

TOWN OF FRANKLIN
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

EFFECTIVE
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) will serve as a guide for consistent decision making by Franklin’s boards and commissions and residents with regard to conservation and development activities for the next ten years and beyond. Franklin’s first Plan of Development was prepared in 1972 and subsequent plans were adopted in 1987, 2000, and 2013. The Planning and Zoning Commission is required by Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes to “prepare or amend and shall adopt a plan of conservation and development for the municipality” at least once every ten years. The plan provides the basis for the long-term vision for the Town and also provides assistance for near term decisions that face the Commission when administrating the zoning and subdivision regulations. It is the aim of this POCD to identify common goals for the Town’s future. With a broad vision in mind, this POCD will outline actionable steps for Franklin to maintain that positive future.

1.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND GOALS

The basic purpose of the planning process is to provide an environment for Franklin’s residents that is healthy, attractive, and socially and economically sound. A fundamental objective is to preserve the Town’s natural attractiveness and rural character. The following goals will support this objective:

- **Agriculture** Preserve the Town’s natural attractiveness by encouraging good agriculture practices to maintain Franklin’s farming heritage.
- **Balancing the Grand List** Add strength and variety to the local tax base by encouraging new commercial and industrial activities in areas that will not negatively affect the health, safety and general welfare of the residents.
- **Protect Natural Features** Preserve lands for habitat, groundwater supplies, and low impact recreational opportunities.
- **Housing Opportunities** Provide a variety of residential densities that are environmentally sound and will meet the needs of all of Franklin’s residents.
- **Commercial/Industrial Development** Encourage commercial/industrial development in appropriate areas, with regulatory safeguards to eliminate adverse impacts on other land uses.
- **Historic Preservation** Identify and preserve buildings and sites that contribute to Franklin’s history.

1.2 POCD UPDATE PROCESS

The Town of Franklin designates the task of updating the POCD to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). Starting in late 2022, the PZC dedicated a portion of meetings to discuss updates to the POCD. An online survey was developed by the Commission and was posted to the Town website. The link to the survey was distributed to each town Board and Commission. The survey link was also sent in Franklin Elementary School’s weekly newsletter, and was shared to the “Franklin Community Forum” on Facebook. As an alternative to the online survey, paper copies of the survey were distributed to the Senior Center, Janet Carlson Calvert Library, and Town Hall. The survey received a total of 109 responses – 106 of which were online and 3 of which were on paper. The results of this survey will be referred to as the “2023 Resident Survey” throughout the POCD. The results of the 2023 Resident Survey are included as Appendix A.

2.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Balancing the residential and commercial land uses with the desire to maintain the rural characteristics is a tricky endeavor. Business retention and new business development are keys to healthy economy. The Economic Development Commission was disbanded in early 2000s. The work of the former Economic Development Commission is performed by the office of the First Selectman. A copy of the existing Zoning Map is included as Figure 1.

2.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Franklin is strategically situated to attract small to medium scale commercial activity. The proximity to major highways and railroads is attractive to future commercial and industrial development. Many of Franklin’s businesses either cater to agriculture or are a type of agriculture business. The 2023 Resident Survey indicated that Franklin should continue to promote agricultural businesses.

2.2 BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

According to the Town of Franklin Assessor, there are currently 1,279.71 acres presently zoned commercial or commercial/industrial. These uses range in type from small, retail stores, to business offices, to the extensive structures and grounds used by the Town's several agriculture businesses.

Frontage along Route 32 has the highest concentration of Franklin’s businesses and commercial enterprises. This busy highway not only offers easy access for customers and employees, but it also provides visual exposure to thousands of potential customers in passing vehicles each day.

Historically, a significant proportion of the businesses in Franklin were related to agriculture. These included three large feed mills, the mushroom farm, farm machinery and equipment

dealers, and the egg-producing and processing activities. Recently, the feed mills and the mushroom farm have either closed or relocated. These businesses supported (either directly or indirectly) the extensive dairy and beef farming business in Franklin and neighboring towns, particularly Lebanon. The farmers use the poultry manure as fertilizer on fields that produce additional feed for their herds. These complementary relationships and the close proximity of the agri-businesses should support a continuation of such uses in Franklin and may even attract additional related uses.

Land uses in Franklin also have been influenced by the Central Vermont Railroad, in terms of both location and type. No less than four rail sidings have been constructed, serving five individual businesses. The full potential of rail service as it relates to economic development has not been realized in Franklin. Additional sidings could be constructed to serve commercial and industrially zoned vacant land in both the southern and northern ends of the Town. This mode of transportation is unavailable to most municipalities in eastern Connecticut and should be carefully considered and pursued as a key ingredient in any economic development effort.

New businesses and expansions of existing businesses have occurred throughout the Town in recent years, but no area compares with the southeast corner of the Town in terms of the number of new activities. Good highway access, rail access, visual exposure to a large amount of traffic on Route 32, access to municipal sewer and water, and proximity to a large consumer market in Norwich have combined to draw new uses to this area.

2.1.1 Agricultural Industries and Producers

The economic benefits of having diverse and healthy agriculture are significant. Farms in Franklin are important businesses that support the existence of food manufacturers and processors, garden centers, veterinarians, farm equipment wholesalers, farm supply stores, machinery repair shops, and wholesale fuel suppliers. Farmland places little or no demand on town services. It generates more tax revenue than it requires in community services, even when it is assessed at its current agricultural use value under Public Act 490.

The Town of Franklin recognizes that change and growth are inevitable and, in many instances, necessary. Knowing that change and growth can be either positive or negative, it is imperative that residents and officials plan and promote positive changes. The challenge before the town is to maintain Franklin's rural character, charm, tradition and values while providing opportunities for culture, recreation, housing, education, commerce and employment. Good planning can ensure that scenic views, open space, farmland and historic structures are preserved, while supporting housing and commercial services that benefit the community.

Although the number of dairies in Franklin has decreased from years past, the remaining ones are strong, and the farmers are invested in continuing into the future. These farms also sell corn, compost, provide sawmill services, and livestock trucking. There are also farmers in town that

keep beef cows, some as their business, and others as their hobby. There are also a few area farms with milking cows for personal use. Other livestock are kept in Franklin by hobby farmers.

The formation of local farmers' markets in surrounding towns has spawned a number of vegetable farms producing both organic and conventionally grown produce in Franklin. Produce farmers market their products at various weekly markets in surrounding towns. There are also four seasonal farm stands and several smaller home stands operating in Franklin that sell fresh, locally grown produce and plants. Labor numbers vary with the season, with the crops mandating manpower requirements.

There are several nursery/landscaping operations in Franklin, with thousands of square feet of greenhouse space and several acres of irrigated land utilized in these operations. Products include annual, perennial, and vegetable plants. There is also one service-oriented landscaping company, which provides lawn maintenance and landscape planning. Products include annuals, perennials, shrubs, trees, and mulch. Additional agriculture related industries include businesses related to equipment sale and repair.

2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promote appropriate commercial/industrial development in existing approved zones.
2. Continue to streamline the permitting process for commercial/industrial developments with pre-application meetings.
3. Primary considerations should be made to help promote small farms/agricultural related businesses in the town. Create a strong foundation for small farms/agricultural businesses to succeed and prosper. Secondary considerations should be made to encourage larger, commercial type farming/agricultural businesses in town.
4. Review available tax exemptions and property tax abatements fee schedules to improve incentives for farming/agriculture.
5. Support appropriate Tax and Fee Policies for Farmland.
6. Encourage the use of properties (private or town-owned) viable for agriculture production.
7. Ensure that agricultural businesses are incorporated into Franklin's Economic Development Strategy.
8. Consider the definition of agriculture and associated uses.

3.0 HISTORIC RESOURCES

3.1 HISTORY OF FRANKLIN

Pre-West Farms

The region which now comprises the Town of Franklin had been the ancestral homelands of the Pequot and Mohegan tribes. Traditionally it has been held that this area encompassed hunting grounds. This land was conveyed to European ownership in 1659 when European settlers from Saybrook purchased the land from the Mohegan Sachem Uncas. In 1660 the first Norwich residents began to build in what would become Norwichtown and three short years later in 1663 what would become Franklin began to be divided among Norwich residents and would be settled by Europeans.

West Farms

After approximately 50 years of settlement, in 1716, the people living in this region of Norwich petitioned the town to form their own Ecclesiastical Society and permission was granted by the town. The next step was to petition the General Assembly, which was duly done, and in 1718 the 2nd Ecclesiastical Society in Norwich, or “West Farms”, began in earnest. Quickly the trappings of a distinct identity and political organization began to take shape – the 2nd Company of the Norwich Militia was reorganized to encompass West Farms specifically and schooling was organized for children.

Norwich continued to grow in importance and ballooned to having eight distinct religious societies. The 4th, or “New Concord”, encompassed some of the south-west portion of West Farms along Blue Hill. More important was the formation of the 8th Society, or “Pautipaug” which encompassed the east side of Franklin up to the Shetucket River. Pautipaug was formed in 1758 after decades of infighting sparked by the Great Awakening movement, but was not legally recognized until 1763.

In 1775 the American War of Independence began and many from West Farms took an active part as soldiers and sailors in the conflict. They fought in such battles as Bunker Hill, Trenton, Germantown, Saratoga, Monmouth, and Yorktown. When the war closed, it was soon desired that this region become a new town. In 1783 the first proposal was made which would have combined the West Farms, New Concord, and Pautipaug Societies. This proposal was adjusted by the State General Assembly, and they recommended that while the West Farms and Pautipaug should be joined as a town and that New Concord be incorporated on its own.

The Town of Franklin

As such, in May 1786 the Town of Franklin was officially born, constituting what had been the West Farms and Pautipaug religious societies. The population of the region was steady between 1774 (when Connecticut colony had conducted a census of religious societies) and 1830. Franklin consistently had between 1,100 and 1,200 residents in this period, and the population

only began to dip by 1840. It plummeted by 1850. The town stretched from the current day borders with Bozrah, Lisbon, Windham, and Norwich in the south and west all the way to the Shetucket River which formed the town's eastern boundary. While the town was witness and participant in vast changes and upheavals over the next decades, the final major change to its shape only came in 1861. Four years earlier in 1857 a successful textile mill had been built on the Shetucket River and the workers lived on the Franklin side of the river in the village of Baltic. The town's population exploded from a mere 895 in 1850 to 2358 people because of the mill, its workers, and the infrastructure needed to support it. This, however, would not last and due to issues around a complicated tax scheme and nativist sentiment; a new town was formed out of the eastern portion of Franklin and the southwestern portion of Lisbon. In June 1861, Sprague was officially created, and Franklin's current borders took shape.

3.2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic preservation encourages the continued use of older properties, safeguards the existence of significant historic elements, and contributes to community development objectives such as quality of life, sustainability, and economic development.

Franklin has one historic site listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Ashbel Woodward House, located on Route 32. The house is owned by the Town and is home to the Dr. Ashbel Woodward House Museum.



There are almost no structures from the 18th century surviving in Franklin, and important sites from the 19th and 20th centuries have been torn down as well. Examples include the Toll House that was located on Route 32, the Town Pound located at the foot of Pound Hill Road, the Cider Mill on Route 207, and various one room school houses.

The 2023 Resident Survey indicated that residents have a strong desire to protect the historical sites and structures that contribute to the rural landscape of Franklin. There was also a desire to encourage new development to be compatible with the rural, agricultural character of Town.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Update the historic resources survey that was completed in 2002.
2. Identify historic resources in Franklin that could be listed on local, state, or national register of historic places.
3. Explore regulation amendments to protect and preserve historical areas of the Town of Franklin and individual structures and sites within this area that are historically, architecturally, archaeologically or culturally significant.
4. Consider the adoption of a demolition delay to provide a window of opportunity to find an alternate preservation solution for a property in lieu of demolition.
5. Increase focus on heritage tourism townwide through promotion of Franklin's historic resources.
6. Investigate preservation easements as a means to protect historic resources in Franklin.

4.0 NATURAL RESOURCES

The characteristics and distribution of the natural resources has a large effect on the quality of life for a community. Balancing the protection of the communities' natural resources and quality life are key factors for a Plan of Conservation and Development.

4.1 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

A majority of respondents to the 2023 Resident survey indicated that they are concerned about preserving agricultural land and open space. Maintaining and preserving the rural nature of Town also can be accomplished by preventing the degradation of water and wetland resources, protecting potential groundwater aquifers from pollution, and minimizing habitat fragmentation from development, forestry practices, or infrastructure changes. See Figure 2 Natural Resource Constraints.

4.2 LAND CHARACTERISTICS

Franklin's terrain is dominated by hills or drumlins that were formed thousands of years ago by glaciers. Glaciation also helps to form stream valleys or floodplains, wetlands, bedrock outcrops. The two main categories of glacial deposits are stratified drift, which typically consist of well sorted fine to coarse deposits that are layered or stratified and till which consists of a heterogeneous mixture of unstratified material ranging from clay to boulders. Stratified drift deposits occur in stream valleys and lowlands. Coarse stratified drift deposits make the most productive aquifers.

The largest area of stratified drift in Franklin is located in the north part of the Town. The potential of this aquifer is not known, but may be explored in the future. The Town of Franklin

passed an Aquifer Protection Ordinance in 2010 as the first step in the process of protecting this potential resource.

4.3 HYDROLOGIC CHARACTERISTICS

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) Water Quality Classification Map indicates that groundwater throughout the Town is classified as “GA” with the exception of two areas. The two areas are located along Route 32 and are classified as “GA impaired”; one located at Murphy Road and Route 32 and the second located at Whippoorwill Hollow Road and Route 32. According to the CTDEP’s Water Quality Standards, the GA classification describes groundwater that is within the area of existing private water supply wells or an area with the potential to provide water to public or private water supply wells. GA groundwater is presumed to be, at a minimum, suitable for drinking or other domestic uses without treatment. Designated uses include existing private and potential public or private supplies of water and baseflow for hydraulically- connected surface water bodies.

Underlying the glacial deposits is bedrock. According to the Bedrock Geology Map of Connecticut (Rodgers, 1985), most of the bedrock beneath Franklin is mapped as one of three formations: Scotland Schist, Hebron Gneiss, or Canterbury Gneiss. According to some informal Franklin historians, Hearthstone Hill is so named because of how the rock breaks to form a potential “hearth stone”. The bedrock aquifer is the source of water for the majority of the Franklin residents via individual bedrock wells.

4.4 WETLANDS AND WATER BODIES

Wetlands are defined by soil type and are typically described as poorly drained. The Connecticut Inland Wetland and Watercourses (CGS 22a-36 to 22a-45) adopted in 1972 requires the regulation of activities affecting wetlands and watercourses in Towns. Wetland regulations are the responsibility of the Franklin Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission. According to the University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research, Franklin has approximately 621 acres of forested and non- forested wetlands and 79 acres of water bodies (as of 2006). Figure 2 Land Cover map includes the wetlands and water bodies within the Town of Franklin.

4.5 AGRICULTURE

Agriculture remains the most extensive land use in Franklin. A total of 1,986 acres were delineated agriculture in 1980. In 1999, this increased to 2,285 acres. In 2009, a total of 2,647 acres was farmed, which is more than twice the amount of land presently used for residential, commercial, and industrial uses, and it equals the amount of land in all other land use categories combined, except for undeveloped woodlands. See Figure 3 Farmland Soils for a depiction of the

Agricultural Lands. In 2022, the Agriculture and Conservation Commission started work on an agricultural and conservation business directory. The goal of the directory is to promote agricultural businesses and available products.

Although the farming has declined over the years, the farms that continue to operate today are an asset to the area and a contributing factor to why many people call Franklin their home. Farming encompasses large tracts of land, and it is important the citizens of Franklin that these parcels remain in an undeveloped state. The 2023 Resident Survey showed that residents value Franklin's rural, agricultural landscape. The farms and open spaces in Franklin are what distinguish our town from the suburban areas in the rest of Connecticut. Seeing livestock, smelling manure, experiencing the changing crops along with the seasons is a privilege, and one that shouldn't be allowed to disappear.

Agricultural producers and landowners depend on the land they steward. Agriculture in Franklin has many environmental benefits including improving surface and ground water by filtering, maintaining or increasing biodiversity, and reducing carbon emissions by reducing the reliance on food shipped from long distances.

4.6 PRESERVED OPEN SPACE AND WOODLAND

Open space such as Giddings Park, the Franklin Wildlife Management Area (WMA), farmland, forestland, and other land use mentioned in this Plan accounts for 7.252 square miles, or 37% of the total land in Town. The state-owned Franklin WMA is the largest separate land holding in Franklin. Occupying approximately 772 acres, the WMA extends for a distance of almost two and one-half miles in a north-south direction through the center of the Town. Most of the WMA is wooded, although a large area north of Plains Road is used for growing crops. The Town Franklin Assessor records indicate that 2,970.35 acres are considered Public Act (PA) 490 land or forest land.

Other open space in Franklin includes parts of the Pautipaug Country Club golf course (68 acres) off Holton Road and along the Sprague town line; 20 acres of the Pease Brook WMA in the extreme southwest corner of the Town, 24 acres of the 4-H Camp on Kahn Road, 79 acres of the Nature Conservancy's Bailey's Ravine and Giddings Park, a 72-acre parcel of Town-owned land across from the school on Route 207. The latter parcel provides facilities for organized sports, and it is the site of the Town garage. It borders on the WMA and contains considerable acreage for additional Town recreation facilities in the future. The Sprague Land Preserve, located on Holton Road in Franklin, includes 625 acres of preserved open space and woodland. The preserve consists of the 270-acre tract formerly known as the Mukluk Preserve, the 230-acre former Watson farm, and the 225-acre former Robinson property. The land was acquired between 2004 and 2016, and will continue to grow in the next decade. See Figure 4 Protected Property.

