

# CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: The Plan for Connecticut

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## 2025-2030

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Prepared by the Office of Policy and  
Management in accordance with  
Connecticut General Statutes Section  
16a-29



*Mansfield Hollow State Park. Courtesy Justine Phillips-Gallucci.*



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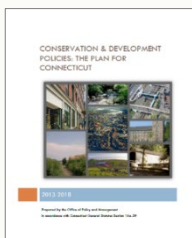
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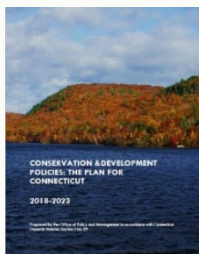
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# INTRODUCTION

The *Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2025 – 2030* (C&D Plan) is the state's comprehensive strategies plan for land and water resource conservation and development, adopted every five years by the Connecticut General Assembly. The C&D Plan establishes a set of priorities affecting the future of the state's shared natural, built, and social environments. These priorities are expressed as visions in this C&D Plan are intended to guide state agencies as they work individually and collaboratively to advance the state's goals through their actions.



This C&D Plan is different from recent iterations. It is framed around new priorities. It was developed with greater input from state agencies, legislators, advocates, and other stakeholders. Finally, it proposes new implementation mechanisms. These changes address several of the recommendations of the Commission on Connecticut's Development and Future (CCDF) made in 2023. However, this C&D Plan is also a transitional plan, expected to better position the state for deeper and more holistic planning and greater integration with regional and municipal planning in subsequent iterations, as was also recommended by the CCDF.

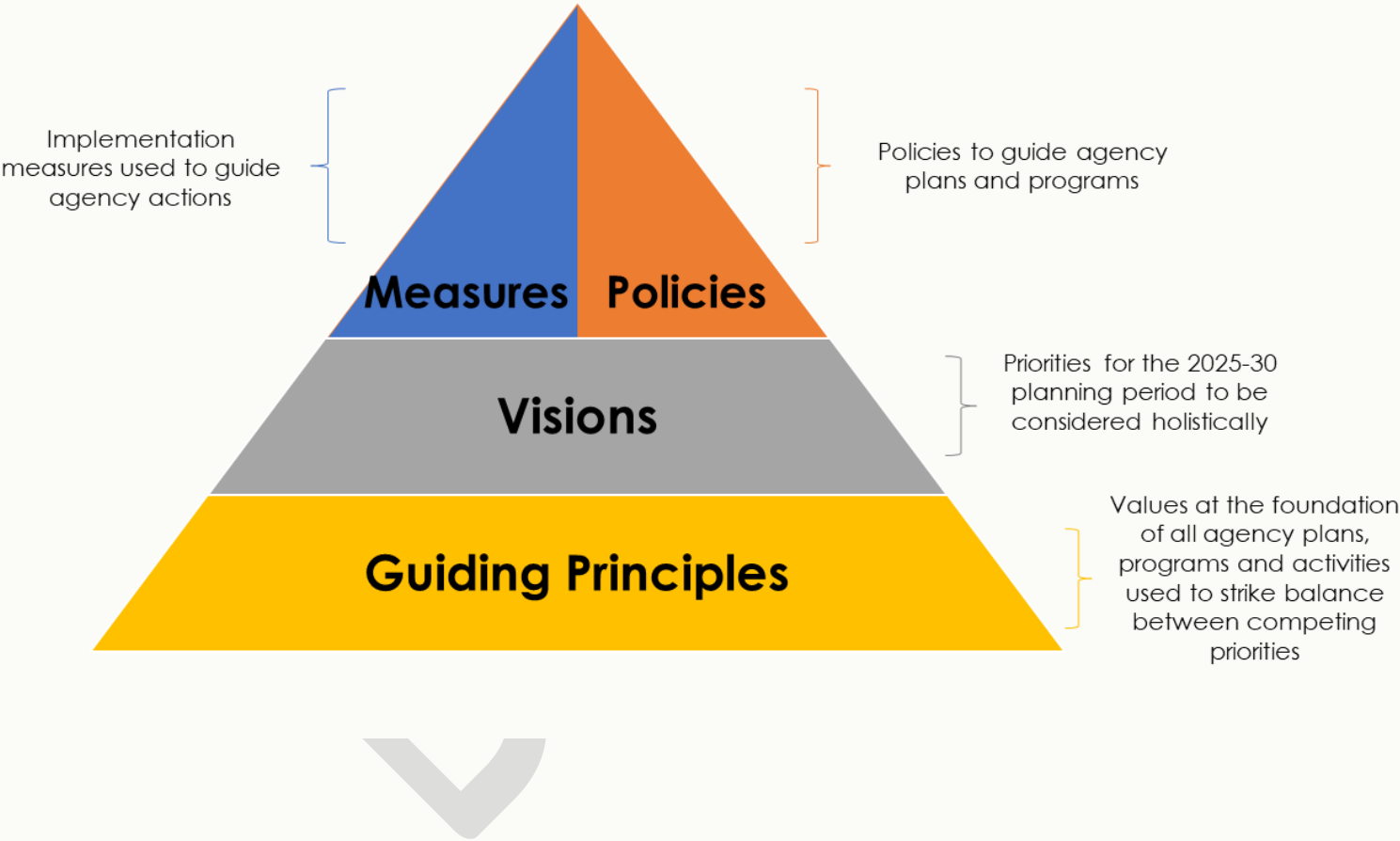


The 2025-2030 C&D Plan highlights the intersection of federal and state planning mandates with the state's top priorities and focuses on improving interagency collaboration in advancing those priorities. The intention is to help agencies balance sometimes competing priorities and to encourage proactive, long-term planning, while also guiding shorter-term decision-making. As a legislatively adopted plan, this C&D Plan also seeks to better align legislative and administrative priorities to ensure limited resources are used to optimal effect. Ultimately, the new implementation mechanisms proposed in this Plan will improve transparency in agency decision-making processes and encourage the state's partners and other conservation and development agents to consider the balance of priorities in their own actions.

