoy passive recreation. The town should continue to acquire and secure the preservation of contiguous open space parcels for optimal conservation of its natural resources. In the *Cheshire 2026 Plan of Conservation and Development Public Input Survey* conducted by Tyche Planning and Policy Group, 43% of respondents supported the idea of paying more in taxes to fund the acquisition of additional open space in town.



Protecting the natural environment has positive economic impacts. In a report compiled by The Land Trust Alliance and the US Fish & Wildlife Service, it is estimated that people who engage in moderate outdoor exercise save $1,100 in annual medical costs. With less money spent on medical costs, people are able to invest in their communities more, contributing to the town's overall economic vitality. It is also estimated that treating drinking water from an unprotected watershed costs approximately ten times more than treating water from a protected source. In the last decade, the town's Inland Wetland Commission has approved development permits for a significant tract of land located in the northern region of Cheshire along with provisions that preserve the environmentally sensitive wetlands and watercourses located on this land. The town should continue to prioritize soil health, runoff reduction, and maintaining riparian buffers which would assist with improved water quality, reduce erosion issues and provide for better biodiversity. This can be accomplished when reviewing new development proposals.. The Conservation Commission, Environment Commission and Town Council should work cooperatively to establish goals regarding future land purchases, make a matrix of considerations

for how they are rated, and specifically identify what they should be used for. For example, a purchase of a property might be more appropriate for watershed protection or environmental biodiversity versus active or passive recreational uses.

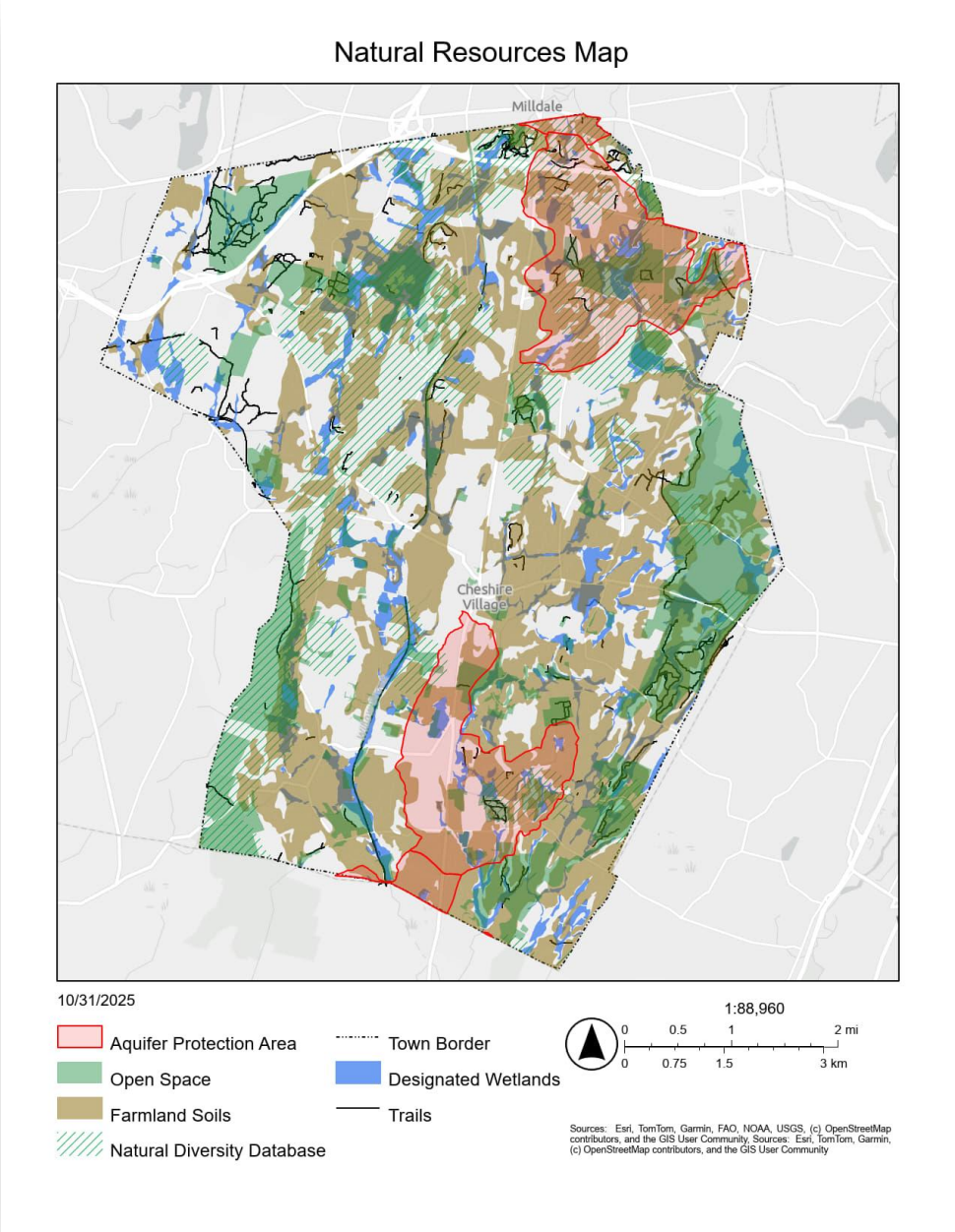
Protection of the natural environment from invasive species takes an all-hands-on-deck approach. Some examples include the Ash tree population which in Connecticut has taken a proverbial beating over the last decade due to the invasive Emerald Ash Borer. Beech trees are susceptible to Beech Leaf Disease. Japanese Barberry is having an outsized effect on wetland areas as the seeds are easily spread by birds. Other invasive species which pose a threat to local ecosystems include plants like garlic mustard, knotweed, mile-a-minute vine, and greenbriar. Other pests to be on the lookout for include the Asian longhorned beetle, and the spotted lanternfly.

Invasive species as a whole continues to be an issue, and the Town should focus on supporting removal of invasive species and planting of native species by using their Preferred plantings lists and mandating the use of native species during development proposals. The Town should continue to focus on the management and removal of invasive species and strive to set goals for individual Town properties over the next 10 years. This should include removal of invasive species, plantings of native species and should consider specifically how the plants contribute to the overall environment including enhancement for wildlife habitats, water quality, and overall watershed improvements.

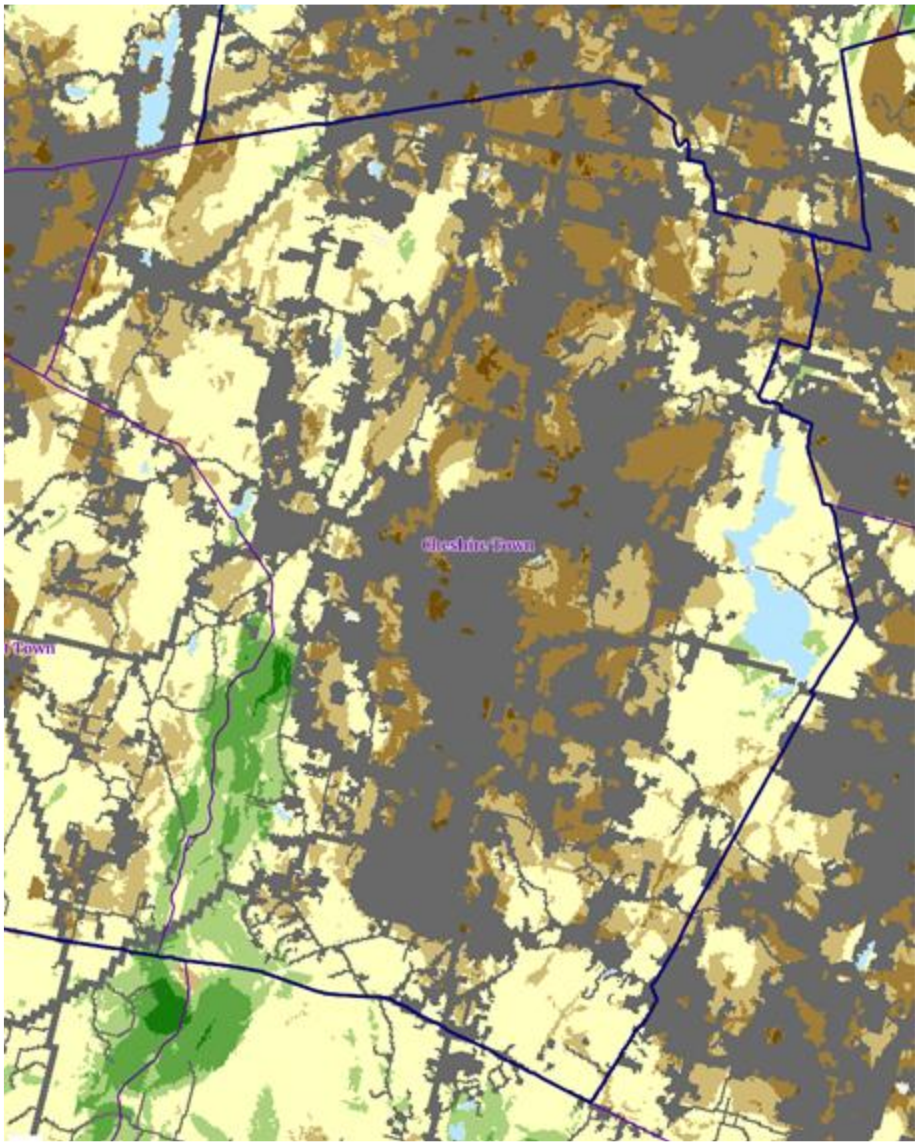
2. Climate Change and Resilience

The Oxford dictionary defines resilience as "the capacity to withstand or recover quickly from difficulties; toughness." In a survey of Cheshire residents conducted during the creation of this Plan, approximately 54% of respondents indicated that preserving the natural environment was in the top three of the ten most important priorities for the next ten years. While the reasons behind this are likely varied, the takeaway is that protecting the environment in which Cheshire residents live is important. In fact, protecting the natural environment was the second highest ranked priority only to preserving more open space.