4.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promote allocation of funds through a fee-in lieu of open space unless the open space donation will rate high in natural resource value or it is of significant size
2. Monitor existing Town held easements and work with owners as necessary to ensure conservation restrictions are honored.
3. Protect uplands and riparian areas around significant wetlands through dedication, acquisition, or adoption of overlay zones and buffer zones.
4. Maintain or enhance natural connections or wildlife corridors for developments that might affect such areas.
5. Encourage and support sustainable agricultural practices for the protection of farmland soils.
6. Ensure stormwater management practices in new developments will not degrade receiving waters by siltation, point source pollution, or contamination.
7. Support Farm and Forest Land Preservation.
8. Investigate establishing a fund to purchase development rights and agricultural land for permanent preservation.
9. Consider zoning regulations that would reduce outdoor light pollution.
10. Commercial solar production facilities should not be located in prime or important agricultural farmlands. If the project must use land that is considered prime or important farmland, the developer must be responsible for returning the land to a productive agricultural condition at the end of the useful life of the solar project.

5.0 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Franklin is primarily a rural town, comprised of single-family homes on approximately two acres lots or larger. Franklin lacks a town center and the only high-density residential area, the Eager Road/Birch Heights Area, was created in the 1970s.

5.1 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

One goal of the POCD is to provide a variety of residential densities that are environmentally sound and will meet the needs of all of Franklin's residents. Based on the feedback from the 2023 Resident Survey, it appears that residents support the status quo of single-family housing, however new demand for affordable and elderly/senior housing is apparent.

5.2 POPULATION

The Census is a population count of every person in the United States taken every ten years. Decennial Census data are used to allocate states' congressional seats, to make decisions about what community services to provide, and to allocate more than \$600 billion in federal funds to

local, state, and tribal governments each year. The most recent Census was conducted in 2020, and initial results of the Census were released in 2021.

Year	Population	Decade Change	Percentage Change	Region Percentage Change
2020	1,863	-59	-3.1	-3.2
2010	1922	87	4.7	5.8
2000	1835	25	1.4	1.0
1990	1810	218	13.7	6.5
1980	1592	236	17.4	2.4
1970	1356	382	39.2	22.9
1960	974	247	34.0	27.7
1950	727			

U.S. Census Bureau data indicate that Franklin's rate of population growth for the most recent decade of 2010 to 2020 was -3.1 %, slightly more than that of the Southeastern Connecticut Region (New London County) which decreased by 3.2 %, and compared to the State which grew 0.9%. For the second half of the twentieth century Franklin’s growth rates exceeded those of the Region. From 1950 to 1960, Franklin experienced a 34% increase, compared to a 28% increase for the Region. During the 1960s, Franklin's rate of growth was 39%, versus a 23% rate for the Region, while in the 1970s, the Town grew at a rate of 17.4% and the Region only achieved a 2.4% increase.

Most of Franklin's population growth during the first part of the twentieth century was from natural increase, or the excess of births over deaths. However, in the 1960s, this situation changed, when more than 70% of the net population increase was from new residents moving into the community, while in the decade of the 1970s the comparable figure was 81%. This trend continued for the rest of the twentieth century, except for the 1990-2000 time period when there was net out- migration. However, for the most recent decade of 2000 to 2010 net in- migration again accounted for most of the growth.

The table below shows Franklin’s 2010 to 2020 population change for five age categories. The children (14 and under) and retired (65 and over) population groups were the only two that grew over the decade. Student-young workers (15-24), prime workers (25-44), and mature workers (ages 45-64) all decreased in population over the decade, with the greatest loss in the 45 to 64 category which decreased by 14.9%.

Table 2 Population Growth 2010-2020				
Age	2010	2020	Change	% Change
14 and Under	326	348	22	6.8%
15 to 24	215	213	-2	-0.9%
25 to 44	452	420	-32	-7.6%
45 to 64	641	550	-91	-14.9%
65 and over	288	304	16	5.6%
Total	1,922	1,835	-59	-3.1%

Determining future municipal service needs requires some idea of the size of the population in future years. The Connecticut Data Collaborative has compiled population projections for Connecticut municipalities which show Franklin’s projected year 2020 population to be 1,859 and year 2030 to be 1,804, and 2035 population of 1,734. This population trend reflects several constantly changing variables such as economic conditions and employment opportunities, both internal and external to Franklin, housing costs, and household size. Due to the unpredictability or instability of these factors, population projections are merely estimates to be used to guide future planning and development decisions.

It is worth noting that Franklin's land area is 19.6 square miles, giving a population density figure of 91 persons per square mile in 2019. This compares with 459 persons per square mile for the Region and 738 persons for Connecticut, making Franklin a desirable low-density community in which to reside.

In 2019 the Franklin racial distribution was 92% white and 5% non-white for those selecting one or more racial categories, compared to 98 % white and 2 % non- white in 2000. People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

During the most recent decade of 2010-2020, the town’s median age is 41.9, which is the first decrease in median age since the mid twentieth century. This has also been occurring in New London County where the 2010 median age is 40.4.

Children and retired age categories may also be examined in terms of the population ages 15 to 64. In general terms, this latter category may be regarded as the economic producers who support the dependent young children under age 15 and the dependent old ages 65 and over. One measure of this dependency is referred to as the dependency ratio and is defined as the number of persons 65 and over and the number of persons under age 15 per 100 persons ages 15 to 64. This is a broad measure of economic dependency, and one must recognize that some persons in the dependent age categories are producers and that some persons in the economically productive category are dependent.

Overall, the total dependency ratio increased from 46.9 elderly and children per 100 adults in 2010 to 67.1 in 2020. The childhood ratio increased from 24.9 children per 100 adults in 2010 to 39.4 children in 2020. The elderly portion of the ratio increased from 22 seniors per 100 adults in 2010 to 27.7 seniors in 2020.

There are numerous implications of the increase in Franklin’s index of aging and the elderly dependency ratio, not the least of which suggests that there will be increased demands for services and programs to serve this age group. Also, in 2020 Franklin had 295 persons ages 55 to 64 that, barring any substantial changes in migration, will be included in the senior category over the next ten years.

5.3 EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey indicate that for the employed population 16 years and older working within the Town of Franklin, the leading industries are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Employment by Industry	
Industry	Numbers of Employees
Health Care & Social Assistance	216
Transportation & Warehousing	183
Wholesale Trade	120
Construction	110
Retail Trade	108
All Industries	1,245

The top five employers in Franklin as of 2021 are Hillandale, Moark Egg, DW Transport & Leasing, Plant Group, and Orthopedic Partners.

The 2015-2019 American Community Survey data indicate that 94% of Franklin’s resident drive to work and the average commute time is 28 minutes. Only one percent of the population uses public transportation and four percent of the population worked from home (pre-Covid value).

The annual average 2020 Connecticut Department of Labor data indicates that of the 936 people in the labor force in the Town and 75 people were not employed.

The 2015-2019 American Community Survey data indicate that a median household income of \$96,719 with a four percent poverty rate.

5.4 HOUSING

The 2020 Census identified a total of 790 housing units in Franklin, of which 739 were occupied and 51 were vacant. This represents an overall growth rate of 2.3% from the 771 total units in 2010. Occupied units increased by 10 from 729 in 2010 to 739 in 2020 for a 1.4% growth rate. Vacant units increased by 9 from 42 in 2010 to 51 in 2020. The homes built have located on lots fronting on existing Town roads or State highways. This existing road system clearly remains the dominant influence on residential locations.

5.4.1 Affordable Housing Development

The State of Connecticut’s 2022 Housing Appeals List shows that 5.97% (i.e., 46 units) of housing in Franklin are considered affordable housing under Connecticut General Statute (CGS) section 8- 30g. CGS Sec. 8-30g requires that an affordable dwelling unit be:

- Assisted housing units or housing receiving financial assistance under any governmental program for the construction or substantial rehabilitation of low- and moderate-income housing that was occupied or under construction by the end date of the report period for compilation of a given year’s list;
- Rental housing occupied by persons receiving rental assistance under C.G.S. Chapter 138a (State Rental Assistance/RAP) or Section 142f of Title 42 of the U.S. Code (Section 8);
- Ownership housing or housing currently financed by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and/or the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and
- Deed-restricted properties or properties with deeds containing covenants or restrictions that require such dwelling unit(s) be sold or rented at or below prices that will preserve the unit(s) as affordable housing as defined in C.G.S. Section 8-39a for persons or families whose incomes are less than or equal to 80% of the area median income.

Because Franklin does not have an affordable housing stock of 10 percent, it is not exempt from affordable housing appeals procedures which can shift the burden of proof to a municipality to show that public safety or health concerns outweigh affordable housing need.

CGS 8-30j, added in 2017, established an additional obligation for municipalities to adopt Affordable Housing Plans that will specify how the municipality will increase the number of local “affordable housing developments”. Franklin adopted its first Affordable Housing Plan in 2022; the plan is included as Appendix B.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consider zoning regulations that require larger residential development proposals provide at least ten percent of the proposed units meet affordability requirements as defined by CGS Sec. 8-30g.
2. Review housing zoning densities for areas served by public utilities and consider regulation modifications accordingly.
3. Consider zoning regulations that require applicants to submit information regarding the potential natural, cultural, and historic resource impact of proposed developments.

6.0 MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

A principal of local government is providing community services, facilities, and infrastructures to meet the town's needs. A map of the locations of many of the Town's facilities is included as Figure 5.

6.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Town of Franklin provides a full range of municipal services. These facilities provide for the health and welfare, and convenience of the residents and a key constituent of the Town's quality of life. Maintaining these facilities in good condition is an important aspect of local government.

6.2 EDUCATION

The Franklin Elementary School is sited on sixteen acres with two baseball fields, one soccer field, one exterior basketball court and one playground. The school building was expanded in 1990 to 67,000 square feet in size on two floors. The school comprises of 25 classrooms plus one art room and a science room on each floor, one computer laboratory, one library, a kitchen, a cafeteria and a 7,500 square foot indoor gymnasium with a stage, men's and women's restrooms and boys' and girls' locker rooms. Three boys', three girls' and four staff bathrooms are on the first floor and one each boy's, girls' and staff bathrooms on the second floor. In addition, there are 103 parking spaces and one elevator.



The 2022-2023 enrollment of the Franklin Elementary School is 187 students in pre-kindergarten to grade eight. There are 61 high school students in the district. Upon graduation from Franklin Elementary, students attend Norwich Free Academy. Students with other specific career goals or needs are enrolled in the Lyman Vocational Agricultural Program, Windham Regional Vocational Technical School, and Norwich Regional Technical School.

The Franklin Board of Education has a policy that states that 20 students is a desirable figure of students per classroom teacher. Adherence to the Board of Education policy would suggest that the school would be operating at or near full capacity with 560 students. Conceivably a drastic increase of students in two or three grade levels would make it impossible to adhere to Board of Education policy yet the total enrollment figure could be below the "acceptable" capacity figure

of 560. With the population holding somewhat steady, the school will be capable to meet additional enrollments.

The single largest expenditure in the Town's budget is the education budget. The education budget for 2022 was \$4.3 million, up from \$3.8 million in 2011.

6.3 MUNICIPAL COMPLEX AT TYLER DRIVE

The Town purchased 5 Tyler Drive, a 12-acre parcel of land with a 40,000 square foot building in 2000. The building was formerly a commercial multi-tenant building that now houses the Fire Department, the Janet Carlson Calvert Library, the Senior Center, and one commercial tenant.

The Volunteer Fire Department uses approximately 16,500 square feet of space for apparatus and equipment storage, a kitchen, meeting rooms, and a hall. The hall provides additional space for Town functions and a polling place if needed.

The Janet Carlson Calvert Library is the only public library in Franklin. The library was constructed in 2006 and consists of approximately 3,500 square feet of space. The library has a collection of over 7,000 books, magazines, DVDs, and other resources. The library offers high speed internet access to the public and several programs throughout the year for kids and adults.



The Franklin Senior Center provides programs and services to Franklin's seniors. The programs include lunches, health screenings, computers, exercise, and social events. The Senior Center was constructed in 2008 and consists of approximately 3,000 square feet. Franklin's Commission on Aging operates the facility.

A cellular tower and emergency communication tower is also located on the grounds. The cellular tower provides a source of revenue for the Town.

6.4 TOWN GARAGE

The Franklin town garage is located at 167 Pond Road. It is 40 feet by 106 feet in size, and contains five bays. The addition of other bays on the garage may be needed in the future as additional services are needed. A protected storage area for salt and sand has been installed to prevent groundwater contamination.

The Town garage also serves as the Town's transfer station where residents bring bulky wastes to be hauled off to State approved facilities. The operation is generally self-sufficient and should be able to continue for the foreseeable future barring any new State mandates. The Town contracts

with a private contractor to provide household waste and recyclable material pick up on a weekly basis.

6.5 TOWN HALL

The Town Hall is located at 7 Meeting House Hill Road. The Town Hall has offices for the First Selectman, the Town Clerk, the Tax Collector, the Treasurer, the Assessor, the Registrars of Voters, the Wetlands Enforcement Officer, Zoning Enforcement Officer, the Building Official, the Sanitarian, the Director of Civil Preparedness, and the Municipal Agent for the Elderly, and others. After the Fire Department relocated to 5 Tyler Drive in 2004, the Town Hall was renovated to address its deficiencies pertaining to O.S.H.A., vault size, and handicapped accessibility. The recent improvements to the Town Hall should serve the Town's needs for quite some time.

6.6 RECREATION

Franklin's recreation facilities are concentrated in Giddings Park and the adjacent elementary school property. These Town-owned properties are located near each other on opposite sides of Route 207. Vehicular access to them is thus very good from all parts of the Town. The Town's Recreation Commission oversees the operations at Giddings Park and the school maintains their recreation fields.

Giddings Park is approximately 72 acres in size. It contains a five-acre cleared area which can be used for camping by such groups as boy scouts, a regulation-size senior league baseball field, a regulation-size little league field, a regulation-size softball field, two doubles tennis courts, a paved basketball area, jogging/walking trails, and a small play area for young children. In addition, there is undeveloped land still available which could be used for future expansion of active recreation facilities should the need arise. In the meantime, this undeveloped land serves an important function as an open space area.

At the elementary school property, there is a regulation softball field for use by either men or women, and also the Kahn Memorial Field, a regulation little league baseball field, jogging/walking track, and a soccer field.

It would seem that for a town of its size, Franklin has an excellent recreation program. Should the need arise for additional facilities; there is adequate land in Giddings Park to construct them. Any additional development of the park should first provide sufficient on-site parking plans in the future to enlarge and grade school side parking lot for projected park uses, with safe access to and from Route 207.

6.7 MUNICIPAL WATER AND SEWER

Franklin's infrastructure consists of sewer service and water service limited to the Industrial Park. Most of Franklin utilizes on-site septic systems and individual wells.

The Franklin portion of the Norwich Industrial Park located near Route 32 and New Park Avenue is served by the Norwich Public Utility (NPU) sewer system. Currently, only the properties developed along New Park Avenue would have access to municipal sewer connections. However, recent development project approvals near Route 32 and Baltic Road have made developers interested in extending NPU's system. NPU also has water service available near the intersection of Route 87 and Stockhouse Road; however, no connections to the water service are located in Franklin.

The Sprague Water and Sewer Authority has a sewer interceptor extends westward from Baltic along Route 207 to within a mile of the Franklin town line. The Sprague sewer inceptor was built with additional capacity; however, there are no current plans to extend this interceptor into Franklin.

6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to maintain the Town facilities in the highest degree possible to fulfill the town's needs for the foreseeable future.
2. Continue to provide facilities for recycling and general bulky waste disposal.
3. Investigate the need to expand the Public Works garage.
4. Investigate the need to connect properties to municipal water and sewer where warranted and when available.

7.0 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

7.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

With only minor additions or realignments, the network of roads serving Franklin is the same as it was thirty years ago. There is a total of 39.96 miles of roads, of which 17.2 miles are state highways and 22.76 miles are Town Roads. The systematic surface maintenance program presently in force will continue and minor drainage problems will be addressed as they occur on Town roads. See Figure 6 for a map of the roads.

Franklin roads fall into three basic functional categories: arterial highways, collector roads, and local access roads. The arterial highways are all state numbered highways, including Route 32, 87, 207 and 610. Although their primary purpose is the movement of traffic through the Town, arterials have an important secondary function, namely, providing access to abutting properties.

The second category of roads in Franklin is the collector. These roads channel traffic from significant development areas toward the arterial highways. They also serve as connecting links between the arterials. Like the arterials, collector roads also provide access to abutting properties. The collector roads in Franklin include, Blue Hill Road, Rindy Road, Under the Mountain Road, Whipoorwill Hollow Road, Robinson Hill Road, Brush Hill, Pound Hill Road, Pautipaug Hill Road, Plains Road, New Park Avenue, Meeting House Hill Road, Champion Road, Kahn Road

and Murphy Road. These roads should be brought up to Town road ordinance standards to ensure safe traffic flow and provide access for emergency vehicles.

