

Parks & Open Space Master Plan

Town of

Simsbury

Connecticut

Final Presentation

October 26, 2020

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Parks & Open Space Master Plan

Thank you to the Steering Committee:

David Bush, Culture, Parks & Recreation Commission, Chairman

Maria E. Capriola, Town Manager

Orlando Casiano, Park Superintendent

Mike Glidden, Planning and Community Development Director

Susan Masino, Open Space Committee

Tom Tyburski, Culture, Parks & Recreation Director

Gerard Wetjen, Culture, Parks & Recreation Commission

Margery C.B. Winters, Open Space Committee &

Chair of Conservation Commission

Members of the
Culture, Parks & Recreation Commission
and
Open Space Committee

Master Plan Process

1. Kickoff
2. Inventory/Assessment
3. Community Engagement
 1. Stakeholder Meetings
 2. Public Input Session
 3. Survey
4. Draft Master Plan
5. Final Master Plan



Stakeholder Interviews/ Focus Group Meetings [JULY]

Public Meeting #1 (Community Input) [JULY]

Online Survey [AUG-SEPT-OCT]

Public Meeting #2 (Findings Presentation) [OCT]

Draft Recommendations Presentation [JAN]

Final Presentation [OCT]

Contents of the Master Plan?

- I. Introduction of the Master Planning Context
- II. Demographic Profile of Simsbury
- III. Parks and Recreation Trends
- IV. Public Engagement Summary
- V. Organizational, Marketing & Financial Analysis
- VI. Recreation Programming Analysis
- VII. Facility Inventory and Analysis
- VIII. Key Issues Matrix
- IX. Recommendations
- XI. Goals and Action Plan
- Appendices
 - Concept Plans
 - Open Space Mapping & Inventory
 - Public Survey Presentation
 - Final Presentation
 - Revenue Analysis
 - Open Space Resources

Demographic Profile

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Town of Simsbury
 Geography: County Subdivision