Protecting the natural environment may mean many things to many people; however, as the climate changes, protecting the natural systems surrounding our communities provides some of the best defense of a more unpredictable weather pattern. For example, protecting floodways and wetlands from development provides storage capacity for flood waters; ensuring core forest blocks remain intact without development incursion protects them against drought and brush fires; and planting and maintaining tree cover helps manage heat, especially in developed areas, and aids in air quality.



Preservation and enhancement of forested areas may be one of the best tools in fighting climate change and ensuring good air quality. According to the Resilient Land Mapping Tool created by The Nature Conservancy to demonstrate each community's long-



Cheshire Resilience

The Resilient Land Mapping Tool provided by The Nature Conservancy shows the terrestrial resilience of Cheshire. As can be seen, the most resilient area is in the southwest corner of town where there is a large amount of uninterrupted preserved land.

Source: The Nature Conservancy

term resiliency, much of Cheshire is considered developed and falls in the 'least resilient' category. However, areas on the edge of town and those with lower levels of development score a median level of resilience. The most resilient area of town lies in the southwest corner near the border of Prospect and Hamden where there has been significant investment in open space acquisition.

In addition to protecting the natural systems which defend the community, significant investment in hardened infrastructure will be needed to mitigate the impacts of stronger storms and heavier rains. Engineering practices have led to stormwater facilities being designed to treat the first one inch of rainfall on a development site before releasing the stormwater. As storms have increased in significance, many practices, including the Connecticut Stormwater Guidelines now suggest, or even require, that the first 1.3 inches of rainfall be treated. This suggests that most of the stormwater basins, pipes, and culverts are undersized for today's storms. It remains to be seen if these guidelines will change again in the future. Properly sizing culverts and drainage pipes can prevent downstream erosion which leads to the degradation of stream banks and wetland systems.

Modernizing the town's agricultural infrastructure for climate resilience will also be instrumental over the next decade. One successful example of this was the recent investment in the equipment at the town's Kurtz Farms. The

Mystic Reservoir

notable family-run, 25-acre farm produces approximately 10,000 varieties of vegetables, plants and poinsettias in its greenhouses, and grows 26,000 hanging baskets. Recently, with funding from the Connecticut Greenhouse Growers Association, the farm's operations have been modernized with new AI-assisted technology tools that monitor and dispense water, fertilizer, and nutrients to crops, improving overall efficiency and consistency. This technology has also allowed the farm to switch to biological pest control rather than the harmful chemicals previously used (*Source: Ciaglo*). Continuing to retrofit the town's infrastructure through strategic investment will strengthen Cheshire's ability to respond to environmental disturbances and should be prioritized over the next ten years.

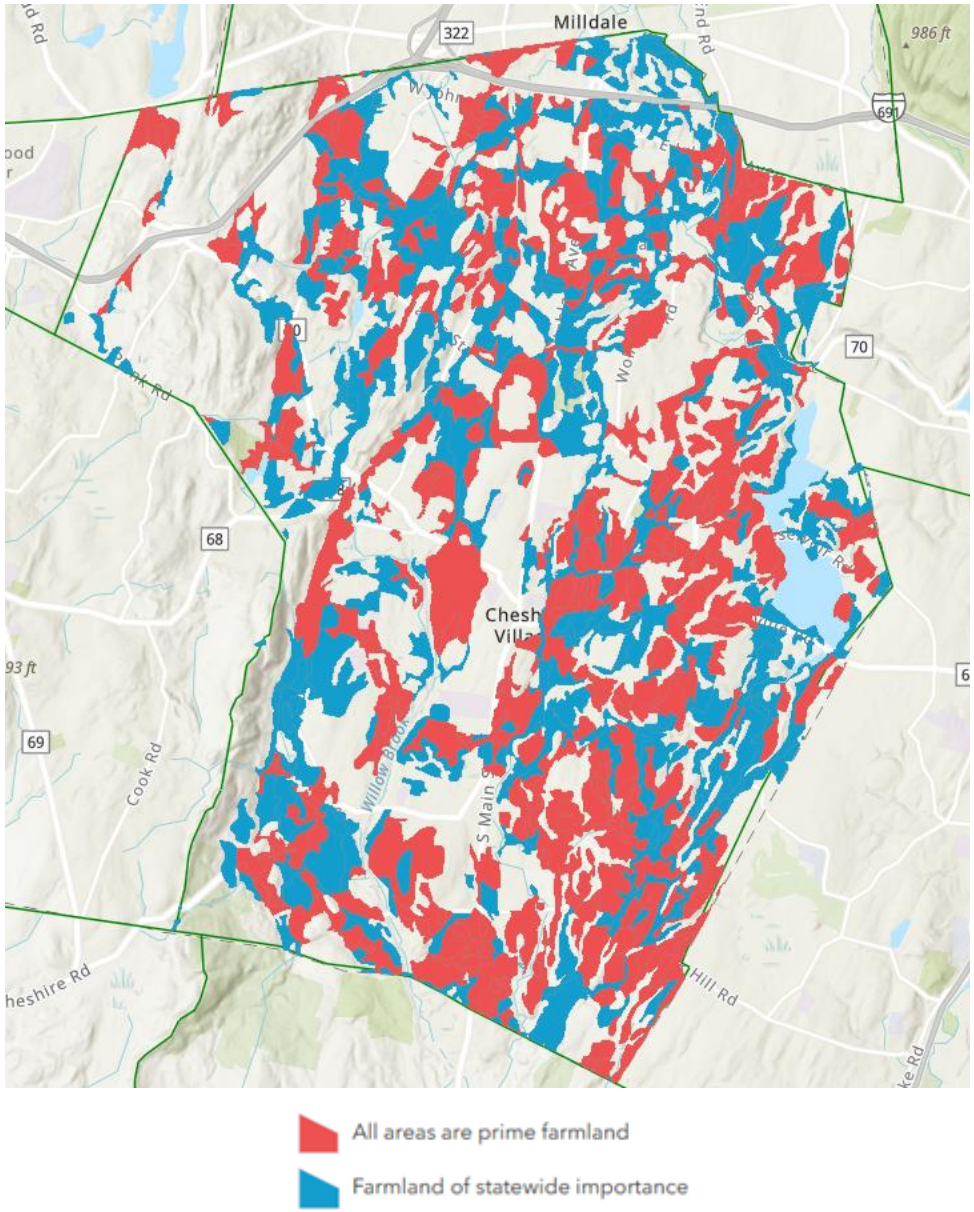
3. Preserving Agricultural Properties

Prior to World War II and the explosive growth that followed its end, Cheshire was primarily an agrarian community. Favorable soils, consistent and predictable weather, and ample water sources provided bountiful land for grazing animals and growing of crops. This history impacts today in Cheshire, being the Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut and current agricultural practices lend to the continued sense of place. The map below shows more than 1,000 acres of prime farmlands and an additional 800 acres of farmland that is of statewide importance located in Cheshire. Approximately 35% of survey respondents indicated that protecting historic and cultural elements of the town is one of the top three priorities over the next decade. Preserving agricultural land is one component as it lends to the cultural identity of the community.

As can be seen in the aerial image, Cheshire center was once surrounded by farms, fields, and orchards. Very little housing or business development existed away from the main roads in this 1934 image.

While many of those former farms have been developed into the neighborhoods we know today, Cheshire's legacy as an agricultural community continues as the main producer of bedding plants in the State. Smaller crop-producing farms continue to provide various products to the residents in Cheshire as well. Preserving agricultural land allows farmers to produce and sell food locally, which lends to the overall resilience of the community. Fresh local foods reduce the dependence on large grocery stores and the need to transport food long distances. This lowers the overall carbon footprint of the food and allows residents easier access to fresh products.