Local access roads are primarily intended to provide access to property, regardless of the particular use. These are most frequently streets in residential subdivisions, and their traffic volumes are lower than those occurring on collector or arterial roads.

In Franklin, the functional classification can be considered a general indicator of traffic volumes and speeds. The state highways, (the arterials), with their better construction, accommodate the largest volumes at the fastest speeds. At the other end of the scale, the local access roads, with their relatively short lengths and frequent driveways, require slower speeds and handle lower volumes. The collectors fall somewhere in-between, although they are often more poorly constructed than the local access roads.

The road classification can also be a guide for preparing and applying standards for development of abutting property. Higher standards would apply for sight lines, separations of driveways, and drainage improvements, on arterial roads than would be required for collector or local access roads. The classification may also indicate priorities for road maintenance and snowplowing.

In addition to roads, the New England Central Railroad line goes thru Franklin. The New England Central Railroad extends from New London all the way to Montreal Canada. Several commercial properties abut the railroad and provide an opportunity for commercial development along the railroad.

7.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Route 32 is by far the busiest road in Franklin. As an arterial, it serves a heavy volume of through traffic while, at the same time, affording access to the Town's collector roads and to abutting properties. Traffic moves at a fast pace for its entire length of 7.1 miles through the Town. This is the main route of travel between the cities of Norwich and Willimantic, both of which are regional centers for employment, shopping, education and governmental services.

At the present time, Route 32 has the capacity to accommodate its heavy traffic load. Recent improvements, particularly in the southern part of the Town, enable these volumes to move smoothly and in relative safety. However, a continued rate of traffic increase will require additional improvements. Those needed improvements will depend in large measure on the extent and quality of development that will occur not only in Franklin but in other towns served by Route 32.

Route 87 is a good two-lane highway with light development along its frontage, and which has no major urban center throughout its length. The dominant development along Route 87 road frontage is single family homes. Land immediately behind the frontage development is farmland or woodland.

Major realignment work was done on Route 87 about 45 years ago, eliminating several dangerous curves between the intersection with Rindy Road and a point about 2,000 feet west of the intersection with Murphy Road. Poor sight lines and narrow shoulders characterize much of the remaining length of the road between the improvement and Route 32.

Route 207, the only road which passes through the full width of Franklin, measures at about 4.1 miles. Like Route 87, it passes through no major urban centers in its total length from Baltic to Hebron. For the most part, Route 207 within Franklin is in excellent condition, having two 11-foot travel lanes with six-foot shoulders. In 2001, Route 207 in Franklin was named the Paul Henry Bienvenue Memorial Highway. In 2022, Route 207 was designated as a State Scenic Road for 16 miles from Sprague, through Franklin, Lebanon and ending in Hebron. This designation not only encourages sightseeing along the road but helps preserve it from modifications that would detract from its appearance, such as rerouting or widening by the State.

Route 610 (Baltic Road) is the shortest state highway in Franklin, extending for only 2.2 miles. It is contained entirely within the Town, linking Routes 207 and 32. The condition of the road is generally poor, with the total two-lane pavement width reduced to only sixteen feet in some areas and not exceeding twenty feet throughout its length. There are no shoulders and sightlines are inadequate in many locations.

Route 610 is a convenient route of travel between the employment and shopping attractions in the Norwichtown and Yantic sections of Norwich and the growing residential areas near the Franklin/Sprague town line and the Pautipaug Country Club. In all likelihood, these areas will continue to grow and generate increasing volumes of traffic, much of which will use Route 610. Additional major improvements will be required if this road is to accommodate future traffic volumes in a safe manner. A traffic signal was installed for the intersection of Route 610 and Route 32 in the summer of 2013.

In general, Town roads in Franklin have paved widths ranging from 16 to 20 feet, and most have little or no shoulders. Bringing the rights-of-way, pavement widths, and road drainage up to current standards should be primary considerations before approval of any development proposals along these roads.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Road Standards** Continue to have developments along road frontage bring the pavement widths, rights-of-way, and drainage up to current standards.
2. **Railroad** Continue to promote the access to rail service from commercial properties in Franklin.
3. **Traffic Safety** Coordinate with CTDOT to improve traffic safety along Route 32.
4. **School Zone** Investigate the creation of a school zone on Route 207 to improve traffic safety near Franklin Elementary School and Giddings Park.

8.0 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The current zoning map for the town of Franklin has not changed much since the last edition of the POCD. The various land use categories, or plan elements, are discussed below.

8.1 RESIDENTIAL

Two residential land use categories are shown on the plan map: Rural Residential- Agricultural (R-80) and Low Density (R-120). These provide a variety of housing settings, as indicated by the plan goals. Since no public sewer or water supply facilities are contemplated in the Town for the foreseeable future, both of these types of areas will have to employ on-site systems. In keeping with the Town's rural character, it is contemplated that most, if not all, housing will be of the single-family type.

It will be the responsibility of the Planning and Zoning Commission to carefully review proposed subdivisions and determine if the land is suitable for housing without endangering the public health, and without causing adverse impacts on neighboring properties. In this regard, erosion and sediment controls are important.

8.1.1 Rural Agricultural (R-80)

This category includes most of the good building land in the Town, and much of the current farmland. Minimum lot size should be approximately two acres. But, nevertheless, the Planning and Zoning Commission must carefully review proposed subdivisions to evaluate their impact on public health and on neighboring properties.

In addition to subdivision activity, agriculture should be encouraged in every possible way. It is difficult for towns to take specific actions since the problem of agricultural preservation is principally one of economics. However, there is a state-mandated municipal tax abatement program for farmland and the state's program for the purchase of development rights. In addition, there now exists state legislation, which authorizes municipalities to establish agricultural land preservation funds. These monies may also be used for the acquisition of development rights or for other expenditures incurred for the preservation of agricultural land. Such fund would give the Town flexibility in accomplishing this objective.

8.1.2 Low Density (R-120)

In these areas, building and development will be limited by natural resource constraints. These include steep slopes, wetlands, and areas of rock outcrops and shallow-to-bedrock soils. These limitations are reflected in existing conditions, since most of the land in these areas is undeveloped at the present time. Areas of stratified drift, or aquifers are also included in the Low-Density category because of the need to preserve them. However, it should be recognized that some aquifers do occur in areas of good buildable land.

However, in all of the Low-density areas, the potential exists for individual dwellings. In order to prevent over-building in locations where building is difficult, lots should be large, on the order of three or four acres.

Recreational and other low-intensity uses would also be appropriate in these areas. As will be discussed in subsequent sections of this plan, Franklin already contains large areas dedicated to public open space. However, the possibility should not be discounted of acquiring property indicated on the map as in the Low-Density category for open space, especially for the protection of some specific natural features or promoting non- fragmented open space areas.

8.2 COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL

Three commercial and industrial land use categories are suggested: Retail Commercial, Highway Commercial-Industrial, and Industrial Park.

8.2.1 Retail Commercial (C-1)

It is suggested that these areas would take in all of the existing C-1 commercial areas along Route 32. The purposes here are to minimize traffic congestion and to maintain the Town's rural character, as mentioned in the proposed Statement of Planning Goals. It is felt that the commercial permitted uses and special permitted uses would remain substantially the same as those currently listed for the C-1 District in the Zoning Regulations.

8.2.2 Highway-Commercial Industrial (C-2)

These areas are proposed to follow very closely the present C-2 District regulations, and the C-2 district locations shown on the current Zoning Map. Uses proposed in this district are larger in scale than those that would be located in the Neighborhood Commercial and Retail Commercial areas. Examples are automotive sales and service, warehousing, indoor storage and truck terminals, and light manufacturing activities.

The Commercial-Industrial areas are located to take advantage of the Central Vermont railway as well as of Route 32.

8.2.3 Industrial Park District (I)

To quote from the current Zoning Regulations, the purpose of this district is to take advantage of the availability of the public utilities and reserve the land for uses that will return the greatest benefit to the Town. This area adjoins the Norwich Industrial Park and should be developed in harmony with the park. Development is intended to take place in a park-like setting with subtle landscaping and preservation of natural features.

8.3 PLANNED RECREATION DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT (PRDD)

The intent of this district is to allow for mixed residential/recreational districts within the Town while protecting the natural resource base and rural character of the community.

This district is a floating zone. The applicant must apply to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a zone change to have a specific tract of land designated as being in a PRDD and shall demonstrate the suitability of the site for the uses in the zone. We have two of these areas presently, one off the south side of Whippoorwill Hollow Road near Route 207 and the other off the West Side of Route 32 near Route 610.

8.4 OPEN SPACE

There are Federal and State grants funds available for purchase of open space. The Town should consider acquiring land for open space or watershed protection if it becomes available. The land use commissions should also establish policies to limit impact of non- agricultural development on productive farmland.

8.5 FUTURE LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Explore regulation amendments to ensure that the design of new development is compatible with the rural landscape of Franklin.
2. Review allowed uses in Commercial and Industrial zones and update regulations as necessary.
3. Examine uses allowed by Special Exception; amend regulations as necessary.
4. Regularly review new state legislation regarding electric vehicles and amend regulations.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

The purpose of this plan is to provide a guide for the future conservation and development of the Town. Each section outlined several recommendations that should be taken to further the goals and objectives. Furthermore, to keep these concepts alive, the land use commissions need to consider the following:

1. Biannually review building, zoning, and subdivision regulations to consider the needs that were outlined in this document.
2. Annually review the Plan of Conservation and Development to assess the progress.
3. Conduct more frequent joint commission meeting to ensure goals are aligned.

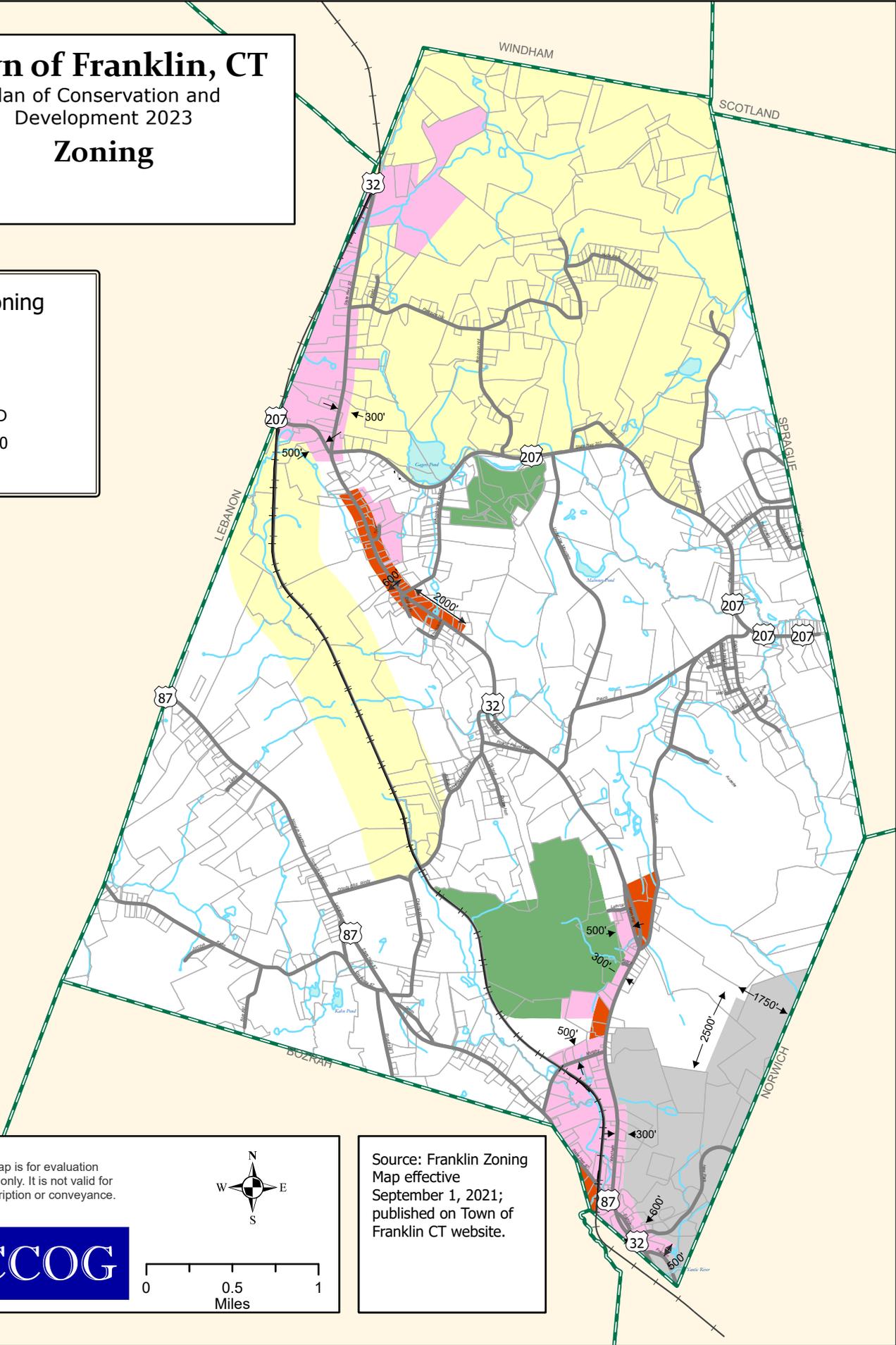
A pleasant living environment cannot be maintained without public expenditures of effort, time and money. If the objectives of this plan are to be achieved, the residents of the Town must become familiar with it and give the elected officials support in all actions proposed by the plan.

FIGURE 1

Town of Franklin, CT
Plan of Conservation and
Development 2023
Zoning

Local Zoning

- C-1
- C-2
- I
- PRDD
- R-120
- R-80



This map is for evaluation purposes only. It is not valid for legal description or conveyance.

SCCOG

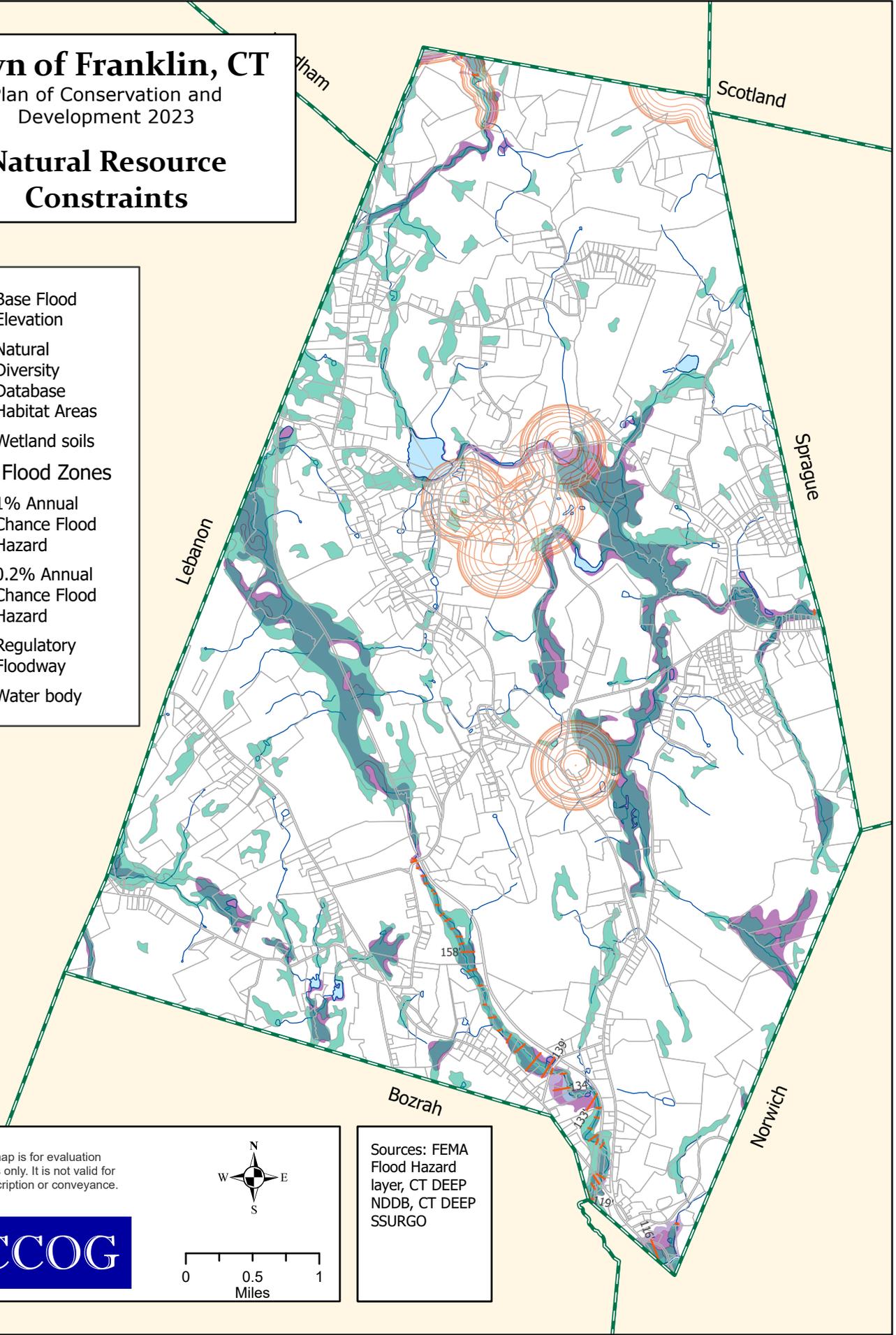
0 0.5 1
Miles

Source: Franklin Zoning Map effective September 1, 2021; published on Town of Franklin CT website.

