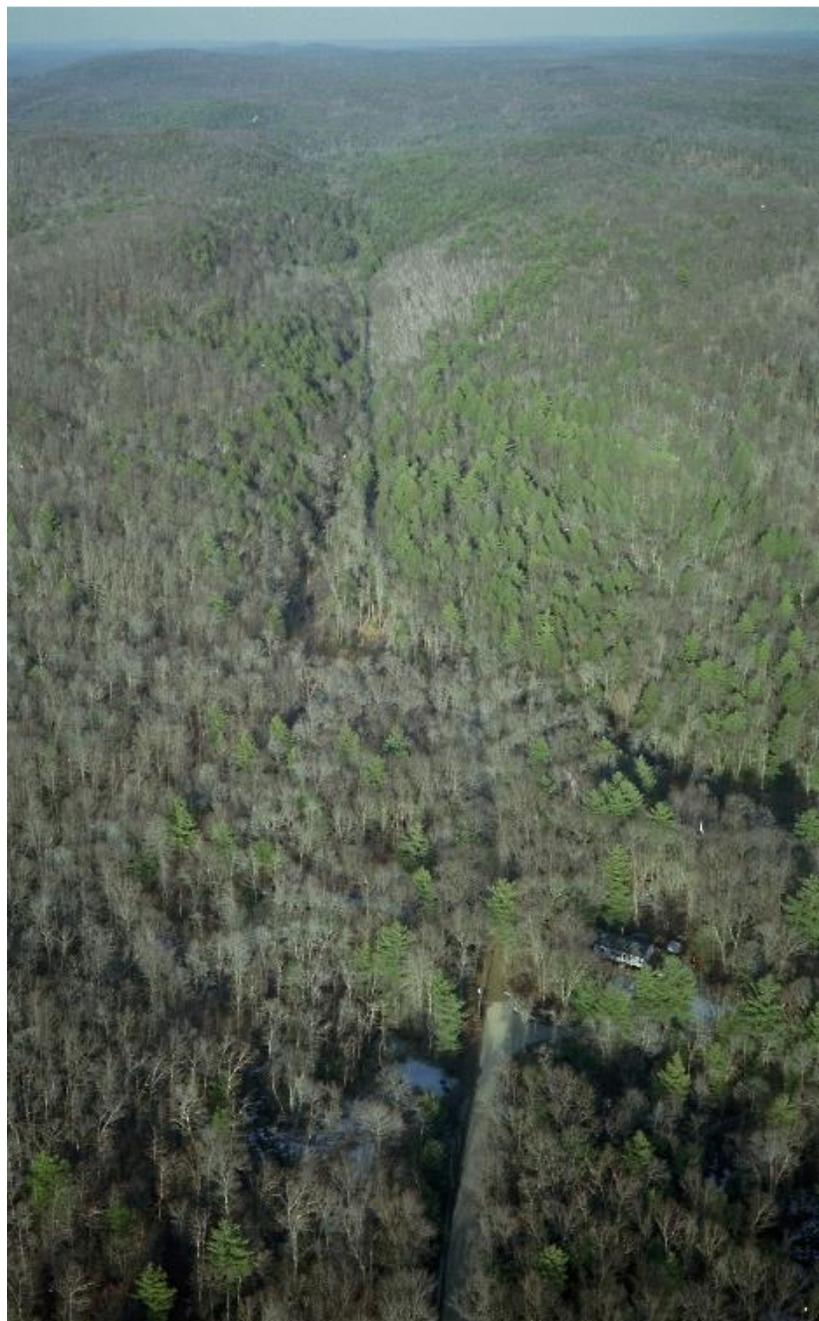




2015 Town of Ashford  
Plan of Conservation and Development





2015

Town of Ashford Plan of Conservation and  
Development



*Prepared by*

The Plan of Conservation and Development Committee of the Town of Ashford

*with technical assistance from*

the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments



*Cover photos:* Ashford Economic Development Commission (top left, top right, middle left, bottom left),

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# Executive Summary

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## Preparing a Plan of Conservation and Development

This document, the 2015 Town of Ashford Plan of Conservation and Development, or the “2015 POCD”, represents the 10-year vision for the Town of Ashford, in Windham County, Connecticut.

The previous plan of conservation and development was completed by the Town of Ashford in 2005. The 2005 POCD’s key impact was the layout of zoning districts. In 2014, the Town’s zoning regulations were updated to include two new commercial and industrial zoning districts and a contiguous commercial district limited to Warrenville and West Ashford, with additional commercial uses still existing along Routes 44 and 74. The balance of the Town belongs to the Residential-Agricultural zone.



## ***The 2015 POCD***

The drafting of the 2015 POCD was led by the Plan of Conservation and Development Committee, an ad hoc committee formed by the Town of Ashford Planning and Zoning Commission. The committee was able to represent a broader range of public interests than just planning and zoning, since its members served on, or belonged to, a range of other boards, commission, committees, and civic organizations. The committee also gained input into topics covered in the POCD through meetings of the group, Our Town – Our Future, and by contacting different boards, commissions, committees, and officials.



The main body of the 2015 POCD is divided into the following subject areas: *Governance, Public Safety and Health, Education, Economic Development, Housing, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Historic Resources, and Energy*. The Plan of Conservation and Development Committee chose to frame the 2015 POCD by assessing the current state of the Town in relation to those topics, identifying key issues, developing a *Vision* for each, and proposing objectives and action items to be carried out within a 10-year timeframe. The final chapter, *Ashford 2015 – 2025* addresses desired future land use, transportation, and priority conservation areas in Ashford.



## ***Governance***

The Town of Ashford is a small, rural Town, with a population roughly one-fifth of the size of an average town in Connecticut. Because of that, the Town has a limited capacity to hire staff and provide services that would normally be found in larger towns. Ashford therefore relies on the dedication of volunteers to accomplish a variety of tasks that are vital to the upkeep of government and services. In the spirit of maintaining sound finances and a balanced annual budget, it is in the best interest of the Town to explore cost-saving measures for the provision of services to residents, including, but not limited to, partnerships with surrounding towns and regionalization of current functions.

## ***Public Safety and Health***

Like Ashford's governance, the provision of public safety in Town is in line with that of a small, rural town. Ashford relies solely on regional State Police troop, has a largely volunteer fire and rescue corps, with two locations, and relies on paramedic response from Windham Hospital. Moving forward, the Town should consider ways of attracting additional volunteers to Ashford Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD) and explore cost-saving measures for purchasing necessary equipment.

## ***Education***

The children of Ashford attend Ashford School, the Town's only public school, from pre-kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Then, most students attend E.O. Smith High School (Regional School District 19), but may also attend Windham Technical High School and numerous special education outplacement locations. The residents of Ashford are fortunate in that all three schools are staffed with qualified and dedicated teachers, administrators, and boards of education. It will remain in the interest of the Town to provide the same level of excellent service, while hedging against funding shortfalls and declining enrollment.

## ***Economic Development***

The need for well envisioned economic development in Ashford is apparent considering the Town's heavy reliance on residential properties for tax revenue, the current mill rate, reliance on external funding sources, and increasing liabilities. Shifting the balance of the tax base to reduce reliance on residential properties will lessen development pressures on the stewards of farmed and open land, lower the mill rate for all residents, and allow the Town to provide additional resources. A well-thought-out and resourced plan is required to reverse the present situation.

## ***Housing***

Despite being a smaller, rural town, Ashford offers a variety of housing options, including five large apartment complexes and dense neighborhoods on the Town's lakes and in West Ashford. However, only 4.41% of Ashford's housing units are set aside and *dedicated* as affordable, according to the Affordable Housing Appeals List compiled by the Connecticut Department of Housing (DOH). Moving forward, Ashford must work to diversify its housing stock in a manner consistent with maintaining rural lands and protecting natural resources.



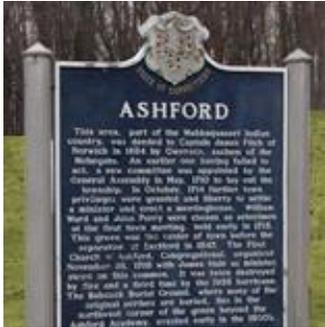
### ***Agriculture***

Agriculture is the historic backbone of Ashford’s culture and economy. Even today, farms and farming have an undeniable presence that contributes greatly to the Town’s scenic appeal and many mechanisms are in place to preserve working lands, offer financial support to farmers, and connect residents to local agricultural products.



### ***Natural Resources***

Equally as important to Ashford’s scenic appeal and rural character as agriculture, are the Towns’ natural resources: acres of dense forests, rolling hills, lakes, ponds, swamps, streams, and wildlife. These are irreplaceable and deserve continued attention from Town government, as well as the State of Connecticut, local land trusts, and private stewards. The Town must continue to support land preservation, education, natural resource inventories, and the provision of open space recreation.



### ***Historic Resources***

Ashford is a town rich with New England culture and historic structures, sites, and villages that are hundreds of years old. It is fundamental that the Town of Ashford and its dedicated volunteers continue to preserve and maintain historic resources for their provided scenic, educational, and cultural benefits.



### ***Energy***

In the past decade, the Town of Ashford has taken important steps toward becoming energy-independent. Notable projects in Town include the placement of photovoltaic panels on Town Hall, the AVFD Company #1, and Pompey Hollow Senior Housing.



### ***Ashford 2015 – 2025***

This chapter summarizes plan recommendations per objectives and actions set in the previous Plan Elements.

### ***Plan Implementation***

The 2015 POCD will be maintained through the Ashford Planning and Zoning Commission. The commission will annually review progress relative to objectives and actions spelled out in the document, while monitoring changes in State statues that may prompt amendments to POCD or affect future plans.

## 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

This update to the plan of conservation and development comes on the heels of a major landmark in Ashford's history. Throughout the year 2014, Ashford celebrated its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The anniversary year was highlighted with a parade and town-wide celebration in October, in Warrenville. The 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee led efforts in orchestrating activities, preparing historic documents and exhibits, and planning the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

The 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee is currently preparing a book dedicated to the entire 300-year history of Ashford.



### ***Our Town – Our Future***

Our Town – Our Future is the name given to a broad group of Ashford residents that attend ongoing stakeholder meetings, held since November 2014, following the 300-year celebration. Our Town – Our Future is coordinated by a volunteer committee, initiated by the Economic Development and Conservation Commissions. This “Core Committee” to Our Town – Our Future organized meetings and programs that focused on the need to plan for the future of Ashford and spur civic volunteerism and involvement, in light of the recent celebrations of the Town’s 300-year history. A number of members of the Plan of Conservation and Development Committee are members of the Core Committee for Our Town – Our Future, and outcomes of stakeholder meetings are reflected throughout the 2015 POCD.

*For more information about Ashford’s 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Our Town – Our Future, visit:*

<http://www.ashfordtownhall.org/category/meetings/300th-anniversary/>

<http://www.ashfordhistoricalsociety.org/news--projects.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ashfords-300th-Anniversary/565291356817273>

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.244462232423157.1073741831.198494480353266&type=1>

<http://www.ashford-ourtownourfuture.org/>

<http://ashford-otof-myview.blogspot.com/>

[http://www.ashfordedc.org/Our\\_Town\\_Our\\_Future.php](http://www.ashfordedc.org/Our_Town_Our_Future.php)

## Statutory Requirements per CGS §8-23



Statutory requirements for municipal plans of conservation and development are spelled out in §8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The statutes state that municipal plans are to be updated or amended every 10 years and must address and consider a range of topics and note any inconsistencies with the six Growth Management Principles of the State of Connecticut's Conservation and Development Policies Plan 2013-2018 (the State POCD).

**§8-23 (d) “In preparing such a plan, the [Planning and Zoning] commission or any special committee shall consider the following:”**

*“(1) The community development action plan of the municipality, if any, (2) the need for affordable housing, (3) the need for protection of existing and potential public surface and ground drinking water supplies, (4) the use of cluster development and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity within the municipality, (5) the state plan of conservation and development adopted pursuant to chapter 297, (6) the regional plan of conservation and development adopted pursuant to section 8-35a, (7) physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends, (8) the needs of the municipality including, but not limited to, human resources, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation and circulation and cultural and interpersonal communications, (9) the objectives of energy-efficient patterns of development, the use of solar and other renewable forms of energy and energy conservation, and (10) protection and preservation of agriculture.”*

**§8-23 (e) (1) “Such plan of conservation and development shall...”**

*“...(A) be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, (B) provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets, sidewalks, multipurpose trails and other public ways as appropriate, (C) be designed to promote, with the greatest efficiency and economy, the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people and identify areas where it is feasible and prudent (i) to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and*



*land reuse, and (ii) to promote such development patterns and land reuse, (D) recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and include a map showing such proposed land uses, (E) recommend the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality, (F) note any inconsistencies with the following growth management principles: (i) Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure; (ii) expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs; (iii) concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse; (iv) conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmlands; (v) protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; and (vi) integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional and state-wide basis, (G) make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located, as designated by the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management under section 16a-4a, (H) promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified in the housing plan prepared pursuant to section 8-37t and in the housing component and the other components of the state plan of conservation and development prepared pursuant to chapter 297. In preparing such plan the commission shall consider focusing development and revitalization in areas with existing or planned physical infrastructure.”*

**§8-23 (f) “Such plan may show the [Planning and Zoning] commission’s or any special committee’s recommendation for...”**

*“...(1) conservation and preservation of traprock and other ridgelines, (2) airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds, (3) the general location, relocation and improvement of schools and other public buildings, (4) the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes, (5) the extent and location of public housing projects, (6) programs for the implementation of the plan, including (A) a schedule, (B) a budget for public capital projects, (C) a program for enactment and enforcement of zoning and subdivision controls, building and housing codes and safety regulations, (D) plans for implementation of affordable housing, (E) plans for open space acquisition and greenways protection and development, and (F) plans for corridor management areas along limited access highways or rail lines, designated under section 16a-27, (7) proposed priority funding areas, and (8) any other recommendations as will, in the commission's or any special committee's judgment, be beneficial to the municipality. The plan may include any necessary and related maps, explanatory material, photographs, charts or other pertinent data and information relative to the past, present and future trends of the municipality.”*

## *Consistency with the State Plan of Conservation and Development*

Growth Management Principle #1: Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned infrastructure.

**The Town of Ashford is not home to Priority Funding Areas, Balanced Priority Funding Areas, or Village Priority Funding Areas outlined in the State POCD.** However, the Warrenville-West Ashford section of Town has been identified as an area of future growth as Ashford's town center, in the 2015 POCD.

Growth Management Principle #2: Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.

Ashford possesses a wide variety of housing types and densities. Moving forward, the Town will work to ensure a diverse housing stock consistent with natural resource preservation and the Town's rural character.

Growth Management Principle #3: Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options.

The 2015 POCD recommends concentrating commercial development in the Route 44 corridor, at the road's intersection with Route 89 and 74. The plan also recommends concentrating commercial and industrial development on Route 44, near the Willington town line and off of Interstate 84. Concentrating development at these nodes allows for an efficient use of land and resources, consistent with the intent of Growth Management Principle #3.

Growth Management Principle #4: Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historic resources, and traditional rural lands.

The Town is supportive of land preservation efforts and has a large inventory of agricultural and natural lands, preserved or functionally managed by the State of Connecticut, Yale University, camps, land trusts, purchase of development rights programs, and the Town.

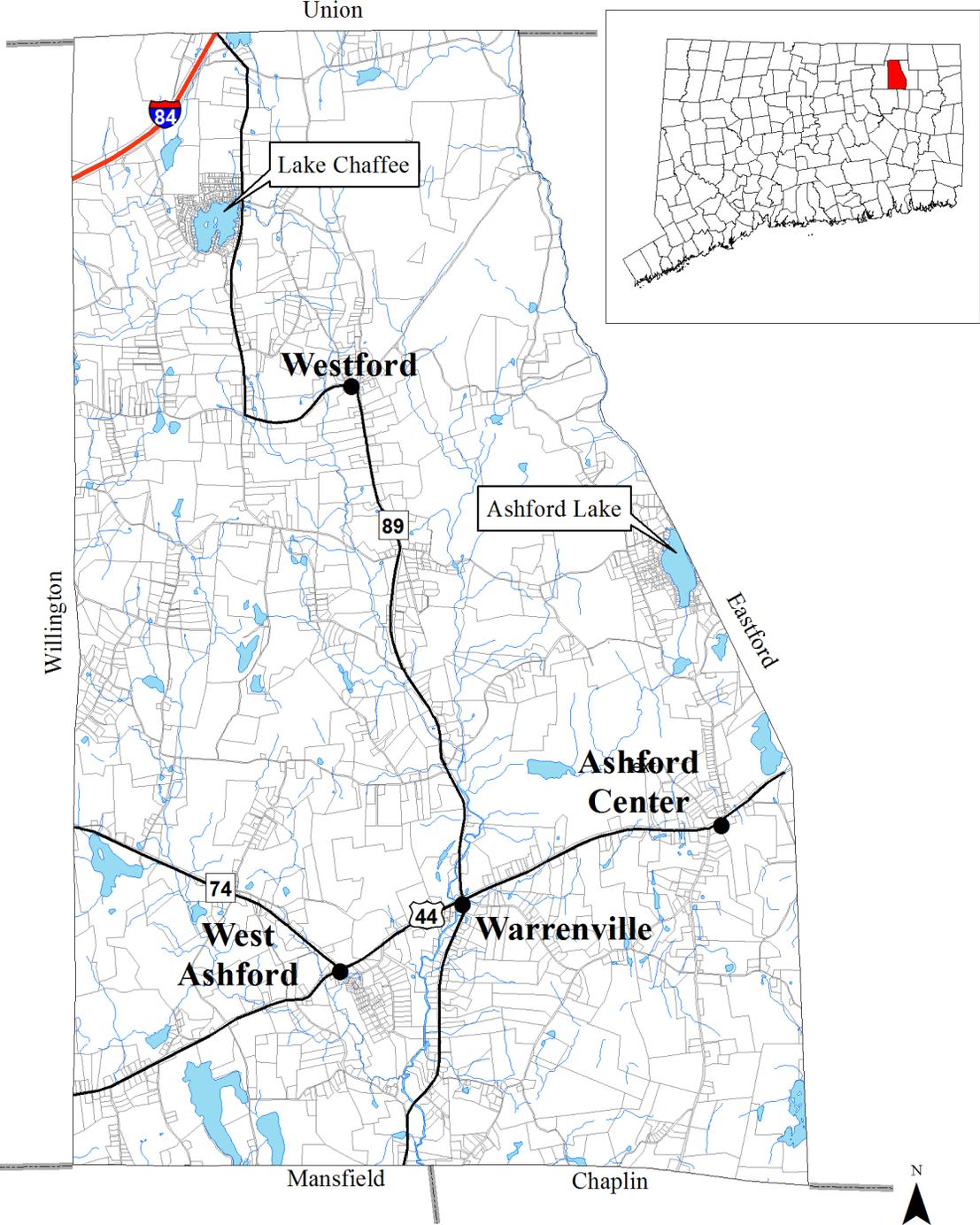
Growth Management Principle #5: Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety.