Today, farms in Cheshire participate in state programs dedicated to promoting locally grown agricultural products which greatly benefits the health and wellbeing of town residents. Currently, ten farms in Cheshire are a part of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut (CT NOFA). This program provides education, support, and advocacy for local farmers, gardeners and consumers in the state about organic food production in order to increase local and organic food supply and consumption. The Boulder



Source: CT DEEP

Aerial Image of Cheshire, 1934

Source: UConn MAGIC

Knoll Community Farm, DeVylder Greenhouses, Drazen Orchards, Emerald Eyes Apiary LLC, Hickory Hill Orchards, Ives Farm Stand, Norton Brothers Fruit Farm, Old Bishop Farm, Wing Dance Apiary LLC and Zentek Farms are listed on Cheshire's Farm and Food Guide and provide a plethora of fresh fruits and vegetables, seasonal and baked goods, seasonal fruit picking, flowers, ice cream and other dairy products, and Christmas trees and plants. Wing Dance Apiary LLC, a family-owned business, provides raw honey as well as educational seminars and honeybee swarm removal services; further showcasing the environmentally responsible and sustainable behaviors that impact the crops and sensitive pollinator populations integral to farms and agricultural lands in town. Looking ahead to the future, Cheshire should continue to work with local farmers and artisans, while partnering with state entities to maintain resilient farmland and agricultural properties.

B. Goals

Over the next decade, Cheshire will pursue the following goals in order to carry forth the vision of carrying out growth and development that is sensitive to the natural systems we all rely on.

1. Maintain existing open space areas to better protect them from future development.
2. Increase ADA accessibility and maintenance for all town-owned open spaces.
3. Update and enforce local zoning regulations to better protect wetlands, forests, and open spaces.
4. Expand the town's open space network.
5. Enhance wetland restoration efforts in town.
6. Increase public awareness of and engagement with conservation efforts and activities.
7. Promote sustainable agricultural practices.
8. Develop a Comprehensive Climate Adaptation Plan.
9. Secure sustainable funding sources for the ongoing maintenance, management, and expansion of conservation efforts in town.
10. Utilize open spaces to share and increase public knowledge of town industrial and geological history.
11. Review and revise zoning regulations related to recreational activities on town-owned open spaces to increase community engagement with natural resources in town.
12. Promote the use of native plantings in new development projects.

C. Actions

1. Update existing maintenance plans for all town-owned open spaces to include trail clearing, regular signage inspections, and infrastructure improvements.
2. Implement a system for regular reviews of maintenance plans to ensure they remain effective and responsive to changing conditions.
3. Secure consistent funding to sustain and support these plans through grants, budget allocations, or a permitting system.
4. Promote and establish a more accessible kayak trail on the Quinnipiac River.
    a. Provide guided tours to promote water recreation activities.
5. Develop parking areas and sidewalks that strengthen access to and encourage the use of open spaces.

6. Consider a citation ordinance for wetland violations.
7. Earmark funding for the acquisition and preservation of additional parcels of open space land, prioritizing existing contiguous open space parcels in order to increase habitats for wildlife.
8. Require clear public access that is ADA accessible, where feasible, to newly acquired open spaces.
9. Include standards about contiguity and access in development plans or conditions of approvals for large developments that include open space.
10. Review and update cluster housing regulations and open space requirements in subdivision zoning regulations.
11. Consider limiting access to open spaces with sensitive habitat and wildlife.
12. Develop and implement comprehensive wetland restoration projects aimed at improving water quality, increasing biodiversity, and enhancing flood resilience.
13. Launch community-driven programs to educate residents about the importance of conservation to promote hands-on conservation activities.
    a. Collaborate with the local school system, scout groups, and conservation-oriented groups such as the Cheshire Land Trust and the Cheshire Pollinator Pathway.
14. Revise the 1995 TRAILS guide with a more accessible digital companion on the CheshireCT.org website.
15. Create an accessible outreach document and workshops to increase public knowledge of Inland Wetland regulations.
16. Create and distribute a newsletter with information about the Inland Wetlands Commission.
17. Create and distribute a “Welcome” pamphlet to the Inland Wetlands Commission.
18. Increase training opportunities for Inland Wetland Commissioners.
19. Establish public-private partnerships and look for grant opportunities to secure sustainable funding sources for the ongoing maintenance, management, and expansion of conservation efforts in open spaces.
20. Implement signage, educational programs, and improved access to open spaces to increase the public’s interest in preserving and protecting the history of the town’s earliest settlers, and geologic and industrial legacy.
21. Review and revise current restrictions on recreational activities in town-owned open spaces to balance conservation priorities.
    a. Encourage the implementation of regulations that increase community engagement activities while preserving natural resources. For example, expand designated areas for bird watching, hiking, and educational programs that promote responsible use.

   b. Consider replacing restrictions on activities such as camping, metal detecting, and other recreational uses with a paid permitting system.

22. Consider charging a fee for the use of town-owned land which would be used for the maintenance of the property.
23. Incentivize removal of invasive species and replacement with native species on existing development sites.
24. Establish a program for Town properties to properly remove invasive species within dedicated timeframes.

Chapter Seven – Cheshire is Connected and Accessible

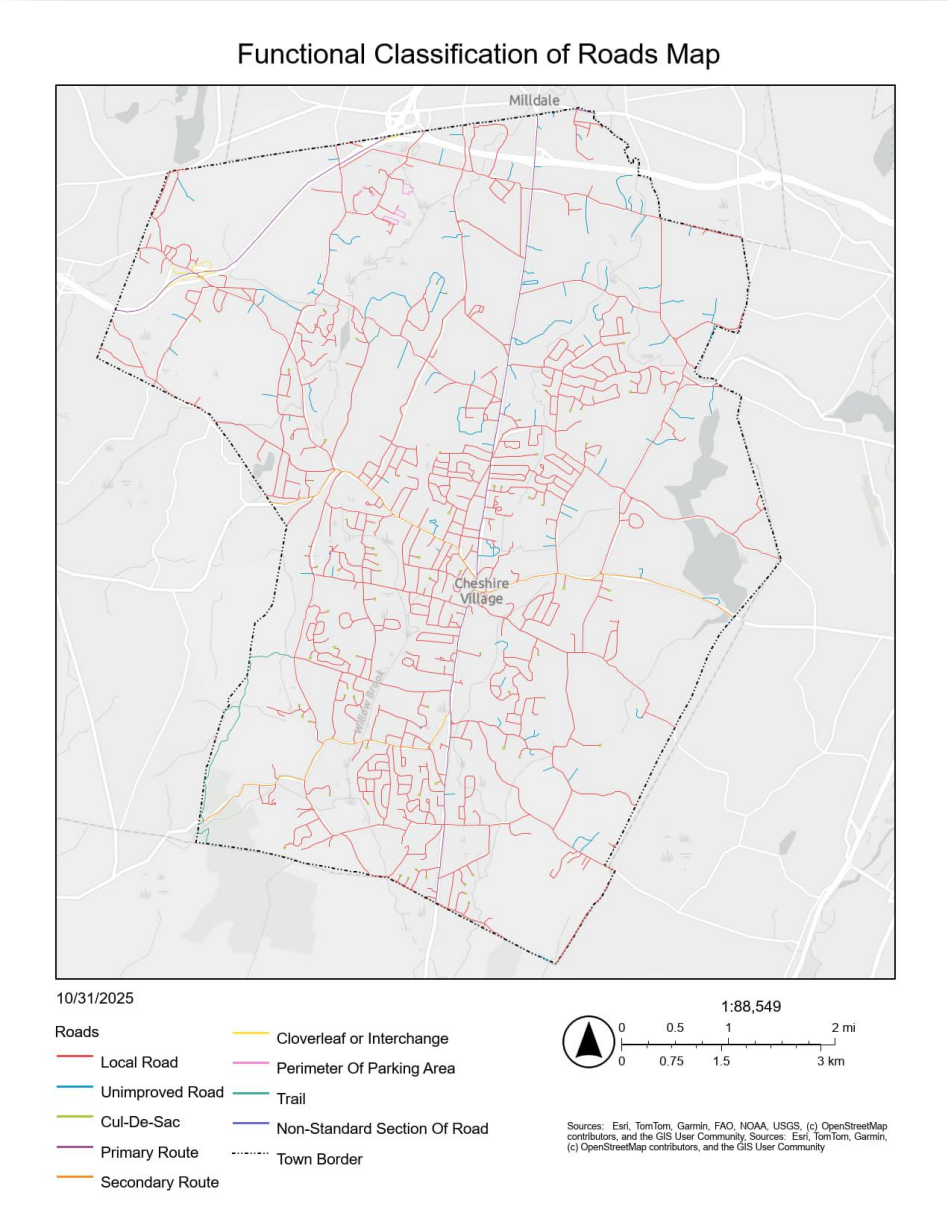
A. Background

Connectivity within a community is an important component of the over quality of life, economic activity, and housing opportunities. A transportation network that is well connected, reasonably free of congestion, and allows for a diversity of options assists in community development by allowing people to transport easily between their homes, places of employment, and other places they need to go. Cheshire is centrally located within the State and served by two interstate highways. This positive side of this connectivity is that it allows easy transport into and out of Cheshire, the challenge with this connectivity is that increased traffic within Cheshire has caused gridlock on the road network within the town, particularly along portions of Routes 10 and 70. Increasing mobility and accessibility are key components to improving connectivity.

It should be noted that simultaneously to developing this PoCD, the Town has engaged a consultant to develop a Multi-Modal Transportation plan for the town, with a focus on priorities for traffic and transport within the town. This report was not completed during the duration of writing this plan; however, information gathered from public input is contained within this PoCD.