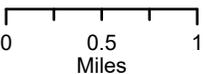
FIGURE 2

Town of Franklin, CT
Plan of Conservation and
Development 2023
**Natural Resource
Constraints**

-  Base Flood Elevation
-  Natural Diversity Database Habitat Areas
-  Wetland soils
- FEMA Flood Zones**
 -  1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
 -  0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
 -  Regulatory Floodway
 -  Water body



This map is for evaluation purposes only. It is not valid for legal description or conveyance.



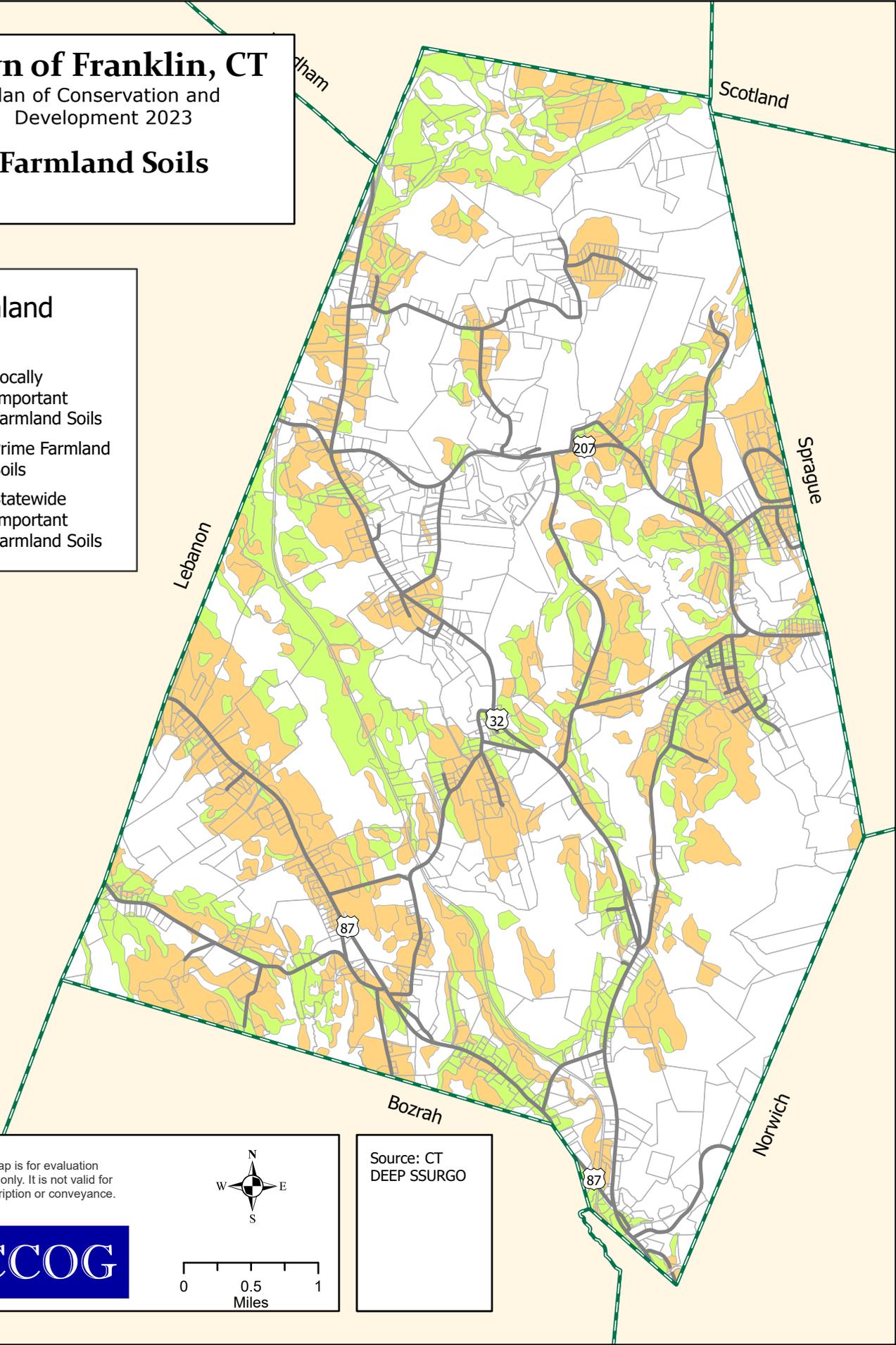
Sources: FEMA Flood Hazard layer, CT DEEP NDDDB, CT DEEP SSURGO

FIGURE 3

Town of Franklin, CT
Plan of Conservation and
Development 2023
Farmland Soils

Farmland Soils

- Locally Important Farmland Soils
- Prime Farmland Soils
- Statewide Important Farmland Soils



This map is for evaluation purposes only. It is not valid for legal description or conveyance.

Source: CT DEEP SSURGO



FIGURE 4

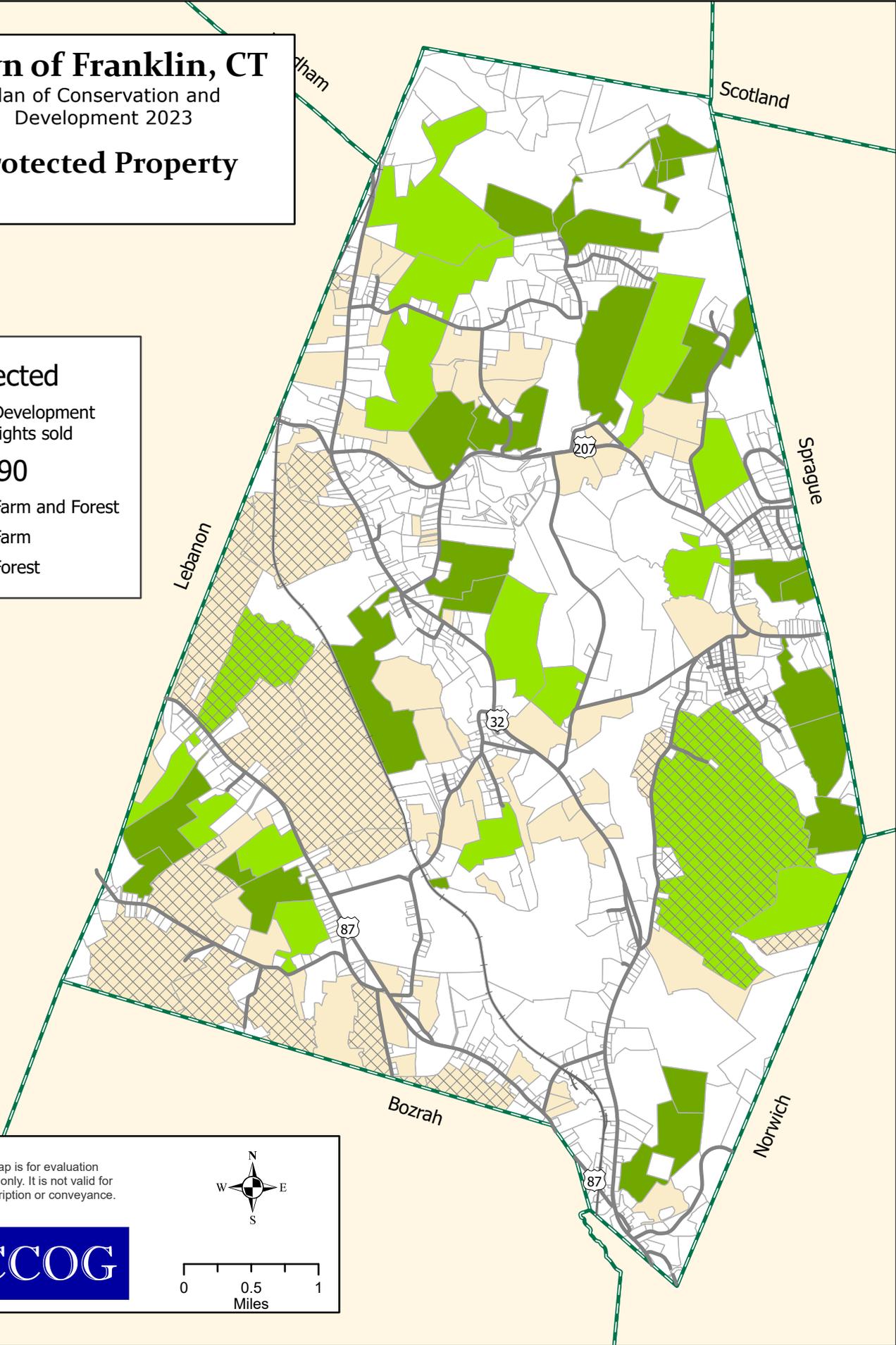
Town of Franklin, CT
Plan of Conservation and
Development 2023
Protected Property

Protected

- Development rights sold

PA 490

- Farm and Forest
- Farm
- Forest



This map is for evaluation purposes only. It is not valid for legal description or conveyance.

SCCOG

0 0.5 1 Miles

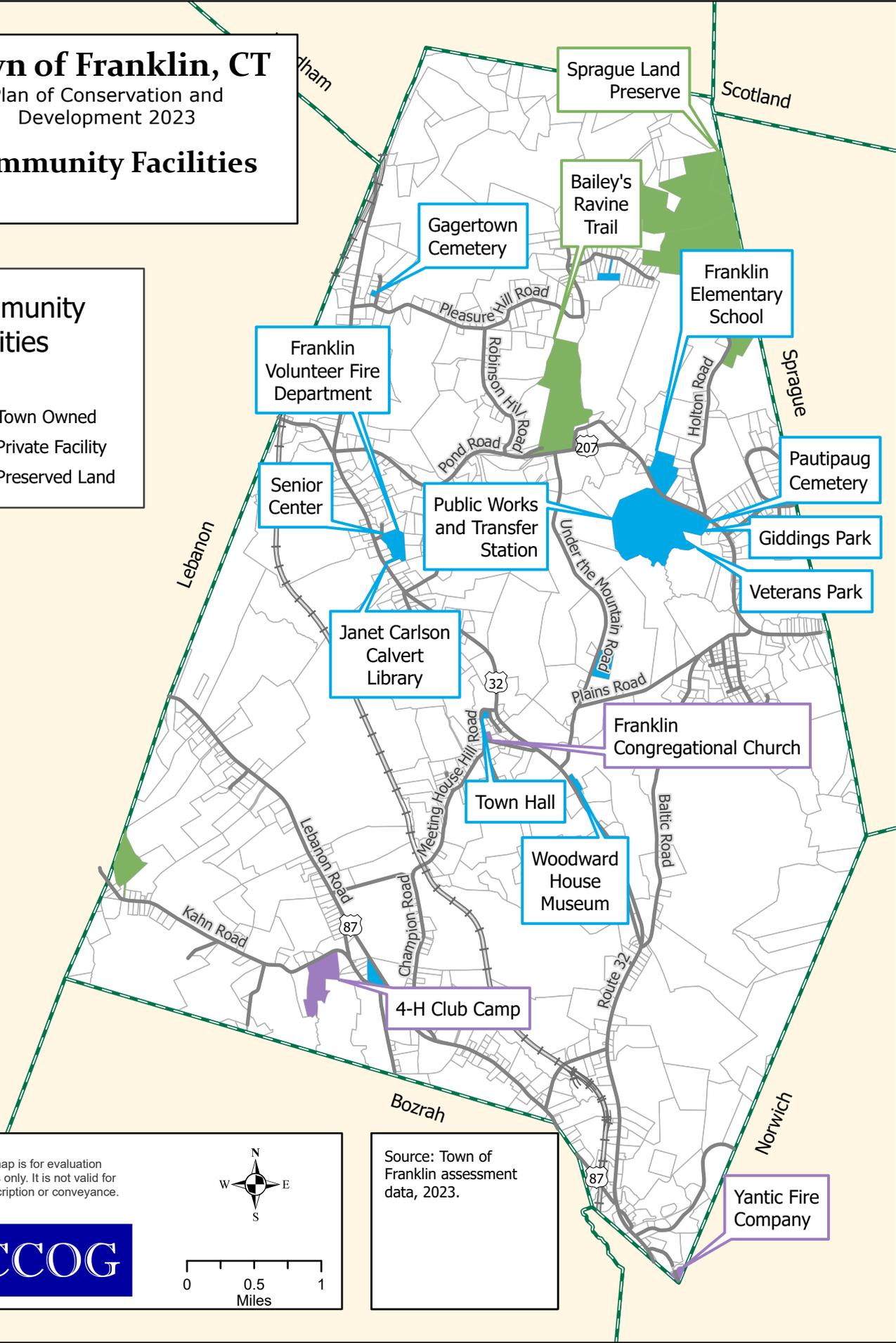
FIGURE 5

Town of Franklin, CT
 Plan of Conservation and
 Development 2023
Community Facilities

Community Facilities

Type

- Town Owned
- Private Facility
- Preserved Land



This map is for evaluation purposes only. It is not valid for legal description or conveyance.

SCCOG

Source: Town of Franklin assessment data, 2023.

FIGURE 6

Town of Franklin, CT
Plan of Conservation and
Development 2023
Future Land Use

Future Land Use

- Water 300' buffer
- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban
- Recreation/ Open Space
- Institutional



This map is for evaluation purposes only. It is not valid for legal description or conveyance.

0 0.5 1 Miles

Source: Derived from the SCCOG Future Land Use map, 2017 POCD; Named Waterbody Lines dataset, CT DEEP, December 2022.

FIGURE 7

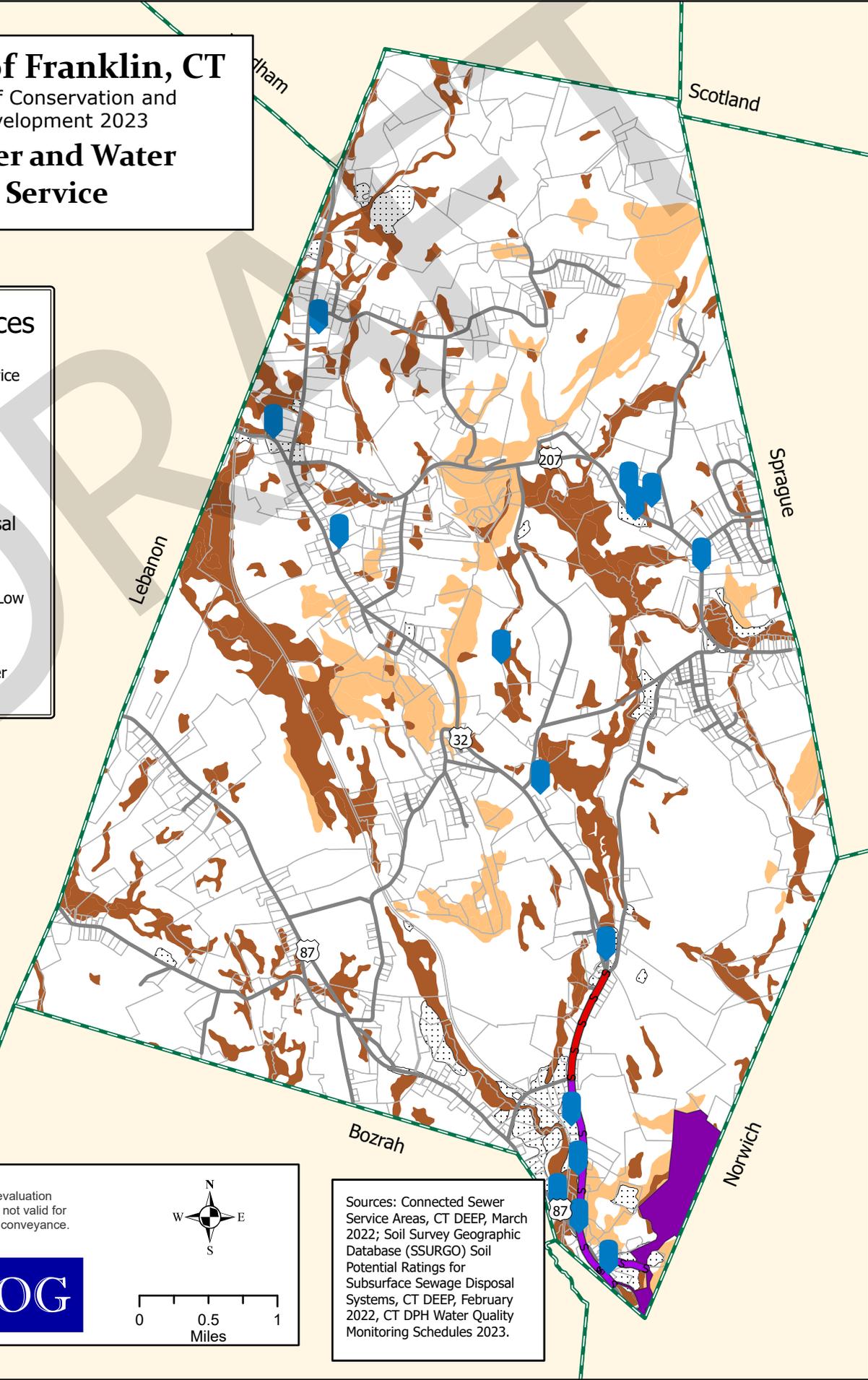
Town of Franklin, CT
Plan of Conservation and
Development 2023
**Sewer and Water
Service**

City Services

- Connected Sewer Service (DEEP)
- Complete
- Proposed

Potential for Subsurface Sewage Disposal

- Very Low Potential
- Extremely Low Potential
- Not Rated
- Public water Systems



This map is for evaluation purposes only. It is not valid for legal description or conveyance.