The 2015 POCD recommends continual monitoring of water quality at Lake Chaffee and Ashford Lake, as well as protection of surface waters, such as the Mount Hope River, and of forests, wetlands, and groundwater sources.

Growth Management Principle #6: Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional, and local basis.

Ashford is a rural town faced with rising property taxes and cost burdens. The 2015 POCD recommends that the Town government and school system both work to identify cost savings through shared efficiencies and regionalism.

Figure A- The Town of Ashford



Sources: Town of Ashford; Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
This map should be used for general planning purposes only. Data is not authoritative.





# The Town of Ashford

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The Town of Ashford is located in Windham County, Connecticut, in the State’s northeast region, or “Quiet Corner”. Ashford is a rural town; it is heavily forested but also features productive farmland and historic village communities. Ashford was incorporated in 1714 by the General Court of the Connecticut Colony and included the present-day Town of Eastford until 1847. Ashford was formed mostly from land known as the New Scituate Plantation, part of the Wabbaquasset country that was purchased from the Wabbaquasset Indians by Major James Fitch II. The name, Ashford was chosen during its incorporation because of the Town’s abundance of Ash trees.

The Town grew up around the village of Warrenville, along the banks of the Mount Hope River, with a purchase of land by John Mixer, who served as Town Clerk and Town Treasurer following Ashford’s first official town meeting in 1715. Shortly after, the center of Town became the village of Ashford Center in the Town’s present southeast. Early settlers were drawn to Ashford for its farmland

soils atop some of the region’s hilliest terrain, with sawmills and like uses, such as the Westford Glass Factory, developing later. The Town was also known as a stopping point along the Old Connecticut Path and, later, the Boston and Hartford Turnpike and the Providence Pike. The advent of the railroad, however, and growing job opportunities in nearby mill villages and cities, caused Ashford’s population to decline steadily until the early 1900’s when farming immigrants from Europe arrived and resettled the countryside. Today, Ashford retains much of its colonial charm and has been relatively slow to develop, even as demand for quiet, county living has pushed workers outward along Interstate 84 from nearby cities.

Interstate 84 passes through, and exits to, Ashford’s northwest corner, allowing commuting westward toward Hartford, Connecticut (30 miles) and eastward toward Massachusetts and the Worcester and Boston metropolitan areas; the Massachusetts state line is approximately five miles from Ashford’s northern boundary and as many minutes via Interstate 84. Running east-west across southern Ashford is another important artery, US Route 44. The University of Connecticut’s (UConn’s) main campus

Table 1- Governmental and Organizational Information

<b>Form of Government</b>	<i>Board of Selectmen-Town Meeting</i>
<b>County</b>	<i>Windham County</i>
<b>Neighbor Towns</b>	<i>Chaplin, Eastford, Mansfield (Tolland Co.), Union (Tolland Co.), Willington (Tolland Co.)</i>
<b>US Congressional District</b>	<i>Connecticut’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District</i>
<b>State Senate District</b>	<i>35<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District of the CT General Assembly</i>
<b>State House District</b>	<i>53<sup>rd</sup> District of the CT House of Representatives</i>
<b>Regional Council of Governments</b>	<i>Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments</i>
<b>Local Health Administration</b>	<i>Eastern Highlands Health District</i>
<b>Primary Chamber of Commerce</b>	<i>Windham Region Chamber of Commerce</i>
<b>Regional High School District</b>	<i>Regional School District 19 (E.O. Smith High School in Mansfield)</i>

at Storrs—in the neighboring Town of Mansfield—is 15 minutes westward on Route 44. The Danielson-Putnam area and Providence, Rhode Island are 20 minutes and 60 minutes, respectively, to the east on Route 44. State Routes 89 and 74 also connect the Town to neighbors like Union and Windham/Willimantic.

According to the United States Census Bureau, Ashford had a total population of 4,317 in 2010, estimated to remain relatively even at 4,301 in 2013, giving the Town approximately 111 residents per square mile of land area. Comparatively, the State of Connecticut has a population density of roughly 743 persons per square mile. Despite its modest density, Ashford and towns like it in southern New England have experienced notable population growth in the last half century, driven largely by employment in nearby urban areas. The growth of UCONN, and Eastern Connecticut State University, in Windham, have also been a major driver of Ashford’s population.

### ***Ashford’s Villages***

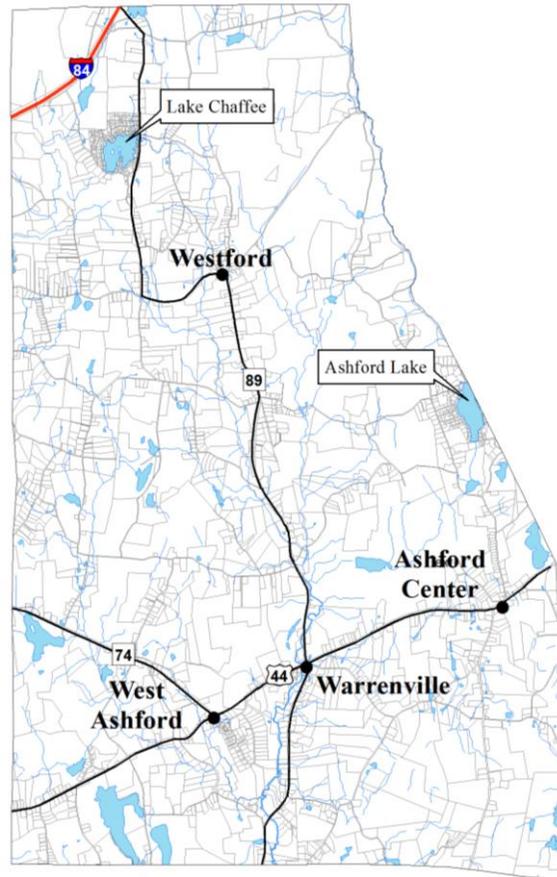
Ashford’s four villages, Ashford Center, Warrenville, West Ashford, and Westford, are each historic in their beginnings but have retained varying levels of their original character. Perhaps the best preserved village in Ashford is Westford. Westford is a classic example of a colonial New England village, set atop a hill with a white Greek revival church as its centerpiece, and fringed by farmland. The village of Warrenville has experienced newer development along US Route 44, but still retains many of its historic buildings and is the present day town center, accommodating the Town Office Building, Knowlton Hall (library), senior center, Tremko House and former Warrenville Post Office.

The Town also features two large lake communities. Lake Chaffee and Ashford Lake are some of the densest residential areas in Town. Lake Chaffee has approximately 250 housing lots.

### ***Land Use and Land Cover***

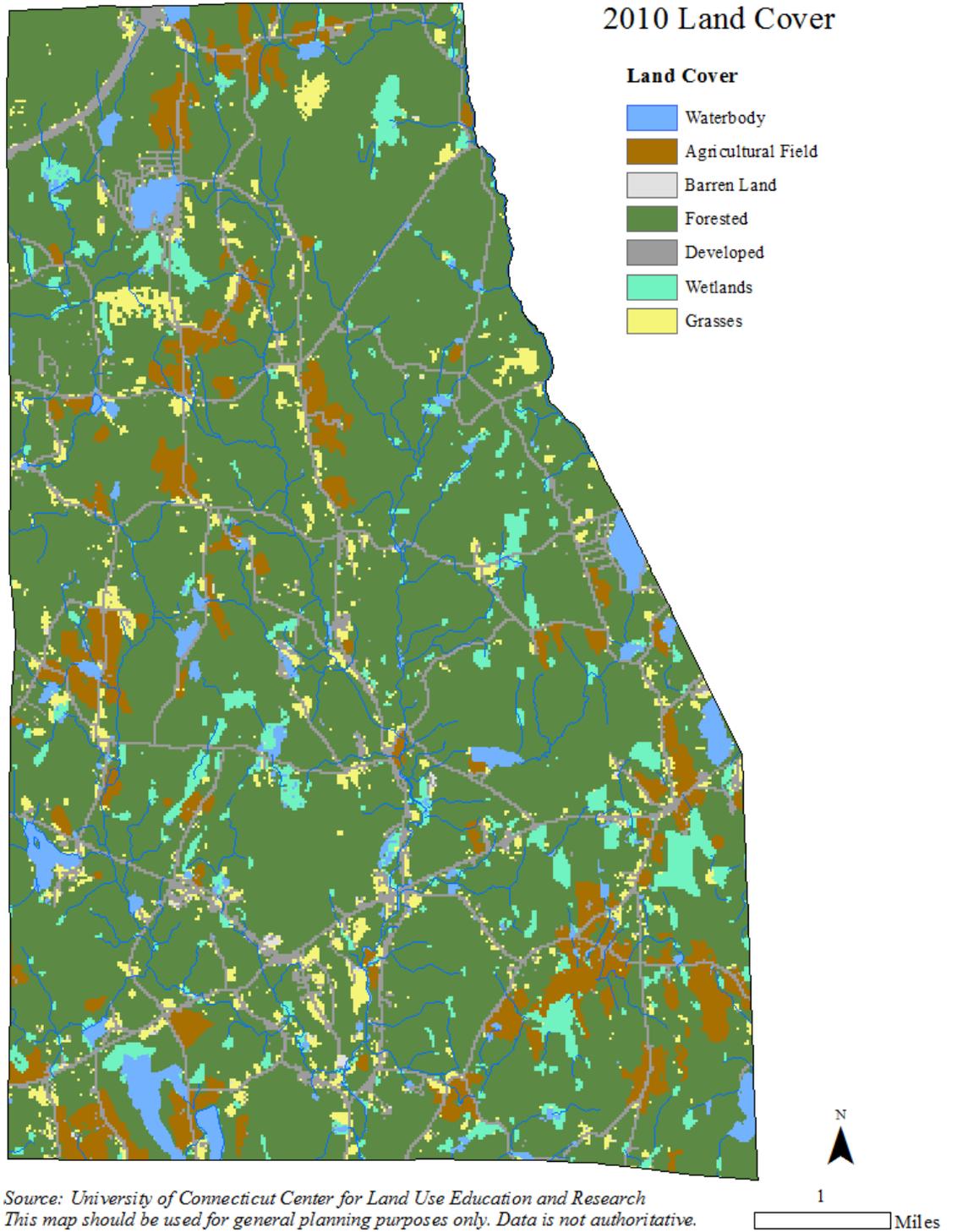
Like much of Connecticut, Ashford is a largely forested town, comprised mainly of oak, ash, and other hardwoods but with pockets of coniferous trees, the most notable in the form of hemlock groves along rocky river banks. Large tracts of land are part of the Natchaug and Nipmuck State Forests, Wolf Den Land Trust and Joshua’s Trust, or one of numerous camps. Yale University is also a large landholder in Ashford: Yale owns Yale-Myers forest for recreation, education, and timber production.

Figure 1- Overview of Ashford



*Data is not authoritative*

Figure 2- 2010 Land Cover



Ashford is the third-most forested town in Windham County, with forests covering 78.6% of its area<sup>1</sup>. The Mount Hope River bisects Ashford, running north to south, and drains most of the town's land. The Town also features a number of natural and man-made lakes, ponds, and woody swamps. Ashford's highest point is Snow Hill, in the Town's northwest corner. This is also the highest point in Windham County at 1,210 feet.

Table 2- Land Cover Data

Land Cover	1985	1995	2010
<i>Developed</i>	6.6%	7.1%	7.4%
<i>Agricultural Field</i>	7.3%	7.2%	7.0%
<i>Deciduous Forest</i>	66.1%	64.5%	64.6%
<i>Coniferous Forest</i>	10.3%	10.2%	10.1%
<i>Water</i>	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%
<i>Wetland</i>	4.7%	4.5%	4.7%

*Source: University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research, 1985, 1995, and 2010 Land Cover*

Ashford guides the use of land in town through zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, and inland wetlands and watercourses regulations. In fact, the Town first adopted zoning regulations following recommendations from the Town's 1970 plan of conservation and development. The zoning regulations have been periodically updated and rewritten and, today, Ashford is divided into four separate zoning districts, each allowing agriculture. The most recent edition of the zoning regulations was completed in 2014. The majority of the Town belongs to the Residential-Agricultural (RA) zoning district; Warrenville and West Ashford are mostly covered by the General Commercial (GC) zoning district; and the Interstate Interchange Development (IID) zone and Technology Development (TD) zone are focused on specialized economic development in the northwestern and southwestern corners of Town, respectively. The zones allows commercial and industrial uses while the TD zone is designated for the development of a technology and business park.

### ***Demographics***

According to the United States Census Bureau, Ashford had a population density of 111.4 persons per square mile in 2010; far less than the State of Connecticut, and less than Windham County. The Town's median age was estimated to be slightly lower than Connecticut's: 38.9 in 2013, up from 36.3 in 2000. The Town's population of individuals 65 and older was also expected to increase by 1.9% in the same time period. Like many towns in Windham County, Ashford is also less racially diverse than the State as a whole. In 2013, 95.3% of the Town's population was estimated to be white (alone), 1.1% black/African American (alone) and only 0.3% of the Town's population was estimated to be Asian. At the 2000 census these statistics were similar; the Town was 95.7% white, 1.0% black/African American, and 1.0% Asian.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research, 2010 Land Cover

Table 3- Age, Sex, and Disability Characteristics: 2013 Estimates

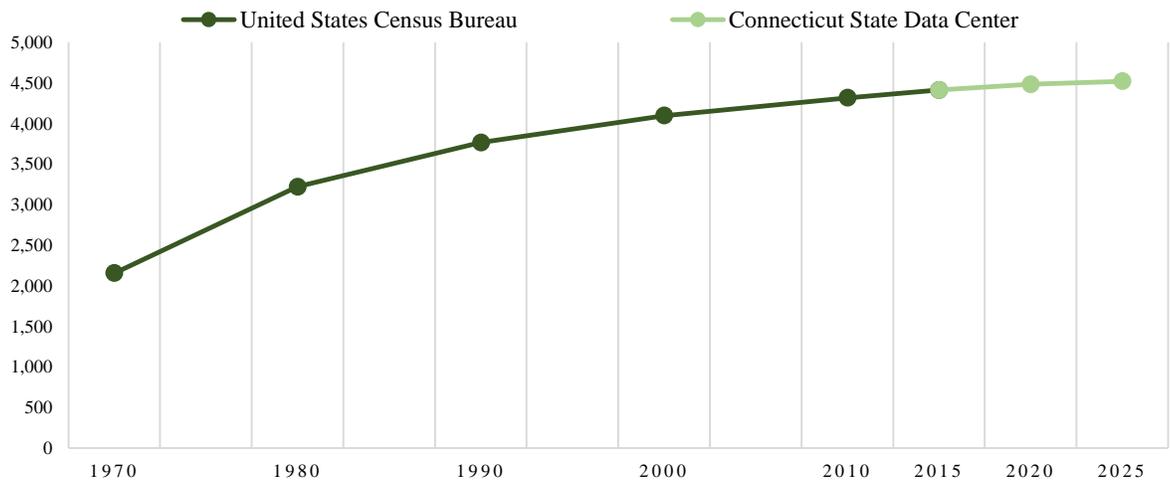
Jurisdiction	2010 Population	2010 Population Density	2013 Population Estimate	2013 Housing Units	Median Age	65 Years and Older	Male: Female Ratio	Disabled Population
Ashford	4,317	111.4	4,301	1,839	38.9	10.2%	99.2:100	4.4%
Chaplin	2,305	118.6	2,408	972	41.7	12.3%	108.1:100	4.0%
Eastford	1,749	60.5	1,650	777	45.8	14.8%	104.6:100	4.3%
Mansfield	26,543	308.5	26,379	6,160	21.1	8.0%	94.7:100	5.8%
Union	854	29.7	1,041	422	42.4	20.9%	90.0:100	4.4%
Willington	6,041	181.5	6,018	2,568	39.5	11.9%	119.8:100	3.2%
Windham County	118,428	230.9	118,115	49,051	39.7	13.3%	98.2:100	4.2%
Connecticut	3,574,097	738.1	3,583,561	1,486,995	40.2	14.5%	94.9:100	5.2%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey

### The Future of Ashford

According to projections by the Census Bureau and the Connecticut State Data Center at the University of Connecticut, Ashford will experience moderate to negative growth over the coming years. The aging Baby Boomer population should continue to shift Ashford’s population distribution toward the “older” end of the spectrum. However, planned expansion of student and faculty enrollment, and development of a technology park at UCONN may have an effect on Ashford’s population.

Figure 3- Historic Population and Projected Population



Sources: United States Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses; Connecticut State Data Center, 2015-2025 Population Projections for Connecticut



# Plan Elements

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Meetings of the Plan of Conservation and Development Committee allowed the identification of nine key topics that affect Ashford today, and are likely to affect the Town's physical and civic development in the following ten years. These nine "Plan Elements" are presented separately, each with identified issues, a vision statement, objectives, and actions.

- A. Governance
- B. Public Safety and Health
- C. Education
- D. Economic Development
- E. Housing
- F. Agriculture
- G. Natural Resources
- H. Historic Resources
- I. Energy



# A. Governance

Ashford uses a Selectman-Town Meeting form of government—the traditional form of government in New England towns. The townspeople, through the Town Meeting, act as the legislative body in most cases, while the three-member Board of Selectmen is the executive body; The Board of Selectmen may act legislatively in instances such as approving small purchases under \$20,000. The First Selectman is the Town’s chief elected official. Other full-time town staff currently include the Selectman’s Administrative Assistant/Animal Control Officer, general Administrative Assistant/Treasurer, Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Land Use Department Clerk, Building Official/Zoning Enforcement Officer/Land Use Department Administrator, Assessor, Tax Collector, Youth/Social Service Director, floating Clerk, and Recreation Director. Ashford also employs a Public Works department.