EDUCATION



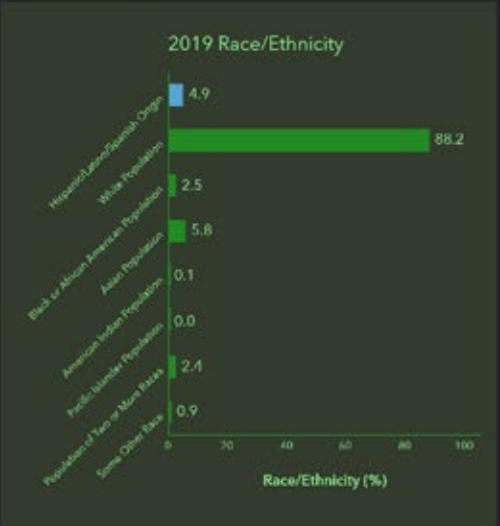
EMPLOYMENT



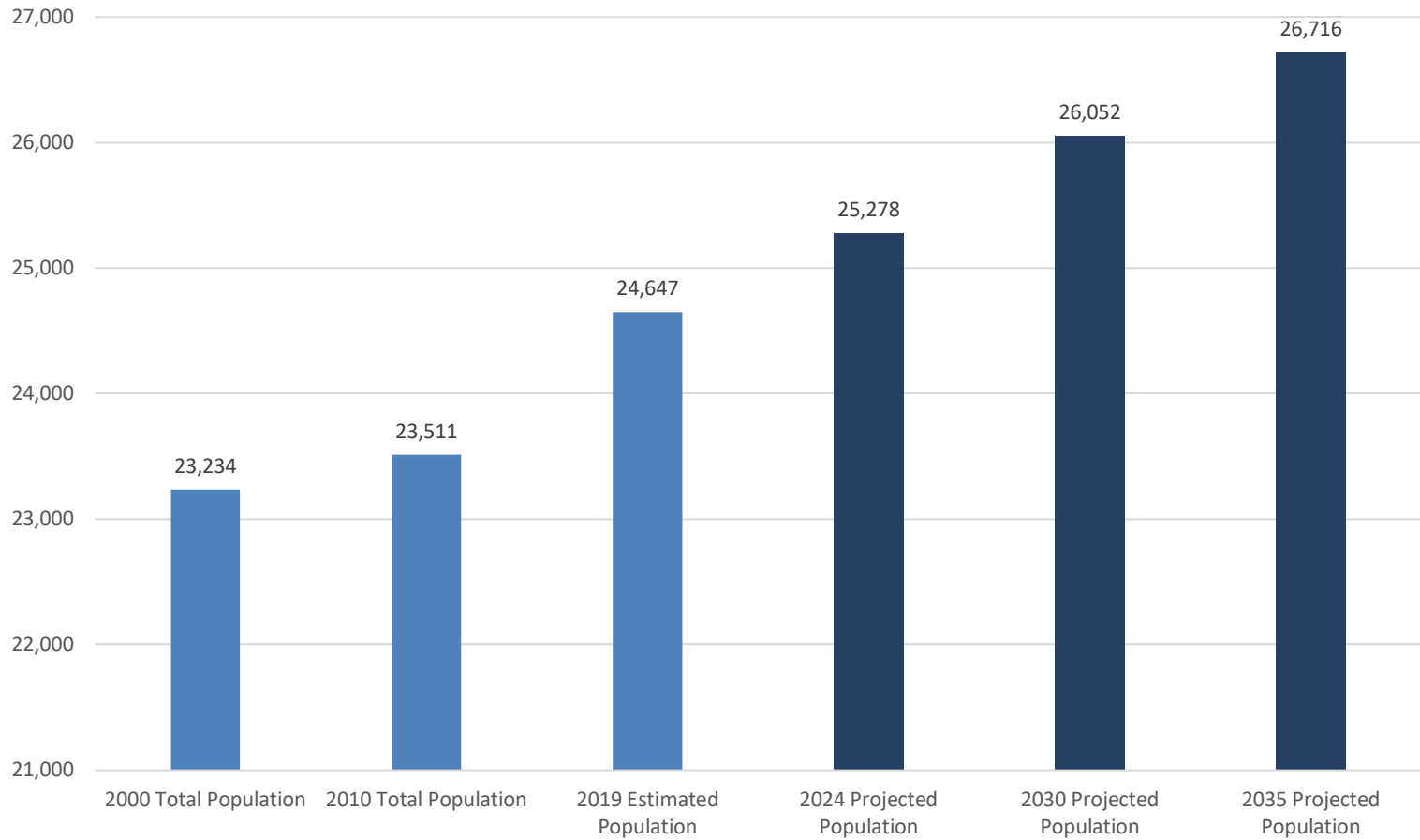
KEY FACTS



INCOME

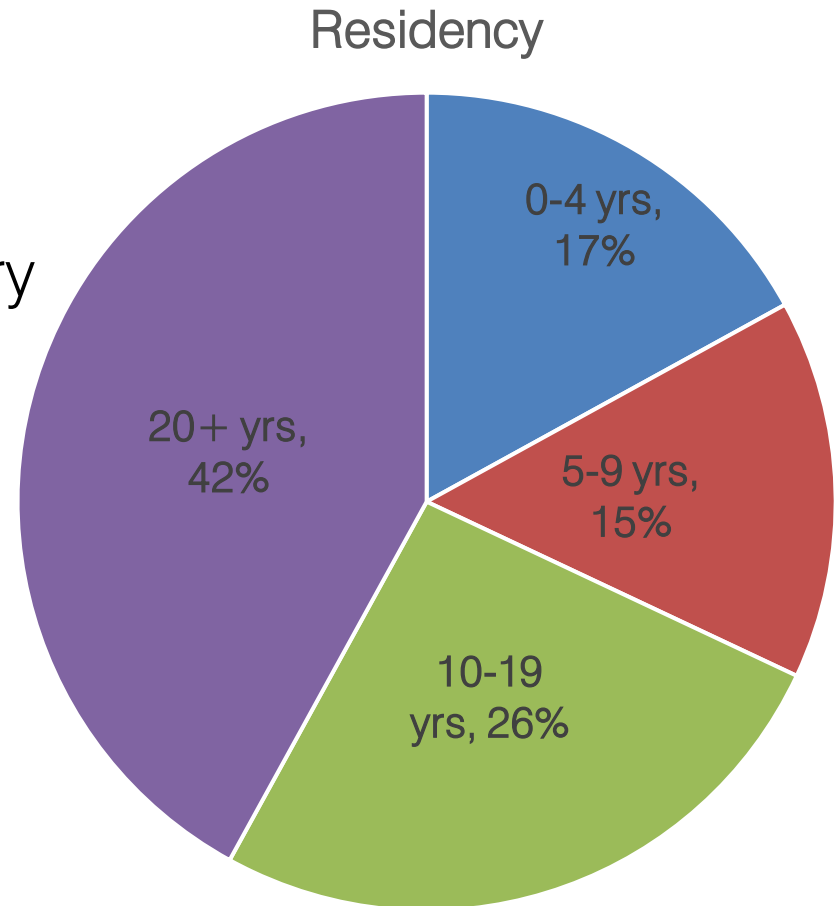


Population Statistics



Survey Statistics:

- 1019 Total Responses
- 92% of respondents Residents
- 94% owned a home in Simsbury