0 0.5 1
Miles

Sources: Connected Sewer Service Areas, CT DEEP, March 2022; Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) Soil Potential Ratings for Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems, CT DEEP, February 2022, CT DPH Water Quality Monitoring Schedules 2023.

Survey Results

2023 Plan of Conservation and Development





Outreach

- Online survey shared on Town website
- Emails sent to all Town boards and commissions
 - In-person meetings requested/suggested with Agriculture and Conservation Commission and Ashbel Woodward Museum
- Flyers posted and paper surveys left at Town Hall, Senior Center, Janet Carlson Calvert Library
- Online survey shared in Franklin Elementary weekly newsletter
- Online survey shared to Franklin Community Connection Facebook Group

2023 Franklin Plan of Conservation and Development

The Town of Franklin must adopt a Plan of Conservation and Development every 10 years per state statute. A new POCD must be adopted prior to June 1, 2023. The Planning and Zoning Commission is seeking input from residents to incorporate into the plan. This survey should take between 5-10 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions about the survey please contact the town planner, Nicole Haggerty, at nhaggerty@seccog.org or (860) 889-2324.

...

1. I consider Franklin's character to be

- Rural
- Suburban
- Good Mix of Uses
- Agriculture
- Other

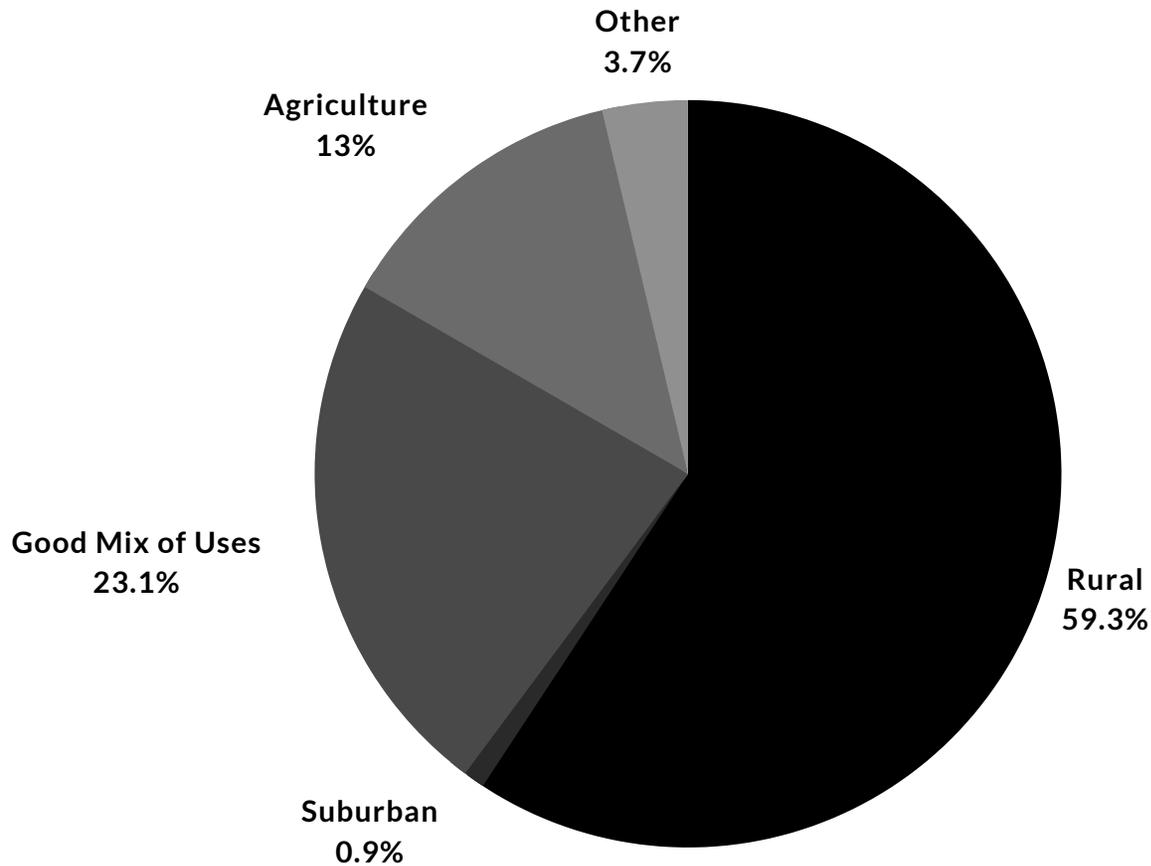
2. Franklin needs more of the following types of housing

- Single Family
- Multi-Family
- Affordable
- Elderly/Senior

Survey

- Opened on 1/17/2023
- Closed 2/14/2023
- 106 online submissions
- 3 paper submissions

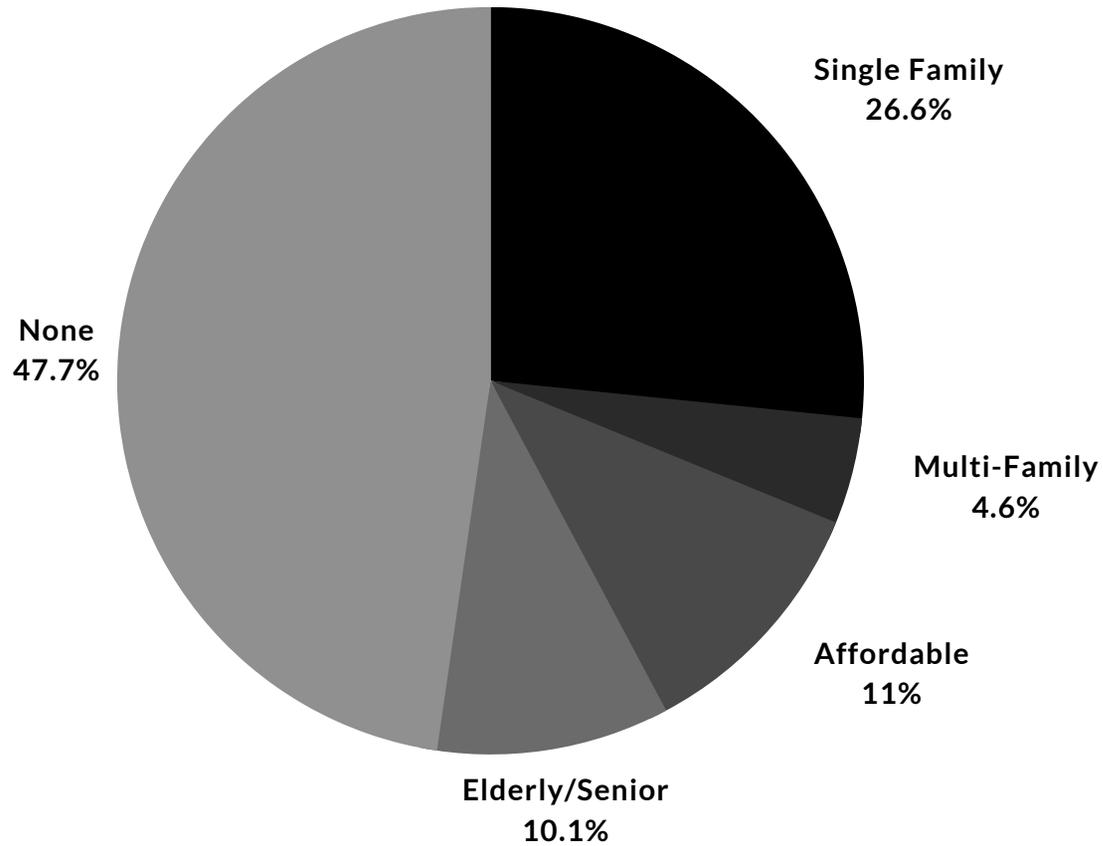
1. I consider Franklin's character to be



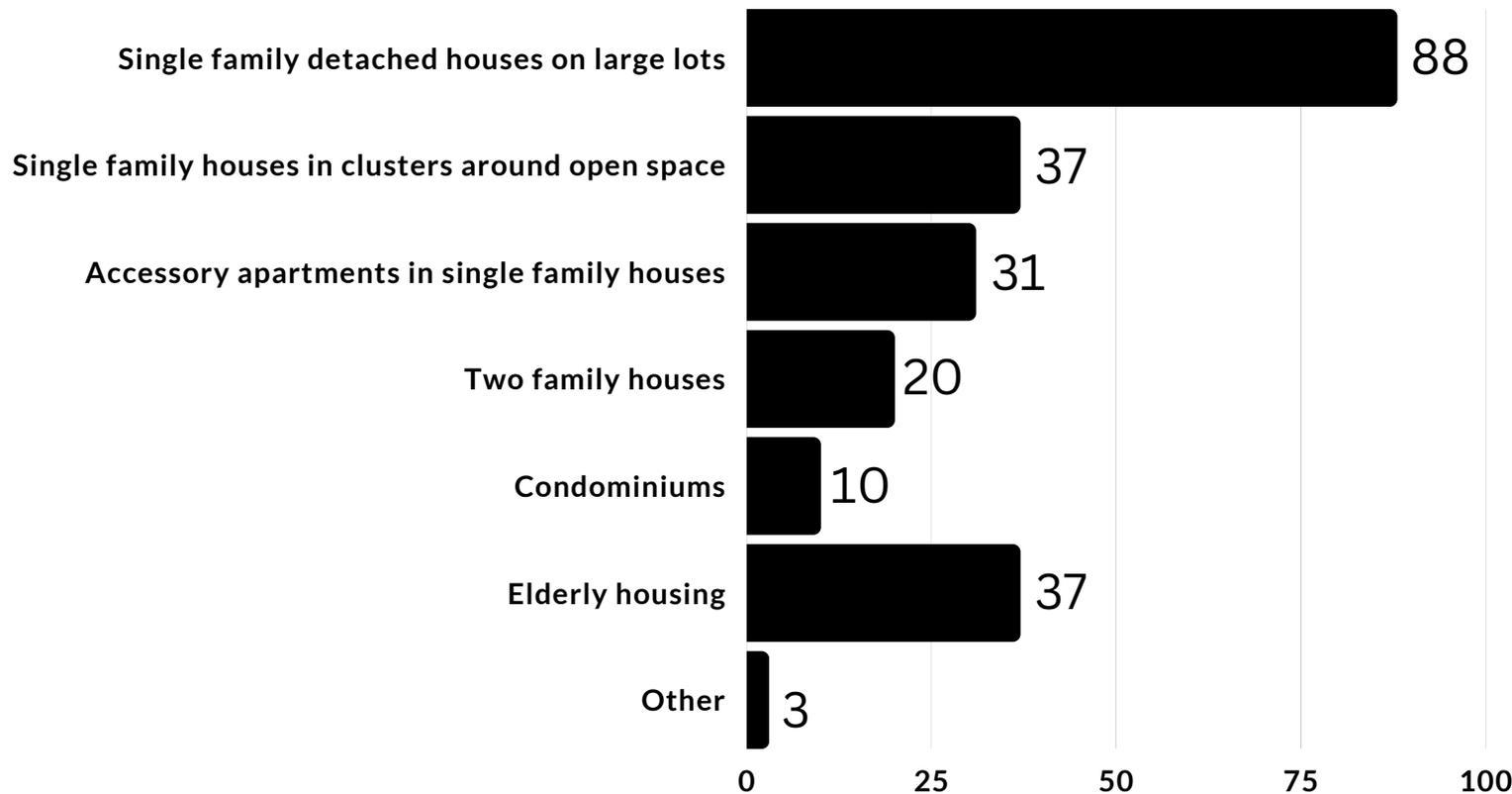
"Other" responses included:

- a mishmash of uses
- Franklin has an identity crisis, they don't have a sense of character
- rural & agricultural
- rural/agricultural

2. Franklin needs more of the following types of housing



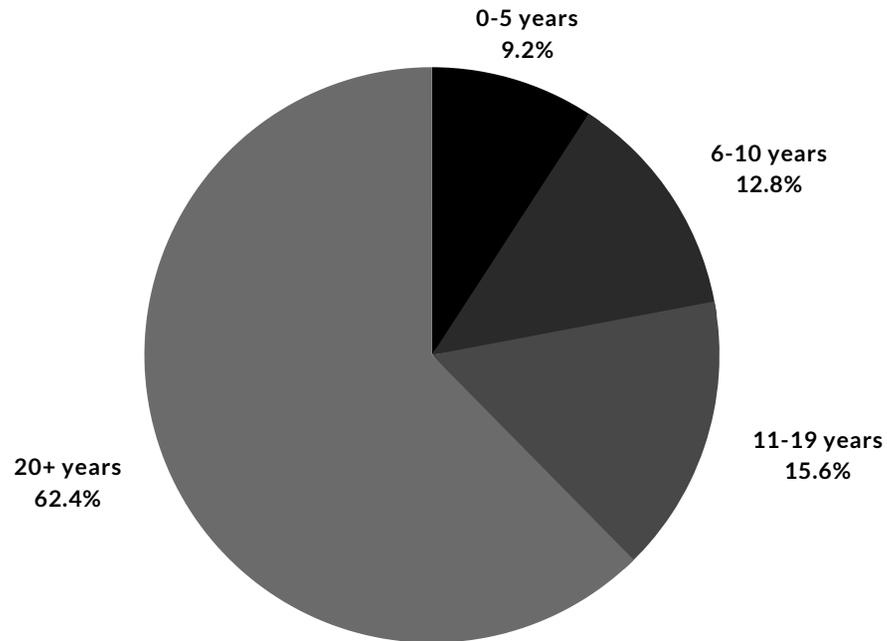
3. What types of housing do you think should be allowed in Franklin? (choose all that apply)



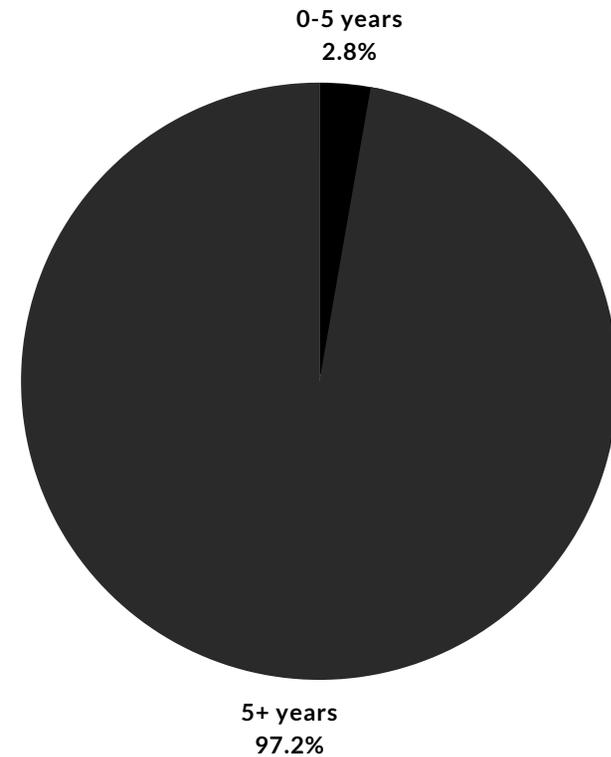
"Other" responses included:

- Single Family Only on large lots 2+ or more acres
- Single family houses
- Affordable housing for young single adults

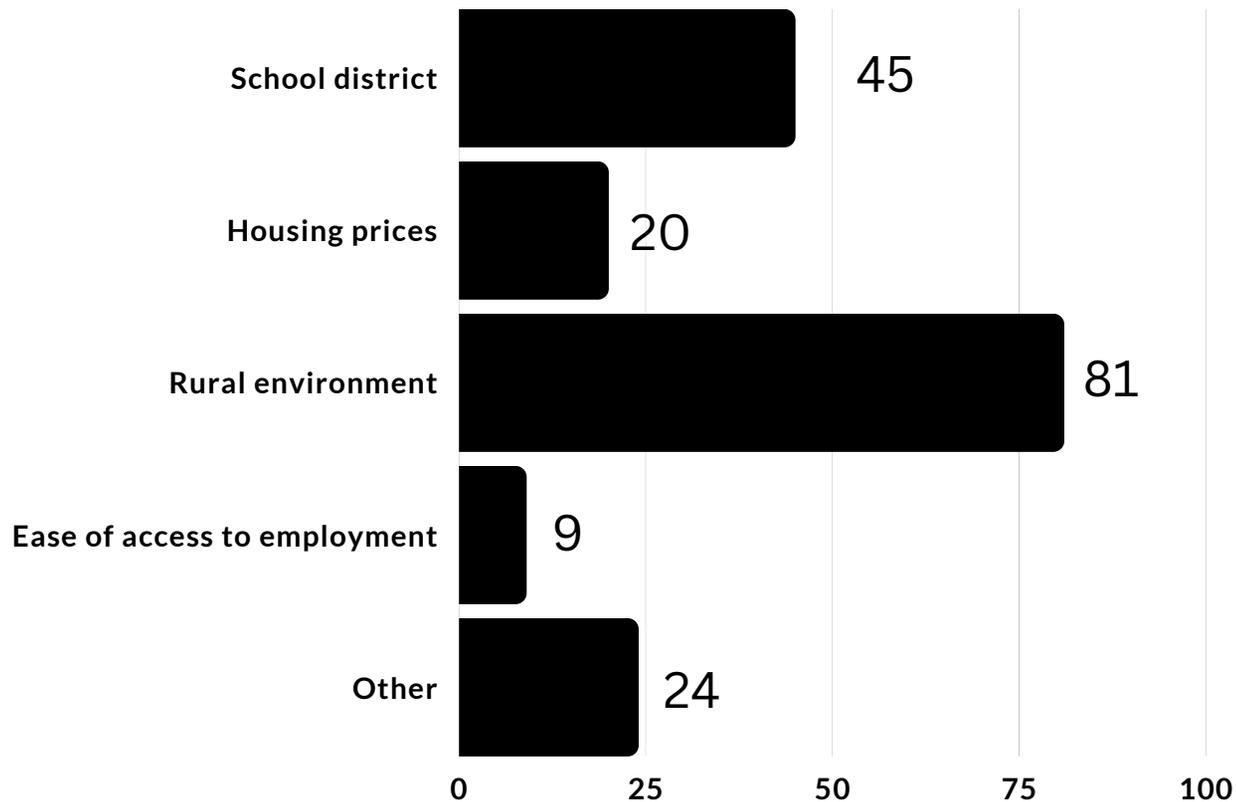
4. How long have you lived in Franklin?