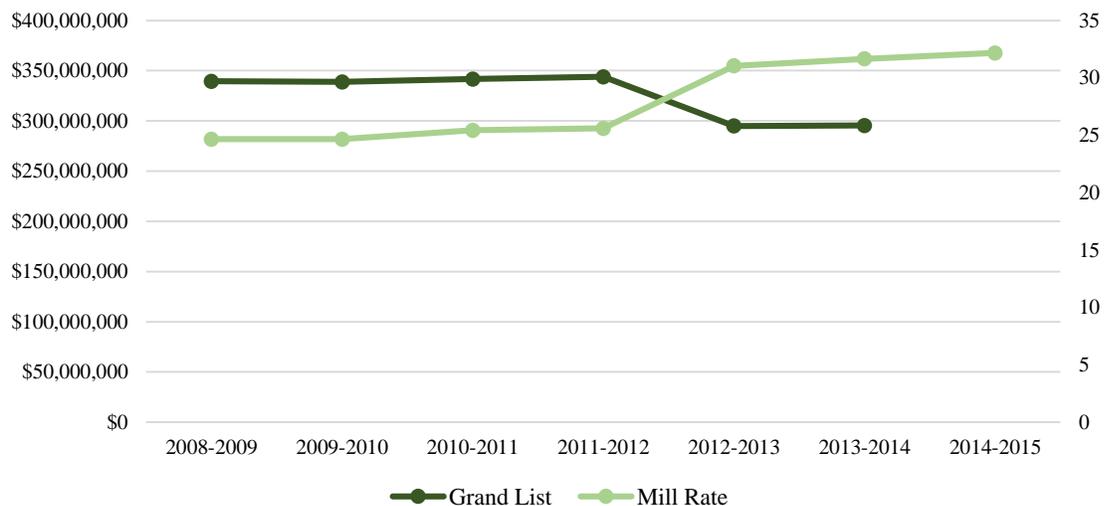


1838 drawing of Ashford Center

## Taxation and Budgeting

Connecticut towns levy local property taxes, balancing yearly budgets with those funds, aid from the State, federal sources, and other grants and funding. Property taxes have risen in recent years, in response to decreased property values after a revaluation, and a nation-wide decline in housing prices.

Figure 4- Net Grand List Compared to Mill Rate: Last Seven Fiscal Years



Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, *Municipal Fiscal Indicators Fiscal Years Ended 2009-2013*

Table 4- Government Taxes and Revenue

Jurisdiction	Mill Rate ('14-15)	Equalized Mill Rate ('12-13)	Net Grand List ('13-14)	Equalized Net Grand List ('13-14)
Ashford	32.16	21.83	\$295,376,144	\$403,533,699
Chaplin	35.05	24.43	\$172,699,060	\$220,319,766
Eastford	24.80	18.86	\$170,535,038	\$217,697,015
Mansfield	27.95	20.06	\$1,011,715,713	\$1,369,554,704
Union	29.00	17.91	\$98,614,334	\$125,904,473
Willington	27.34	19.21	\$479,609,789	\$629,316,327
Connecticut Average	N/A	18.60	\$2,179,483,225	\$3,060,193,320

Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, *Municipal Fiscal Indicators Fiscal Years Ended 2009-2013*

Because of this, Ashford’s Mill Rate, the tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed value, is shown to be high. The Town’s Equalized Mill Rate, which is derived from the Equalized Net Grand List, the value of all taxable property in Town when adjusted for current market prices, better reflects the local property tax burden in Ashford, compared with the State average. The next planned revaluation is for the year 2016.

Not uncommon in a rural community, Ashford’s local property tax burden is shared heavily by residential properties (*see Table 5*). In 2013, the local electrical company, Eversource Energy, is the largest contributor to Ashford’s Grand List, while the second and third-largest contributors were holders of apartment complexes in Town. The fourth and fifth-largest Grand List contributors are a campground and one private citizen<sup>1</sup>. Another major revenue challenge faced by Ashford is the amount of untaxable, non-profit land holdings between camps, Yale University, the State of Connecticut and various smaller organizations. About one third of the land in Ashford is untaxed<sup>2</sup>.

Each year, the Board of Finance prepares the Town’s budget. The budget is presented at the Annual Town Meeting, which adjourns to referendum for approval by registered Ashford voters and landowners. Like most towns in Connecticut, the largest portion of Ashford’s general fund budget is dedicated to education in its two school districts: Ashford School District and Regional School District 19 (*see Education*). The balance of the general fund budget is directed toward government expenditures, such as salaries, operations, Town Hall department budgets, and board and commission budgets. In terms of indebtedness, Ashford’s municipal debt per capita is less than half of the State average. Low municipal debt allows for greater flexibility in bonding larger expenditures; Ashford is ranked 120<sup>th</sup> of the State’s 169 towns, in terms of debt per capita.

### **Capital Expenditures**

In addition to the general fund budget, Ashford prepares a 5-year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) as part of its annual budget, (*see Figure 5*). Capital improvements include equipment purchases,

<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Economic Resource Center, *Ashford, Connecticut CERC Town Profile 2014*

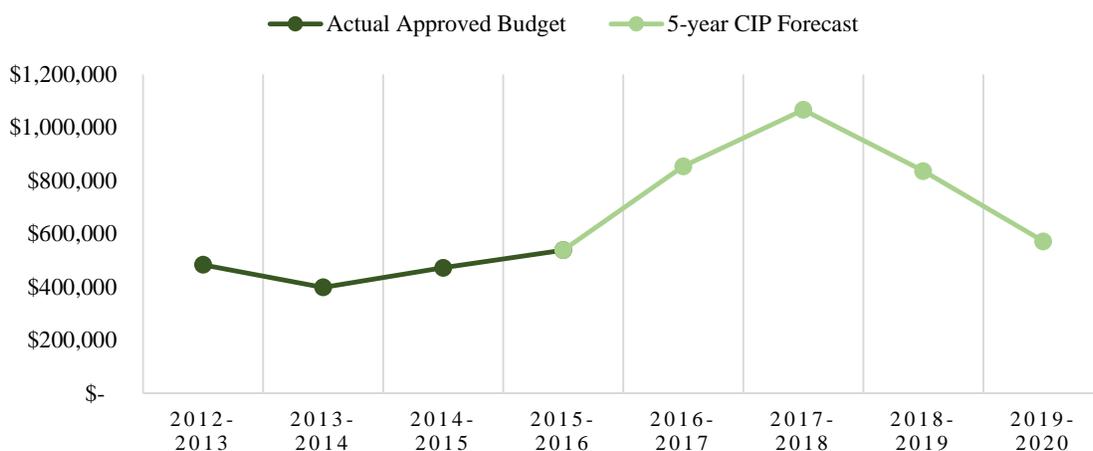
<sup>2</sup> Town of Ashford Conservation Commission, *Ashford Open Space Plan*

Table 5- Government Revenue and Spending 2012-2013

Jurisdiction	Total Town Expenditure (2012-2013)	General Government Expenditure (2012-2013)	Grand List Component: Residential (2012)	Grand List Component: Commercial/Industrial/Utility (2012)	Debt per Capita (2013)	Moody's Bond Rating (2013)
Ashford	\$14,635,662	\$3,385,353	75.4%	7.4%	\$1,115	Aa3
Chaplin	\$7,555,898	\$1,623,959	78.8%	5.3%	\$71	Not Given
Eastford	\$5,185,600	\$1,320,731	74.6%	6.2%	\$192	Not Given
Mansfield	\$44,740,096	\$12,515,632	73.0%	15.0%	\$336	Aa2
Union	\$3,043,620	\$1,304,319	76.9%	6.0%	\$4,338	Not Given
Willington	\$15,982,198	\$3,057,809	69.0%	16.1%	\$853	Aa3
Connecticut Average	\$76,272,910	\$29,894,928	69.3%	16.9%	\$2,276	Not Given

Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Municipal Fiscal Indicators Fiscal Years Ended 2009-2013

Figure 5- Capital Improvements Expenses



Source: Town of Ashford

maintenance to paved and unpaved roads, town building maintenance and parking lot maintenance, property revaluation, and Ashford School, Ashford Volunteer Fire Department, and other town projects. The CIP is funded through State aid and the Capital Non-Reoccurring (CNR) fund.

Typically, road maintenance is the largest, yearly capital expense. Ashford has among the largest percentages of unimproved, town-owned roads in the State: accounting for approximately 23% of the 67.6 miles of locally maintained road. Ashford's unimproved roads provide scenic value vital to the character of the Town. Currently, Lipps Road, Bebbington Lane, Seckar Road, Varga Road, Colts

Pond Road, and Oakes Road are protected, by the Town’s “Scenic Road Ordinance”, against improvements, such as paving, that may substantially alter their character.

### ***Municipal Facilities***

An important governmental service is the provision of public parks, open spaces, and facilities. Warrentville is the present-day center of municipal activity in Ashford. Located in Warrentville, within hundreds of feet from one another, and two churches, are, the Town Office Building, Knowlton Memorial Hall, the former Warrentville Post Office, and the campus of the Ashford Senior Center and Pompey Hollow Senior Housing Complex. The Town’s other civic facilities are the Public Works garage, dog pound, and transfer station which are located on Route 74 in West Ashford.



*The Town Office Building (town hall), built in 2005*

The Town of Ashford takes pride in its municipal facilities and many recent facility upgrades have taken place in recent years. Knowlton Memorial Hall, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was recently renovated when being converted from the town hall to the Babcock Library. The current Town Office Building is a more modern building, built in 2005, and is built with two main sections, one resembling a clapboard colonial house and the other resembling a New England-style barn with a cupola. Also, the Ashford Senior Center, the Pompey Hollow Senior Housing Complex, and the Ashford Volunteer Fire Department’s Company #1 building in Warrentville are recent constructions and architecturally complement the new Town Office Building and older surrounding historic buildings. Also, a currently scheduled renovation is the replacement of the roof at Ashford School.

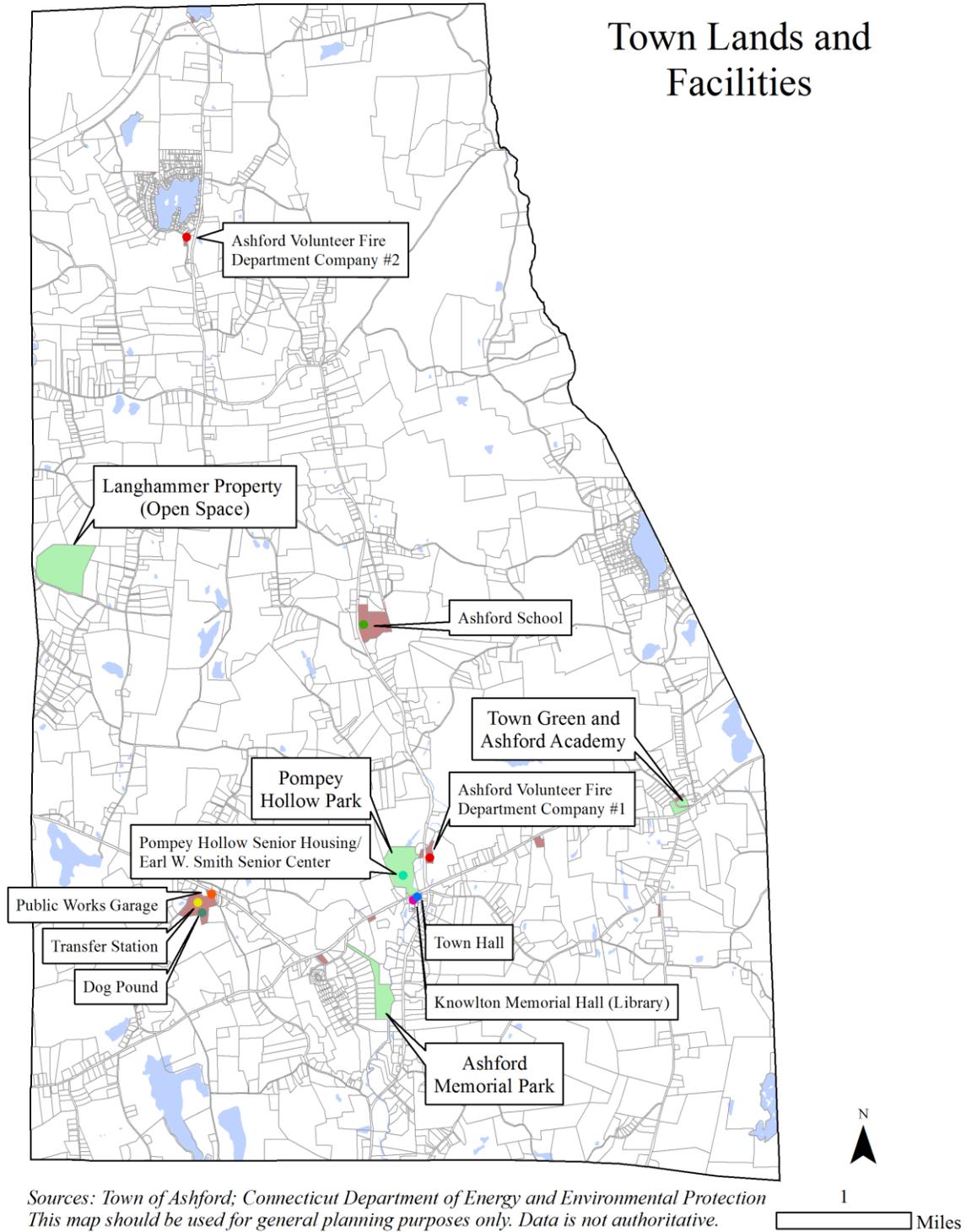
Recreation in Ashford is focused around two municipal parks in the Warrentville-West Ashford area.



*Ashford Memorial Park*

Pompey Hollow Park on the campus of the senior center and senior housing has recreational facilities, walking trails, access to the Mount Hope River, and hosts the Ashford Farmers’ Market as well as summer concerts. Ashford Memorial Park includes sports fields and recreational facilities, trails, and river access as well. Ashford School—the Town’s only public school—also hosts recreational facilities available to the public. Lastly, the development of trails at the “Langhammer property”, a town-owned forested tract of land in west-central Ashford, began in 2015.

Figure 6- Town Lands and Facilities



## ***Boards and Commissions***

Ashford has a combined Planning and Zoning Commission that adopts and amends the Town’s zoning regulations and subdivision regulations and hears zoning and subdivision applications and matters. Ashford’s other two land use commissions are the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. The Ashford Economic Development Commission is the governmental body responsible for encouraging, recruiting, and maintaining relations with local business.

Supporting the roll of agriculture and open land in a vibrant and livable rural community, Ashford has established a Conservation Commission, as well as an Agriculture Commission. The Ashford Agriculture Commission is made up of a cross section of the Town’s agricultural community and was established to advocate for the interests of Ashford’s farmers, giving recommendations to Town government officials, boards, and commissions. The Ashford Conservation Commission advocates for the protection of natural lands, appropriates funding for open space preservation, supervises the Ashford Farmers’ Market, and prepares the Town’s Open Space Plan. Open spaces are commonly protected through purchase of development rights (PDR) by the State of Connecticut or a local land trust. PDR is a mechanism through which a party acquires a property owner’s right to develop all or a portion of their property, ensuring that the land is protected in perpetuity.

The Ashford Parks and Recreation Commission and the Town’s Recreation Director oversee town-owned recreation property and plan for community events and programming, such as festivals, parades, concerts, dog training, yoga classes, and youth sports.

## ***Other Groups***

Civically involved, non-governmental groups in Ashford include but are not limited to: the Ashford Historical Society, the Ashford Garden Club, the Ashford School Parent-Teacher Organization, Friends of Babcock Library, Ashford Business Association which also serves Eastford and Willington, the Hungarian Social Club, Czech Club, and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

Table 6- Town Board, Commissions, and Committees

<b><i>Boards, Commissions, and Committees</i></b>
<i>Board of Selectmen</i>
<i>Planning and Zoning Commission</i>
<i>Zoning Board of Appeals</i>
<i>Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission</i>
<i>Economic Development Commission</i>
<i>Board of Finance</i>
<i>Board of Assessment Appeals</i>
<i>Agriculture Commission</i>
<i>Conservation Commission</i>
<i>Recreation Commission</i>
<i>Commission on Aging</i>
<i>Board of Education</i>
<i>Region 19 Board of Education (3 appointed from Ashford)</i>
<i>Ashford Clean Energy Task Force</i>

## ***Vision for Governance***

*“The Town of Ashford will strive to fulfill the needs of its citizens—however they may change. Meeting this end demands that the Town government and its Board of Education explore cost-saving and adaptive policies for the performance of necessary functions, delivery of municipal services, and the provision of public facilities.”*

## ***Issues***

- Disproportionate reliance on residential properties for tax revenue (*see Economic Development*)
- Disproportionate reliance on State funding sources for a large share of education and CIP budgets
- Changing demand for public facilities
- Shifting demographics and slow to negative population growth
  - Declining enrollment in the Ashford School District (*see Education*)
  - Declining share of enrollment in the Region 19 School District and Windham Technical High School (*see Education*)
- Access to online communications for municipal news

## ***Municipal Functions***

Objective 1: Improve citizen involvement, intra-town communication, and inter-town communication

- a. Maintain the Town website and keep current important documents, forms, and meeting information
- b. Continue publication of the Ashford Citizen which is delivered to every Ashford household via the United States Postal Service
- c. Investigate the use of community media and social media as means of providing information on local issues and initiatives, such as Our Town Our Future
- d. While respecting that primary use should be retained by Ashford’s seniors, promote the use of the Senior Center to meet community needs, such as activity and meeting space, and consider expansion of the Senior Center to incorporate more community-use space
- e. Continue to support citizen involvement in Our Town – Our Future

Objective 2: Ensure that all official Town and Board of Education functions are being performed efficiently in regards to energy, time, and cost

- a. Continue to communicate with adjacent municipalities and NECCOG in order to identify opportunities for cooperative purchasing of software and equipment

- b. Review “back office” functions (e.g. payroll) of the Town government, the Board of Education, and neighboring towns to avoid duplication of purchases and efforts
- c. Continue to periodically reassess the responsibilities of staff and elected/appointed officials
- d. Establish an active program to encourage and recognize volunteer involvement in Town functions and meetings so as to recruit individuals with diverse and valuable skills

Objective 3: Develop sound policies for the taxation of open space

- a. Continually examine methodology for taxation of open space per Public Act 490 (Connecticut General Statutes §12-107a – 12-107f) for open space land (*see Natural Resources*)

### ***Public Improvements***

Objective 4: Design roadways and other transportation facilities to maximize efficiency and safety in a manner consistent with maintaining aesthetics

- a. Ensure that road standards, such as road width and paving materials, are consistent with the Town’s rural character
- b. Require new development to be compatible with street hierarchy and traffic flow, and to implement traffic calming techniques when needed
- c. Limit curb cuts on arterial and collector streets
- d. Define and maintain pedestrian areas and provide safe pedestrian environments through the use of crosswalks, sidewalks, and trails
- e. Encourage, when appropriate, the integration of pedestrian and bicycle transportation into trails and greenways
- f. Promote the designation of new scenic roads under the Scenic Road Ordinance

Objective 5: Maintain clear plans for the utilization of and maintenance of municipal lands and facilities

- a. Maintain an inventory of, and create a management plan for, municipal infrastructure
- b. Plan for municipal needs ten years in advance and identify possible sites for future facilities
- c. As town funding permits, encourage the Garden Club and other volunteer groups in their efforts to maintain the aesthetic appeal of existing facilities
- d. Require new municipal structures and landscaping to conform to the desired aesthetics of surrounding areas

Objective 6: Assess the adequacy of infrastructure systems, including communications

- a. Consider future planning efforts dedicated to meeting the needs of citizens in regards to electrical, communications, sanitary, water, and transportation infrastructure systems

## ***Recreation***

Objective 7: Continue to provide recreational programming to encourage Town pride and involvement

- a.* Continue the success of cultural events and activities hosted by the Parks and Recreation Commission and other groups
- b.* Pursue opportunities for Town swimming facilities—most likely at a lake or pond, and possibly in partnership with a neighboring town
- c.* Promote the use of the Ashford Senior Center by all residents, giving priority to seniors
- d.* Continue to cooperate with the Board of Education to maximize the use of school facilities by residents, following current the current fee structure and guidelines for use
- e.* Replace playscapes and park equipment as needed
- f.* Investigate the feasibility of the development of a trail linking Pompey Hollow Park and Ashford Memorial Park



## B. Public Safety and Health

Currently, the Town of Ashford’s public safety and health needs are being met through the Ashford Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD), the regional State Police Troop C barracks in Tolland, Windham Hospital Paramedic Program, the Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD), and the Ashford Animal Control program. The Town also holds mutual aid agreements with surrounding towns and provides ambulance (basic life support) services for Eastford. Ashford, like all towns in Connecticut, appoints an Emergency Management Director and annually updates an Emergency Operations Plan.