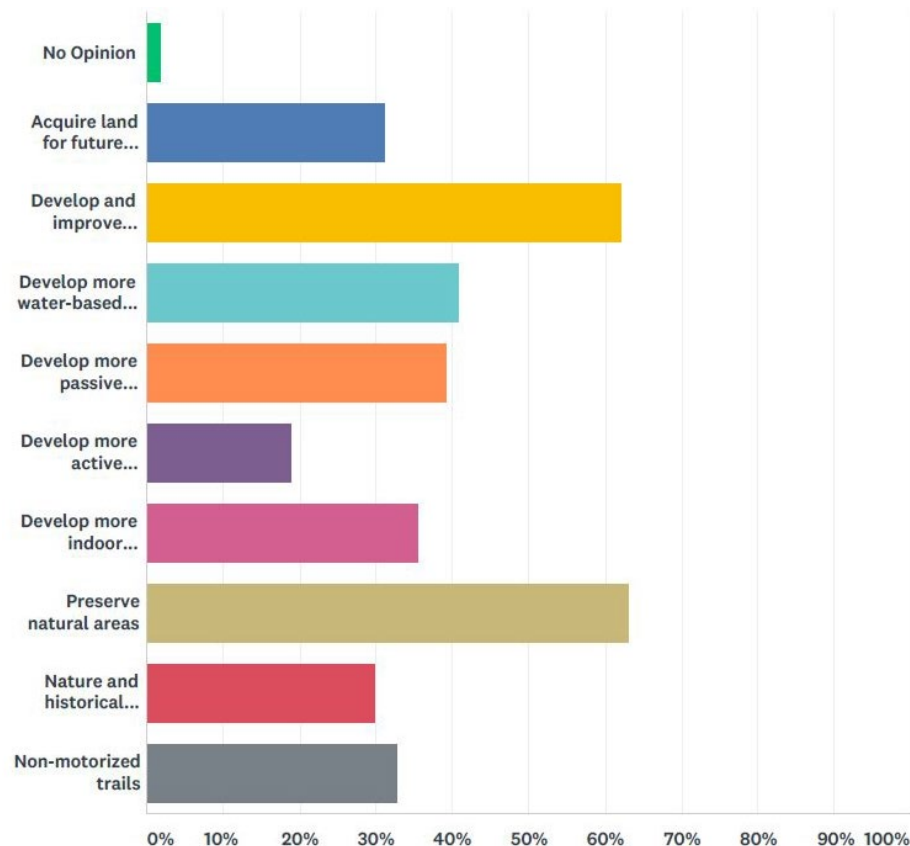
Stakeholder Input

Top Parks & Open Space Priorities:

- Preserve Natural Areas
- Develop and Improve Existing Water-based Recreation
- Passive Recreation Opportunities
- Indoor Recreation

Top Facility Improvement Priorities

- Public Access to Water Bodies
- Amenities (signage, bathrooms, drinking fountains)
- Lighting/Security



Facility Assessment Overview

Strengths

- Maintenance of facilities
- Facilities for a wide variety of age ranges/interests
- Heavily utilized
- Passive & active possibilities
- Scenic quality
- Excellent facilities
- Bicycle/pedestrian networks

Areas of Improvement

- Maintenance concerns
- Facility upgrades
- ADA accessibility
- Drainage concerns
- Invasive species proliferation
- Habitat loss (mowing/noise)
- Parking & lighting
- Playground updates
- Lack of connection to larger resources
- Lack of community participation

Key Issues/ Recommendations Matrix

Issues

Recommendations

Key Issues	Data Input								DATA INPUT RATING
	Qualitative					Quantitative			
	Stakeholder Mtgs	Public Input (Public Meetings, Public Comment, etc.)	Existing Documents	Consultant Team	Staff Input	Online Survey	Facility Assessment/ Level of Service		
Rating Scale 5 - priority 3 - opportunity to improve 1 - minor or future issue blank means the issue didn't come up or wasn't addressed									
Organizational & Marketing									
Need better method for users to report issues of maintenance related to parks, open spaces/trails, and facilities	5	3	1	3	3	3	3		21
Need communication tools so local groups can advertise group activities	3	3		3	3		3		15
Need better marketing and communication of activities, facilities, and open spaces	5	5	1	5	3		3		22
Need better marketing and communication regarding parks maintenance practices and standards	5	1	1	5	5		5		22
Need updated park and open space/trail maps, fix incorrect trail mapping	5	3	1	5	5		5	5	29
Need Assistant Director staff support				5	5				10
Need Programming Assistant				5	5				10
Need updated/expanded website to include all parks with descriptions, make more user friendly	5	3	1	5	5		5		24
Trash being left in parks	3	1		3	3		3	3	16
Provide continued staffing to meet current offerings and quality of park facilities	5	1	5	5	5		5	5	31

Consultant's Analysis and Professional Expertise	Prioritization																		
	Priority Level	PRIORITY	Factors					Recommend Timing											
			Ability to Meet Needs of Town	Staff Impact	Cost to Implement/ Maintain	Community Benefit	Ease of Implement	Near Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	As Opportunity Arises								
Preliminary Recommendations																			
2.2.1/2.2.2 - Develop or purchase a reporting App or use existing Town system if one exists	High	23	5	3	5	5	5				x								
2.1/2.2.1/2.2.4 - Develop a link on website, assist with communication methods	High	23	5	3	5	5	5				x								
2.2.1 - Develop Marketing & Communications Plan to improve awareness and communication.	High	23	5	3	5	5	5				x								
2.3 - Develop educational campaign regarding parks maintenance to improve awareness and understanding.	High	23	5	3	5	5	5				x								
2.2.1/2.2.3 - Regularly update park and open space/trail maps, promote, add to website, consider an App.	High	23	5	3	5	5	5				x								
1.1.1/1.1.2 - Promote/Hire Assistant Director	High	21	5	5	5	1	5				x								
1.1.3 - Reassign/Hire Staff to fulfill programming need	High	21	5	5	5	1	5				x								
2.2.3 - Regularly update website regarding park and open space/trail maps, promote, consider an App.	High	23	5	3	5	5	5				x								
1.5 - Analyze carry-in-carry out policies, increase promotion/ education/enforcement, promote of recycling/landfill drop-offs	Moderate	21	5	3	3	5	5												x
1.1.3 - Hire and train staff appropriately for current and future parks programming demand.	High	21	5	3	3	5	5												x