As shown below, the 2025-2030 C&D Plan is built on a foundation of Guiding Principles embedded in all agency work. From there, the Plan identifies five Visions, held as equal priorities for the 2025-2030 planning period and beyond. Implementation is addressed through policies to guide agency plans, programs, and decisions, and Implementation Measures to guide actions that are likely to have significant impact on the natural, built, economic, and social environments.

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# Structure of the 2025-30 C & D Plan



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## **PLANNING PROCESS – (to be written later)**

*CCDF Recommendations and Statutes*

*ORG/OPM Work with Agencies*

*ORG/OPM Work with Continuing Committee*

*Public Outreach*

*Hearings and Adoption*

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# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following Guiding Principles are the values that underlie all aspects of the C&D Plan and inform the Visions, Policies, and Implementation Measures. These Principles look beyond land and water resources to recognize the interrelationships of economic, social, and cultural factors with conservation and development. As is evident from ongoing work across the state, agencies already embrace these values as standards in their efforts to secure a future Connecticut that is thriving with healthy and robust natural, built, economic, and social systems, and ample opportunity for all residents.



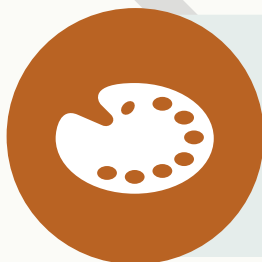
## **SUSTAINABLE**

*Balance the ecological, social, and economic dimensions of conservation and development to meet current needs without compromising the future. This entails protecting, preserving, and conserving our natural resources, efficiently and responsibly using our economic and human resources, and achieving and maintaining social wellbeing.*



## **EQUITABLE**

*Ensure a high quality of life and opportunity for people of any income, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, or age. This requires reducing disparities in outcomes, access, and opportunities, minimizing environmental, public health, and other burdens, and extending community benefits.*



## **VIBRANT**

*Create and maintain culturally, economically, and physically diverse communities and an innovative, thriving statewide economy. This involves cultivating diverse businesses in type, size, and ownership, and creating, preserving, and promoting distinct communities and regions and their unique mixes of historic, natural, cultural, and social features.*



## **RESILIENT**

*Develop and maintain the capacity to prepare for, recover from, adapt to, and thrive in changing and disruptive conditions. This demands that Connecticut understand, avoid, and/or reduce a variety of environmental, economic, public health, and social well-being risks, build technical, staffing, fiscal, and other capacity to implement resilience measures and capitalize on opportunities to provide multiple resilience benefits.*



Agencies are encouraged to use these Guiding Principles as lenses through which to consider their efforts to implement this C&D Plan, especially when faced with equally prioritized Visions that need to be balanced against one another. Applying the lenses of each Guiding Principle against potential plans, programs, and actions will help to illustrate impacts, trade-offs, and/or opportunities for mitigation, and will ensure that agencies' decisions keep within Connecticut's comprehensive set of values.





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# VISIONS

The five Visions set the course for the desired future of Connecticut by defining overarching priorities for the 2025-2030 planning period. These broad priorities are expressed as longer-term Visions to encourage agencies and state partners to consider how their current actions advance or detract from the state's larger aspirations, even those that fall outside of an agency's typical mission area.

The Vision for Connecticut's future includes:

- **A Thriving Economy**
- **Housing for Current and Future Residents**
- **Stewardship of Resources**
- **Healthy People and Places**
- **Connected and Inclusive Communities**