Table 7- Emergency Services

<b>Fire</b>	<i>Ashford Volunteer Fire Department Company #1 &amp; Company #2</i>
<b>Basic Life Support</b>	<i>Ashford Volunteer Fire Department Company #1</i>
<b>Advanced Life Support</b>	<i>Windham Hospital Paramedic Program</i>
<b>Police</b>	<i>State Police Troop C (Tolland)</i>

Table 8- Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Calls

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Fire</b>	<b>EMS</b>
<i>2007-2008</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>361</i>
<i>2008-2009</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>266</i>
<i>2009-2010</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>326</i>
<i>2010-2011</i>	<i>182</i>	<i>266</i>
<i>2011-2012</i>	<i>197</i>	<i>348</i>
<i>2012-2013</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>266</i>
<i>2013-2014</i>	<i>211</i>	<i>338</i>
<i>2014-2015</i>	<i>192</i>	<i>311</i>

*Source: Ashford Volunteer Fire Department, Call Summary*

### ***Ashford Volunteer Fire Department***

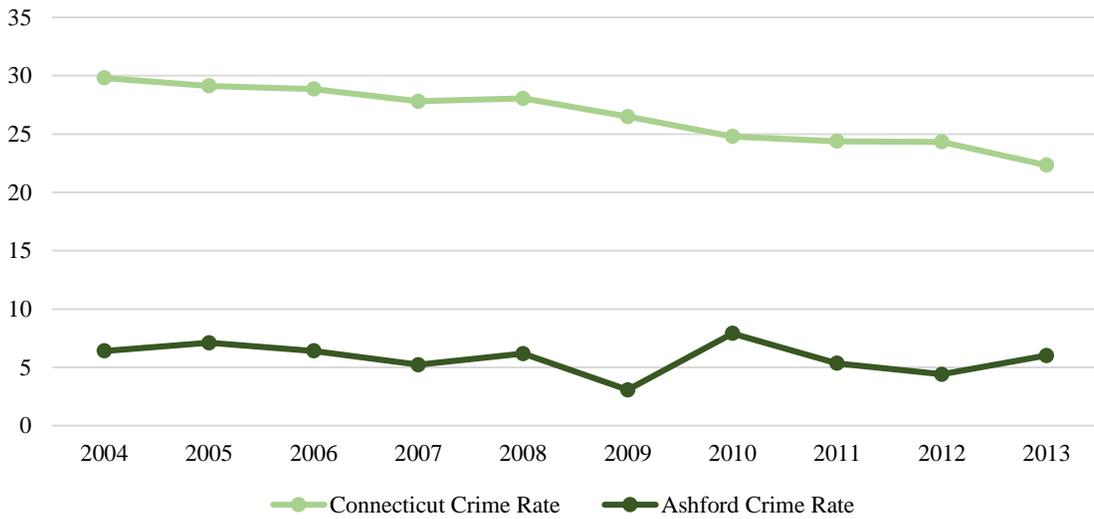
The AVFD is the initial responder for both fire and rescue in Ashford. The department’s main fire station on Route 89 in Warrenville houses its ambulance. The department’s second, smaller fire station is on located on Old Town Road in northern Ashford and is adjacent to Lake Chaffee. As of 2010, the AVFD has hired a number of paid staff for daytime hours when volunteerism is typically low. Between the 2007-2008 and 2014-2015 fiscal years, the AVFD responded to an average of 174.5 fire and rescue calls and 310.25 ambulance calls per year<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Connecticut State Police Troop C***

The State Police Troop C barracks is 12 miles from Warrenville in the Town of Tolland. The next-closest State Police barracks is Troop D in the Danielson section of Killingly—18 miles from Warrenville. Ashford sees very little crime compared to the rest of the State, even when normalized for the Town’s relatively small population (*see Figure 7*).

<sup>1</sup> Ashford Volunteer Fire Department, *Call Summary*

Figure 7- Crime Rate (Incidents per 1000 residents)



Source: Connecticut State Police Crime Analysis Unit, Connecticut Uniform Crime Reports

### ***Ashford Animal Control***

Ashford Animal Control is responsible for the protection of domestic animals and the impact these animals have on Ashford residents. The Animal Control facility is located on Route 74 adjacent to the Public Works Department garage. The Board of Selectmen appoint Ashford’s Animal Control Officer who is provided licensing and training from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

### ***Eastern Highlands Health District***

The EHHD serves as the local health department for Ashford and nine other towns in Windham and Tolland Counties and has a broad range of duties. According to the organization’s website, “*The specific services provided by the [EHHD] include septic system inspection and approval; well and water quality monitoring; food protection; lead investigations; radon prevention; public bathing area monitoring; and public health complaint investigations. The District also has a communicable disease control program for disease surveillance and outbreak investigation, and an expanding public health education and training program. Other public health functions conducted by the district include data collection, analysis, and health planning activities.*”

### ***Emergency Management***

The mission of Ashford Emergency Management is to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate any emergency or disaster that affects the Town of Ashford. Emergency Management incorporates ‘All Hazards Planning’ when developing emergency plans for the Town and its residents. All Hazards refers to natural hazards, such as tornadoes and hurricanes, as well as human-caused hazards, such as transportation accidents, disease outbreaks, fire, and terrorist attacks. Emergency

Management works closely with the AVFD and other public safety agencies during a disaster to assist them with resources at their request. The department provides emergency notification to the public on disaster information and updates them as needed. Residential services through Emergency Management and its partner agencies, such as the American Red Cross, include emergency sheltering, coordination of the volunteer Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT), and other services from the Town, State and federal governments.

Ashford is currently developing a co-operative sheltering agreement with Mansfield, Coventry, and Willington to provide limited overnight sheltering and food when the American Red Cross' regional shelter is not activated. Ashford may open warming/cooling and charging centers primarily at the Town Office Building and the Senior Center. For lengthier emergencies, the Ashford School can be opened for shelter, showers and food.

Ashford Emergency Management and the volunteer, citizen-based Emergency Management Advisory Council meets throughout the year with municipal and agency leaders to ensure the reliability of Emergency Operations Plans and emergency management resources. Ashford Emergency Management also participates in State-wide emergency planning exercises, and represents the Town as a member of the Northeastern Connecticut Emergency Management Committee and Region IV of the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.



*Ashford Volunteer Fire Department Company #1 in Warrentonville*

## ***Vision for Public Safety***

*“The Town of Ashford will promote volunteerism and civic responsibility while responding to the changing safety needs of its residents.”*

### ***Issues***

- Availability of trained AVFD members to support fire and rescue needs
- State Police response times to all parts of Town
- Maintaining adequate levels of cooperative service between towns
- Town of Eastford’s partnership with Ashford Volunteer Fire Department for basic life support—“how long will this last and what will happen if it ends?”
- Maintaining equipment requirements in light of changing technical issues
- Accounting for elderly and disabled citizens

### ***Emergency Management***

Objective 1: Encourage public involvement in Emergency Management

- a. Examine ways to increase involvement in CERT and training courses offered through the American Red Cross and other partner groups

### ***Fire and Rescue***

Objective 2: Proactively plan to encourage involvement in Ashford Volunteer Fire Department

- a. Examine ways to incentivize citizen involvement

Objective 3: Seek cost-saving solutions to equipment upgrades

- a. Pursue inter-municipal cost-sharing agreements for future, non-standard equipment purchases
- b. Seek grants for large equipment purchases, such as fire trucks

## C. Education

Ashford’s pre-kindergarten, elementary school (grades 1-5), and middle school (grades 6-8) students attend Ashford School, the Town’s only public school. High school students (grades 9-12) attend Regional School District 19 (Region 19), E.O. Smith High School, in Mansfield and have the option of attending Windham Technical High School. E.O. Smith High School also offers a Vocational-Agricultural program which attracts students from outside of its region. The Town of Ashford elects four members of the Region 19 Board of Education, which has 12 members total.

The Ashford Board of Education works to provide quality education to the children in Town. Ashford students enjoy smaller class sizes with minimal disciplinary issues and an extraordinary curriculum, in a safe, clean, and comfortable facility. The Ashford Board of Education has adopted and implemented the STEAM model of education, emphasizing science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics, which has been further enhanced with classroom technology and cross-discipline collaboration. The pursuit of excellence in education with this model has led to regional recognition by other local districts that visit the school regularly, with the hope of returning ideas to their institutions. As such, the Board is

Table 9- Education Attainment (2012-2013)

Jurisdiction	Education as a Share of Total Expenditures	Education Expenditure per Pupil
<i>Ashford</i>	76.9%	\$15,841
<i>Chaplin</i>	78.5%	\$18,795
<i>Eastford</i>	74.5%	\$16,989
<i>Mansfield</i>	72.0%	\$15,424
<i>Union</i>	57.1%	\$15,414
<i>Willington</i>	80.9%	\$15,587
<i>Windham County</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Connecticut Average</i>	58.9%	\$14,505

*Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Municipal Fiscal Indicators Fiscal Years Ended 2009-2013*



*Ashford School*

Table 10- School District Data

Criteria	2012-2013	2013-2014	Change
Enrollment- Ashford School	439	422	-17
Male/Female Ratio- Ashford School	1.03	1.06	+0.03
Enrollment- Region 19	218/1,227	201/1,211	-29
Male/Female Ratio- Region 19	0.96	0.96	-

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut Education Data and Research

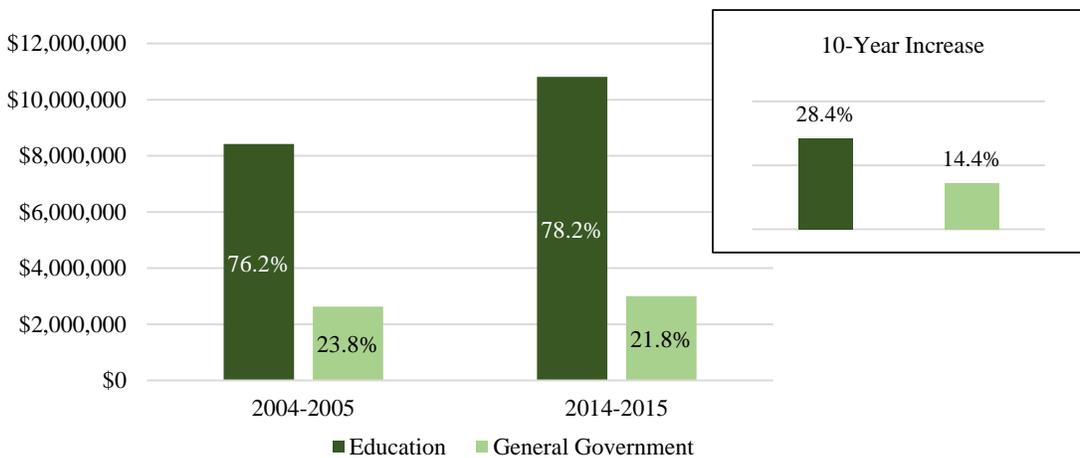
currently researching the option of opening its doors to tuition students in order to expand opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the quality education, while hedging against decline in enrollment and stabilizing the per student cost.

Consistent with the Town’s steady yet aging population, and similar to most other towns in the State, public school enrollment in Ashford is declining. Between the 2006-2007 and 2013-2014 academic years, Ashford School’s enrollment declined approximately 19.5%<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, Ashford’s share of enrollment at Region 19 fell by over 16.5% (from 241 to

201). Further, the Town’s enrollment in Region 19 is projected to be 183 for the 2015-2016 academic year, only 76% of 2006-2007 enrollment<sup>2</sup>.

In the 2012-2013 fiscal year, almost 77% of Ashford’s general fund expenditures were dedicated to education, and the Town allocated approximately 78% of the general fund budget to education in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. Expenditures in the 2015-2016 fiscal year were partially offset using \$3,971,055 in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) aid from the State.

Figure 8- Comparison of Budgets, Fiscal Years 2004-2005 and 2014-2015



Source: Town of Ashford

<sup>1</sup> [http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ct\\_report/EnrollmentDT.aspx](http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ct_report/EnrollmentDT.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.eosmith.org/uploaded/Library/District/BOE/Budget/2014-15\\_Superintendents\\_Proposed.pdf](http://www.eosmith.org/uploaded/Library/District/BOE/Budget/2014-15_Superintendents_Proposed.pdf)

## ***Vision for Education***

*“The Town of Ashford, in cooperation with the Ashford Board of Education and the Regional School District 19 Board of Education, will strive to maximize returns for education investment. Both school districts will educate children in a way that elevates Ashford’s quality of life and makes the Town an attractive place to raise a family.”*

## ***Issues***

Budgets for both school districts are relatively in line with similar towns in Connecticut, and current education costs are well justified by completeness of curricula, educator and administrator talent and dedication, and quality of facilities. However, it would be unwise for the boards of education and the Town to not consider cost-saving solutions, through elimination of redundant systems, to better prepare for possible disruptions in funding availability, future unfunded mandates, and declining enrollment.

- Declining enrollment in Ashford School and declining share of enrollment in Region 19
- Duplication of tasks and functions between Ashford School District and the Town government (*see Governance*)
- Redundancy between Ashford and neighbor towns, with similarly small school districts, in large budget items such as school administration and student transportation
- Rising yearly costs of Special Education, without regional solutions
- Reliance on State Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funds—what happens if State budgeting issues cause ECS funding to Ashford to decrease over time?

## ***Budget***

Objective 1: Manage the future of the school district budgets

- a. Proactively plan for any potential State funding shortfalls due to decreases in ACS allotments
- b. Seek ways in which “back office” functions can be accomplished in cooperation with Town government or on a regional level
- c. Seek cost savings by partnering with neighboring districts for school administration, if State policies are changed to allow for that
- d. Seek cost savings by partnering with neighboring towns to provide Special Education, if State policies are changed to allow for that

## ***Ashford School District***

Objective 2: Adhere to the goals and objectives of the School Improvement Plan 2014-2015 for the Ashford School District

- a. Promote critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills through the implementation of interdisciplinary curriculum, following the concept of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics), which apply to the real world now and in the future
- b. Personalize learning for each student through the examination of performance data and the design of specific differentiated instruction that targets skills and results in personal success
- c. Communicate and display student achievements and school spirit while clearly articulating learning expectations and the school's role in preparing students for success in the 21st century to the larger community
- d. Initiate policies and practices, and devote appropriate resources, toward the improvement of Ashford students on Connecticut standardized testing
- e. Promote institutional practices rooted in the individual skills, talents, needs, and performance of each student
- f. Initiate mechanisms for improving and providing effective communication with the community and Town leadership, including other boards and commissions
- g. Encourage volunteerism on the Board of Education and other groups

## ***Regional School District 19***

Objective 3: Encourage volunteerism in the Region 19 Board of Education

- a. Elect qualified individuals to serve in Ashford's four elected positions on the board

Objective 4: Meet the Cross-Curricular Graduation Standards for the 2015-2016 academic year

- a. Ensure that students "communicate clearly and effectively"
- b. Ensure that students "become proficient with and apply the standards of mathematical practices"
- c. Ensure that students "apply creative and practical approaches to solving problems"
- d. Ensure that students "demonstrate skills and habits conducive to self-directed and life-long learning which supports positive social change"

## D. Economic Development

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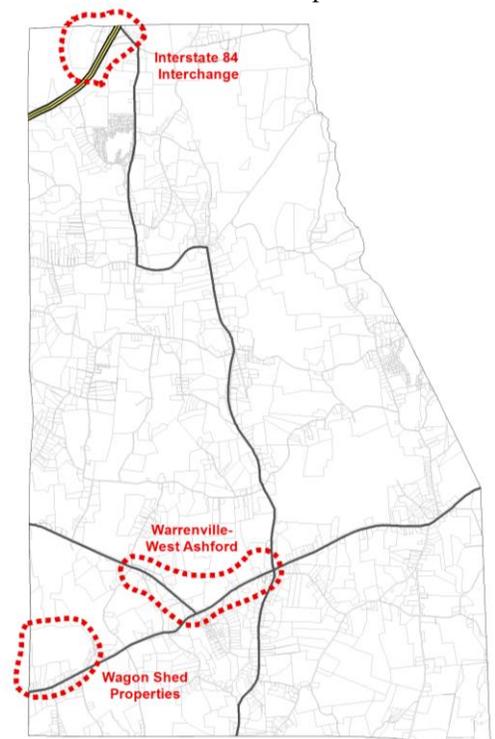
The need for sensible and sustainable economic development in Ashford grows greater each year. The mill rate of 32.962 (2015-2016) is higher than adjacent towns and the tax burden falls heavily onto residential properties. Ashford's General Fund budget for the 2015-2016 fiscal year was balanced using 31% non-tax revenue—most of which comes from State government sources. With an uncertain outlook for the future of State finances (e.g. with high bonded debt and unfunded pension and retiree benefits), the Town could be forced to continue to raise taxes if the Grand List is not better-balanced to include a greater number of commercial and industrial properties. The additional taxes from such properties will help support education, recreation, historic preservation and other Town needs. Concentrating commercial and industrial uses in designated locations also minimizes impacts to farmland, forests, and aesthetics and will lessen long-term development pressures on the stewards of those resources.

The 2005 POCD identified "Special Planning Areas" (SPAs) suitable for economic development in Town: the area of the General Commercial zoning district in Warrentville and West Ashford, the Interstate 84 Interchange which includes parcels zoned for commercial and industrial uses, and the former Wagon Shed Properties on Route 44 which belong to the Technology Development zoning district. These SPAs were retained in the 2015 Plan and are each addressed separately, on pages 29, 32, and 34.