Legend (color):

High (green)

Moderate (yellow)

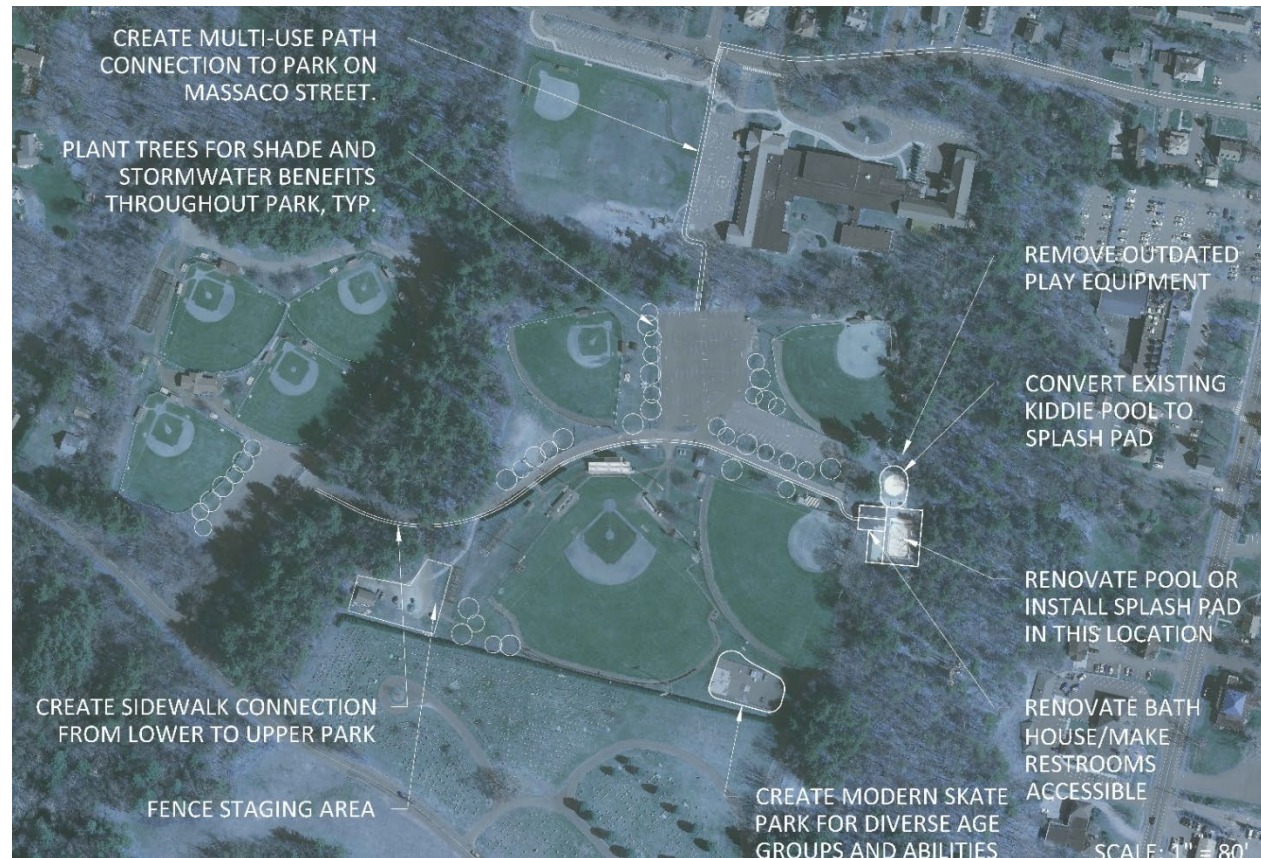
Low (cyan)

Goals + Recommendations

1. Continue to Improve Organizational Efficiencies
2. Enhance and improve internal and external communications regarding Department activities and services
3. Continue to Improve Programs and Services
4. Continue to Improve and Enhance Multi-use Trail System
5. Maintain and Improve Facilities and Amenities
6. Develop Individual Park Improvement/Master Plans
7. Maintain Existing Open Spaces Effectively and Appropriately
8. Expand Open Space Opportunities/Offerings
9. Develop Individual Open Space & Forest Stewardship Management Plans

Site Specific Recommendations: Memorial Park

- Improve accessible parking
- Replace pool
- Renovate bathrooms/
bathhouse
- New splash pad
- Replace skate park
- Remove playground
- Add shade trees
- Improve bike/ped
access
- Improve landscaping