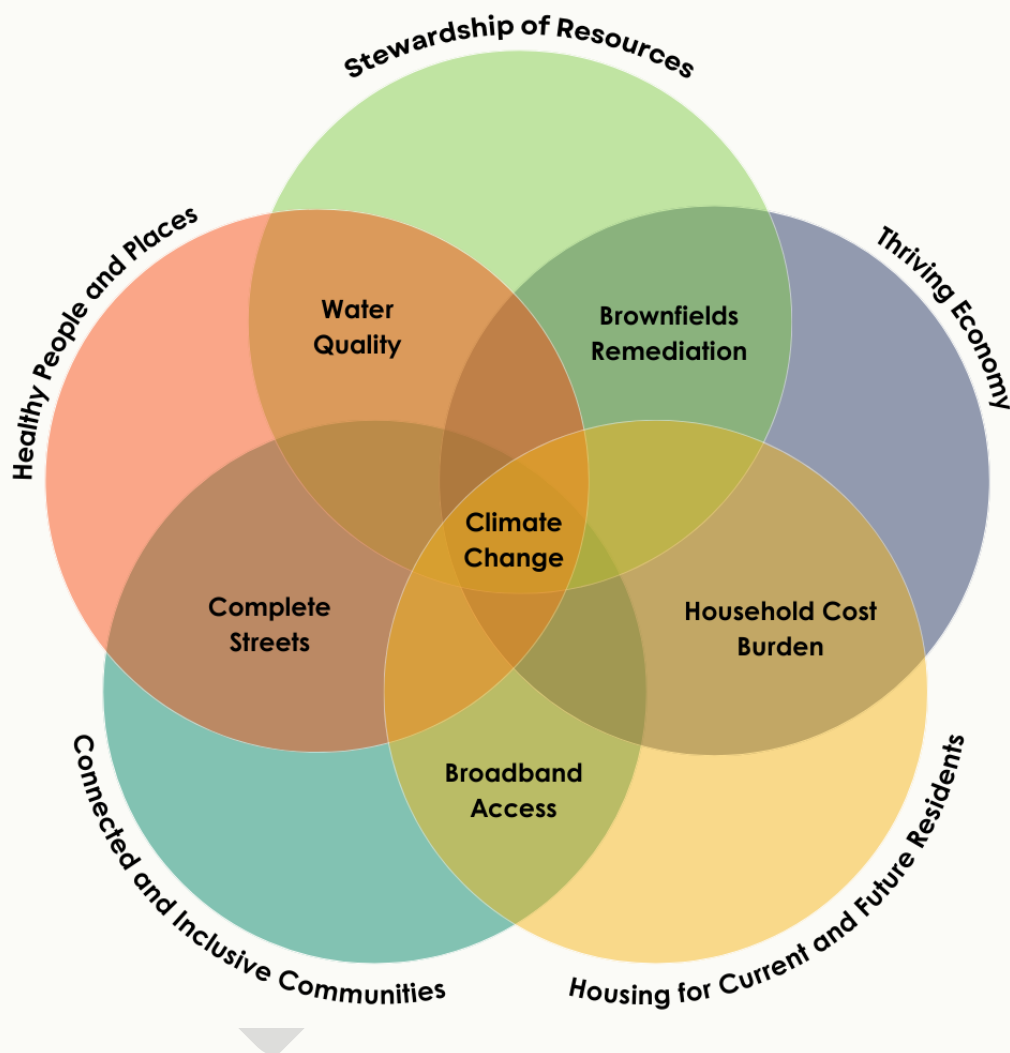
All five Visions are equally important and should be considered in tandem with one another.

Each Vision explained more thoroughly in the following pages, including:

- A defining *vision statement* that summarizes the goal of each Vision area
- *Targets* within each Vision area for agencies to direct their plans, programs, and investments towards
- Brief discussions of current *strengths* and *challenges* within each Vision area that inform the targets. *Strengths* can be leveraged to make progress towards the Vision, while *challenges* may hinder progress and will require multi-sector approaches to address.

Appendix A includes *Ongoing Initiatives and Other Resources* related to each Vision, highlighting current work by state and quasi-public agencies that advance Connecticut towards the Vision. The highlighted plans, programs, studies, and resources present opportunities for interagency approaches to build on current efforts. This section is separate from the body of the plan as it is intended to be a living document; updated annually by the *ad hoc* C&D Plan Advisory Committee, which is discussed in the Implementation section, to ensure it remains a valuable resource over the planning horizon.

To making meaningful progress towards making these Visions a reality will require a holistic consideration of the factors encompassed within each and the interrelationships of the Visions. The following diagram highlights a few cross-cutting, current issues of conservation and development that affect or are affected by overlapping Vision areas. It is intended to spark greater reflection among agencies as to how their own work might impact areas not traditionally under their purview.



Climate change sits at the center of the diagram, as its effects will be felt across all sectors—from opportunities to invest in innovative green industries (Thriving Economy), to balancing the need to develop more housing (Housing for Current and Future Residents) with the need to conserve land to protect biodiversity (Stewardship of Resources), and increasing public transit ridership (Connected and Inclusive Communities) to reduce transportation sector emissions and improve air quality (Healthy People and Places). Other issues sit at the intersection of two or more

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Visions—for example, brownfield remediation allows a site to be put back into active use, which is attractive for businesses (Thriving Economy), while also allowing undeveloped lands to be conserved (Stewardship of Resources).

Thus, when reviewing programs and plans for consistency with the C&D Plan, OPM will evaluate potential impacts across all five Visions: how the program or plan may contribute to the realization of each Vision, and how any potential negative impacts to each Vision might be mitigated. When trade-offs between the Visions exist, as is expected, agencies are encouraged to return to the Guiding Principles for further direction, as described earlier. OPM recognizes that consistency under this framework will look different across agencies and subject areas. The intention of this C&D Plan's framework is to enable state agencies to meaningfully engage with the priorities.



*Tobys Rock Mountain, Beacon Falls. Courtesy Justine Phillips-Gallucci.*

# A THRIVING ECONOMY

*Connecticut will have a flourishing and diverse economy that leverages our strategic location, existing infrastructure, and natural and cultural assets.*



## Targets

To accomplish this Vision, state agencies will direct plans, programs, and investments towards:

- Promoting infill development and redevelopment in areas with existing supportive infrastructure
- Promoting compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development patterns around existing and planned public transportation
- Improving transit services to provide convenient, reliable, safe, and competitive transportation choices
- Reducing economic disparities among residents, neighborhoods, and communities
- Ensuring high quality opportunities for all residents to participate in the economy
- Creating and maintaining a diverse mix of economic activities within and across economic sectors
- Maintaining a resilient and adaptable workforce
- Promoting regional collaboration and coordination in growing, retaining, and attracting businesses and talent
- Recognizing the economic impacts of CT's tribes, and protecting and celebrating tribal culture
- Improving statewide energy resilience
- Pursuing greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies

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## Current Strengths

- Significant recent and ongoing federal investments in infrastructure, including \$5.4 billion in roads, bridges, public transit, ports, and airports; approximately \$200 million in clean water and water infrastructure; and \$230 million in broadband<sup>i</sup>
- Strategic location in the Northeast Megaregion provides ready access to major markets and financial centers
- 5th highest state gross domestic product per capita in 2022<sup>ii</sup>
- Robust education systems and 7th most highly educated adult populations in the nation (2022 ACS 1-Year data<sup>iii</sup>
- Estimated \$954 million in expenditures by Arts and Culture Organization and their Audiences in FY 2022.<sup>iv</sup>
- Agricultural cash receipts of approximately \$590 million in 2021, with miscellaneous crops, floriculture, and dairy products the leading commodities.<sup>v</sup>
- Abundance of natural resources and historic, cultural, and creative assets provide a high quality of life

## Current Challenges

- High cost of living and lack of affordable housing<sup>vi, vii</sup>
- An older population than many other states, with sluggish total population growth since 2010<sup>viii, ix</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for income inequality among states<sup>x</sup>
- Climate risks to businesses, housing, and infrastructure<sup>xi</sup>
- Condition and capacity of infrastructure to support growth<sup>xii</sup>



# HOUSING FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS

*Connecticut will have a variety of housing types in vibrant, diverse communities across the state that are able to meet residents' needs and are affordable at all income levels and all stages of life.*



Greenwich. Courtesy Denise Savageau.

## Targets

To accomplish this Vision, state agencies will direct plans, programs, and investments towards:

- Increasing and diversifying Connecticut's housing supply in areas with existing supportive infrastructure, in a way that includes rental and ownership, affordable and market-rate, and small and family-sized units in a variety of medium- and high-density development types
- Bolstering local neighborhood contexts through infill new construction, rehabilitation of existing units, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, particularly those with historic disinvestment
- Promoting the co-location of housing with amenities and services that facilitate simpler commutes and travel patterns, particularly transit-oriented developments
- Fostering bike, pedestrian, and micro-mobility connections between dense residential, commercial, and mixed-use development and existing or planned transit
- Reducing the number of low- and moderate-income households that are cost-burdened by housing, transportation, and energy costs
- Ensuring that a diversity of housing types are equitably attainable to people in challenging seasons of life, with an intention of eliminating homelessness in the state and positioning housing as a key support to stabilizing mental health
- Ensuring that the state's existing house stock provides healthy environments for individuals and families

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## Current Strengths

- Recent budget and state bonding activities have increased funding opportunities for housing development and preservation<sup>xiii</sup>
- Notable recent increase in construction of multi-family residential properties, capitalizing on strong market demand<sup>xiv</sup>
- A diverse array of financial vehicles to support renters, homeownership, and housing stability<sup>xv</sup>
- A strong system of tenant protections<sup>xvi, xvii</sup>

## Current Challenges

- Lack of housing construction for the past two decades
- Worker shortages in the construction trades<sup>xviii</sup> and low enrollment in trade schools
- Increasing land costs creating new pressure to develop in more affordable flood-prone areas, which puts residents at risk
- COVID-19 related shift in housing market and increased housing costs<sup>xix</sup>
  - Increased mortgage rates raising cost of homeownership and dampening housing sales
- A fragmented, multi-layered regulatory landscape hinders timely development to meet current demands<sup>xx</sup>
- Insufficient supply of affordable housing for various income levels and household cost burdens<sup>xxi, xxii, xxiii</sup>
- Changing demographics are increasing demands specifically for underbuilt smaller, starter-home inventory, as the median age of CT residents increases and Millennials attempt to enter the housing market<sup>xxiv</sup>

# STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES

*Connecticut's natural, cultural, and historic resources will be carefully and responsibly used and managed to bolster their ability to withstand disruptions and ensure their long-term quality and viability*



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail. Courtesy Justine Phillips-Gallucci.

## Targets

To accomplish this Vision, state agencies will direct plans, programs, and investments towards:

- Advancing meaningful and equitable strategies to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change across all sectors
- Planning for and investing in the resilience of critical infrastructure, including transportation, communications, water, wastewater, and energy assets
- Planning for and adapting to the effects of sea level rise
- Protecting and enhancing the connectivity of natural lands and open spaces
- Preserving and protecting farmland and farm operations and investing in climate-smart agricultural production and practices
- Promoting adaptive reuse, infill development, and redevelopment of underutilized sites as strategies to protect and conserve land
- Continuing to preserve historically, culturally, and architecturally significant sites, structures, landscapes, buildings, and objects, especially those related to traditionally underrepresented groups
- Facilitating the transition towards a fossil fuel-free energy system while enhancing efficiency, resilience, and equity
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity
- Managing the built environment and restoring, enhancing, and protecting natural assets to improve water quality

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## Current Strengths

- Current efforts to conserve and manage Connecticut's diverse resources to protect the ecosystem services they provide and to contribute to a high quality of life:
- 110 state parks and 32 state forests<sup>xxv</sup> and more than 500,000 acres of land conserved by the state and its partners<sup>xxvi</sup>. Connecticut's varied and scenic landscapes provide carbon storage, erosion and flood control, oxygen production, and habitat for hundreds of species of wildlife.
- More than 45,000 acres of preserved farmland has maintained agriculture as a vital part of our state's economy<sup>xxvii</sup>.
- Long Island Sound plays a major role in the regional economy, hosting many activities including tourism, aquaculture and fishing, and boating<sup>xxviii</sup>.
- More than 52,000 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 63 National Historic Landmarks, and more than 75,000 properties listed on the State Register of Historic Places<sup>xxix</sup>.
- Progress made towards cleaner, cheaper, and more reliable energy, including development of critical infrastructure, expanded renewable energy programs, and residential and commercial investments in energy efficiency<sup>xxx</sup>