### *Issues*

- Vacancy of existing West Ashford commercial space gives negative impression of the area market and discourages new businesses
- Recent and future developments in Mansfield may attract commercial development away from Ashford, but it also may lead to opportunities. Mansfield development could spill over to Ashford, particularly at the Wagon Shed SPA
- High property taxes, compared to several surrounding towns, may be a barrier to development
- Reliance on onsite water and septic (except for an area served by Connecticut Water Company in the Warrentville-West Ashford area)
- Real or perceived community opposition to development

Figure 9- Special Planning Areas for Economic Development



*Data is not authoritative*

## Principal Objectives of Economic Development

Objective 1: Proactively support the retention and expansion of existing businesses

- a.* Maintain a dialogue with the business community to understand their needs and concerns. The EDC will make these issues known to other boards and commission
- b.* Annually review the regulations and ordinances and suggest any needed adjustments to ensure that they are business-friendly
- c.* Identify local needs and actively seek out and encourage businesses that serve those needs
- d.* Assist home-based businesses to relocate to a more appropriate location in town if the business grows too large to be secondary to residential use

Objective 2: Proactively seek economic development that provides needed goods and services; increases the tax base; and provides jobs

- a.* Seek to be the first point of contact for businesses interested in locating in Ashford, and present the position that Ashford is open for business
- b.* Perform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats assessment concerning economic development and the Town in general. Consideration should be given to employing an outside agency to facilitate this assessment
- c.* Develop an overarching plan of economic development for all of the town that addresses home-based and agricultural business, in addition to the development in each of the individual SPA's
- d.* Seek state and federal grants for development of economic development plans or studies

Objective 3: Encourage the reuse and/or redevelopment of existing sites and structures. Priority should be placed on derelict and vacant sites in areas targeted for development

- a.* Maintain a list of rental commercial properties
- b.* Continue to inventory potential sites and structures for commercial or industrial reuse and/or redevelopment
- c.* Investigate the status of, and determine options for, properties for commercial or industrial reuse and/or redevelopment

## Warrenville - West Ashford Special Planning Area

### ***Vision for Warrenville - West Ashford Special Planning Area***

*“The vision for this SPA is to enhance its physical image; expand its commercial activities; and provide a focal point for civic activities, culture and municipal services.”*

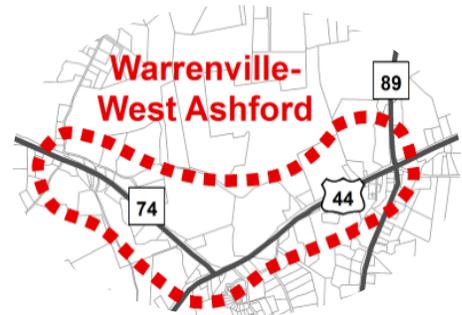
This Special Planning Area is the "public face" of Ashford as a result of the three State highways that intersect the area. Warrenville and West Ashford are combined as one SPA in this POCD but were treated separately in the 2005 POCD. Although they are contiguous, visually linking the two areas presents difficulties because of the abutting terrain; the presence of a major state highway with no shoulder or sidewalks; and heavy traffic traveling at high speeds. The focus, moving forward is to encourage the retention and expansion of present businesses; seek new commercial development; make this SPA more pedestrian and bike friendly; and try to evoke the look and feel of a traditional New England small town.

The majority of the Town's commercial development will be in West Ashford. However, commercial development will continue outside this SPA along State Routes 44 and 74 consistent with existing uses and zoning and where it does not unduly infringe on historic villages and structures, non-profit facilities, and the concept of a New England small town.

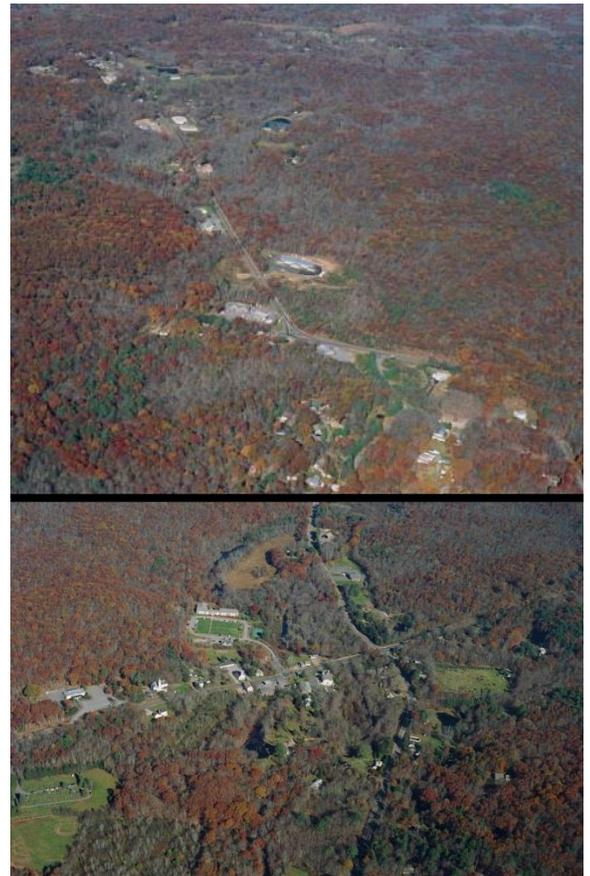
### ***Objectives for the Warrenville – West Ashford SPA***

Objective 1: Retain and expand commercial economic development in West Ashford

- a. Solicit, by survey or other means, public input to determine the preference and



Warrenville-West Ashford SPA



Route 74 and West Ashford (top), and the Routes 44 and 89 intersection in Warrenville (bottom)

needs of Ashford citizens in regards to commercial services. The goal of this is to encourage business success by demonstrating the commercial service needs of the Town

- b. Maintain an inventory of existing commercial buildings, commercially zoned land for sale, and existing residential property that may be used commercially
- c. Create a long term plan of development for the area with the intention of improving business retention, expansion and recruitment; pedestrian access; use of streetscapes; parking; and building architecture
- d. Visit with existing businesses, and land owners to obtain input and learn how the town can better serve their needs
- e. Proactively recruit new business to the SPA by presenting the advantages of doing business in this SPA



*Mostly vacant commercial space on Route 74*

Objective 2: Ensure that Warrenton remains the center of civic activity in Ashford

- a. Strive to locate future municipal facilities within walking distance to Town Hall, the Senior Center, and Knowlton Memorial Hall
- b. Create a long term plan, specific to Warrenton that considers future municipal needs. Such plan should include conceptual locations of new structures, vehicular and non-pedestrian traffic flow, and the recreational use of the Mount Hope River front



*The Town Office Building*

Objective 3: Promote land use policies and traffic flows that enhance the Town's rural character and delineate the concept of a Town Center

- a.* Develop "Village Design Guidelines" that promote:
  - The use of street trees and other landscaping improvements
  - Architecture consistent with a New England village setting
  - The use of signage that is nonintrusive to the village's visual appeal
  - The use of entrances, exits, and parking areas that are visually appealing and do not negatively impact the flow of traffic
  - Pedestrian linkages between properties
  - Sound environmental principles
- b.* Determine how best to incorporate the Village Design Guidelines into the land use regulations
- c.* Develop steps to physically and visually link West Ashford and Warrenton. Consider pedestrian and bike traffic and the addition of sidewalks and/or bike lanes to Route 44
- d.* Explore with the State Department of Transportation methods of traffic calming along Routes 44 and 74 and widening the lanes to allow bike and pedestrian traffic
- e.* Explore the potential for state grants and tax incentives to assist with the objectives for this SPA

## Wagon Shed Properties Special Planning Area

### ***Vision for the Wagon Shed Properties Special Planning Area***

*“The Town will promote the development of the Wagon Shed properties to accommodate a mix of industrial and commercial land uses, and open spaces.”*

The Wagon Shed Properties encompass 284 acres of undeveloped land on the Western border of Ashford, on Route 44. The Wagon Shed Properties have been designated the Technology Development (TD) Zone and present opportunities for industrial, commercial, recreational, and mixed-use space, and may capitalize off of the UCONN Technology Park being constructed roughly 3.5 miles away. This is one of the few significantly sized group of connected, and commercially zoned parcels remaining in Ashford. It is also the western gateway into Town, for travelers from the Mansfield-UCONN area and the Hartford area.

The development of the Wagon Shed Properties initially depends upon resolving issues with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



*The Wagon Shed Properties SPA*



*Aerial photograph of the Wagon Shed SPA*

### ***Objectives for the Wagon Shed Properties SPA***

Objective 1: Return the Wagon Shed Properties to productive use

- a.* Seek removal of existing DEEP orders limiting use and marketing of the properties
- b.* Seek removal of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency liens on the property for EPA remediation of adjacent properties not in Ashford
- c.* Consider applying for grants and liability protection programs administered by DEEP and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development directed at assisting municipalities in bringing properties back to productive use

Objective 2: Develop a plan of development for the Wagon Shed Properties

- a.* Seek state and/or federal grants to facilitate the development of this plan
- b.* Consider a wide range of land uses including, but not limited to, technology development, professional offices, light manufacturing, value added agriculture, solar, recreational venues, and commercial
- c.* Incorporate open space and environmental concerns. Consider a campus like development
- d.* Optimize land use and business mix that maximizes revenue to the Town

Objective 3: Secure viable businesses as developers of the property

- a.* Proactively market the property per the plan of development
- b.* Market space to companies that benefit from proximity to UCONN and the UCONN Technology Park

## Interstate 84 Interchange Special Planning Area

### ***Vision for the Interstate 84 Interchange Special Planning Area***

*“The Interstate 84 Interchange will provide needed diversity and surety in Ashford’s tax base while growing economic opportunity by permitting the operation of large scale industrial businesses, as well as complementary commercial activities compatible with the rural character of the Town.”*

The Interstate 84 Interchange Special Planning Area includes the properties at and around Route 89 and Exit 72 on Interstate 84. The SPA is made significant by its location—along Interstate 84 and minutes from Interstate 90 (the Massachusetts Turnpike). Those highways are two of New England’s vital transportation arteries and Exit 72 is an important gateway to the Town. Interstate travel, and the SPAs position in a remote corner of Town present an excellent opportunity for recruiting commercial and industrial uses with minimal impact to farmland, forests, and residential properties in interior portions of Town.



*Interstate 84 Exit 72 and the Interstate 84 Interchange SPA*

Large parcels of land in this SPA have been for sale and marketed by a large commercial real estate firm for a number of years without results. The interchange currently has two businesses: the Ashford Motel and Mainline Heating; otherwise the area is undeveloped. The interchange currently receives little traffic from Exit 72 with vehicles using Route 89 to and from Route 190 in Union. The lack of traffic makes attracting retail and service businesses difficult; however, this interchange and Exit 73, immediately northeast in Union, are among the few interchanges along Interstate 84 that have not been developed. Hence, the interstate proximity could be the strongest marketing attribute for this SPA.

Although this SPA is remote from most of Town, it also a gateway into Ashford for people arriving from Interstate 84. Therefore, efforts should be made to preserve the scenic beauty of the area and natural resources such as wetlands, Morey Pond, and the Mount Hope River. Likewise, any economic development should be mindful of these sensitive environmental resources.



*Mainline Heating, an existing commercial business*

### ***Objectives for the Interstate 84 Interchange SPA***

Objective 1: Determine the reasons why this area has remained undeveloped and determine how best to attract businesses to this SPA

- a.* Perform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity, and Threats (SWOT) assessment of the SPA in concert with the commercial developer(s) and land owners
- b.* Develop a plan of development for the SPA
- c.* Consider coordination with adjacent towns of Willington and Union in the above activities

Objective 2: Secure strong, sustainable commercial and/or industrial development

- a.* Proactively market the property per the plan of development
- b.* Recruit businesses that will substantially contribute to the grand list and have the potential for attracting other businesses
- c.* Consider businesses that benefit from ease of access to Interstate 84
- d.* Coordinate with the Town of Union to ensure the most appropriate use of adjacent properties

Objective 3: Coordinate the compatible development of the SPA

- a.* Ensure that future development does not negatively impact nearby residential development; Lake Chaffee is approximately 1.25 miles from the center of the SPA
- b.* Ensure that detailed site planning is required of all developments so as to limit nuisances and make the area visually attractive, attract other businesses to the SPA; and minimally impact environmentally sensitive areas
- c.* Proactively monitor state and federal developments that could negatively impact the SPA



## E. Housing

Demand for residential development has slowed considerably in the past decade, with only a handful of building permits being issued in the last eight years and even fewer housing units actually being built (*see Figure 10*). Residences are currently most concentrated around Lake Chaffee, Ashford Lake, and West Ashford. There are also a number of apartment complexes in the southern portion of Town for commuters using Route 44. Most of Ashford is sparsely populated with large housing lots separated by forests and agricultural fields.

Table 11- Selected Housing Characteristics

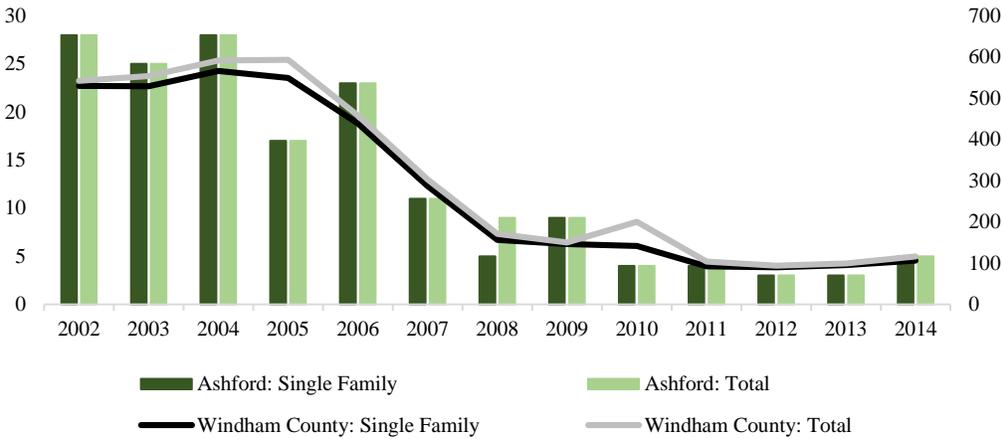
Jurisdiction	Housing Units ('09-13)	Owner-occupied Units ('09-13)	Median Home Value ('09-13)	Dedicated Affordable Housing ('14)	Gross Rent over 30% of Income ('09-13)
Ashford	1,839	82.4%	\$238,000	4.41%	58.6%
Chaplin	972	77.2%	\$218,800	3.64%	33.7%
Eastford	777	91.4%	\$262,700	3.03%	52.1%
Mansfield	6,160	66.6%	\$246,300	10.99%	66.8%
Union	422	92.6%	\$262,700	3.09%	0.0%
Willington	2,568	68.5%	\$239,200	7.85%	69.2%
Windham County	49,051	70.1%	\$211,100	NA	49.1%
Connecticut	1,486,995	67.8%	\$278,900	11.34%	53.3%

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey; Connecticut Department of Housing, 2014 Affordable Housing Appeals List

Affordability is an important theme in housing trends and all Connecticut towns should develop goals for the provision of diverse housing types consistent with their goals for growth. Section 8-39a of the Connecticut General Statutes defines affordable housing as units for which a family earning 80% of the area's median income would spend no more than 30% of that income toward gross rental costs. Municipalities in which less than 10% of housing is *dedicated* as affordable<sup>1</sup>, according to the Connecticut Department of Housing (DOH), are subject to the affordable housing and land use appeals procedure outlined in §8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes. The affordable housing and land use appeals procedure places the burden of proof for denial of an affordable housing development application on the municipal land use commission denying that application, to help ensure that the

<sup>1</sup> Dedicated affordable housing includes units that are set aside as affordable, restricted to low income families, or elderly housing restricted to low income individuals. This is commonly done through deed restrictions.

Figure 10- Residential Building Permits Issued since 2002



Source: United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Building Permits Database

commission is not acting discriminatorily. According to the DOH, as of 2014, 4.41% of Ashford’s housing stock was considered to be affordable and Ashford was one of 131 towns that did not meet the 10% threshold. In 2014, Ashford had 32 government-assisted housing units, two housing units using tenant-based rental assistance, and 50 homes under single-family mortgages through the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) or the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher Program, or “Section 8” program, is locally administered by the Mansfield Area Housing Authority.

Despite not meeting the 10% threshold set by the DOH, there are a wide range of housing options in Ashford and home values are lower than most of the Town’s immediate neighbors. Smaller lot homes like those on Lake Chaffee, and a number of apartment complexes add diversity to the Town’s housing stock. Apartment complexes in Ashford—Perry Hill Apartments, Birch Hill Apartments, Ashford Hills Apartments Woodlawn Apartments, and Mar-Lea Park Apartments—have one month rents as low as \$650 for a one-bedroom unit and \$750 for a two-bedroom unit.

Currently, the Residential-Agricultural zoning district allows, as a permitted use, two-family dwellings and owner-occupied accessory apartments. The zoning district also allows, as a specially permitted use, “boarding, rooming or lodging quarters”, which is a single-family dwelling shared with up to two other people.

### ***Special Populations***

The Pompey Hollow Senior Housing Complex is a non-profit housing facility run by the Ashford Housing Authority, and is a somewhat uncommon feature in a rural town. The housing complex is intended for residents 62-years and older or handicapped, and has 32 units, four of which are handicapped accessible. Ashford also has one residential group home for special needs individuals: Ashford Group Home, operated by Network Inc., a Connecticut non-profit human services organization serving people with special needs.

## ***Vision for Housing***

*“The Town of Ashford will strive to provide a mix of housing options that is consistent with goals for resource and land preservation.”*

### ***Issues***

- Non-attainment of 10% threshold for affordable housing and land use appeals procedure
- Little room for development given environmental constraints, septic and well requirements, and land use regulations
- Financially motivated developers

### ***Land Use Regulations***

Objective 1: Utilize subdivision regulations to protect the scenery and rural character of the Town

- a. Consider a requirement that new subdivisions greater than a certain number of lots be shielded from street view
- b. Continue to require set-aside open space, or fee in lieu of open space, within new subdivisions

Objective 2: Address Lake Chaffee and Ashford Lake lots

- a. Consider potential changes to the zoning regulations that would create zoning districts more appropriate for the Ashford Lake and Lake Chaffee communities

### ***Housing Diversity***

Objective 3: Continue to maintain a variety of housing options in Town

- a. Continue to permit accessory apartments, two-family homes, and “boarding, rooming, or lodging quarters in the Residential-Agricultural zone
- b. Consider requiring a number of housing units to be set aside and deed-restricted to remain affordable if housing is to be developed in combination with industrial/office spaces in the Technology Development zoning district
- c. Consider future needs for apartment-style housing, beyond what already exists in Town, and any needed updates to zoning regulations, consistent with natural resource protection
- d. Explore the need for “supportive housing”: a combination of housing and services intended to aid homeless or disabled adults



## F. Agriculture

Agriculture, for most Connecticut towns, is no longer as abundant an activity and land use as it once was. Since the mid-twentieth century, Connecticut farmers have grappled with the declining importance of local agriculture due to mass production and wholesale of food products. Productive land has steadily been lost to residential growth, in even the most rural Connecticut towns, as small, family-run farms are sold in growing communities. The Town of Ashford, fortunately, values agriculture as an important community asset and has set policies that intend to strengthen its economic viability. This is important because, among other reasons, many of Ashford's farmers descend from families that have farmed in Town for generations and farmers are often some of the most civically active and well-known members of the community. Today, Ashford farmers specialize in everything from dairy, meat, and eggs, to maple syrup, corn, fruits, vegetables, honey, flowers, and forest products. Further, organic farming, value-added products, such as preserves, agri-tourism, craft distillers, and pick-your-own products deepen the market for local agricultural products in Ashford.