While physical connectivity gets most of the attention, information technology connectivity is just as critical to a community in the creation of new jobs and employment opportunities. The ability to transmit data into and throughout the community is just as critical as transporting people and goods and in some instances, can take pressure off from the physical transportation system by allowing work to take place remotely.

Farmington River Canal Heritage Trail

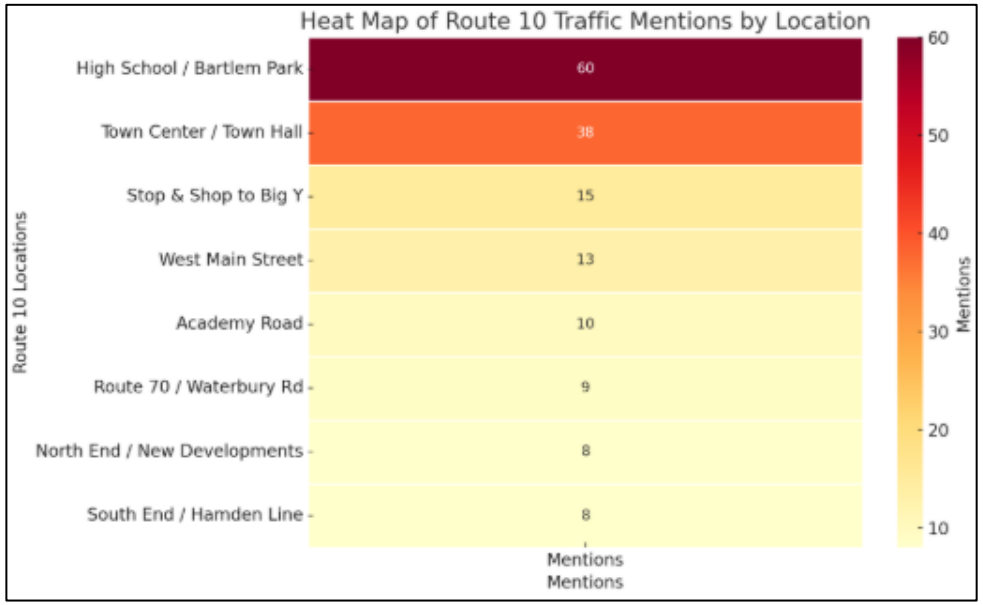


1. Transportation and Roadway Infrastructure

As with most suburban communities in Connecticut, people travelling to and within Cheshire rely primarily on their personal automobiles. As such, the primary focus of transportation development over the last 100 years has been on construction of roads. After the turnpike era of the late 19th century came to an end, the State began building out the State highway network. Route 10, the primary north-south roadway throughout town was commissioned in 1932 and is part of a former New England Interstate route running from New Haven CT, north to Littleton, NH. In Cheshire, Route 10 is primarily a two-lane bidirectional road, with a short four lane portion in the center of town near its intersection with Route 70 and 68. The primary east west routes in Cheshire are Routes 68 and 70. Route 10 has an interchange with Interstate 691 at the north end of town near the border with Southington, Route 70 intersects Interstate 84 on the west end of town, and Route 69 intersects Interstate 91 in Wallingford, approximately four miles east of the Cheshire border. Finally, Route 42 offers a connection from Route 10 toward the southwest to the town of Oxford. Other roads in town are mostly local streets providing access to individual neighborhoods and serving a more local purpose.

In addition to being the primary north-south roadway in Cheshire, Route 10 also serves as the main commercial corridor, not only in Cheshire, but also in neighboring Hamden and Southington. During certain times of day, this heavily travelled road experiences severe gridlock, particularly in the section south of the interchange with Route 68/70 toward the Cheshire High School. Traffic from both Interstates 84 and 91 merge onto Route 10 in the center of town, causing compounding delays at the traffic lights in the area, particularly heading northbound during the morning rush hour and heading southbound during the evening rush hour.

According to data collected by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) the annual average daily traffic along Route 10 is approximately 10,800 vehicles per day (2022) at the Southington town line, rising to approximately 22,800 vehicles (2022) just south of the intersection with Route 68/70 and falling back to 15,300 at the Hamden town line (2022). Beginning just after the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant growth in building permits, particularly for multi-family construction in the north end of town along the Route 10 corridor. It is anticipated that the average daily traffic volumes will be rising as a result of the new units, particularly between Realty Drive and the Southington town line. The lack of parallel north-south routes in town places particular pressure on Route 10. Only a few viable alternatives exist, and all are primarily residential roads with low-speed limits such as Mountain Road which traverses from Route 68 to Route 42 on the western side of town. In a survey of 329 residents, 161 people said that the worst traffic in town is along Route 10; more than 60 responded that it was the worst near the high school and Bartlem Park, approximately 55 responded that the worst was near the center of town around Town Hall and the Route 68/70 intersection. The graphic below summarizes these responses.



Summary Graphic created using ChatGPT

Route 10/ South Main Street in front of Cheshire High School

Including the two signals at the I-691 ramps, there are a total of 17 traffic signals in the 4.85 mile stretch of Route 10 between I-691 and Cheshire High School; with 11 being in the 1.85 miles between the high school and the Maple Avenue intersection.

According to the CT Crash Data Repository at the University of Connecticut, there were a total of 886 crashes along Route 10 in Cheshire between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2024. This highest rate of those crashes occurred between the Routes 68/70 intersection and the Cheshire High School/Bartlem Park intersection. Four of those crashes resulted in at least one fatality, 214 resulted in injury, the remaining resulting only in property damage.

While Route 10 gets the most attention, other portions of road are also impacted by high traffic volumes. Route 70, between its intersection with I-84 and Route 68/Mountain Road on the western side of town carries approximately 16,000 vehicles per day according to the latest CT DOT data. This road is primarily two lanes; however, it widens to four lanes near the Route 68 intersection

providing for added capacity. It features a lower density of traffic signals and therefore does not suffer from the related delays. Mountain Road carries approximately 4,800 vehicles per day along its two-lane, residential lined winding path. The speed limit is 25 for nearly its entire length.

In a public information gathering session for the Cheshire Multi-Modal Transportation Plan, similar themes were heard regarding concerns about traffic, especially along Route 10. There was wide consensus among the respondents that reducing delays on major corridors in town, adding left turn lanes along Route 10, and improving comfortability of bicycling and walking in Cheshire were key priorities.

Connecticut DOT is conducting a pedestrian and signal upgrade along Route 10 between the Hamden Town Line and Sandbank Road in 2026. The Town should ensure that light timing is included in this project in order to limit the number of times a vehicle travelling along the route would be required to stop.

The Town should consider all options for reconstruction and improvements any time a project is proposed. Large storms have caused street flooding, particularly along Cornwall Avenue (Routes 68 & 70) in the area of the canal crossing. Such flooding causes traffic detours leading to heavy traffic in areas not designed for it. Any planned roadwork in town should include consideration for updating the drainage infrastructure to avoid future flooding wherever possible.

2. Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Cheshire has put substantial effort into building out a sidewalk network in the center of town. Much of Route 10 between Jarvis Street intersection to the north and the South Brooksvale Road/Cooks Hill Road intersection to the south has sidewalks on at least one side of the road, and in many places on both sides. Most traffic signals include a pedestrian phase with marked crosswalks, though not all pedestrian phases are separate from traffic. For the most part, unsignalized intersections do not include crosswalks. As such, there are areas where crossing the street can be difficult at best, and dangerous at worst. Other areas of town with sidewalks include those surrounding the village center area, along Maple Ave and West Main Street. Some residential streets surrounding the village center include sidewalks, though most lack such connectivity.

Farmington River Canal Heritage Trail

While there are no true bike lanes along the major roads in Cheshire, Mountain Road is equipped with sharrows, warning drivers that the road is for use by cyclists. The primary north south route for bicycle traffic is the Farmington River Canal Heritage Trail, which runs directly through Cheshire on its 80-mile route from New Haven to Northampton, MA. It follows the former route of the New Haven and Northampton Railroad, the 'Canal Line", itself which followed the former Farmington Canal, which was completed in 1835, provided a method of transport between New Haven and the Connecticut River north of Springfield. With the exception of a short portion in Southington and Plainville, the trail is complete and has become a major attraction. It lies along the East Coast Greenway, a 3,000-mile continuous pedestrian and bicycle trail from Florida to Maine.

In Cheshire the trail runs parallel to Route 10 and traverses through residential, commercial, and industrial areas providing a possible transportation alternative to driving for those that work and live in Cheshire. Creating and expanding linkages to the trail from nearby neighborhoods and business areas is an important component of ensuring that the trail is a viable alternative to driving and allowing residents to fully enjoy the trail without needing to drive to a trail head parking lot.