## Current Challenges

- A global climate crisis caused by an increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The climate emergency brings with it higher temperatures, changing precipitation patterns and increased probability of drought, more frequent and intense storms, and a loss of air and water quality<sup>xxxi</sup>.
- The Connecticut shoreline and the east coast of the United States in general are especially susceptible to the effects of sea level rise due to subsidence, or the sinking of the coastline. The Long Island Sound is expected to rise 20 inches higher than the national tidal datum by 2050, leaving the 61% of Connecticut's residents who live in the coastal area, as well critical infrastructure and sensitive habitats, vulnerable to increased erosion, frequency of flooding, and coastal inundation<sup>xxxii,xxxiii</sup>.
- The sixth mass extinction crisis, with rates of extinction over 1,000 times higher than would occur naturally due in large part to habitat loss and other effects of human activities, may provoke the decline and loss of many of Connecticut's species, especially the ~600 listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern<sup>xxxiv,xxxv</sup>.
- Loss, conversion, and/or fragmentation of working and conservation lands remain challenges for preserving their long-term ecological, recreation, and economic values<sup>xxxvi</sup>.
- Ensuring that the benefits of stewardship efforts are shared equally among Connecticut's residents, with particular focus on underserved and vulnerable communities. For example, emphasizing access and affordability in the transition to a fossil-fuel free energy system, or prioritizing green space and tree canopy preservation in urban areas.
- Building general awareness or understanding of why stewardship is important.



# HEALTHY PEOPLE AND PLACES

*Connecticut will offer communities that enable the health and physical, social, and mental wellbeing of residents of all incomes, races, genders, ethnicities, abilities, and ages.*



Windsor Locks Canal. Courtesy Connecticut Department of Transportation.

## Targets

To accomplish this Vision, state agencies will direct plans, programs, and investments towards:

- Advancing a Health in All Policies approach that takes into consideration the health implications of decisions across all sectors
- Increasing connection between at-risk populations and medical or other health-related services or resources
- Collaborating with community-based organizations to address social determinants of health
- Addressing food insecurity
- Enhancing urban open spaces and increasing accessibility to promote healthy lifestyles through increased participation in outdoor recreation and community activities
- Maintaining and increasing urban tree cover
- Mitigating conflicts between public health and other state goals, such as between insect-borne disease protection and wetlands protection
- Reducing transportation sector emissions
- Continuing to protect ecologically sensitive waters including public supply source waters
- Making best use of existing infrastructure and ensuring the efficiency and sustainability of future infrastructure
- Considering potential conflicts with other state policies when addressing small community water supply and wastewater disposal problems
- Continuing to invest in developing a sustainable local food system and encouraging the development of community gardens and urban agriculture



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## Current Strengths

- Significant recent and ongoing federal investment in infrastructure, including \$200 million in clean water and water infrastructure<sup>xxxvii</sup>.
- Attainment of most national targets for health, and better health outcomes for indicators including obesity prevalence, infectious disease incidence, and insurance coverage, as compared to other states<sup>xxxviii</sup>.
- Ranked 6<sup>th</sup> nationwide in healthcare quality in 2020<sup>xxxix</sup>.
- Decline in childhood lead poisoning over the past decade—the incidence rate of blood lead tests greater than or equal to 5 µg/dL was 1.1% in 2020<sup>xl,xli</sup>.
- Connecticut's adoption of more stringent lead-based paint poisoning thresholds<sup>xlii</sup>.
- Community based organizations, including Neighborhood Revitalization Zones and health-specific entities, that can advise state efforts and assist in outreach or in convening people, businesses, and institutions at a neighborhood level

## Current Challenges

- Chronic diseases (heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease) are the leading causes of death in Connecticut<sup>xliii</sup>.
- Health disparities exist by age, sex, race, ethnicity, geography, ability, and socioeconomics. For example:
  - Adults with disabilities are more likely to have depression, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease<sup>xliv</sup>.
  - While the rate of preventable hospitalizations for Connecticut residents is 1,526 per 100,000, the rate for black Connecticut residents is 2,171 per 100,000<sup>xlv</sup>.
  - Hispanic and black non-Hispanic children and adults have higher prevalences of asthma<sup>xlvi</sup>.
- 1 in 10 Connecticut residents struggle with food insecurity according to estimates from Feeding America<sup>xlvii</sup>.
- 28.7% of adults with a household income of less than \$25,000 do not have a regular source of care<sup>xlviii</sup>.
- Only 64.1% of adults with a household income of less than \$25,000 have healthcare insurance<sup>xlix</sup>.
- Healthcare costs in Connecticut average 25% more per person than the national average, frequently making Connecticut among the top states in per capita healthcare expenditures<sup>l</sup>.
- The cost of healthcare has risen 77% over the past 15 years<sup>li</sup>

# CONNECTED AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

*Connecticut will foster and support unique, diverse, and inclusive communities that are well-connected with each other and greater Northeast megaregion*



## Targets

To accomplish this Vision, state agencies will direct plans, programs, and investments towards:

- Encouraging denser land use and development near existing transit networks and activity centers
- Developing a multi-modal transportation network that improves transit and mobility experiences for all and facilitates the realization of other Visions
- Developing coordinated capacity and infrastructure for solid waste management
- Continuing to increase broadband access across the state
- Supporting businesses and organizations that strengthen activity centers
- Collaborating with CT's tribes to support tribal culture and resources, and ongoing coordination on planning policies
- Investing in neighborhood-supported placemaking that offers multiple benefits to improve quality of life
- Supporting and promoting CT agriculture, and the accessibility of healthy foods for all
- Increasing accessibility to natural and cultural amenities throughout the state
- Balancing expansion of infrastructure with community needs, conservation priorities, and long-term fiscal responsibility
- Acknowledging, mitigating, and/or correcting the negative impacts that prior infrastructure investments have had on low-income and marginalized communities
- Fostering a sense of belonging for residents of all incomes, races, genders, ethnicities, abilities, and ages in all communities
- Supporting regional planning and shared services efforts among municipalities and regional councils of government

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## Current Strengths

- Increasingly diverse communities and diversity among communities<sup>lii</sup>.
- Significant investment in infrastructure and greenhouse gas reduction throughout the state, facilitated by funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law<sup>liii</sup>.
- Connecticut's diversity of villages, town centers, and urban commercial districts provide ample opportunities for economic growth and community development<sup>liv</sup>.
- Regional councils of government ensure collaboration among municipalities while giving each town opportunities for input<sup>lv</sup>
- Continued expansion of Connecticut's broadband network is closing the digital divide, and is routinely mapped for progress<sup>lvi</sup>

## Current Challenges

- Connecticut's infrastructure continues to age and grapple with years of backlogged improvements<sup>lvii</sup>
- Compounding impacts occur in divested communities, including significant infrastructure needs, environmental justice and health issues, and a lack of access to amenities, such as open space<sup>lviii</sup>
- Siloed nature of state agency activities requires municipalities and developers to navigate a complex bureaucratic structure, often with multiple agencies for a single project

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# POLICIES

The following overarching policies apply to all agency planning, programming, and policymaking. They encourage all agencies to take a comprehensive view of their efforts, incorporating the guiding principles and visions of this C&D Plan in their deliberations. They also demonstrate to potential partners in conservation and development the overall approach of state agencies.

**1. *Seek multiple benefits and create efficiencies across agencies to optimize the use of state resources in conservation and development initiatives.***

Continue and enhance collaboration among state agencies. To accomplish this effectively, agencies should:

- a. Support relationship building across agencies at all staff levels
- b. Collaborate on projects and policies
- c. Encourage potential partners and stakeholders to consider impacts and opportunities of actions across multiple vision areas

**2. *Leverage federal and private resources to support programs and projects that balance priorities.***

While all agencies seek to maximize their capture and use of federal and private funding, it is important to understand both the opportunities and limitations attached to such funding. Agencies should seek to fit the funding to the most beneficial projects, maximize the benefits towards all conservation and development priorities, and minimize the trade-offs often imposed by funding limitations.

**3. *Encourage planning and preliminary phasing among partners in conservation and development to advance well-balanced projects for potential state investment.***

The recent spate of federal and state funding has focused significantly on shovel-ready projects. That focus can neglect projects potentially offering superior benefits, especially in under-resourced communities lacking the capacity to invest in due diligence and planning. It is important for agencies to continue to assist in planning and due diligence to better understand needs and opportunities and to maintain project pipelines that focus on the state's priorities.

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**4. *Develop greater capacity to govern, develop, leverage, and use existing data.***

Most agencies collect significant amounts of data. CT Open Data and the CT Geodata Portal have helped to centralize and make available statewide data sets. However, there is significant opportunity to better use, share and interpret data; to develop and maximize existing intellectual capital related to data management and analysis to conduct analyses that help refine priorities and identify cross-sector synergies; and to enable scenario-based planning within and across state agencies.

**5. *Promote regional solutions to conservation and development and in the efficient use of limited resources.***

Many priorities identified in this C&D Plan are best addressed at a regional scale because many aspects of our economic, transportation and other systems operate regionally. Decision-making processes for establishing programs and allocating state investments should promote greater regional-level thinking.

**6. *Clearly communicate priorities horizontally and vertically within and across agencies.***

The sheer size and complexity of the state agency system does not lend itself easily to cross-sector communications. While there are numerous interagency working groups and committees actively collaborating in the areas prioritized by this C&D Plan, gaps in knowledge and familiarity with these issues within and among agencies remain. Ensuring that all levels of management are familiar with the C&D Plan's visions and how individual agencies connect to these priorities can help foster creative ideas and collaborations. Fostering greater interagency communication on intersecting priorities will also allow the state to better leverage resources and carry forth a comprehensive vision.

**7. *Seek out and facilitate meaningful engagement with diverse stakeholders.***

Methods for engaging residents, advocates, communities, and other stakeholders in planning and development continue to evolve. Agencies should continue to experiment with new methods to increase transparency,



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build trust, effectively communicate, and successfully engage with primary stakeholders that accurately represent the affected community and its diversity of viewpoints. All agencies should strive to ensure that contributions from stakeholders meaningfully contribute to outcomes. Moreover, agencies should collaborate and share lessons learned on stakeholder engagement, particularly when multiple agencies are working in specific areas.