5. How long do you plan to remain in Franklin?



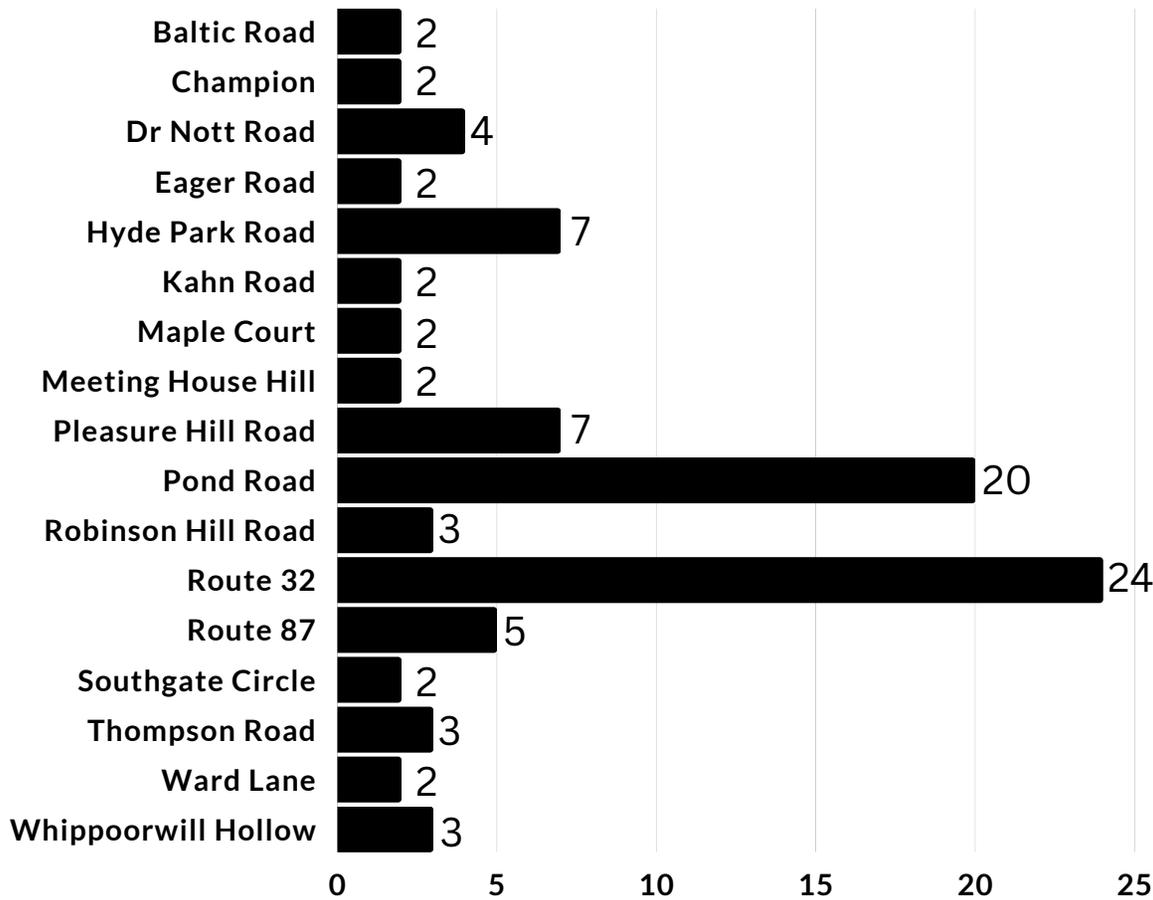
6. What factors influenced your decision to locate in Franklin (choose all that apply)



"Other" responses included:

- Born here
- Family
- Low taxes

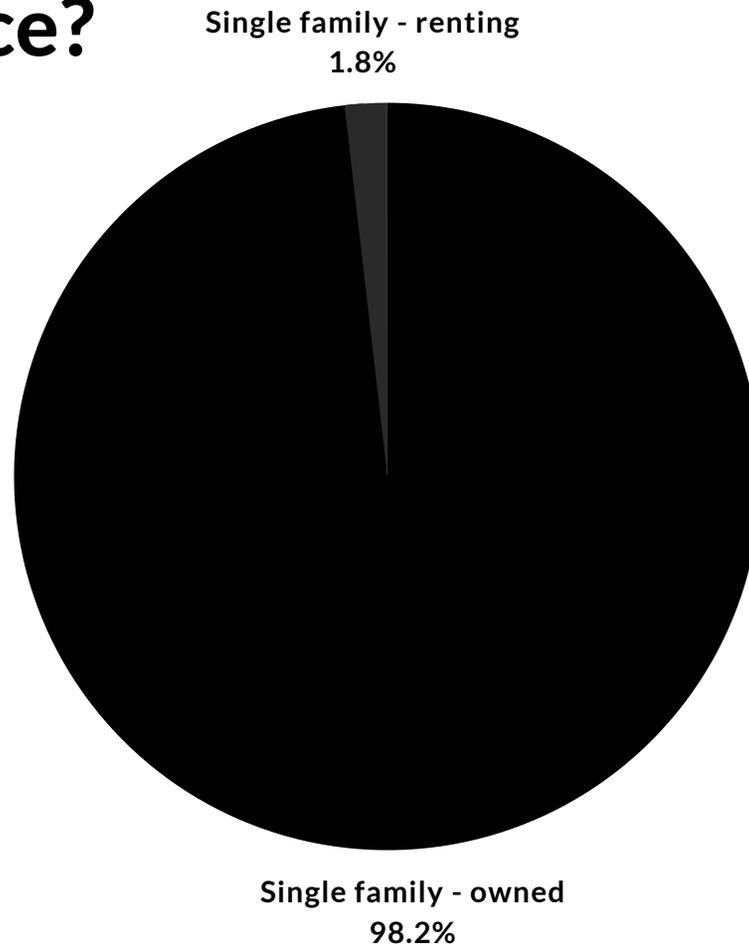
7. Name of the road you live on



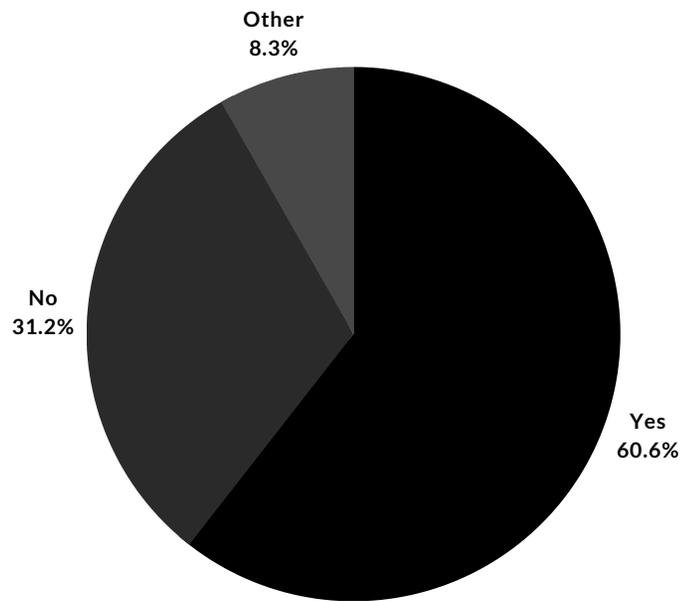
Roads that only had one response:

- Brush Hill Road
- Dobrucki Road
- Forge Lane
- Hearthstone Drive
- Holton Road
- Lydia Lane
- Oak Drive
- Plains Road
- Smith Road

8. What type of housing best represents your living circumstance?



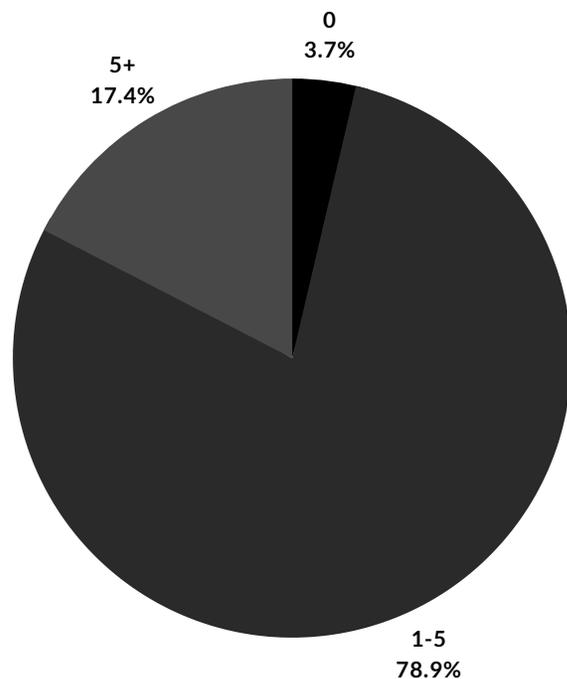
9. Do you believe Franklin has enough business development?



"Other" responses included:

- utilize sewer/water
- occupy vacant approved sites/those currently zoned for business
- only "the right kind" of businesses

10. How many different Franklin businesses do you patronize in an avg month?



11. What businesses would you like to see more of in Franklin?

Common themes:

- 16 responses said no more businesses
- No big-box stores/less franchises
- Small businesses/locally-owned businesses/mom & pop stores
- Family friendly businesses

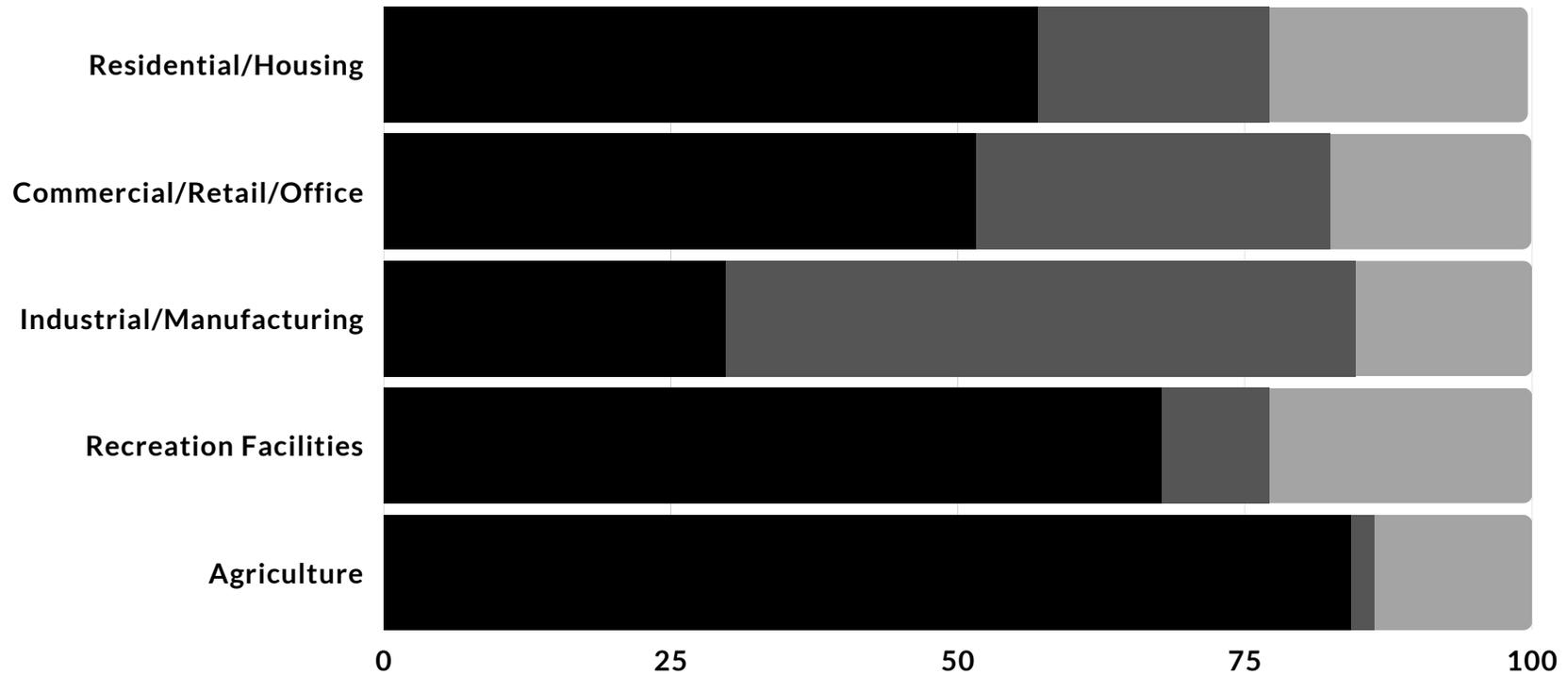
Examples of businesses desired

- Agriculture-related businesses such as farm stands, farmers markets, wineries/breweries, cheese shops, plant nursery
- Restaurants - coffee shop, bakery, fine dining options, pub, deli, diner
- Retail - grocery store, antique store, pharmacy
- Doctor's offices, lawyer offices, dentist offices, manufacturing
- Recreational - activities, mini-golf, public golf course, recreation center

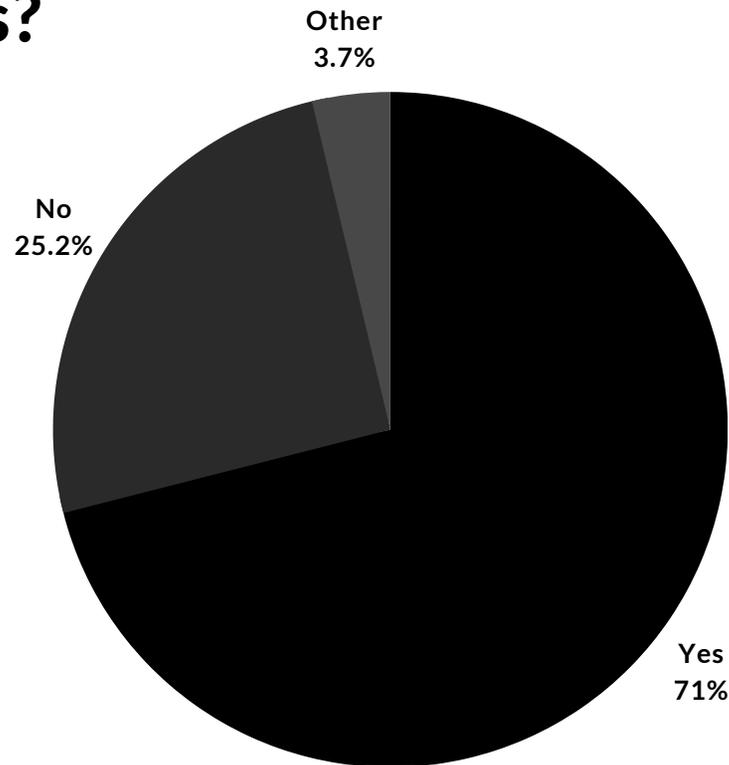
12. Where in Franklin would you like to see more business development occur?

- 14 responses said no more development
- Other common responses included:
 - Southern end of Town
 - Existing zoned areas
 - Industrial Park
 - Route 32
 - Near Route 87/207 intersection

13. Which of the following types of land uses should be encouraged by the POCD and the Zoning Regulations?



14. Should the Franklin Planning and Zoning Commission explore options for design compatibility of new commercial and industrial buildings as part of the site plan review process?