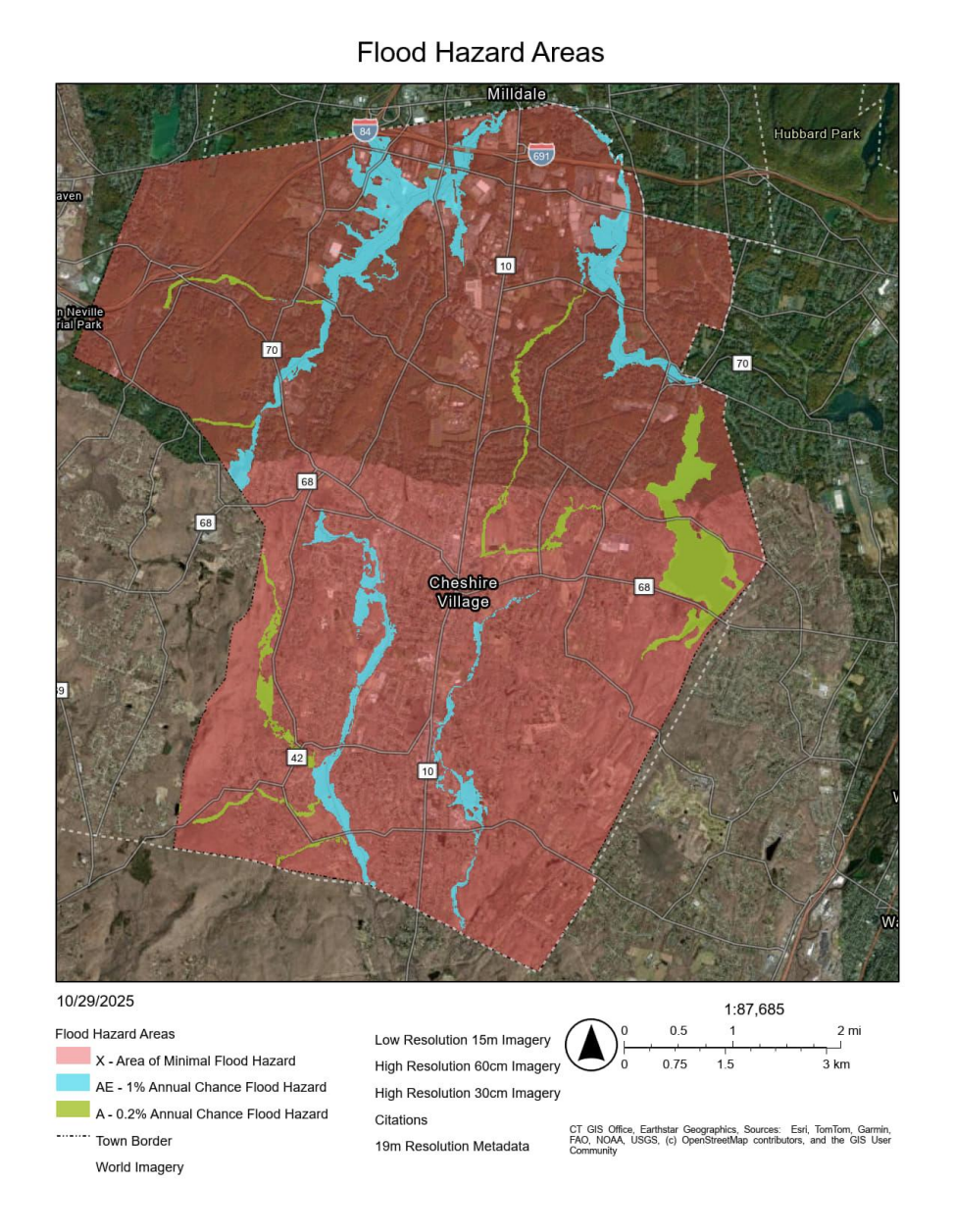
3. Transit

While the vast majority of commuters report using individual automobiles as their primary mode of transport (78%), 1% of Cheshire residents report using public transportation to commute to work, and 3% report walking or biking. Five percent of Cheshire residents report having no access to a personal automobile. (*Source: Advance CT*) In addition, 14% of workers report that they work from home. Cheshire is served by CT Transit bus service. Route J operated by CT Transit New Haven, connecting New Haven and Waterbury, runs along Route 10 and Route 70 in Cheshire. Route 460, operated by CT Transit Waterbury runs from the Milldale section of Southington to Waterbury, with a spur into Cheshire with a stop at the corner of Marion Road and Jarvis Street. Finally, Express Route 925 and 928 make stops at Exit 26 park and ride lot along Interstate 84. There is; however, no direct bus route between Route 10 in Cheshire and in the industrial area in the north end of town, nor is there a bus connection to Meriden. Considering the majority of employees commuting into Cheshire for work are coming from Waterbury (13.1%) and Meriden (5.8%) (*Source: US Census, OnTheMap*), providing those direct connections could assist in easing traffic in town and allowing a wider range of employee's access to and from Cheshire.

The CT DOT is developing a plan for improved bus service within the north end of town; the State has met with various employers in the area to determine the best location for the route and fixed stops. It will be important for the bus schedule to take into account shift schedules so that employees in the area can take advantage of the route. If the schedule does not align with the needs of employees, it will be minimally used and unsuccessful.

Various styles of CT Transit Buses

Source: CT Transit



4. Linkages to and From Town Center

Considering the consistent feedback received from town residents indicating that the worst traffic exists surrounding the town center, roughly from Maple Avenue south to the high school, increasing and improving the linkages to the town center, both for automobile traffic, and for bicycle and pedestrian traffic should be investigated and pursued. Improving walkability, through construction of additional and improved crossing conditions could encourage additional nearby residents to walk to existing businesses and services, such as the local Stop and Shop supermarket and public library. While sidewalks are available on the major roads, such as West Main Street, Main Street, and Maple Avenue, many of the surrounding neighborhoods are lacking sidewalk infrastructure.

In addition, creating bike lanes or additional off road bicycle infrastructure connecting the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail to the town center should be a priority. Doing so would create a new connection to the services within the center of town, further encouraging the use of alternative transportation to automobiles.

5. Accessibility

It is important that as the town continues to develop, it is done in a way that allows for access for all users, including, but not limited to those with limited mobility. The term access can be thought of broadly and include both access to sites from the frontage roads, access across neighborhoods, within development sites, and for those with limited mobility.

Access management into developments can be an effective way of managing traffic and limiting traffic impacts on frontage roads by reducing the number of curb cuts and access points where traffic turns into and out of properties. By requiring neighboring properties to grant access easements within the zoning regulations, over time multiple properties can be managed through one access drive, reducing the amount of traffic turning as it enters and exists sites, which slows traffic on the road. A current example of this exists at the Stop and Shop and Maplecroft Plaza where multiple properties and businesses are accessed through a limited number of access drives. Areas of high-density commercial development, such as the commercial area along South Main Street could benefit from implementing access management techniques in any future development. In the meantime, the Town could consider working with neighboring property owners to encourage consolidation of access drives for existing developments.

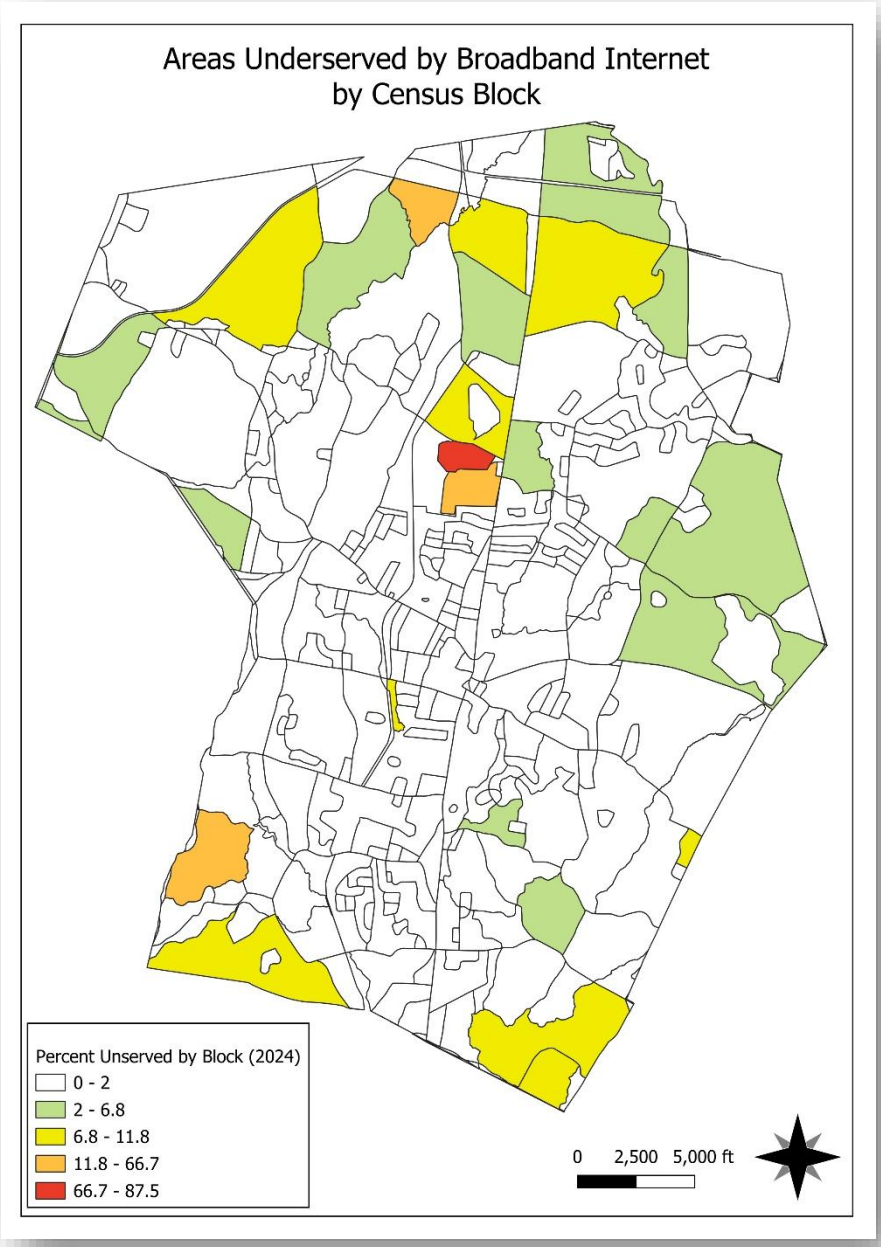
Likewise, pedestrian access into sites from the public right of way is key for anyone using public transportation or hoping to walk from their home in a nearby neighborhood. Toof often developments are constructed with internal sidewalks that do not connect to the street. Other times, sidewalks are brought into the development site along the main access drive, but then lead nowhere, leaving pedestrians to walk through a maze of parking aisles and driveways to reach their destination. The Commission should continue to work with developers at any opportunity to ensure adequate and safe pedestrian accessways are provided throughout development, especially when a sidewalk network