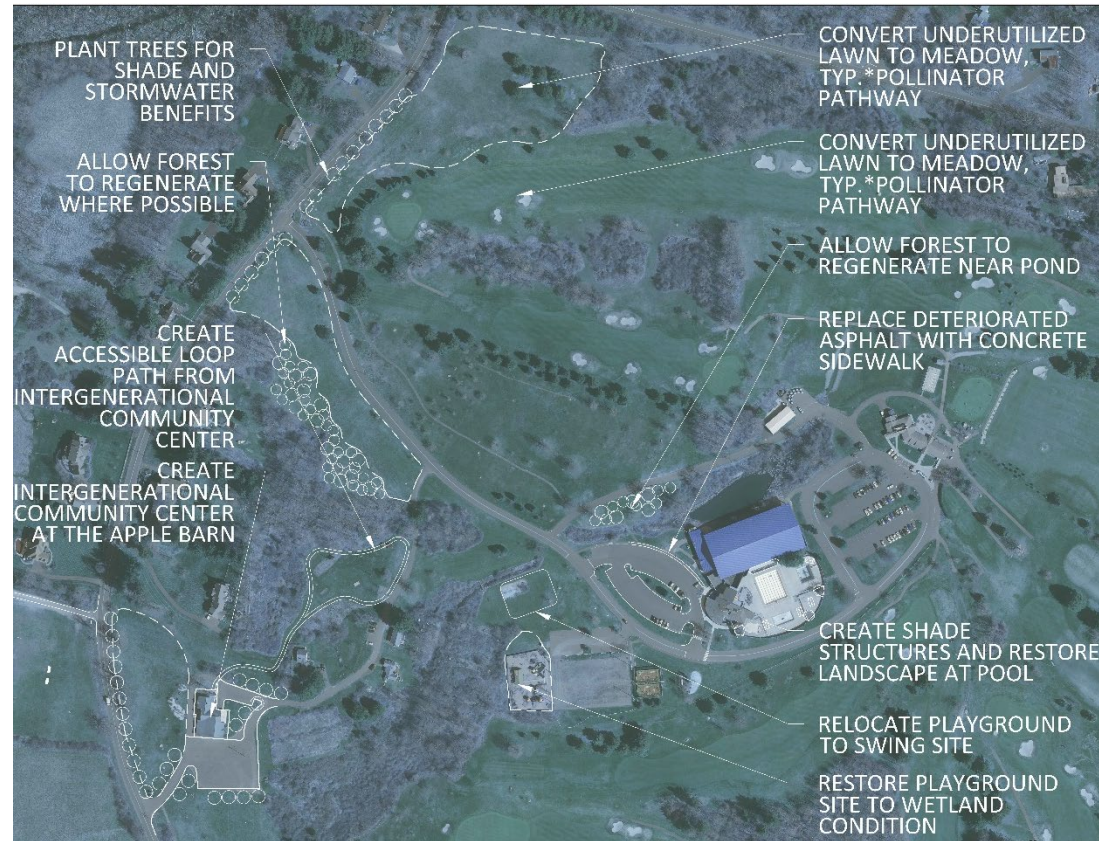
Site Specific Recommendations: Curtiss Park

- Upgrade parking
- Provide restrooms
- Create pollinator pathway meadows
- Enhance riparian & forest protection
- Plant shade trees
- Provide lighting for fields
- Renovate pavilion
- Improve river access
- Renovate roadway
- Improve amenities
- Provide trash/recycling



Site Specific Recommendations: Simsbury Farms

- Develop Intergenerational Community Center (Apple Barn)
- Create pollinator pathway meadows
- Enhance riparian & forest protection
- Restore wetlands
- Relocate playground
- Improve roadway and parking area lighting for safety
- Improve loop trail
- Plant shade trees
- Improve accessibility
- Improve shade structure at pool
- Connect recreation complex to existing Town fiber network