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# LOCATIONAL GUIDE MAP

Several statutes refer to the Locational Guide Map of the C&D Plan and/or land use categories that have historically appeared on previous iterations of the map, though there are no requirements for the C&D Plan to include a Locational Guide Map. CGS Chapter 297a, in particular, requires OPM to develop boundaries for Priority Funding Areas based on consideration of the Locational Guide Map to direct agencies' investments in "growth-related projects." Growth-related projects are defined as any of the following state agency actions when the costs are at least \$200,000:

- Land acquisition (not for conservation purposes)
- Development or improvement of property
- Acquisition of public transportation equipment
- Awarding of a grant to conduct any of the preceding actions

In addition, programs such as historic home rehabilitation tax credits or Enterprise Corridor Zones have been tied to Locational Guide Map categories (see Appendix B for a list of statutory references to the Locational Guide Map). How or whether agencies use Priority Funding Areas or references to Locational Guide Map designations is not widely known; however, lack of knowledge surrounding Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 297a and the inherent challenges of producing a Priority Funding Area map suggests that these tools are not widely used.

It is important to understand that a Locational Guide Map provides only general guidance for conservation and development and must be considered in context with the policies and implementation measures of the overall C&D Plan. Mapping prepared at a statewide scale inherently ignores detailed information, such as topography, soils type, and man-made features that are critical considerations in site-specific decision making.

The state's original approach for identifying Priority Funding Areas on the Locational Guide Map used U.S. Census Blocks as the base geographic unit of mapping. Census Blocks are statistical areas that vary significantly in size - typically quite small in places with the greatest population density and large in lightly populated areas. In previous Locational Guide Map/ Priority Funding Area maps, the entire area of a Census Block was identified as a Priority Funding Area and favorable for development, even when infrastructure supporting that designation was not available throughout the Census Block. The spatial mismatch between where infrastructure exists and the designation of Priority Funding Areas was particularly significant in less densely populated areas.

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This resulted in some areas prime for conservation activities to be designated as appropriate for development activities.

In order to improve the Locational Guide Map, the statewide Geographic Information Systems Office assisted the Office of Responsible Growth in developing a new methodology to create a map that better reflects current conditions across the state. Inspired by recent studies from the Brookings Institution<sup>ix</sup> and the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization<sup>ix</sup>, the new methodology seeks to identify activity centers of varying types and intensity around the state based on available data sets. Activity centers are where employment hubs, civic uses, transportation assets, cultural attractions, and medical and educational institutions cluster at a local scale. Understanding the location of activity centers around the state, by type, facilitates consideration of the C&D Plan's policies and implementation measures by enabling agencies to target programs, plans, and actions appropriately.

### **Analysis (currently underway – this section to be revised)**

The components feeding the activity center model include:

- Commercial centers
- Transit and traffic centers
- Civic centers
- Recreation centers
- Cultural centers

The presence of multiple components and/or individual components at certain thresholds enables stratification of activity centers by type or intensity.

The data explored for use in the model included the following:

#### Civic Uses

- State and federal government facilities
- Town halls
- Libraries
- Post offices

#### Cultural Uses

- Places of worship
- Parks

#### Institutional Uses

- 
- Hospitals
  - Colleges and Universities

#### Infrastructure

- Transit routes and stops
- Traffic volumes
- Crash densities

#### Commercial Uses

- Employment
- Points of interest
- Building footprints

#### Residential Uses

- CAMA data

The data sets were plotted at various scales and evaluated for accuracy by the GIS Office and Office of Responsible Growth.

Different methods of clustering analyses were used, again at various scales, and evaluated for accuracy.

Descriptions of maps to come...

The activity centers are descriptive of current conditions, rather than prescriptive of future conditions. They are useful tools for agencies to compare to specific objectives, e.g. a comparison of climate vulnerable areas to activity centers can help prioritize resilience projects on a regional level. In addition, activity centers highlight areas where agencies might prioritize certain types of investments over others. Regional, neighborhood and village centers, as well as commercial corridors, reflect where activity is already present, and where placemaking investments can be directed towards densification, connectivity, vibrancy, and inclusivity. Areas between activity centers are likely targets for conservation, resource protection, and connectivity enhancement investments.

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# IMPLEMENTATION

The Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) identify four broad categories of state agency actions that must be consistent with the C&D Plan:

- *The acquisition of real property when the acquisition costs are in excess of two hundred thousand dollars;*
- *The development or improvement of real property when the development costs are in excess of two hundred thousand dollars;*
- *The acquisition of public transportation equipment or facilities when the acquisition costs are in excess of two hundred thousand dollars; and*
- *The authorization of each state grant, any application for which is not pending on July 1, 1991, for an amount in excess of two hundred thousand dollars, for the acquisition or development or improvement of real property or for the acquisition of public transportation equipment or facilities. (CGS Sec. 16a-31)*

The statutes further identify a category of state agency plans that must be prepared with consideration of the C&D Plan and be reviewed for consistency by the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management:

*Whenever a state agency is required by state or federal law to prepare a plan, it shall consider the state plan of conservation and development in the preparation of such plan. A draft of such plan shall be submitted to the secretary who shall provide for the prepare of the plan an advisory report commenting on the extent to which the proposed plan conforms to the state plan of conservation and development (CGS Sec. 16a-31)*

The statutes do not define what consistency with the C&D Plan means or how to resolve potentially conflicting policies within the Plan. In addition, agencies have not been obligated to document their determinations of C&D Plan consistency on a systematic basis. It has not been uncommon for agencies to cite one or two policies within the C&D Plan that support a particular program, plan or project while remaining silent regarding other C&D Plan policies that might conflict.