Above: Accessible Sidewalk Ramp

Source: StrongGo Industries

Below: Accessible Parking Spaces with Travel Path

Source: CT Sealcoating



exists along the frontage road. Additionally, for any site within a reasonable distance of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, the Commission should consider requiring bicycle parking accommodations.

Consideration of access should also include the ability to maintain consistent means of travel throughout the community. More frequent and larger storms have led to increased flooding on some of the major roads, causing them to be out of service during large storms. In particular, the area along Cornwall Avenue adjacent to the Farming Canal Heritage Trail crossing has suffered from severe flooding during major storms causing the road to be out of service for periods of time. This forces traffic onto smaller residential streets which are not sufficient for the traffic volume. As storm intensity is expected to continue to increase, the Town, in conjunction with the Connecticut DOT need to be cognizant of all areas of potential road flooding and ensure that infrastructure is maintained or upgraded any time road work is planned in order to ensure that it remains capable of handling increased stormwater. In addition, hardening of other infrastructure along the roads, such as water and sewer lines, or underground utilities should be coordinated with road construction projects to consolidate projects reducing the number of road closures and disruptions.

Finally, in an effort to ensure access is available to all individuals, it is important that site and street design incorporate elements that allow people of varying physical capabilities to move freely through the site. Parking lots, sidewalks, crosswalks, bus tops, and building entries must all consider a variety of mobility types.

The Town has created an ADA transition plan, along with the supplemental Sidewalk Policy created in February 2024. The purpose of an ADA transition plan is to provide for a means to remove physical barriers to accessibility in transportation systems and public facilities. The plan considers roads, sidewalks and crosswalks, as well as municipal facilities. The Cheshire Sidewalk Policy was developed by the Town's Engineering Department in conjunction with the Public Safety Commission in order to serve as a foundation for the field work required within the Town in order to facilitate the goals found within the ADA Transition Plan. The goals and actions of these two documents are incorporated into the goals and action items of this PoCD. The Town should continue to revisit both the ADA transition Plan and the Sidewalk Policy as often as necessary in order to ensure they are compliant with State law, and relevant to the development within Cheshire.

6. Information and Data Transmission

Overall, high speed internet connectivity and cellular data are widely available in Cheshire. Out of 392 census tracts, only 38 show some percentage of the users not able to connect to high-speed fiber internet. In addition, cellular service is available throughout most of town by most of the major carriers. According to FCC data as of 2021, LTE voice is available in nearly 100% of the town through the three major carriers, AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile. According to the FCC data, AT&T and Verizon offer the best coverage for cellular data, but generally coverage is good with all three major carriers. Like most of Connecticut, which contains rolling hills and a high prevalence of ledge, there are dead zones in the coverage areas for all three of the major carriers. Unfortunately, there is not one carrier that covers the entirety of the municipal areas.

As the number of employees working from home grows, and the needs of data transmission increases for business purposes, it is important to continue working toward 100% coverage for both high speed internet and cellular data throughout Town. With the rapid transition from land line phones to cellular over the last decade, it is increasingly important that cellular coverage be as wide-ranging as possible. Homeowners, the travelling public, and emergency services have grown increasingly dependent upon consistent cellular coverage.

The Town took advantage of an incentive program and purchased all of the streetlights, upgrading them to LEDs several years ago. Those LEDs are outfitted with power outlets and data ports which could support the creation of townwide wi-fi network. Creating an open wi-fi network could prove particularly useful in areas of low cellular coverage such as the Elam Park area.

7. *Wireline Utilities*

Electric, cable, and telephone wireline utilities are provided by Eversource, Comcast, and Frontier, respectively. The utility companies are responsible for the maintenance of their network; however, the Town has a role to play in the installation of new utilities. While the majority of wires are located on utility poles and hung overhead, the Town requires that for all new developments, these utilities be placed underground in order to better protect them in inclement weather.

Upgrades to the systems can and should be undertaken with the Towns input, including efforts to reduce power consumption and increase resiliency of the network. The Planning and Zoning Commission, along with other regulatory bodies should work collaboratively with the Energy Commission to develop a comprehensive energy plan for the Town to include town facilities, street lighting, and other energy needs.

B. Goals

Over the next decade, Cheshire will pursue the following goals in order to carry forth the vision of continuing to invest in existing and new transportation infrastructure and provide a variety of transportation options to ensure the best accessibility possible:

1. Reduce congestion throughout tow with a focus on Route 10
2. Increase connectivity to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail wherever feasible.
3. Improve pedestrian connectivity throughout town, particularly in commercial areas and along Route 10.
4. Develop traffic calming measures to reduce speeds on residential streets throughout the town.

C. Actions

1. Coordinate road construction projects among all utility providers and others (i.e. water, sewer, gas, drainage, paving) in order to ensure as few disruptions to the road network as possible.
2. Upgrade and maintain drainage infrastructure to mitigate the effects of larger and more frequent rain events, particularly in low lying areas, or areas of stream crossings (i.e. Cornwall Avenue at the Farmington Canal)

3. Consider purchasing additional easements adjacent to roadways for the purpose of stormwater management.
4. Lobby the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments and the CT DOT to conduct a wholistic corridor study of Route 10 from the I-691 Interchange South to the Hamden Town line.
5. Work with the CT DOT to install dedicated right and left turn lanes, increase the shoulder width to allow for bypass traffic, and improve sight lines wherever possible along Route 10.
6. Encourage CT DOT to assign a liaison to the Town in order to coordinate efforts to improve traffic throughout town.
7. Seek coordination of traffic light timing along Route 10 to allow motorists to stop as few times as possible.
8. Seek grant funding to continue to build out the sidewalk infrastructure, particularly along Route 10 and throughout business areas.
9. Update zoning regulations to require the installation of sidewalks for any new development.
10. Connect the high school with the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail with a pedestrian bridge over the Canal. This connection should include an improved pedestrian facility across Route 10 in order to provide a safe connection from the trail to Bartlem Park.
11. Make improvements to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail including wayfinding signage, mile markers, and additional connectivity where appropriate.
12. Work with adjacent landowners to create additional parking spaces at trail heads wherever possible. This could include easements, shared parking agreements, or land purchases.
13. Develop and install coordinated signage to assist in finding parking throughout the downtown area to encourage visitors to park once and walk.
14. Work with the local traffic authority to develop methods to reduce speeding across town including increased enforcement and traffic calming measures.
15. Fund future traffic studies as recommended by the ongoing multi-modal transportation study.
16. Develop a comprehensive energy plan for the Town.
17. The Town should investigate the use of microgrids for Town Buildings.
18. The Town should achieve and maintain Gold Certification status with Sustainable CT.