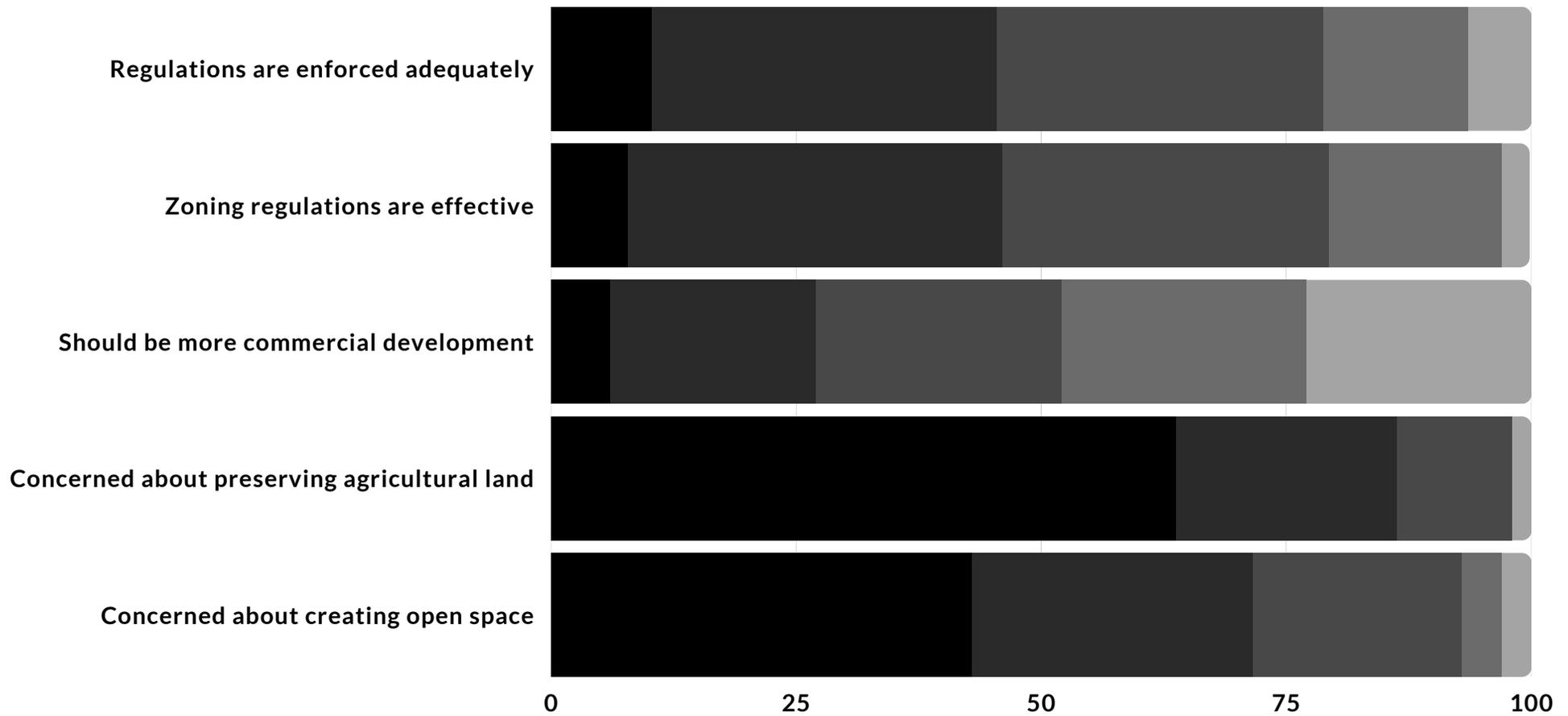


15. What improvements would you like to see for traffic improvements in Franklin?

- Most common areas of concern:
 - Route 32
 - Route 32/Route 2 intersection
 - Franklin Elementary
 - Franklin Hill
- Proposed solutions included:
 - More speed enforcement
 - Reduce speed limits
 - Remove passing zones
 - Add rumble strips on center/shoulder lines
 - Add speed limit flashing signs
 - More telephone mirrors
 - Timing/amount of traffic signals



16. Do you agree with the following statements?



17. Is there anything else you would like to add about the direction that you see Franklin moving in, or a direction you would like to see Franklin move in, on any issue?

- Common themes:
 - Preserve the rural character of Franklin
 - Encourage small/local businesses over large/franchise businesses
 - Protect open space/farmland/aquifers
 - Water/sewer services - property valuation/potential for expansion
 - Protect historical sites and structures
 - Concerns about aging population
 - Utilize existing vacant buildings for businesses
 - Traffic/safety on Route 32

17. Is there anything else you would like to add about the direction that you see Franklin moving in, or a direction you would like to see Franklin move in, on any issue?

- Proposed solutions:
 - PZC should review zoning regulations for commercial and industrial zones
 - Review allowed uses
 - Regulations could apply greater scrutiny/have more "teeth"
 - Encourage new development to be compatible with historic/rural nature of Town
 - Industrial noise is a major concern
 - Examine zoning in the north end of Town
 - Address blight/require existing businesses and residents to clean up their properties
 - Greater communication between Town and residents on PZC topics
 - Attract younger families to Town by maintaining high quality school/town services
 - More public access to open space

17. Is there anything else you would like to add about the direction that you see Franklin moving in, or a direction you would like to see Franklin move in, on any issue?

- Other Misc. Comments
 - More tree removal or underground power supply
 - More diversity within the community
 - Affordable housing
 - Push for more green energy being required in building, see some charging stations, micro grids
 - Public hearings for all wetland and zoning applications
 - Eliminate pre application meetings with town officials/ or require they be open to the public
 - Street lights in consolidated housing areas are greatly needed

Town of Franklin

Affordable Housing Plan

Adopted September 20, 2022

Prepared by Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments Staff

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Introduction

What is Affordable Housing?

Generally, housing is considered *affordable housing* if its occupants are lower-income households who pay no more than 30% of their income toward housing costs, including mortgage, rent, property tax, and utilities. *Affordable housing* created or maintained under government subsidies or programs is usually intended for occupancy by households earning no more than 80% of median income, which funding programs often measure at the regional or state level. HUD's calculations for the Norwich-New London area define a family of four earning up to \$78,500 per year as low-income under HUD's 80% Area Median Income calculations.ⁱ Housing programs usually require that occupants pay 30% of their income for their housing and subsidies cover the remaining operating costs.

HUD Metro Area	Median Family Income	Income Category	Persons in Family			
			1	2	3	4
Norwich-New London Metro	\$91,800	Low Income (80%)	\$54,950	\$62,800	\$70,650	\$78,500
		<i>Equiv. Monthly Housing Budget</i>	\$1,374	\$1,570	\$1,766	\$1,963
		Very Low Income (50%)	\$35,950	\$41,050	\$46,200	\$51,300
		<i>Equiv. Monthly Housing Budget</i>	\$899	\$1,026	\$1,155	\$1,283
		Extremely Low Income (30%)	\$21,600	\$24,650	\$27,750	\$30,800
		<i>Equiv. Monthly Housing Budget</i>	\$540	\$616	\$694	\$770

Affordable housing is created either with the support of government subsidies assisting in the cost of its construction and long-term affordability provisions, or in the case of some mixed-income set-aside developments, through profits earned through the development of market-rate units supporting the construction cost and long-term affordability provisions of the affordable housing units. Recent public investments in affordable housing in southeastern Connecticut include Stonington's Spruce Meadows (new mixed-income apartments), Waterford's Victoria Gardens (mixed-income elderly apartments), and Groton's Branford Manor (capital improvements to existing 100% affordable apartments).ⁱⁱ Common sources of funding include the Federal Government's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program and the State of Connecticut's Competitive Assistance for Multifamily Properties (CHAMP) program. Different funding programs can target different types of housing or affordability for households at different income levels. Most affordable housing developments that depend on government subsidies receive funding from multiple State of Connecticut or federal programs.

Why Plan For Affordable Housing?

Under Connecticut law, municipalities are delegated the authority to regulate land use development according to laws set forth in Title 8 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Local zoning regulations establish rules for the location and type of housing that can be constructed in Connecticut. State statutes specify the conditions under which municipalities may adopt local land use plans and regulations. CGS § 8-23 establishes a requirement for municipalities to adopt local Plans of Conservation and Development, which document policies and goals for the physical and economic development of a municipality. CGS § 8-2 outlines the authorities municipalities are granted to adopt local zoning regulations. Both CGS § 8-23 (planning) and § 8-2 (zoning) direct municipalities to consider the need for affordable housing, both locally and at the regional level, and to adopt zoning that encourages the development of multifamily dwellings and housing at different price points. CGS § 8-30j, added in 2017, established an additional obligation for municipalities to adopt Affordable Housing Plans that will specify how the municipality will increase the number of local “affordable housing developments”.

The § 8-30j requirement for Affordable Housing Plans was passed in recognition of increasing challenges for Connecticut residents in finding adequate affordable housing, especially outside of Connecticut’s most urban communities. Since 2000, the share of Connecticut renters who pay more than 30% of their income towards housing rose from 37% to 46% in 2019. Homeowners with mortgages also saw their budgets stretched, with 20% of homeowners housing cost-burdened in 2000 and 31% in 2019. In Southeastern Connecticut, one in four households earns less than 80% of the area median income and is housing cost-burdened.

§ 8-30j(a): “At least once every five years, each municipality shall prepare or amend and adopt an affordable housing plan for the municipality. Such plan shall specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments in the municipality.”

The 8-30j Affordable Housing Plan statute references the definition of *affordable housing developments* included in CGS § 8-30g, which defines them as *assisted housing* that receives government subsidies to provide affordable housing for low and moderate households, or a *set-aside development* where deed restrictions ensure that at least 30% of the housing units are occupied by low-income households at affordable rates for at least 40 years. This definition of housing would include any deed-restricted affordable housing created as part of a mixed-income development, as well as affordable housing built or preserved with the support of state or federal programs.

The Affordable Housing Plan is an opportunity for municipalities to more closely examine housing needs and review how existing housing inventories and land use policies do or do not address those needs. The planning process also prompts a review of potential actions that municipalities may take that would enable or promote the development of housing that is affordable and accessible to lower-income residents. In 2020, the Connecticut Department of Housing worked with the Regional Plan Association to develop guidance on how municipalities might approach the development of Affordable Housing Plans (https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOH/AHPP-Guidebook_RPA_120120.pdf), and provided small grants to support municipal work to prepare plans. The initial deadline for compliance with the requirement for an Affordable Housing Plan statute is June 2022, five years from the statute’s effective date.

Plan Development Process

The development of an Affordable Housing Plan for Franklin is being overseen by Franklin’s Planning & Zoning Commission, with opportunities for members of the public to provide suggestions and feedback. Ultimately, the Plan will be considered by the Commission for adoption.

Housing Conditions in Franklin and Southeastern Connecticut

Affordability

A 2018 review of housing conditions in southeastern Connecticut prepared by the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) in partnership with the Southeastern Connecticut Housing Alliance (SECHA) showed that demand is most acute in southeastern Connecticut for lower-cost housing and rental housing. The portion of southeastern Connecticut households that can afford the housing they live in has dramatically decreased in the last twenty years. Since 2000, the share of renters who cannot afford their housing, and are therefore housing-cost-burdened, increased from 31% to 46%. As previously mentioned, as of 2018, 29,000 households in southeastern Connecticut earned less than 80% of the area's median income and were housing cost-burdened, or one in four households.

The rise in housing challenges is linked to a growing mismatch between incomes and housing costs. Adjusted for inflation, income growth in the region has been stagnant, growing less than 1% between 2000 and 2019, while for-sale housing prices and rents have increased 23% and 19%, respectively.

SCCOG's projections of future housing needs estimate that based on the expected demographics of future southeastern Connecticut households, demand will continue to increase for lower-cost and multifamily housing. Of the approximately 7,000 additional households expected by 2030, more than half are expected to be low-income, partially due to growth in the number of senior citizens, as baby boomers continue to age into retirement, as well as young workers who typically earn lower wages. New housing production of a little more than 500 units per year would satisfy expected new need for housing, but not address existing unmet needs.

Franklin has 781 housing units, of which approximately 86% are owner-occupied. The median value of an owner-occupied home in Franklin is approximately \$246,100, \$7,000 over the median value for homes in New London County.ⁱⁱⁱ Median household income is approximately \$94,000, higher than the county median of \$71,000.^{iv} According to census data, there are about 74 multifamily homes in Franklin, with 27 one-bedroom units at the Elisha Brook development, which is targeted to very low-income seniors over age 62. Median gross rent in New London County is \$1,099.

Local and Regional Housing Market

Housing in southeastern Connecticut's suburban and rural municipalities skews toward larger single-family homes, while one-bedroom units are concentrated in the region's urban centers. Many of the region's suburban and rural communities have few alternatives to the single-family home, with single-family housing making up over 90% of housing in some communities. Homeownership is also more

common in rural/suburban towns, with urban households slightly more likely to rent (54%) than own, and suburban/rural households much more likely to own their homes (80.1%).^v

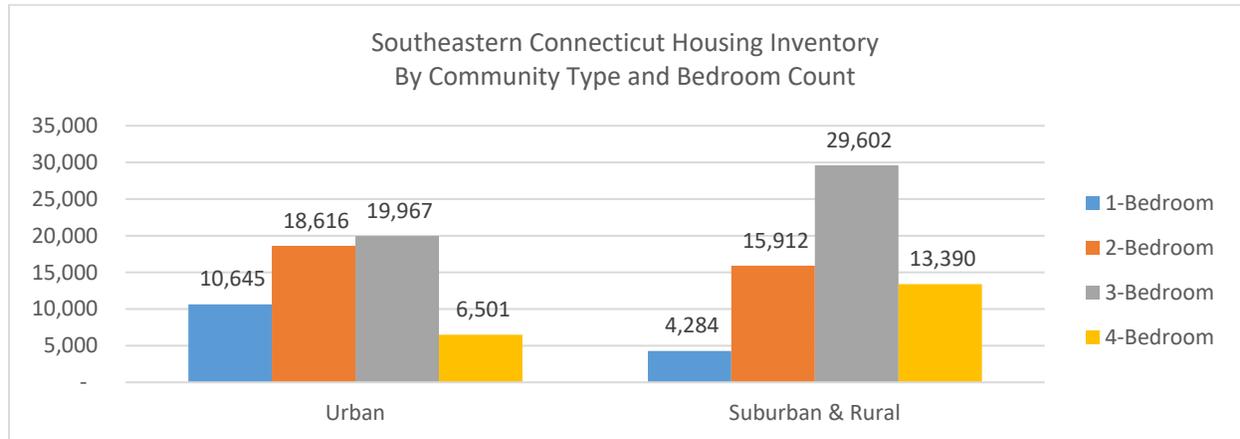


Figure 1. Housing in Southeastern Connecticut: Units by Number of Bedroom and Urban or Suburban/Rural Community Type. Additional 0-bedroom and 5+ bedroom units not shown. Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2018 5-Year Estimates.

Housing construction in southeastern Connecticut has remained sluggish since the 2008 recession began, with annual production hovering around 300 units per year. Housing construction has traditionally focused on the production of single-family homes in suburban and rural municipalities. Recent spikes in multifamily construction in suburban/rural towns occurred in 2014 and 2015, but these levels were not sustained in 2016 and 2017. Building permit data reported to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) indicate that from 2000 to 2017, permits for 98 new housing units were awarded in Franklin. The median sales price for a single-family home in Franklin was \$241,650, with 24 sales in 2019.^{vi} More recent county-level data shows median sales price increased from \$230,000 in 2019 to \$270,000 in 2020.^{vii}

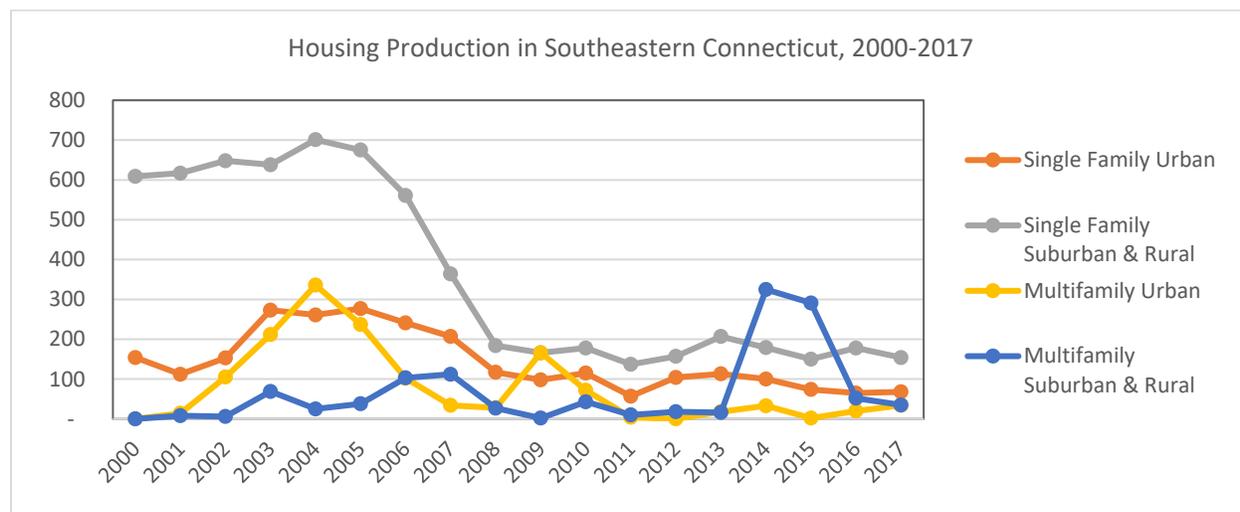


Figure 2. Housing Production Levels by Housing Type and Community Type, 2000-2017. Source: U.S. Census via Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.