This C&D Plan seeks to clarify the process for determining consistency through the following recommended changes:

- a. Amend CGS 16a-31 to increase the value threshold of projects that need to be consistent with the C&D Plan from \$200,000 to \$1,000,000 and require that



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agencies document and transmit to OPM their determination of the consistency of such actions relative to the C&D Plans' implementation measures, in a manner to be developed by OPM in consultation with other state agencies. The threshold has not been adjusted since 2007 and agencies have not been asked to document the consistency of their actions with the Plan over the last two decades. Limiting the projects that must be consistent to those with greater potential for significant impact is meant to facilitate the transition to more transparent implementation of the C&D Plan.

- b. Establish an *ad hoc* C&D Plan Advisory Committee (C&D Advisory Committee), comprised of staff of state agencies that undertake actions subject to the C&D Plan and who likely have contributed to the development of this C&D Plan. The committee should meet at least semi-annually. Continuing inter-agency engagement during the plan implementation period will enable a more adaptive approach to implementation. The C&D Advisory Committee should:
  - a. Review and evaluate individual agency planning, programming, and policy development efforts for opportunities to enhance outcomes through combined efforts and integration of resources, and the exploration of potential mitigation measures
  - b. Consult with OPM on the development of the consistency reporting documentation referred to above
  - c. Regularly update the Ongoing Initiatives and Resources in Appendix A to maintain its value as a clearinghouse of relevant programmatic information.
  - d. Provide a forum for developing approaches to balance conflicting conservation and development priorities, such as the need for more housing and natural resource protection, or the need for economic growth and the need to maintain and support existing infrastructure.
- c. Engage the Continuing Committee on State Planning and Development in monitoring implementation of the C&D Plan. In addition to receiving an annual report from OPM, the Committee should consider meeting at least annually to review implementation and the extent to which state actions are consistent with the C&D Plan. Such information can help guide future funding and policy decisions.

The following implementation measures provide a potential yardstick by which consistency with this C&D Plan can be measured. They are particularly geared towards agency actions, as defined by CGS 16a-31, but should also be useful in directing agency planning and program development. It is expected that OPM, in consultation with the ad hoc C&D Advisory Committee will develop reporting templates for agencies to use in meeting the proposed new statutory mandate for activities involving \$1,000,000 or more of state or federal resources. The table below highlights the vision statements most applicable to each measure.

<b>Implementation Measures</b>	<b>Stewardship of Resources</b>	<b>Thriving Economy</b>	<b>Healthy People and Places</b>	<b>Housing for Current and Future Residents</b>	<b>Connected and Inclusive Communities</b>
<b>Increase and diversify CT's housing supply to include rental and ownership, affordable and market-rate, small and family-sized units in a variety of medium- and high-density development types appropriate to the neighborhood context through new construction, rehabilitation of existing units and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.</b>		X	X	X	
<b>Reduce the number of low- and moderate-income households that are cost-burdened by housing, transportation, and energy costs.</b>			X	X	
<b>Promote universal design as a component of new construction or substantial renovation projects.</b>			X		
<b>Maximize use of existing public sewer, water, and transportation infrastructure.</b>	X				X
<b>Promote infill, redevelopment and revitalization of neighborhoods that have suffered from prolonged disinvestment.</b>		X	X	X	
<b>Preserve historically, culturally, and architecturally significant sites, structures, landscapes, buildings, and objects.</b>		X	X		
<b>Avoid developing prime farmland soils, wetlands, habitat areas, and core forest.</b>	X				
<b>Avoid new development activities in areas prone to flooding and inundation from sea-level rise or storms.</b>	X	X	X		
<b>Incorporate low-impact development techniques, energy efficiency and resilience, and climate resilience technologies and techniques in development projects.</b>	X		X		
<b>Encourage development project design to consider the applicability of future technologies such as smart city technologies, autonomous vehicles, 5G service, new energy systems, etc.</b>	X	X			

Foster bike, pedestrian, and micro-mobility connections between dense residential, commercial and mixed-use development and existing or planned transit.			X	X	X
Support robust community, private partner, advocate, and other stakeholder engagement in planning for and improving quality of life at a neighborhood scale.			X		X
Support arts, culture, and entertainment activities in activity centers, particularly those with transit access.		X			X
Enhance urban tree canopies, and access to green space in urban contexts.	X	X	X		
Improve the climate resilience of existing public infrastructure and avoid siting new infrastructure in areas prone to flooding and inundation from sea level rise and/or storms.	X				X
Incorporate low-impact development techniques, energy efficiency and resilience, climate resilience technologies and techniques and equity measures in the maintenance and management of state-owned facilities.	X		X		
Develop coordinated capacity and infrastructure for solid waste management that provides efficient, equitable and sustainable systems.	X				X
Locate public-facing government facilities on sites served by transit within activity centers.		X	X		X
Increase the diversity of CT businesses by size and type, focusing on entrepreneurs who are women, minority and/or immigrants, and support business growth and evolution to maintain businesses within the state.		X			
Increase proximity between childcare, medical, transit, workforce development and employment opportunities to foster more affordable living.		X	X		X
Support innovation, sustainability, and economic health in CT's agricultural and aquacultural sectors.	X	X			
Maximize protection, restoration and/or enhancement of biodiversity, ecosystem health and functioning, and the ability of the natural environment to adapt to climate change.	X		X		
Provide equitable access to natural resources and recreation opportunities.			X		X
Invest in strategic open space conservation and management that meaningfully contributes to the state's open space goals, ecosystem health and/or climate change adaptation.	X				

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