Chapter Eight – Future Land Use Map and Conclusion

Future Land Use Map

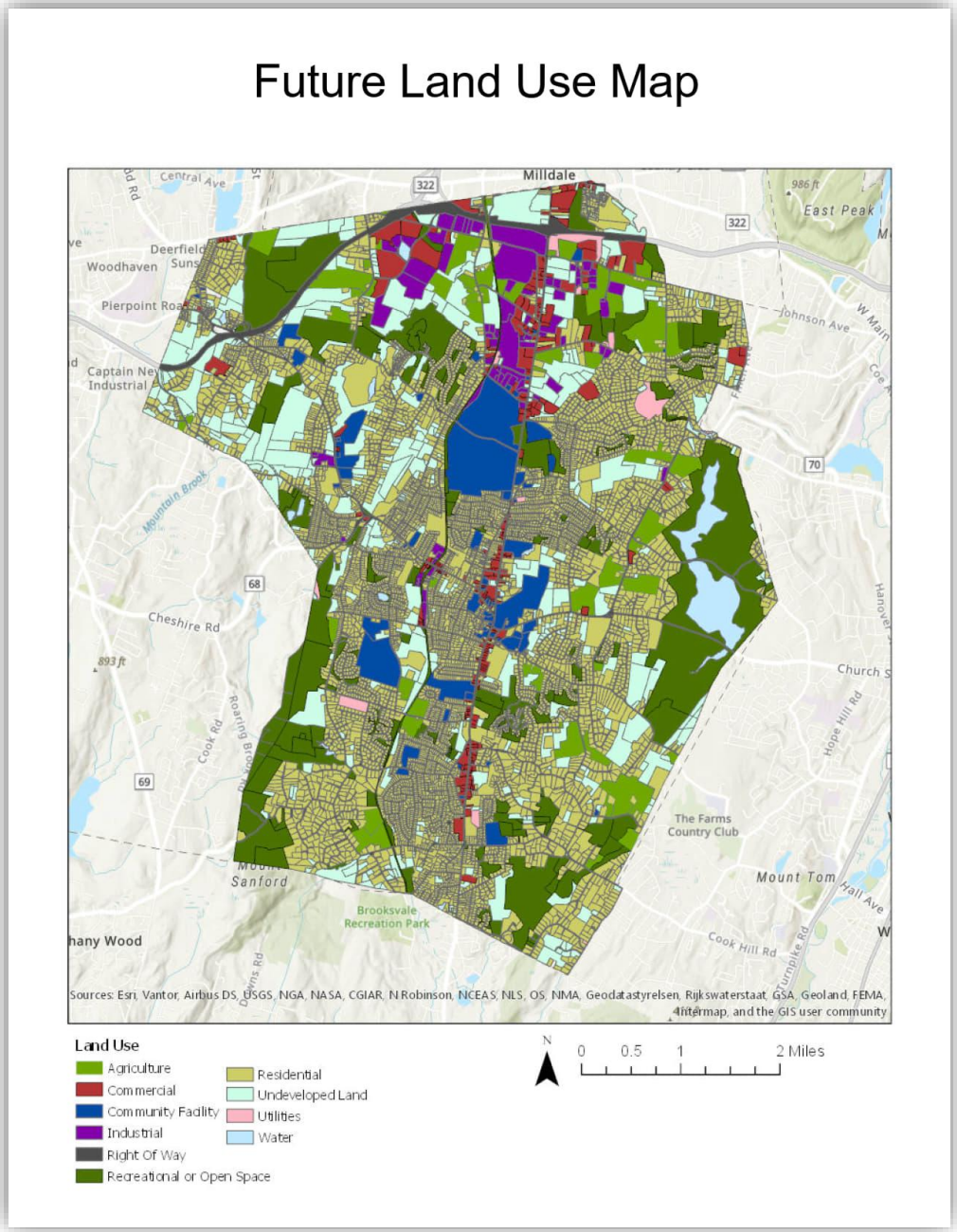
A.

The future land use map is the culmination of the goals and policies set forth in this plan and acts as a guide to assist the Planning and Zoning Commission as it makes decisions on applications, zone changes, and other planning exercises over the course of the next ten years.

It should be recognized that areas noted for different land uses, such as commercial, industrial, and residential are general in nature. Zoning should remain flexible, to an extent, in order to accommodate the growth of various sectors in the future. The map notes areas intended for each but should not be relied upon for parcel specific information.

B. Conclusion

The 2026–2036 Plan of Conservation and Development (PoCD) for the Town of Cheshire serves as a framework to guide growth, preservation, and investment over the next decade. This document reflects a collective vision shaped by



the community's values—protecting Cheshire's small-town charm, fostering responsible economic development, enhancing mobility, and preserving its rich natural and cultural resources.

Cheshire continues to stand out as a desirable place to live, work, and visit. The Plan's themes—ensuring an excellent quality of life and strong sense of place; maintaining a diverse and resilient development pattern; protecting environmental resources; and improving connectivity and accessibility—are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Together, they establish a holistic approach to planning that balances the needs of current residents with the opportunities of future generations.

Central to this Plan is the principle of sustainability, both environmental and fiscal. Cheshire's future depends on thoughtful stewardship of its open spaces, natural resources, and infrastructure systems, while encouraging innovative housing and economic development that align with community goals. Investment in modern infrastructure, multimodal transportation, and resilient land use policies will ensure that Cheshire remains adaptable in the face of changing demographic, economic, and climate trends.

Implementation of this Plan will require collaboration among the many municipal departments, boards and commissions, along with regional and state partners, and of course, Cheshire residents. The Implementation Matrix found in the next chapter outlines specific actions and responsible entities to achieve the goals set forth herein. Regular review and progress tracking will be essential to ensuring that the goals of this plan are carried out.

As Cheshire evolves, this Plan should continue to inform decision-making while remaining flexible enough to respond to new challenges and innovations. Through its proactive planning and community engagement, Cheshire reaffirms its commitment to maintaining the qualities that define it: a vibrant community, strong local identity, environmental stewardship, and a forward-thinking approach to growth.

By embracing this Plan, Cheshire ensures that over the next decade it will remain a community of choice, celebrated for its balance of progress and preservation, its livability, and its enduring sense of place.

Appendix A – Implementation Matrix

The following tables include the implementation matrix to be used when carrying out the visions and goals set forth in this plan. Each table includes the specific vision followed by the specific action items related to that vision listed out within each chapter of this plan. The table also includes the entity responsible for carrying out the action along with a timeframe and estimate cost. In reading the "Responsible Party" column of the table, the following abbreviations are used:

BO: Building Official
BOE: Board of Education
CHD: Chesprocott Health District
DPW: Department of Public Works
EC: Environment Commission
EDC: Economic Development Commission
EnC: Energy Commission
FD: Fire Department
FM: Fire Marshal
HDC: Historic District Commission
IWWC: Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission
PBC: Public Building Commission
PD: Police Department
PR: Parks and Recreation Department
PRC: Parks and Recreation Commission
PZC: Planning and Zoning Commission
TBC: Town Beautification Committee
TC: Town Council
TM: Town Manager's Office
WPCA: Water Pollution Control Authority

In reading the "Cost Estimate" column, the approximate order of magnitude for cost of implementation of each action is estimated as follows:

$= Less than $10,000.
$$= Greater than $10,000 but less than
$100,000. $$$= Greater than $100,000 but less than $1,000,000.
$$$$=More than $1 million

	Vision: Ensure an Excellent Quality of Life and Strong Sense of Place	Responsible Party	Priority Level	Cost Est
1	Monitor the space needs of Town departments to ensure adequate space is available at Town Hall well into the future.	TM	Low	$
2	Monitor the needs and volunteer rates of the Cheshire Fire Department and consider incentives to attract volunteers such as tax breaks, stipends, or increased pensions rates or; be prepared to add additional paid staff if volunteer rates drop; or work collaboratively with nearby towns to ensure adequate coverage.	PSC, FD	Medium	$$$
3	Support ongoing maintenance of town wide fire hydrants	FD, TC	Medium	$$
4	Maintain existing police and fire facilities and ensure Capitol Improvement Plan includes adequate replacement vehicles and equipment.	PSC, FD	Medium	$$
5	Investigate the need for a public safety complex in the north end of Town		Low	
6	Develop maintenance plans for large open space parcels which consider drainage and flooding, invasive species, tree health, and public access.	PR, PRC, DPW	Medium	$$
7	Review zoning regulations and pursue changes which require or strongly encourage bike and pedestrian friendly elements in new developments.	PZC	Low	$
8	Work to revitalize Mixville Park using the Mixville Master Plan Prepared by Weston and Sampson	PR, PRC	Medium	$$$$
9	Review opportunities for the development of additional playing fields and the hiring of sufficient maintenance crews	PR, PRC	Low	$$
10	Construct a bridge across the canal and connect it to a trail to provide a direct connection between the High School and the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail.	PR	Low	$$
11	Adopt design standards targeted at commercial and historical areas in town to ensure new and re-construction is aesthetically cohesive with its surroundings.	PZC, TBC	High	$
12	Work with Town Beautification Committee to ensure that developers are adhering to the list of approved plantings in order to avoid the introduction of invasive species.	PZC	Medium	$
13	Review proposed landscaping plans and ensure they are followed before issuing final approvals.	PZC	Low	$
14	Consider an expansion of the Cornwall Avenue – Town Center Historic District, or an entirely new district in order to better protect historic properties along Main Street and West Main Street.	TC, HDC	Low	$
15	Adopt a demolition delay ordinance using the model ordinance prepared by Preservation Connecticut.	TC, HDC	Low	$
16	Leverage funds available for preservation through the Certified Local Government program.	TC, HDC	Low	$
17	Review the zoning regulations to ensure that arts and entertainment venues are allowed which meet the needs and desires of the town.	PZC	Low	$
18	Review the potential for adaptive reuse of Chapman School for Town Facilities.	TC, PZC	Medium	$$$