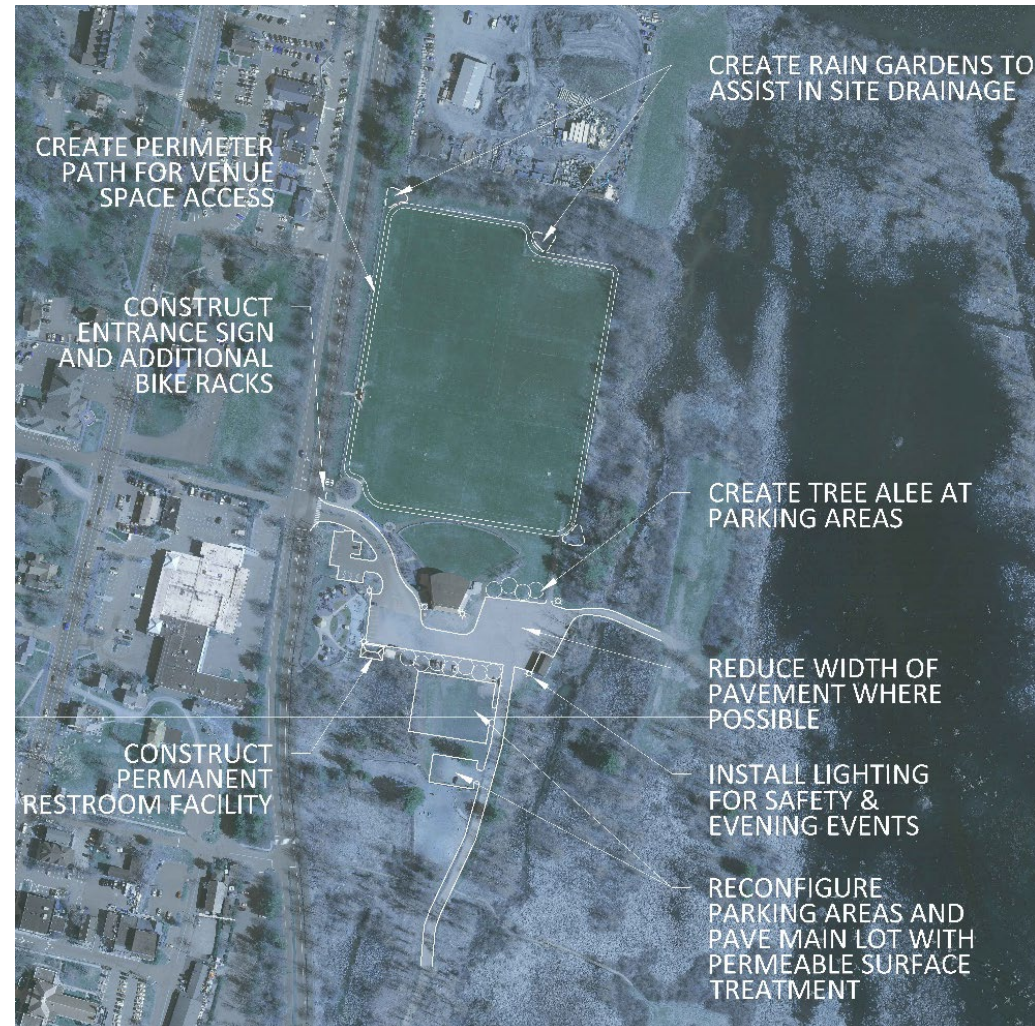
Site Specific Recommendations: Weatogue Park

- Improve parking
- Renovate/ relocate playground
- Improve restroom facilities
- Improve park amenities
- Create bicycle connection from Farmington Valley Trail
- Plant shade trees
- Create pollinator pathway meadows



Site Specific Recommendations: Simsbury Meadows

- Improve parking lot surfacing & restrooms
- Renovate playground
- Upgrade dog park
- Improve park amenities
- Improve accessibility
- Improve security lighting
- Enhance riparian & forest protection
- Enhance/Protect wetlands
- Plant shade trees and shade structures
- Improve landscaping
- Create bioretention/ rain garden areas
- Improve nature trail



Implementing the Plan & Immediate Next Steps

Objective 5.1 – Continue to improve ADA accessibility at all facilities

- Simsbury Meadows – Feasibility Study Underway – Analyze Parking Lot Improvements
- Curtiss Park – Feasibility Study Underway – Analyze Parking Lot Improvements

Objective 5.4 – Provide improved signage Town-wide to make it easier for patrons to find and use parks, open spaces, and facilities. Develop consistent wayfinding.

- Approved capital funding to replace two park entrance signs
- Support from Volunteers & Scouts

Objective 5.6 – Improve/Replace Playground Facilities

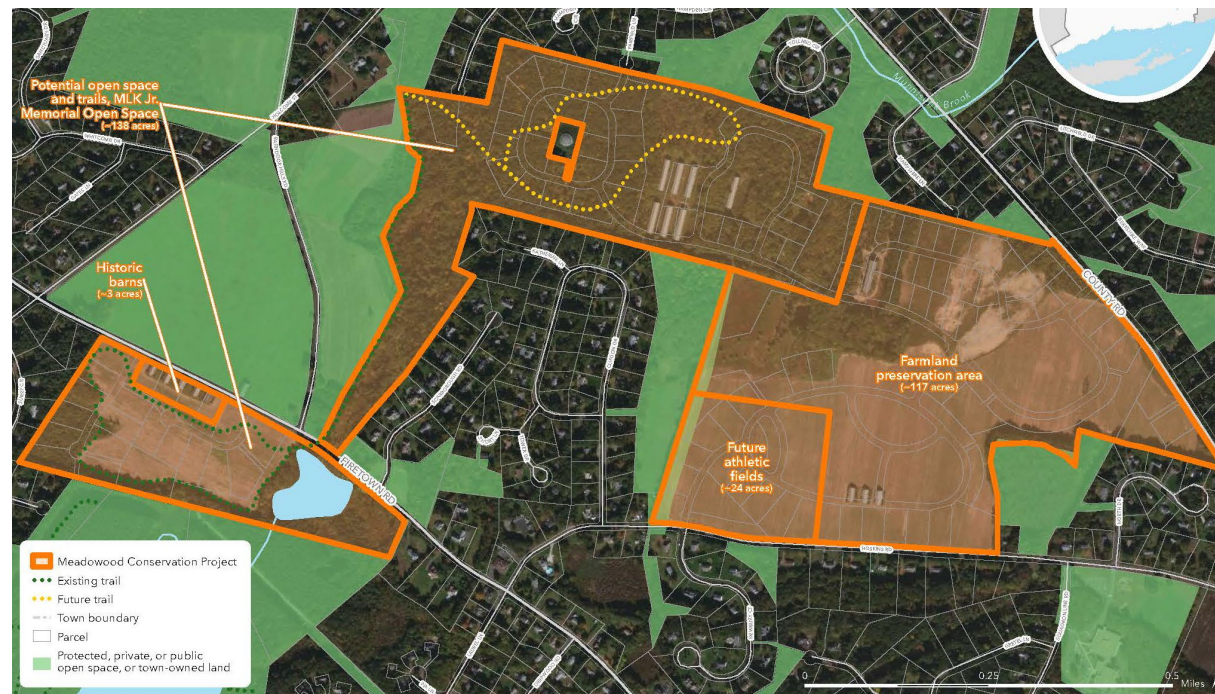
- West Mountain Playground – Allocated \$50,000 for Replacement
- Playground Improvements – Continue allocating \$25,000/year for Maintenance/Replacement
- Simsbury Meadows Improvements – Allocated \$150,000 in Capital Plan (21)