Vendors at the Ashford Farmers' Market

Table 12- Agriculture in Connecticut and Windham County

Census Criteria	Connecticut ('12)	Connecticut ('07)	Windham County ('12)	Windham County ('07)
Farms	5,977	4,916	692	594
Average farm size (ac.)	73	83	84	101
Median farm size (ac.)	22	27	30	45
Market value of products sold (\$1000)	500,600	551,553	44,212	39,701
Market value of products sold, per farm	92,120	112,195	63,891	66,837
Average age of farm operator	58.7	57.6	56.8	57.0
Primary occupation of operator- Farming	46%	46%	51%	46%

Sources: United States Department of Agriculture, 2012 Census of Agriculture and 2007 Census of Agriculture

## Agriculture Commission

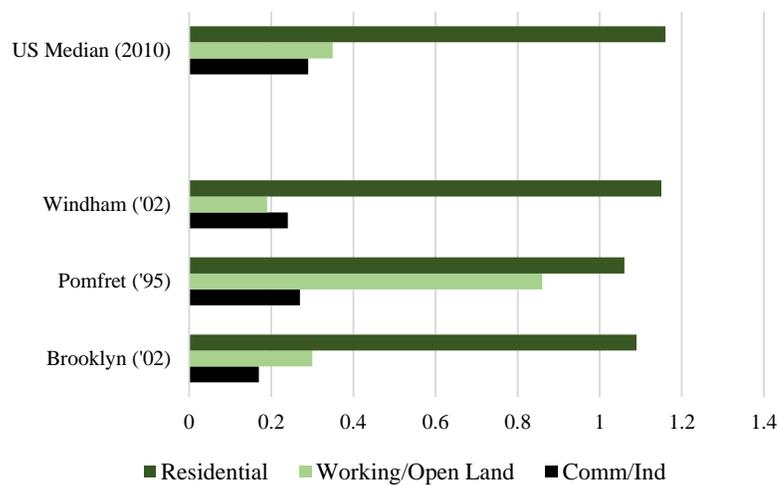
The Ashford Agriculture Commission was established in 2010 as an advisory group with a number of responsibilities, including advocacy for agriculturally friendly policies, acting a medium between the agricultural community, other residents, and Town government, providing a resource for agricultural information, performing education and outreach, supporting young farms, and promoting economic development through agriculture. When establishing the commission, Ashford gained assistance from The Last Green Valley's AgVocate program.

## The Value of Agriculture

Today, a growing number of Connecticut towns are interested in preserving their agricultural heritage and exploring new ways of expanding agriculture and access to local agricultural products. Investment in agricultural preservation can strengthen community character and environmental sustainability, raise property values, and expand access to healthy, locally sourced foods. An additional benefit, which is often overlooked, is that agricultural lands and other open spaces typically have a net positive impact on

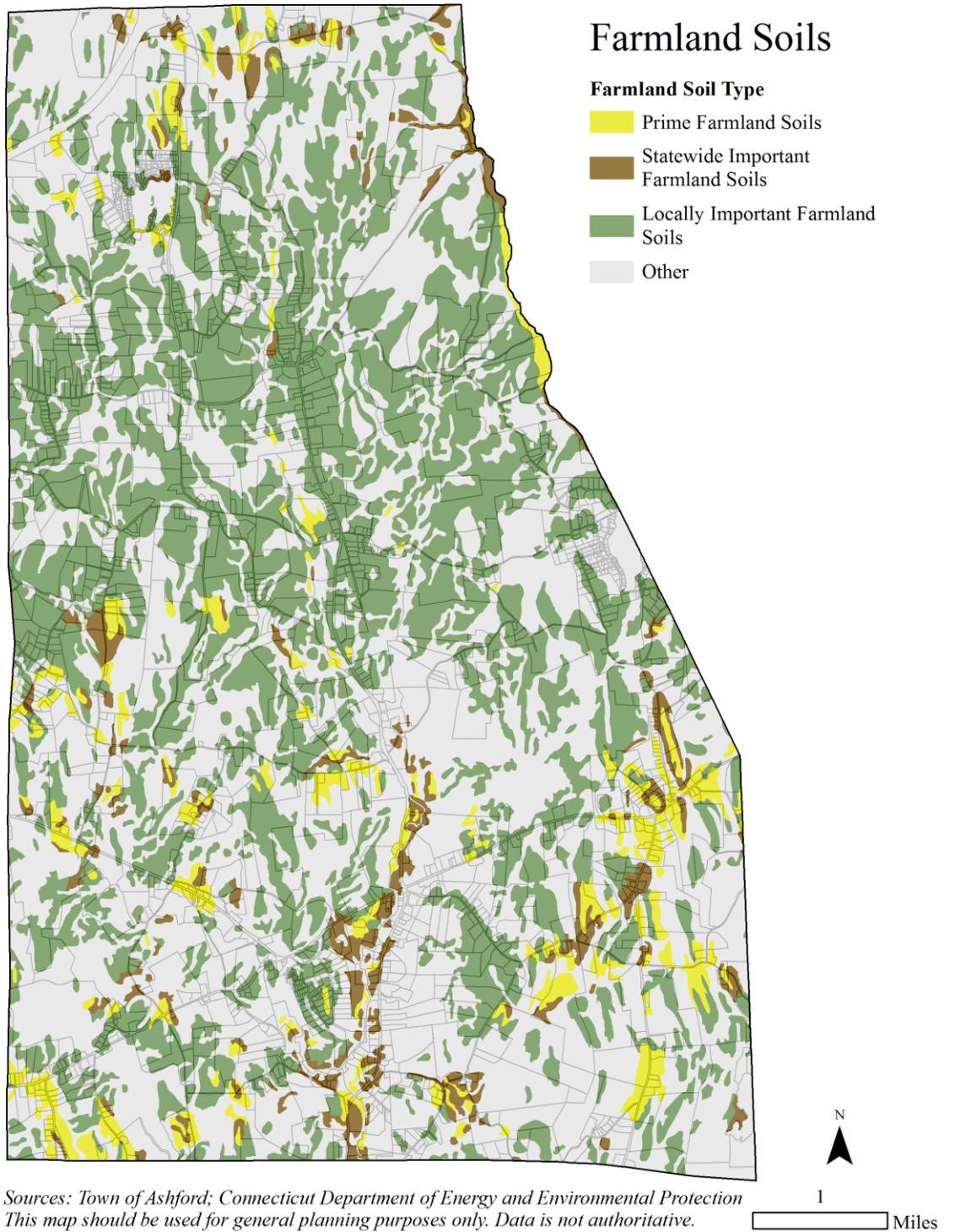
a town's budget because they require little in the way of services (*see Figure 11*). The Town of Ashford protects agricultural land and other open spaces through Public Act 63-490 or "PA 490", Connecticut's use-value assessment law (Connecticut General Statutes §12-107 a through 12-107f). PA 490 allows a town to assess a qualified property's value based on that land's present use, as opposed to "highest and best" use, which results in lower property taxes. Ashford also uses an ordinance that allows for tax abatements to be granted to dairy farms and fruit orchards. Ashford has not adopted a "Right to Farm" ordinance which simply expresses the Town's commitment to agriculture and expresses local approval of normal agricultural activities despite perceived nuisances such as noise and odor. Ashford's zoning regulations however, are very farm-friendly and go a long way to protect agricultural enterprise from citizen complaints. A number of farms in Ashford are also protected under PDR programs by the State of Connecticut and local land trust. The Town also hosts the successful Ashford Farmers' Market on Sundays in summer months. The farmers' market had ten full-time vendors as of 2015.

Figure 11- Ratio of Public Service Costs to Taxes Derived from Different Land Uses in Certain Connecticut Towns



Source: American Farmland Trust and Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, *Planning for Agriculture* (2012)

Figure 12- Farmland Soils





*Horse Listener's Orchard on Bebbington Road*

## ***Opportunities***

The 2012 Agricultural Census, of the United State Department of Agriculture, shows that the number of farms in Windham County grew by 98 between 2007 and 2012, slightly above the State average rate; however, the amount of farmed land in Windham County decreased slightly in this timeframe while farmed land in Connecticut grew. Still, Windham County has on average, larger farm sizes than the State as a whole, had the greatest per-capita acreage of land in farms, and had the second-greatest number of farms per capita, behind Litchfield County, based on 2010 Decennial Census data for population<sup>123</sup>.

Nation-wide, it appears that importance is returning to locally sourced food, and that Connecticut farmers have ample opportunity to capitalize on residents that are growing more cognizant of where their food comes from, how it is grown, and how it is prepared.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, *2007 Census of Agriculture*

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, *2012 Census of Agriculture*

<sup>3</sup> United States Census Bureau, *2010 Decennial Census of Population and Housing*

## ***Vision for Agriculture***

*“Ashford will continue to develop and implement policies which seek to strengthen the economic viability of agricultural enterprise, while continuing to preserve agricultural lands for their aesthetic value. In this way, Ashford will cement its identity as a farm-friendly community, and give back to those that have given so much to the Town.”*

## ***Issues***

- A stronger sense of community is needed amongst farmers in Town: many newer farmers do not have connections with neighbors or with the Agriculture Commission
- Need for greater PDR investment from the State and involvement from local farmers
- No current partnership between local farmers and the school districts
- Barriers for new farmers, such as business education, access to start-up capital, knowledge of supporting programs, and land

## ***Policy Support***

Objective 1: As a town, support agricultural enterprises

- a. Encourage the purchase of locally grown products
- b. Seek additional ways to promote, support, and grow the Ashford Farmers’ Market
- c. Encourage relationships between Ashford School and local farmers
- d. Explore the adoption of property tax abatement ordinances for farming operations other than dairy farms and orchards
- e. Consider adopting a Right to Farm Ordinance subject to balancing the protection of residential property rights
- f. Assemble a list of leased and available agricultural land, and encourage the use of the Connecticut FarmLink program
- g. Continue to support the vocational agricultural program at E.O. Smith High School
- h. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a value-added agricultural production facility at an industrially zoned location
- i. Encourage a more cohesive agricultural community
- j. Continually identify policy barriers to agricultural enterprise, and find solutions to those issues

## ***Land Preservation***

Objective 2: Increase the amount of preserved agricultural land in Town

- a.* Assist large landowners with participation in State programs for agricultural land preservation.
- b.* Adhere to the legislative intent of Public Act 490 for agricultural lands and support the State's PDR program and similar efforts of preservation groups to protect farmland.

## G. Natural Resources

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Ashford is in a region of Connecticut known as the “Quiet Corner” because of its rural character and lack of urbanized areas. The Town is located in the Shetucket River watershed in the Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, a nationally designated region of Connecticut and Massachusetts, as well as the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District. As stated earlier, the majority of Town is forested land which displays a rich mix of not only deciduous tree cover from oaks, maples, ash, hickory, elm, and beech, but also coniferous tree cover from white pine, hemlock, red pine, and white cedar.

### *Soils*

In Ashford, there are Prime, Statewide Important, and Locally Important farmland soils<sup>1</sup>, as classified by the USDA. Prime and Statewide Important soils can typically be found in river valleys, and are dense along the Mount Hope River in southern Ashford, as well as on hill tops. Locally Important soils are found throughout most of Town. Highly farmable soils are typically also wetlands soils.



*The Friedman Memorial Forest, owned by Joshua’s Trust, is an example of an oak-hickory forest*

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<sup>1</sup> Prime soils have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for growing crops. Statewide Important soils are high-yield soils that do not fully meet criteria for Prime soils. Locally Important soils are used for production of food and are important to the local economy; they have only been identified by a limited number of Connecticut towns, including Ashford.

Figure 13- Wetland Soils

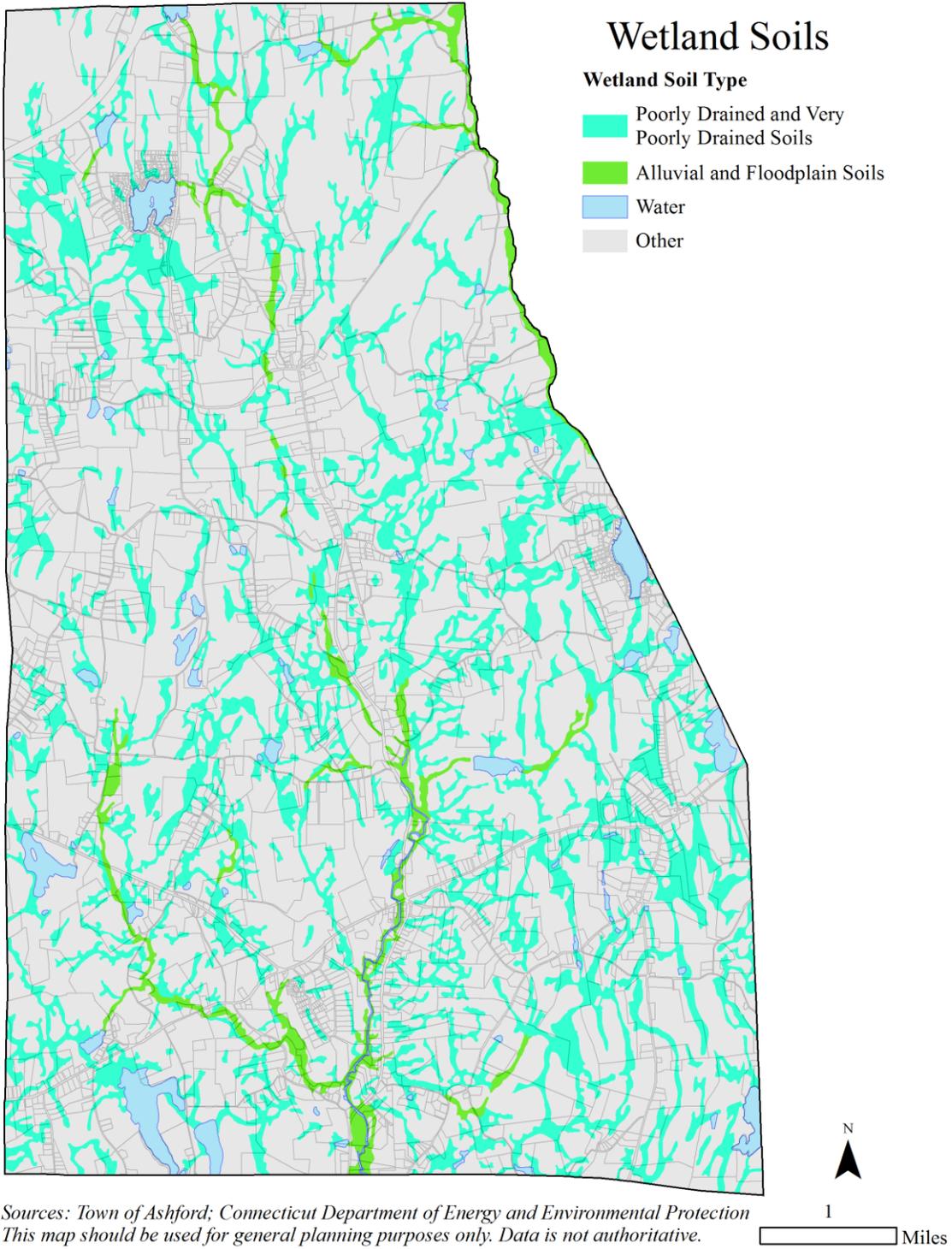
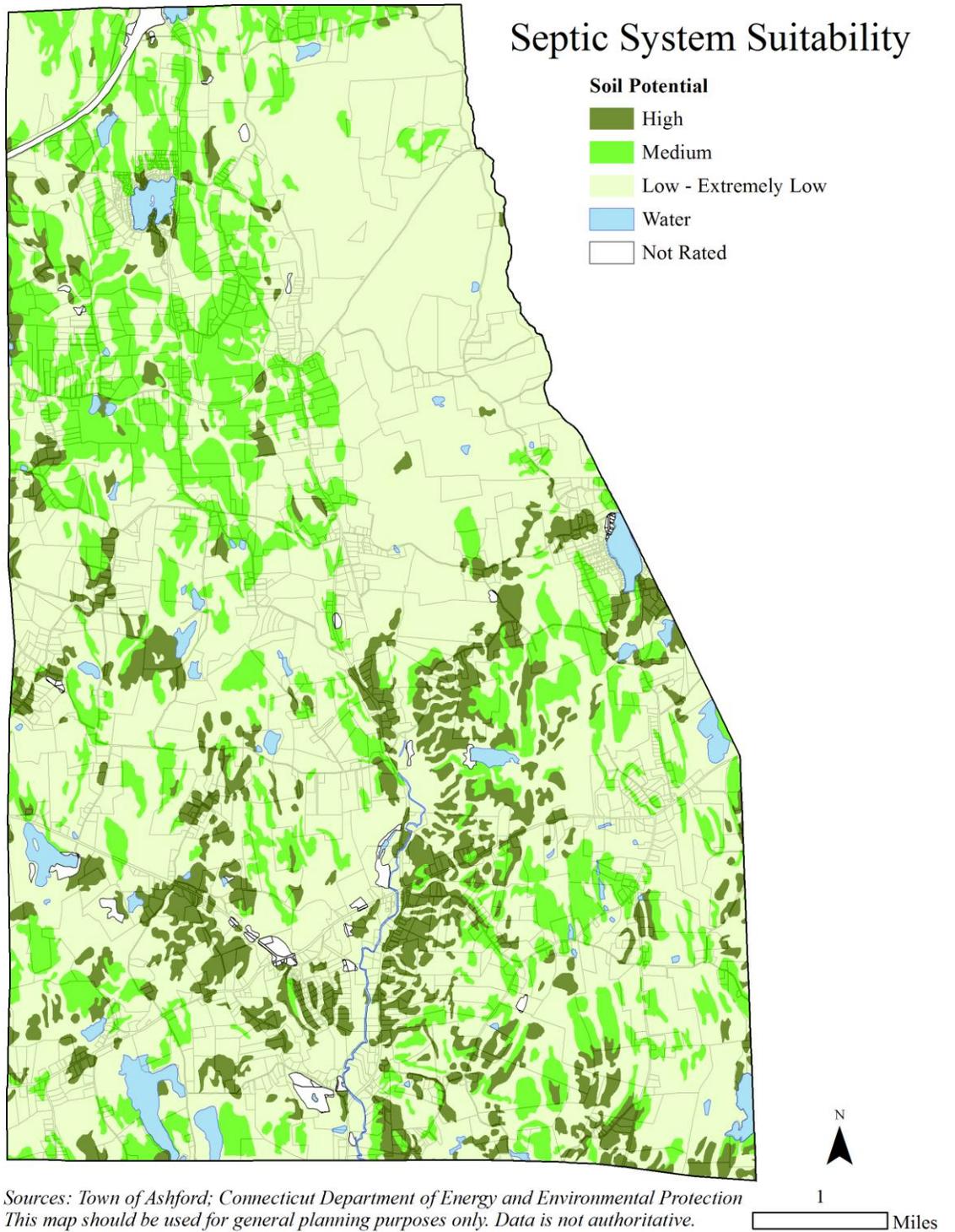


Figure 14- Septic System Suitability of Soils



Almost all homes and businesses in Ashford rely on on-site underground wells for drinking water. Ashford has few aquifers in town, the largest of which is along the southern end of the Mount Hope River. Here, coarse, sandy soil is up to 50 feet deep. All homes in Ashford rely on on-site septic systems for waste disposal, which limits the intensity of future development, especially since there are many areas of town with low soil suitability for septic systems.