	Vision: Maintain a Diverse and Resilient Development Pattern.	Responsible Party	Priority Level	Cost Est
1	Investigate the potential to remove housing as an allowed use from the C1, C2, and C3 zones.	PZC	Medium	$
2	Strengthen Section 44A of the Zoning Regulations and consider other approaches to encourage the development of affordable housing with municipal oversight in lieu of 8-30g applications.	PZC	High	$
3	Review Chapter 44A with the consideration of adding design standards.	PZC	Medium	$
4	Review the Special Design district to consider removing housing as an allowed use.	PZC	High	$
5	Review the ADU regulation with consideration for more flexibility in occupancy and ownership.	PZC	Medium	$
6	Review the cluster subdivision regulation for potential changes to encourage or require its use and to preserve additional open space. Consider possible density bonuses and changes to the way the total number of lots is calculated.	PZC	Medium	$
7	Consider allowing Cluster Developments in areas without water and sewer as determined by site conditions.	PZC, CHD	Medium	$
8	Review Section 5.5 of the subdivision regulation relating to rear lots and consider changes to allow more flexibility.	PZC	Medium	$
9	Consider expanding and supplementing a business incentive program for both new and existing businesses in town.	TC, EDC	Medium	$
10	Evaluate infrastructure improvements that can support business development and prioritize town resources based on taxpayer funded improvements vs. grand list growth.	TC, WPCA, DPW	High	$
11	Work with the internet service providers to continue to improve access to high speed and broadband internet.	TC	Low	$
12	Explore adopting new TIF district areas (West Main Street Business District, South End Commercial District, et.al.) and what infrastructure needs might exist within each unique area.	TC, EDC	Medium	$
13	Investigate and collaborate with EDC to amend existing regulations to promote quality commercial industrial development or redevelopment resulting in net positive grand list growth.	PZC, EDC	Medium	$
14	Continue to work with CT Transit to increase bus service to major employment areas in town.	TC, EDC	High	$
15	Study specific geographic focus areas of the community to encourage appropriate scaled and complimentary development. For example: Town Center, West Main Street Center, North End Industrial Corridor, South End Commercial District.	PZC, EDC	Medium	$
16	Evaluate the need for regulatory changes to accomplish specific placemaking goals.	PZC, TBC	Low	$
17	Encourage the expansion of sewer service in areas identified by WPCA as being in the sewer shed.	TC, PZC, WPCA	Low	$$$$
18	Encourage Regional Water Authority to extend service where applicable.	TC	Low	$

	Vision: Maintain a Diverse and Resilient Development Pattern.	Responsible Party	Priority Level	Cost Est
19	Encourage the expansion of Eversource Gas services where feasible.	TC	Low	$
20	Investigate coverage gaps and determine practical locations for infrastructure improvements to cellular service.	TC	Medium	$
21	Review the I-C zone and consider potential changes or elimination to encourage further development.	PZC	Medium	$
22	Review the potential for adaptive reuse of the current Darcy School for housing.	TC, PZC	Medium	$$$

	Vision: Continue to Develop in an Environmentally Sensitive Manner	Responsible Party	Priority Level	Cost Est
1	Update existing maintenance plans for all town-owned open spaces to include trail clearing, regular signage inspections, and infrastructure improvements.	PR, PRC	Medium	$$
2	Implement a system for regular reviews of maintenance plans to ensure they remain effective and responsive to changing conditions.	DPW	Low	$
3	Secure consistent funding to sustain and support these plans through grants, budget allocations, or a permitting system.	DPW, TC	Medium	$$
4	Promote and establish a more accessible kayak trail on the Quinnipiac River.	PR, PRC	Low	$$
a	Provide guided tours to promote water recreation activities.	PR	Low	$$
5	Develop parking areas and sidewalks that strengthen access to and encourage the use of open spaces.	PR, DPW	Medium	$$$
6	Consider a citation ordinance for wetland violations.	TC, IWWC	Medium	$
7	Earmark funding for the acquisition and preservation of additional parcels of open space land, prioritizing existing contiguous open space parcels in order to increase habitats for wildlife.	TC, PRC	Medium	$$$
8	Require clear public access that is ADA accessible, where feasible, to newly acquired open spaces.	PRC, TC	High	$$
9	Include standards about contiguity and access in development plans or conditions of approvals for large developments that include open space.	PZC	Medium	$
10	Review and update cluster housing regulations and open space requirements in subdivision zoning regulations.	PZC	Medium	$
11	Consider limiting access to open spaces with sensitive habitat and wildlife.	PRC, PR	Low	$
12	Develop and implement comprehensive wetland restoration projects aimed at improving water quality, increasing biodiversity, and enhancing flood resilience.	EC, DPW, IWWC	Medium	$$$
13	Launch community-driven programs to educate residents about the importance of conservation to promote hands-on conservation activities.	EC, IWWC	Low	$
a	Collaborate with the local school system, scout groups, and conservation-oriented groups such as the Cheshire Land Trust and the Cheshire Pollinator Pathway.	EC	Low	$

	Vision: Continue to Develop in an Environmentally Sensitive Manner	Responsible Party	Priority Level	Cost Est
14	Revise the 1995 TRAILS guide with a more accessible digital companion on the CheshireCT.org website.	PC, PRC	Low	$
15	Create an accessible outreach document and workshops to increase public knowledge of Inland Wetland regulations.	IWWC	Medium	$
16	Create and distribute a newsletter with information about the Inland Wetlands Commission.	IWWC	Low	$
17	Create and distribute a “Welcome” pamphlet to the Inland Wetlands Commission.	IWWC	Low	$
18	Increase training opportunities for Inland Wetland Commissioners.	IWWC	Medium	$
19	Establish public-private partnerships and look for grant opportunities to secure sustainable funding sources for the ongoing maintenance, management, and expansion of conservation efforts in open spaces.	EC, PRC, DPW	Medium	$$
20	Implement signage, educational programs, and improved access to open spaces to increase the public’s interest in preserving and protecting the history of the town’s earliest settlers, and geologic and industrial legacy.	EDC	Medium	$$
21	Review and revise current restrictions on recreational activities in town-owned open spaces to balance conservation priorities	PR, TC	Medium	$
21	Review and revise current restrictions on recreational activities in town-owned open spaces to balance conservation priorities.	PRC	Medium	$
a	Encourage the implementation of regulations that increase community engagement activities while preserving natural resources. For example, expand designated areas for bird watching, hiking, and educational programs that promote responsible use.	EC, PZC	Medium	$
b	Consider replacing restrictions on activities such as camping, metal detecting, and other recreational uses with a paid permitting system.	TC, PRC	Low	$
22	Consider charging a fee for the use of town-owned land which would be used for the maintenance of the property.	TC	Low	$
23	Incentivize removal of invasive species and replacement with native species on existing development sites.	EC, TC	Medium	$
24	Establish a program for Town properties to properly remove invasive species within dedicated timeframes.	EC	Medium	$$

	Vision: Develop Transportation Infrastructure that Connects Cheshire and Provides a Wide Array of Access	Responsible Party	Priority Level	Cost Est
1	Coordinate road construction projects among all utility providers and others (i.e. water, sewer, gas, drainage, paving) in order to ensure as few disruptions to the road network as possible.	DPW	Medium	$
2	Upgrade and maintain drainage infrastructure to mitigate the effects of larger and more frequent rain events, particularly in low lying areas, or areas of stream crossings (i.e. Cornwall Avenue at the Farmington Canal)	DPW, TC	Medium	$$$$
3	Consider purchasing additional easements adjacent to roadways for the purpose of stormwater management.	TC	Low	$$$
4	Lobby the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments and the CT DOT to conduct a wholistic corridor study of Route 10 from the I-691 Interchange South to the Hamden Town line.	TC	High	$
5	Work with the CT DOT to install dedicated right and left turn lanes, increase the shoulder width to allow for bypass traffic, and improve sight lines wherever possible along Route 10.	TC, PZC	High	$
6	Encourage CT DOT to assign a liaison to the Town in order to coordinate efforts to improve traffic throughout town.	TC	High	$
7	Seek coordination of traffic light timing along Route 10 to allow motorists to stop as few times as possible.	TC	High	$
8	Seek grant funding to continue to build out the sidewalk infrastructure, particularly along Route 10 and throughout business areas.	EDC, PZC, TC	Medium	$$$
9	Update zoning regulations to require the installation of sidewalks for any new development.	PZC	Low	$
10	Connect the high school with the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail with a pedestrian bridge over the Canal. This connection should include an improved pedestrian facility across Route 10 in order to provide a safe connection from the trail to Bartlem Park.	PR, PRC	Medium	$$$
11	Make improvements to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail including wayfinding signage, mile markers, and additional connectivity where appropriate.	PR, PRC	Low	$$$
12	Work with adjacent landowners to create additional parking spaces at trail heads wherever possible. This could include easements, shared parking agreements, or land purchases.	PR, PRC, TC, DPW	Low	$$$
13	Develop and install coordinated signage to assist in finding parking throughout the downtown area to encourage visitors to park once and walk.	EDC	Medium	$$
14	Work with the local traffic authority to develop methods to reduce speeding across town including increased enforcement and traffic calming measures.	PSC, TC	Medium	$$$
15	Fund future traffic studies as recommended by the ongoing multi-modal transportation study.	TC	Medium	$$
16	Develop a comprehensive energy plan for the Town.	EnC, TC	Medium	$
17	The Town should investigate the use of microgrids for Town Buildings.	EnC, TC	Low	$$$
18	The Town should achieve and maintain Gold Certification status with Sustainable CT.	EnC, EC, TC	Low	$