Objective 5.7 – Improve/Replace Park Amenities

- Approved capital funding for mechanical renovations at ice rink

Implementing the Plan & Immediate Next Steps

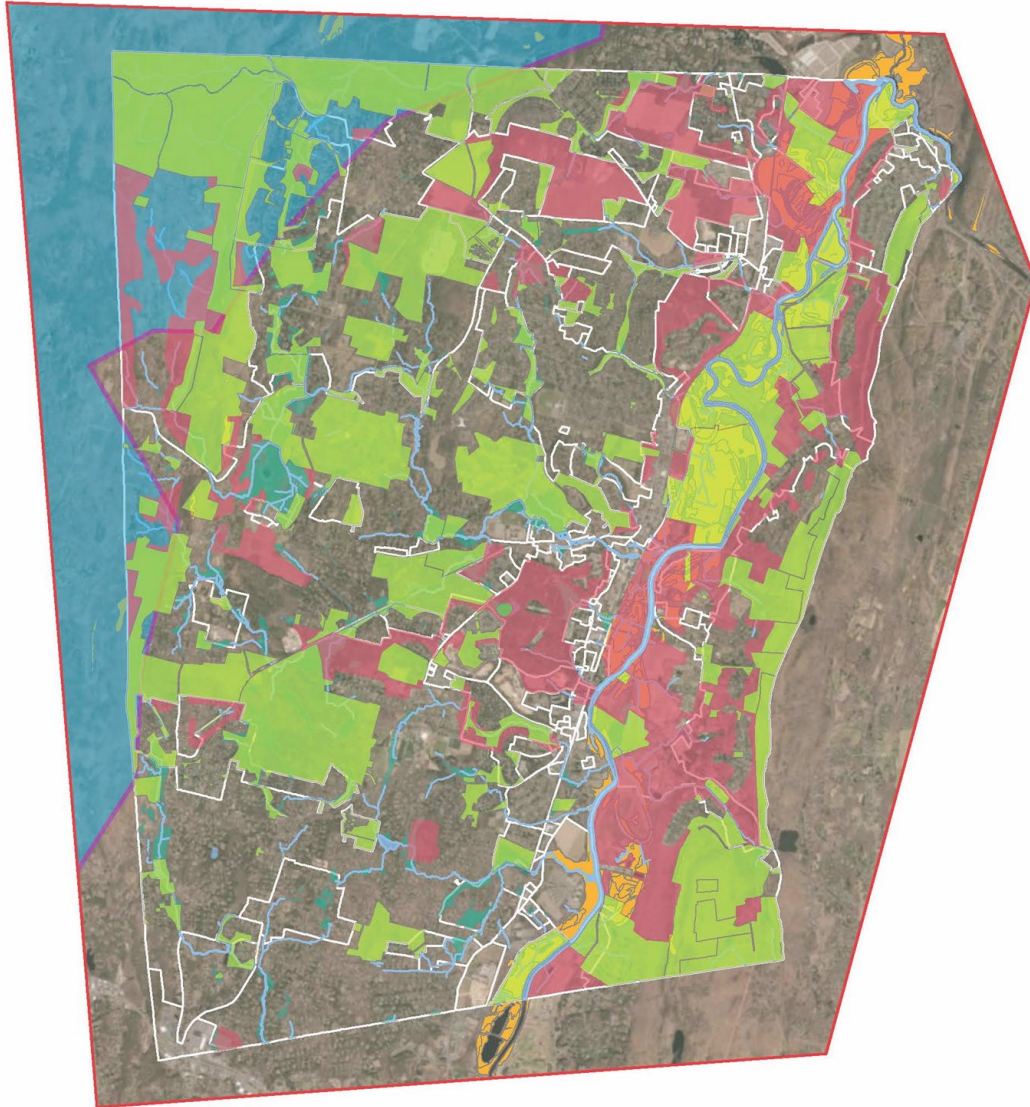
Objective 7.2 - Acquire additional open space parcels to enhance connectivity and habitat quality



Meadowood Site (138 acres)

- Agricultural soils and opportunity for continued farming (117 ac)
- Historic resources – Martin Luther King Jr. & tobacco barns on Firetown Rd (3 ac)
- Connectivity to McLean Game Refuge and other conserved lands
- Community trails w/ multiple new access points
- Opportunity for 6 new multi-purpose athletic fields (24 ac.)