Housing Production and Regulation in Franklin

SCCOG's 2018 Regional Housing Needs Assessment reviewed zoning regulations and the availability of vacant land in all of its member municipalities. The review revealed that large-lot, residential zoning is the most common in the region, based on overall land area. New opportunities for single-family homes exist in all towns, while 14 of the region's towns have opportunities for multifamily development on land in or close to sewer service areas, and an additional four municipalities (including Franklin) enable multifamily development in areas not served by sewer.

Much of the land in Franklin is zoned for single-family housing development (R-120, R-80, and C-1 in the following zoning map). Two-family dwellings are allowed by special exception as part of a Golf Course Community, or as a conversion of a single-family dwelling if it is more than ten years old in the R-80 and R-120 zones by special exception. The zoning regulations also allow for Elderly Housing developments (more than 20 units) by special exception in the R-80 and Industrial zones, and Age Restricted Housing Communities (maximum density of 4 units per acre, with neighborhood commercial development allowed) by special exception in the R-80 and Industrial zones.

Summary of Franklin Housing Production Regulations (from 2018 Southeastern Connecticut Regional Housing Needs Assessment)

Town of Franklin

Single-Family: Permitted throughout most of town, in the R-80 and R-120 residential zones and the Light Commercial (C-1) zone.

Two-family: Allowed by Special Permit as part of a Golf Course Community in the Planned Recreation Development District.

Mixed-Use: Allowed in the C-1 zone by Special permit.

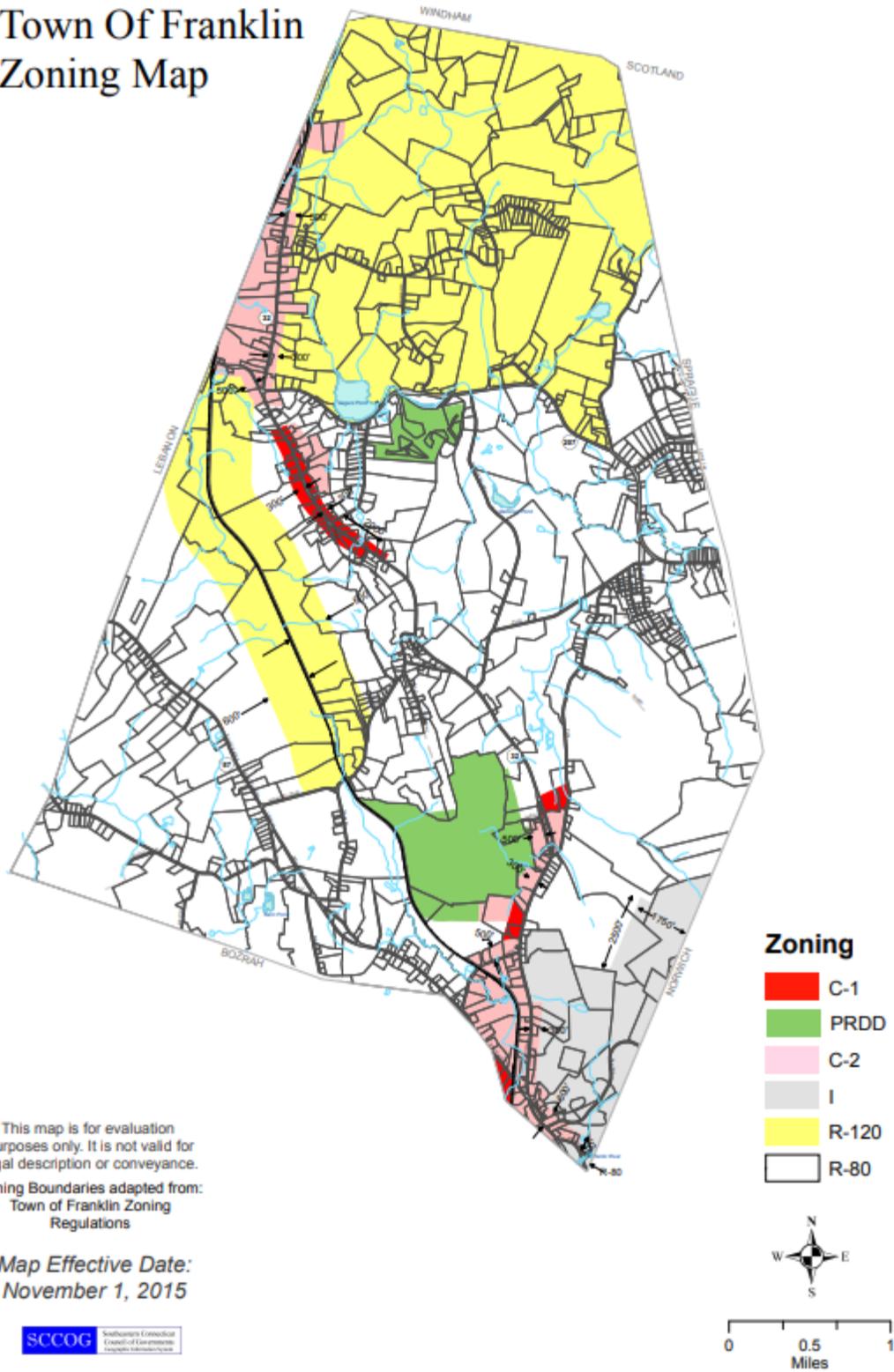
The Local Plan of Conservation and Development

The Franklin Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) was most recently updated in 2013. It noted that Franklin is primarily a rural town, with single family homes on two acre lots or larger. The only high-density resident area, known as the Eager Road/Birch Heights area, was created in the 1970s. In 2011 Elisha Brook Access Senior Housing, a twenty seven unit age-restricted and income-restricted development for very low income seniors, opened on New Park Avenue as Franklin's first multi-family housing development.

The POCD identified the following recommendations related to housing:

1. Consider zoning regulations that require larger residential development proposals provide at least ten percent of the proposed units meet affordability requirements as defined by CGS Sec. 8-30g.
2. Review housing zoning densities for areas served by public utilities and consider regulation modifications accordingly.
3. Consider zoning regulations that require applicants to submit information regarding the potential natural, cultural, and historic resource impact of proposed developments.

Town Of Franklin Zoning Map



This map is for evaluation purposes only. It is not valid for legal description or conveyance.
 Zoning Boundaries adapted from:
 Town of Franklin Zoning Regulations

Map Effective Date:
November 1, 2015



Affordable Housing Appeals Act (§ 8-30g)

Connecticut's Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals statute, C.G.S. § 8-30g, was established in 1997 to enable the development of affordable housing in municipalities where zoning regulations would otherwise prevent its construction. Municipalities are subject to § 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes when less than 10% of the municipal housing stock meets the statute's definition of affordable. The statute encourages development approvals for deed-restricted affordable housing by requiring that upon appeal of a development proposal for affordable housing that is rejected by a municipality with less than 10% affordable housing, the municipality must demonstrate that public interests in health, safety, or other matters clearly outweigh the need for affordable housing.

The State of Connecticut's 2019 Housing Appeals List shows that just over 5% of housing in Franklin counts as affordable housing for the purpose of determining the applicability of the § 8-30g statute. In determining the percent of affordable housing present in a municipality, the CT Department of Housing counts:

- Assisted housing units or housing receiving financial assistance under any governmental program for the construction or substantial rehabilitation of low and moderate income housing that was occupied or under construction by the end date of the report period for compilation of a given year's list;
- Rental housing occupied by persons receiving rental assistance under C.G.S. Chapter 138a (State Rental Assistance/RAP) or Section 142f of Title 42 of the U.S. Code (Section 8);
- Ownership housing or housing currently financed by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and/or the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and
- Deed-restricted properties or properties with deeds containing covenants or restrictions that require such dwelling unit(s) be sold or rented at or below prices that will preserve the unit(s) as affordable housing as defined in C.G.S. Section 8-39a for persons or families whose incomes are less than or equal to 80% of the area median income.

Of the 44 qualifying homes in Franklin, 16 have single-family CHFA/USDA mortgages, 27 are government assisted (the Elisha Brook development), 1 receives tenant rental assistance, and 0 deed restricted units.

As mentioned, municipalities that have 10% or more of their housing inventory falling into the above categories are exempt from § 8-30g appeals. Municipalities may also be granted four-year temporary exemptions by demonstrating progress in facilitating new affordable housing. The threshold for achieving a moratorium is new affordable housing created equal to the greater of two percent of existing housing, or housing earning 50 "Housing Unit Equivalent" points. New housing qualifies for between ½ and 3 Housing Unit Equivalent points based on the size of the unit (more bedrooms earn more points), restrictions on occupancy (senior-only housing earns fewer points), and the affordability level of the unit (affordability to lower income levels earns more points).

The Town of Franklin could achieve a moratorium with as few as 19 new affordable homes (three bedroom family units affordable to families at 40% Area Median Income) or as many as 100 homes for senior-citizens at 80% Area Median Income.

Community Input

As part of community outreach efforts for the Affordable Housing Plan, an online survey asked residents for their views on housing needs in their community. As of 2/9/2021, there were 113 responses, or about 14% of households. When residents were asked, in general, if they supported or opposed affordable housing in Franklin, nearly 72% of respondents said that they somewhat or strongly oppose affordable housing, 8% said neither support nor oppose, and 20% said that they somewhat or strongly support affordable housing.

However, when residents did voice support for specific goals: 35% were in favor of expanding options for senior citizens to remain in town, 28% supported home ownership for young residents, 9% supported assisting low-income residents with home maintenance, and 27% responded with “none of the above” or “other”. There was also strong support for attracting young families and young workers. Single family detached housing was the most preferred type of new development (46%), but there was also some support for small-scale multifamily options such as in-law/accessory apartments (23%) and townhouses (13%).

A public meeting was held over ZOOM on April 12, 2021. Residents, PZC members, and staff discussed the changing demographics and current housing market, the difficulties of young residents attempting to buy homes in town, and the increase in construction costs such as lumber.

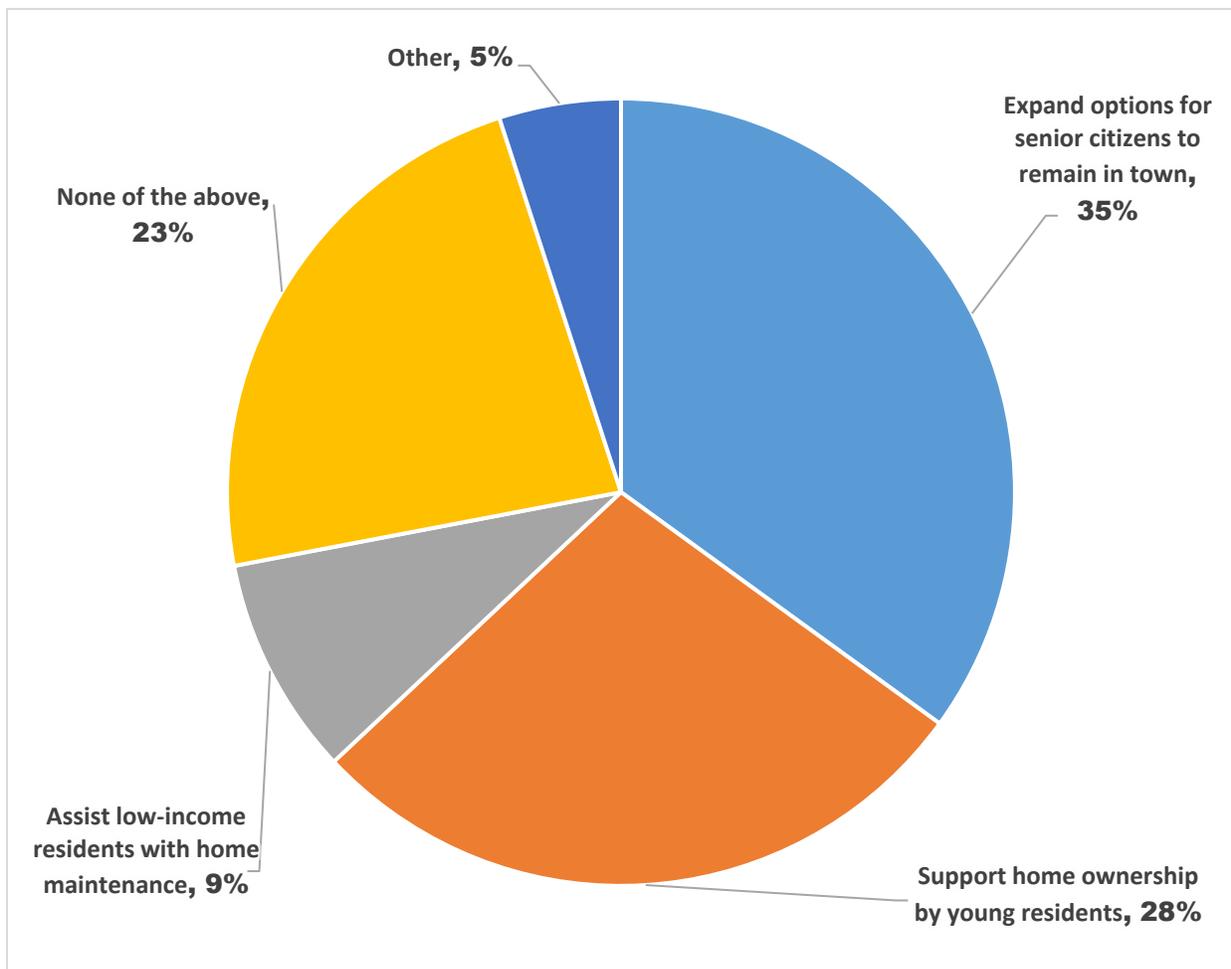


Figure 3: Franklin residents voiced some support for supporting senior citizens and young residents

House Bill 6107

During the drafting of this Affordable Housing Plan, House Bill 6107, titled “An Act Concerning The Zoning Enabling Act, Accessory Apartments, Training For Certain Land Use Officials, Municipal Affordable Housing Plans And A Commission On Connecticut’s Development And Future” was passed as Public Act 21-29 and signed into law by the governor on 6/10/2021. Several portions of this new public act will require changes to our existing zoning code, and have been incorporated into the Action Plan Options below.

Action Plan Options

Connecticut municipalities have flexibility in determining how they act to improve access to affordable housing. This plan should include steps appropriate to the Town of Franklin that may be taken with the goal of creating additional affordable housing units in Franklin, consistent with the other development and conservation goals of the Town. Some of the strategies that have been implemented or considered by Connecticut municipalities are the following:

Zoning Regulation Purpose

- Update the “Purpose” section of the Franklin Planning and Zoning Regulations to include addressing significant disparities in housing needs and access to educational, occupational, and other opportunities; and affirmatively further the purposes of the federal Fair Housing Act, per PA 21-29.

Commission Continuing Education

- Support the continuing education of Planning and Zoning Commission members with ongoing training on: affordable housing issues, process and procedures, the Freedom of Information Act, interpretation of site plans, and the impact of zoning on the environment, agriculture, and historic resources on a biennial basis, per PA 21-29.

Increase Opportunities for Multifamily Development

- Review potential modifications to single-family zoning that would enable low-density, low-impact multifamily developments where supported by appropriate infrastructure, per PA 21-29.
- Review housing zoning densities for areas served by public utilities and consider regulation modifications accordingly, per 2013 POCD.
- Update parking minimum for residential developments to 1 space per studio or 1-bedroom dwelling and 2 spaces per 2+ bedroom dwelling unit, per PA 21-29.

Support First-Time Home-Ownership and Aging-In-Place

- Work with local realtor community to publicize availability of USDA and CHFA low-interest home loans.
- Consider applying for State of Connecticut Small Cities funding for rehabilitation of existing housing occupied by low-income residents, first time homebuyers, etc.
- Create municipal tax relief programs/down-payment/closing cost assistance for elderly, low income, first time buyers, etc.

Expand availability of lower-cost housing

- Allow one Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) alongside or within a single-family house, according to existing lot coverage and setback rules for single-family homes, without the need for a public hearing or special permit, per PA 21-29.
- Strike reference to minimum dwelling unit sizes for Elderly Housing, Age-Restricted Housing, and Conversion of Residences, so that minimum dwelling unit sizes are governed by the building code, per PA 21-29.
- Consider adopting provisions for single-family cluster development, which enables smaller homes, reduces infrastructure costs, and reduces the environmental footprint of new construction.

Increase availability of deed-restricted affordable housing

- Amend the Zoning Regulations by adopting inclusionary zoning as permitted under CGS Sec. 8-2i. to require a percentage of new large housing developments to be affordable housing for low or moderate income persons, per 2013 POCD.
- Work with housing land trusts or other non-profits to acquire and rehabilitate existing housing for deed-restricted affordable housing.

ⁱ HUD FY 2020 Income Limits Summary for Norwich-New London, CT HUD Metro FMR Area (towns of Bozrah, East Lyme, Franklin, Griswold, Groton, Ledyard, Lisbon, Lyme, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Preston, Salem, Sprague, Stonington, Voluntown, Waterford).

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2020/2020summary.odn>

ⁱⁱ CHFA 2019 Summary of Programs. https://www.chfa.org/assets/1/6/2019_CGS_8-37bb.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018 5-Year Estimates.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} New London County 2019 Sales by Town, Eastern CT Association of Realtors.

^{vii} Fourth Quarter New London and Windham County SOLD Comparisons - 2020 vs. 2019, Eastern CT Association of Realtors.