Implementing the Plan & Immediate Next Steps

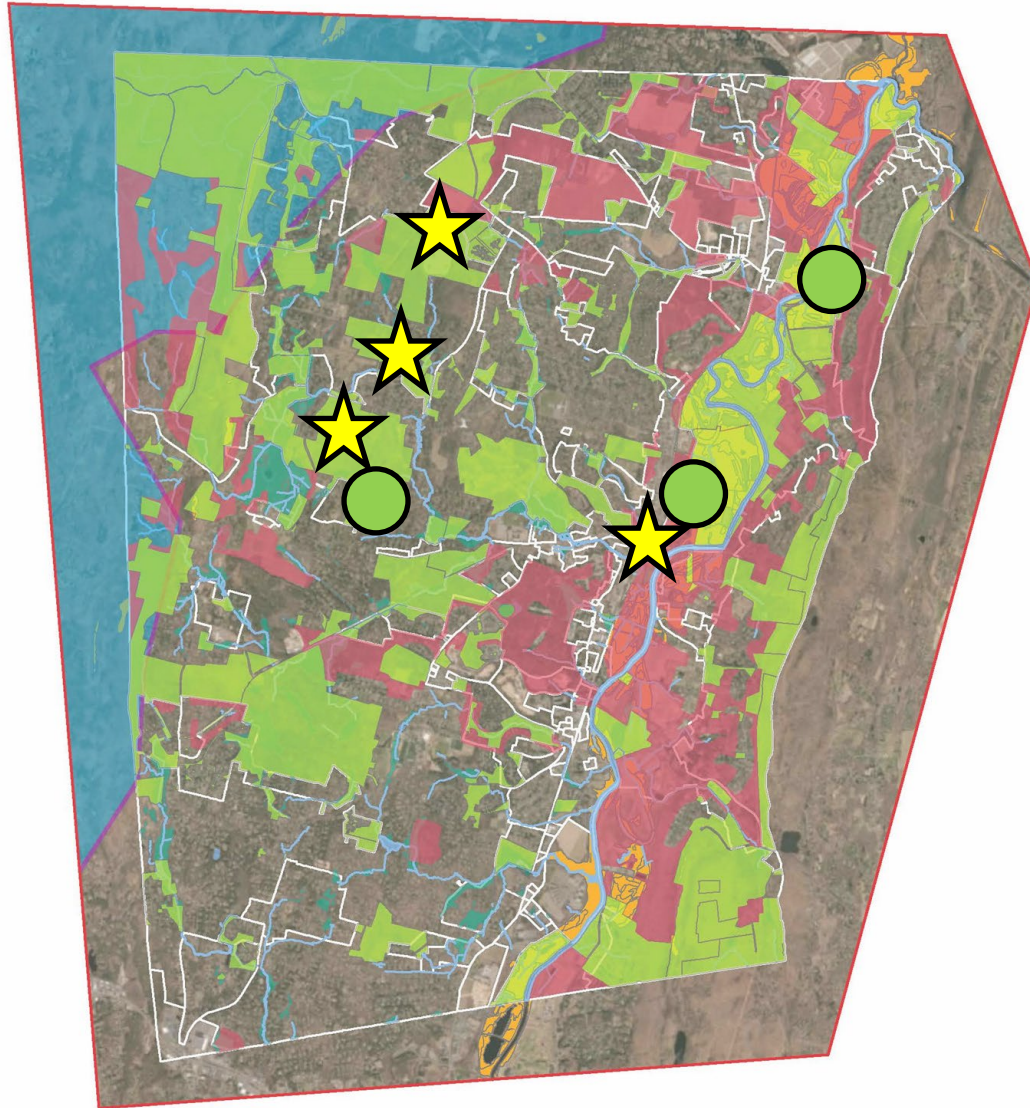


Objective 7.8 – Develop policies/procedures for Open Space management practices.

Development of Natural Stewardship Plans

- Belden Forest
- Onion Mountain Park
- Ethel Walker Woods
- Stratton Brook

Implementing the Plan & Immediate Next Steps



Objective 8.2 – Implement pollinator pathways program and community gardens

Locations Implemented: ★
Simsbury Farms – 3 locations
Hop Brook Landing at the Flower Bridge
Barn Door Hills “Triangle”
Meadow at Great Pond/Laurel Lane

Locations Under Consideration: ●
Curtiss Park
Simsbury Meadows
Meadow at Case Circle

Parks & Open Space Master Plan

Thank you

Questions?

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