### ***Hydrology***

Ashford is almost entirely within the regional drainage basin of the Natchaug River; the northern slope of Snow Hill, draining into the Willimantic River. These two rivers meet in Windham to form the Shetucket River, which is a tributary to the Thames River. Ashford's most prominent river is the Mount Hope River, which runs through the center of Town, from Morey Pond on the Ashford-Union town line, into Mansfield (see Figure 15). Lakes and ponds in Ashford are typically shallow and swampy.

Major lakes and ponds include Knowlton Pond, Morey Pond, Rychlings (Lowry) Pond, Lake Chaffee, and Ashford Lake. Ashford Lake and Lake Chaffee both have a large concentration of lakeside homes.

### ***Topography***

The mean elevation of Ashford is 640.6 feet above sea level, the highest in Windham County. Also, at 1,200 feet, Snow Hill in northeastern Ashford is the highest peak in Windham County and one of the highest peaks in eastern Connecticut. Boston Hollow is perhaps Ashford's most significant

topographic feature. Boston Hollow is a deep valley that runs southwest-northeasterly toward the Eastford town line and into the Yale-Myers forest. Boston Hollow is served by a dirt road and is rich with hemlock, oak, and white pine.

### ***Wildlife***

Ashford is home to an abundance of White-tailed Deer, making it a popular hunting destination, as well as larger mammals such as black bear, and potentially moose—with recent sightings in Eastford and Union. Smaller animals include as coyotes, Red and Gray Fox, bobcats, beavers, owls, hawks, and eagles.

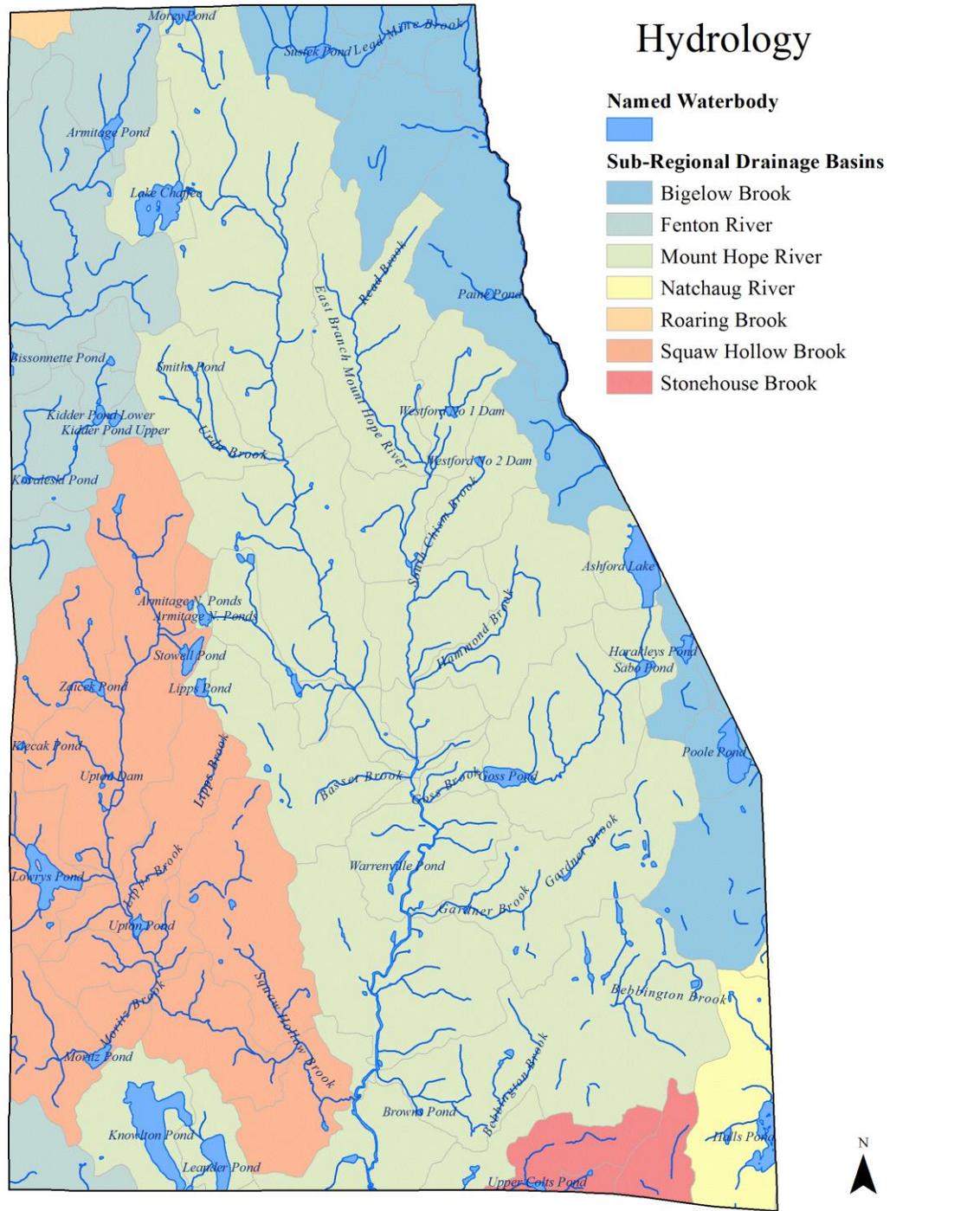


*Boston Hollow heading up toward Eastford*



*A bald eagle at Lake Chaffee*

Figure 15- Major Watercourses and Drainage Basins in Ashford



Sources: Town of Ashford; Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
 This map should be used for general planning purposes only. Data is not authoritative.

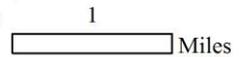


Figure 16- Surface Water and Groundwater Quality

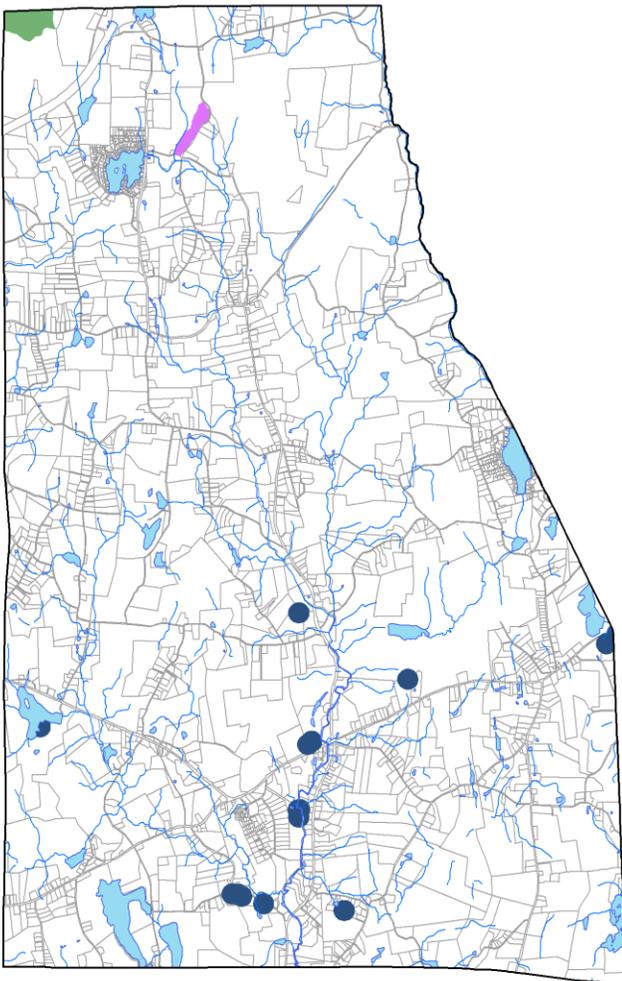
# Surface Water and Groundwater Quality

## Surface Water

- AA
- AA

## Groundwater

- GA
- GAA-Impaired
- GAA-Well
- GAAs (most of Town)



GA: Designated uses: existing private and potential public or private supplies of water suitable for drinking without treatment; baseflow for hydraulically connected surface water bodies.

GAA-Impaired: Actual quality of groundwater does not meet the assigned classifications criteria for GAA. Modified class designation unique to digital data.

GAA-Well: Designated uses: Class GAA, an existing or potential public supply of water suitable for drinking without treatment; baseflow for hydraulically connected surface water bodies. The 500 ft radius area that represents an area of contribution to a public water supply well. Modified class designation unique to digital data.

GAA: Designated uses: existing or potential public supply of water suitable for drinking without treatment; baseflow for hydraulically connected surface water bodies.

GAAs: Designated uses: existing or potential public supply of water suitable for drinking without treatment; baseflow for hydraulically connected surface water bodies. Ground water that is tributary to a public water supply reservoir.

AA: Designated uses: existing or proposed drinking water supply, fish and wildlife habitat, recreational use (may be restricted,) agricultural and industrial supply. Discharge restricted to: discharges from public or private drinking water treatment systems, dredging and dewatering, emergency and clean water discharges.

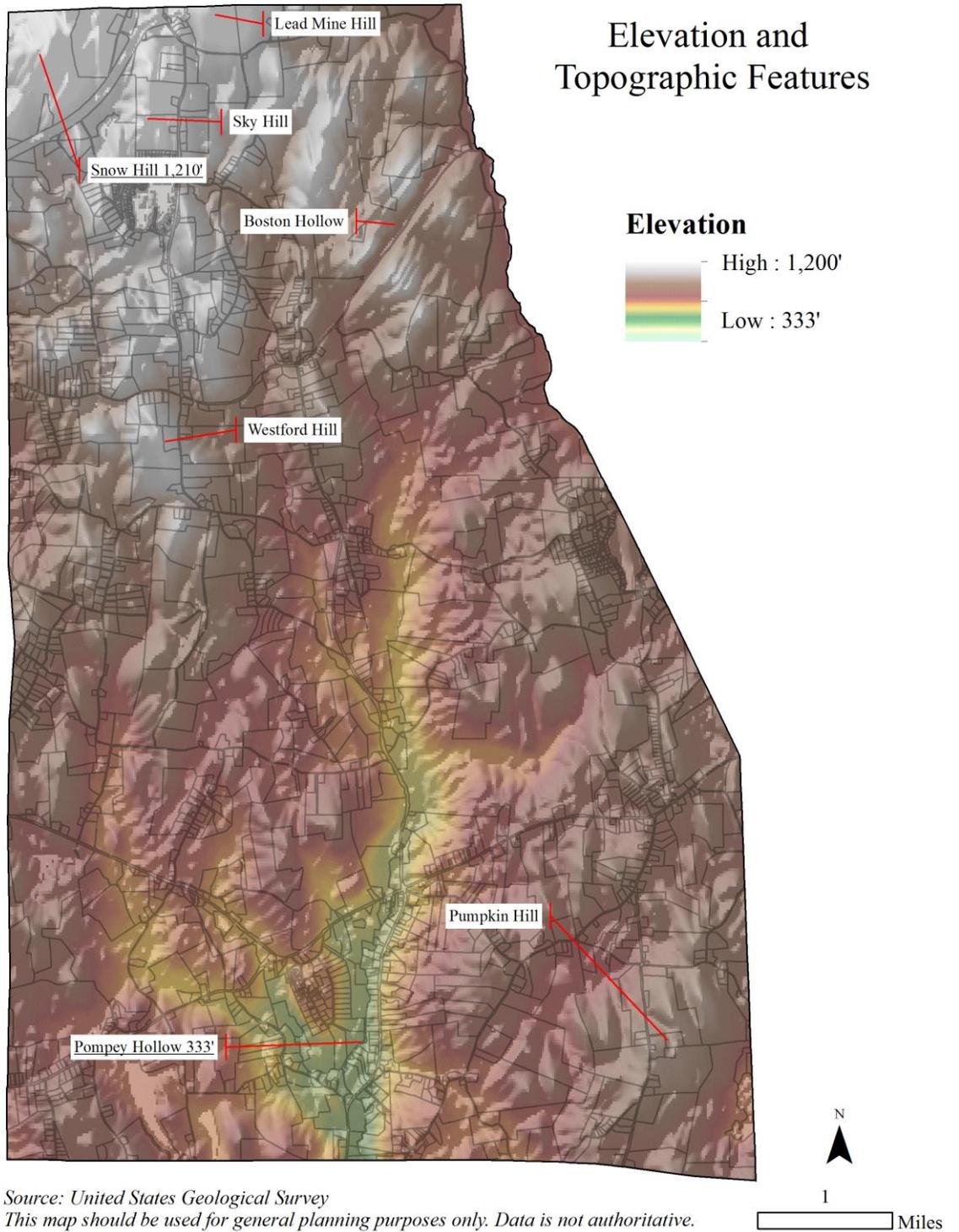


1.5

Miles

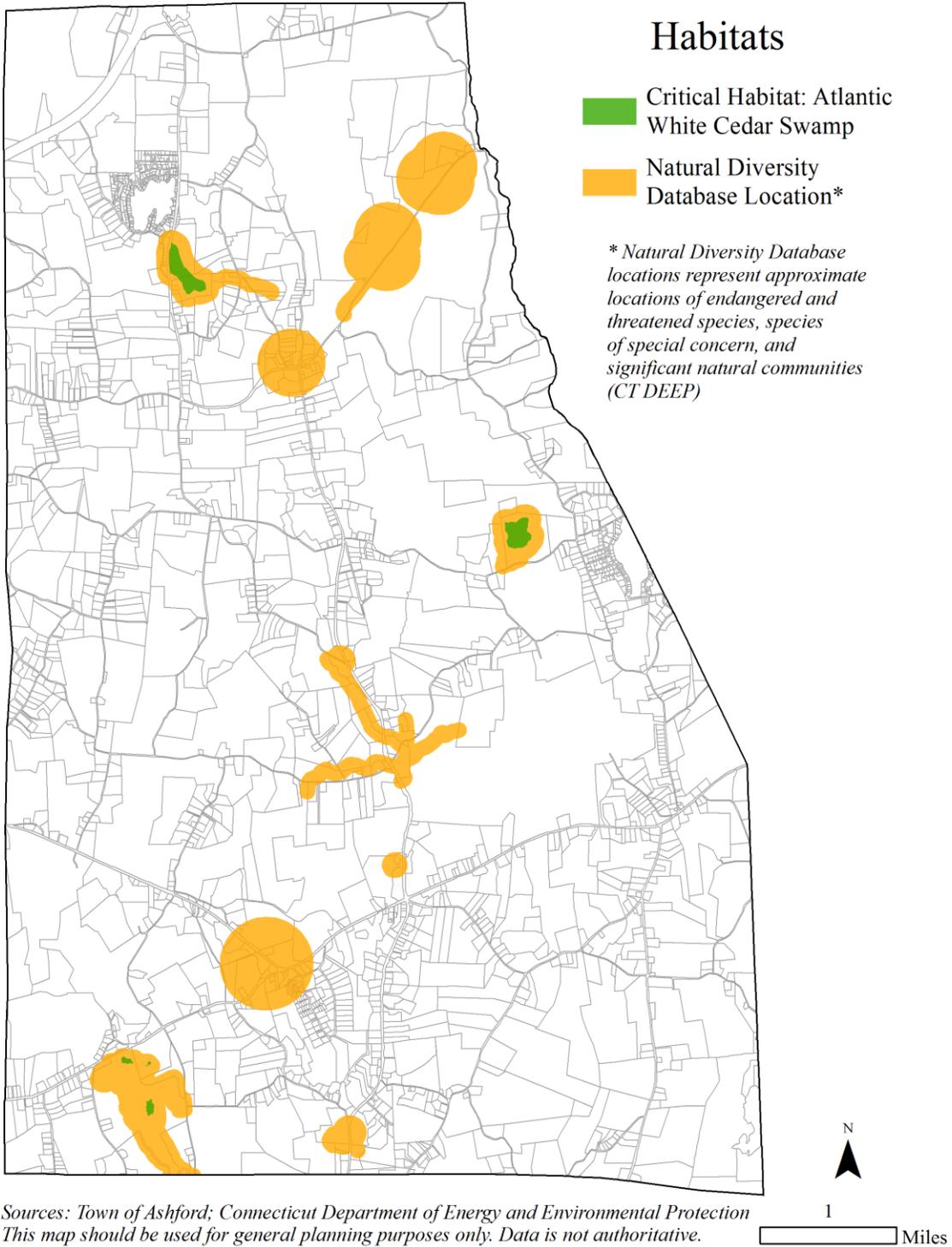
Sources: Town of Ashford; Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
 This map should be used for general planning purposes only. Data is not authoritative.

Figure 17- Elevation and Topographic Features



Source: United States Geological Survey  
This map should be used for general planning purposes only. Data is not authoritative.

Figure 18- Critical Habitats and Natural Diversity Database Locations



## *Open Space*

Preserved and managed open space—camps, State land, open space in land trusts, town property, and the Yale-Myers forest—is a valuable resource in Ashford and is a large share of the Town’s total land area (see *Figure 19*). 32.8% of Ashford is preserved or managed open space while an even larger proportion receives reduced property tax assessment under PA 490, through farmland, forestland, or open space classification. A town may use discretion when setting criteria for parcels or portions of parcels that qualify as open space PA 490. Currently, all open space in excess of the minimum lot size of a parcel may qualify for open space valuation pursuant to PA 490 (Connecticut General Statutes §12-107a through 12-107f).

Hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing are popular activities in Ashford and draw people in from outside of the Town. The Nipmuck and Natchaug trails, both part of Connecticut’s “Blue-Blazed” trail system, pass through Ashford. These trails are 34.5 and 19.5 miles, respectively<sup>2</sup>. An issue that has been raised in Town, in the past, is that a number of significant State parks and other open space tracts in and near Ashford are connected by main roads without provisions for bicycle and pedestrian safety. Improvements such as bicycle lanes and walking paths could correct this safety and recreation limitation. For example, shared-lane markings can be used on local and State roads to make them more bike-friendly.

A distinct feature of Ashford is its abundance of camps. Camps include: the Salvation Army of Connecticut and Rhode Island’s Camp CONNRI, the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp for children with serious medical conditions, founded by late actor Paul Newman, Boy Scouts of America’s June Norcross Webster Scout Reservation, and the Evangelical Christian Center Summer Camp.

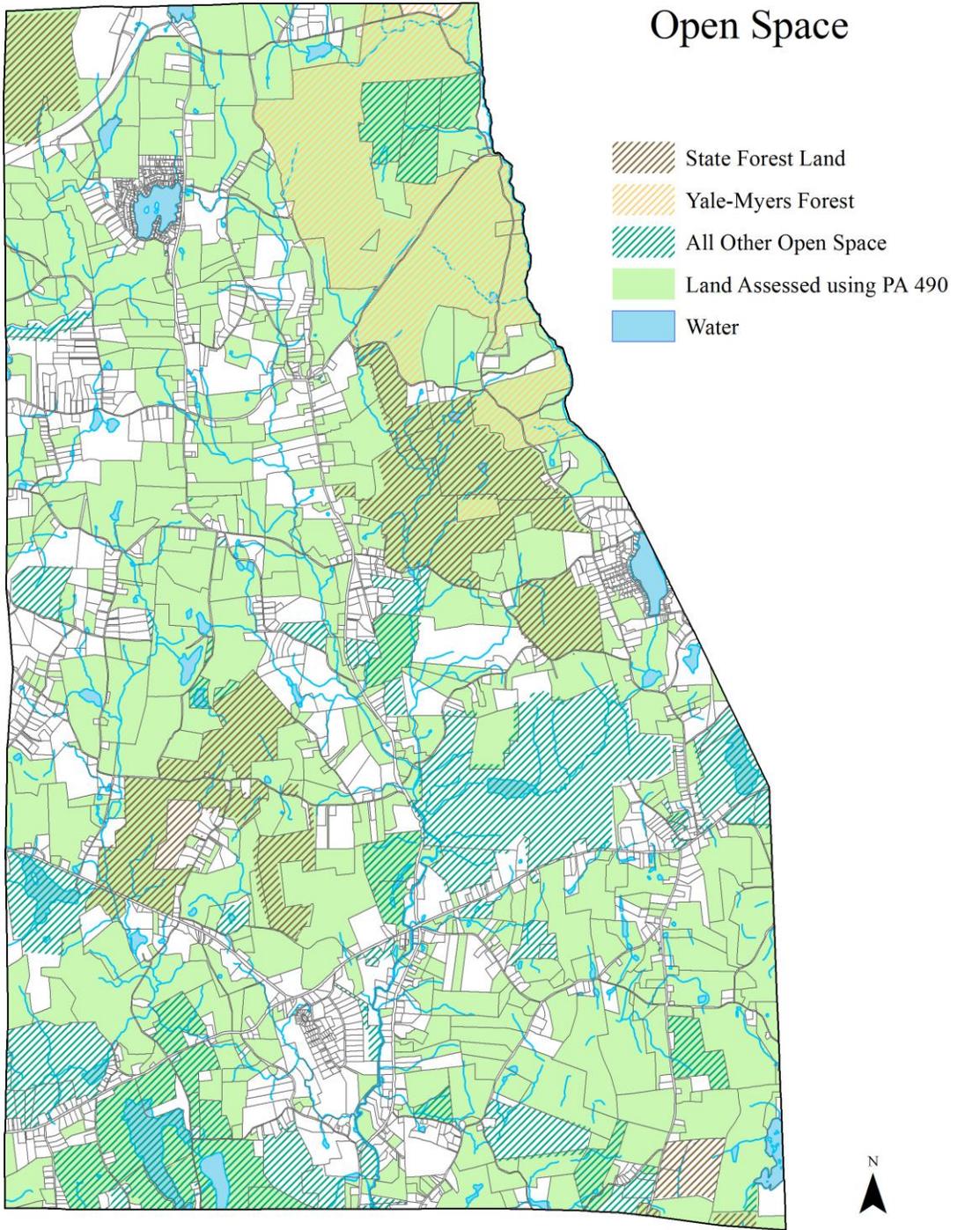


*A sign marking the intersection of the Nipmuck and Natchaug trails in a remote, forested portion of town*

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<sup>2</sup> John Hibbard, Connecticut Walk Book East: The Guide to the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails of Eastern Connecticut

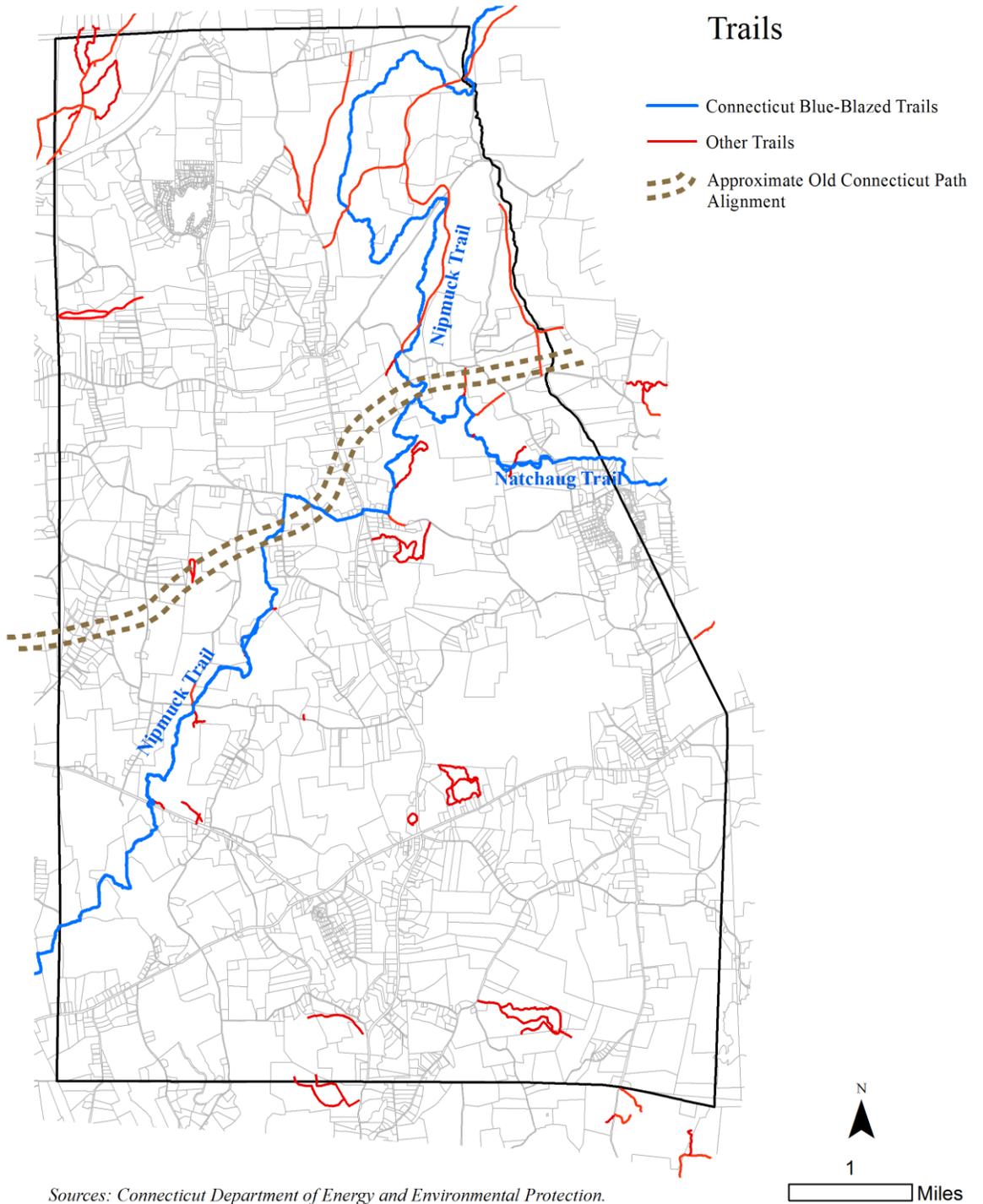
Figure 19- Open Space Land



Sources: Town of Ashford; Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
This map should be used for general planning purposes only. Data is not authoritative.

1 Miles

Figure 20- Major Public Use Trails



Sources: Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.  
This map should be used for general planning purposes only. Data is not authoritative.

### ***Conservation Commission***

In 1972, Ashford established a Conservation Commission responsible for recommending, to regulatory boards and commissions, proper actions that may be taken for the conservation of natural resources within the Town, and for guiding the appropriation of open space funding, coordinating community programs related to the environment, and performing long-term open space planning.

In June 2015, the Conservation Commission completed the *Ashford Open Space Plan*, a document which inventories the Town's open space and environmental assets, recommends actions to other boards, commissions, and committees, identifies key areas to focus future preservation efforts, and establishes a vision, goals, and objectives for the future of open space planning. "The Vision for the Future", page 8 of the *Ashford Open Space Plan* reads, "*The Ashford Conservation Commission envisions an Ashford that continues to maintain its character and charm, often described as "rural character". The acquisition or preservation of carefully selected open spaces is a key component of maintaining community charm. The Conservation Commission recognizes that it is essential to provide a variety of types of open spaces in order to maintain rural character.*"

### ***Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission***

The Ashford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission carries out the regulatory duties prescribed in §22a-36-45a of the Connecticut General Statutes and enforces *The Town of Ashford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations*. The Commission has the authority to require and propose mitigation actions and modifications to plans in order to minimize impact to wetland soils and waterbodies in town, as well as enforce those decisions through the Town's duly authorized wetland agent. The Commission is the first to review major development proposals that are within the regulated upland review area (within 200 feet of the Mount Hope River, 150 feet of its named tributaries, and 100 feet from any other watercourses or wetland soils) or determined to have a possible impact on the health of wetland soils and watercourses.

## ***Vision for Natural Resource Management***

*“The Town of Ashford will promote environmental protection and stewardship of resources for the benefit of generations to come.”*

### ***Issues***

- Motorized vehicles (ATVs and dirt bikes) using walking trails
- Inadequate signage for Mount Hope River access points
- Conversion of grasslands to forested land
- Proliferation of invasive species in the natural landscape
- Fragmentation of open spaces and wildlife corridors

### ***Forest Management***

Objective 1: Encourage sustainable forest management for health and long-term productivity

- a. Educate landowners through the Eastern CT Forest Landowners Association, Coverts Project, UCONN Extension, CT Forests & Parks Association, Yale School of Forestry, and other outlets on best management practices, forest stewardship plans, and land conservation
- b. Support the use of land trusts and encourage the use of State and federal programs to permanently protect forests through conservation restrictions and other methods
- c. Encourage the camps, Yale University and other large property owners to protect their property from development with a donation of a conservation restriction, sale of development rights, or other methods
- d. Maintain an inventory of all lands in excess of 25 acres. Using the inventory develop a hierarchy for preservation and protection in relation to existing tracts of open space, and incorporate that data into the Regional GIS viewer

Objective 2: Maintain native tree cover and forest types

- a. Encourage the planting of native New England plants and discourage the cutting of mature native trees and shrubs, especially between buildings and the road
- b. Provide information to homeowners from DEEP and the UCONN College of Agriculture on invasive species and the removal and management of invasive plants
- c. Inventory street trees and develop a replacement schedule for trees in areas of new development that would benefit from tree cover

### ***Open Space Recreation***

Objective 3: Encourage passive and active outdoor recreation, including fishing, hunting, hiking, boating, and birdwatching

- a. Expand public access to fishable waters by obtaining easements from property owners and increasing signage of access areas
- b. Use assigned stewards from organizations such as Trout Unlimited to help maintain fishing access areas
- c. Work with CT Forest & Park Association to protect the continuity of Blue Blazed Trails and other linkages, camps, and state forests
- d. Build relationships with camps to encourage partnership and sharing of resources, such as the maintenance of roads, in exchange for recreation programs and public access camp property

### ***Water Quality***

Objective 4: Assure the future usefulness of the Town's water resources for recreation and natural qualities

- a. Ensure that water quality, pollutant levels, invasive species, septic systems, and erosion and sedimentation are being monitored on a regular schedule
- b. Educate landowners and lake association members on preventable water quality issues such as eutrophication from fertilizer runoff, septic system failure, and pesticides and herbicides
- c. Continue water quality testing of Lake Chaffee, Ashford Lake, and the Mount Hope River
- d. Continue a study of existing septic systems to ensure compliance with current Eastern Highlands Health District standards

### ***Habitat***

Objective 5: Protect habitat diversity

- a. Create green corridors by linking open space parcels
- b. Prioritize areas with identified threatened species
- c. Protect grasslands from forest conversion
- d. Preserve land that will help protect surface and subsurface water sources

## *Administration*

### Objective 6: Enhance the abilities of the Conservation Commission

- a.* Keep up-to-date maps and records of conservation easements, preserved open space, and ownership of surrounding land, educate the public on conservation techniques, and design management plans for conserved areas
- b.* Require, when applicable, a report from the Conservation Commission and Town Engineer, prior to subdivision approval
- c.* Work with the local land trusts and the State to match funds for acquiring conservation easements
- d.* Encourage donation of Town-owned open space to local land trusts for management and monitoring
- e.* Encourage citizens to support land trusts and to conserve land within conservation areas
- f.* Consider the recommendations of the Ashford Open Space Plan

### Objective 7: Develop sound policies for the taxation of open space

- a.* Continually reassess implementation of PA 490 for open space including eligibility criteria such as acreage, area of town, and natural features.

## Lake Chaffee and Ashford Lake

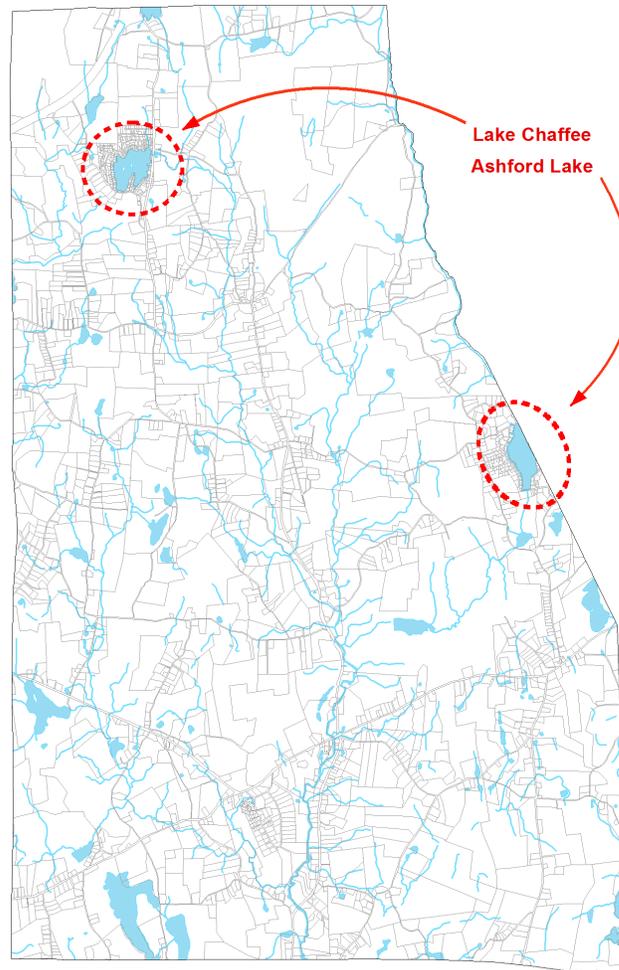
Ashford Lake and Lake Chaffee are manmade lakes and are the most densely populated areas in Ashford. Both lakes are governed by lake associations: Ashford Lake Property Owners' Association (ALPOA) and Lake Chaffee Improvement Association (LCIA). Because of the lakes' high populations, water quality has been an ongoing issue. Commonly, populated lakes face threats from high nutrient levels from fertilizer runoff, invasive plant species, bacteria from failed septic systems, and sedimentation.

### ***Vision for the Ashford Lake and Lake Chaffee Special Planning Areas***

*"The communities of Ashford Lake and Lake Chaffee will remain important residential areas to year-round residents and those wishing to visit Ashford as a rural getaway by ensuring that human development does not compromise the lakes' environmental integrity"*

Objective 1: Assure the future usefulness of the lakes to residents and wildlife

- a. Ensure that water quality, pollutant levels, invasive species, septic systems, and erosion and sedimentation are being monitored on a regular schedule.
- b. Educate landowners and lake association members on preventable water quality issues such as eutrophication from fertilizer runoff.
- c. Recommend a schedule for continued water quality testing.
- d. Recommend a study of existing septic systems to ensure that they are within current code requirements.



*Data is not authoritative*

## H. Historic Resources

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Ashford is the 48<sup>th</sup>-oldest town in Connecticut and was established in 1714, 62 years prior to the founding of the United States. Ashford is a place of pervasive colonial and early-American history: stone walls, antique homes, churches, barns, and cemeteries dot the rural countryside and are a vital piece of the Town's visual landscape and community identity.

### *Historic Buildings*

Ashford has four properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Ashford Academy, Knowlton Memorial Hall

(the present-day library), Church Farm, and Mixer Tavern belong to the NRHP. Ashford Academy, in Ashford Center, was built in 1823 and served as a public school until 1949. Knowlton Memorial Hall, in Warrenville, is named for Thomas Knowlton, a Revolutionary War colonel, and was built with a gift from his family. The building was built in 1923, served as Ashford's town office building until 2006, and now houses the Babcock Library and serves as the Town's meeting hall. Church Farm has been used since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with its house built in 1821 and its current barn built in 1895, it was added to the NRHP for its well-preserved architecture. Mixer Tavern was owned by John Mixer, one of Ashford's original founders and was built in 1715 as a stopping point for travelers on the Old Boston Turnpike.

### *Villages*

The villages of Ashford Center and Westford have seen very little development and retain their original colonial character in historic buildings, sites, and a traditional layout. These villages are situated along major routes and allow passersby to gain a sense that the Town of Ashford is still in-touch with its history. The village of Westford is the best-preserved example of a New England village in Town, centered on a Greek revival church building and cemetery, and framed with farmland.

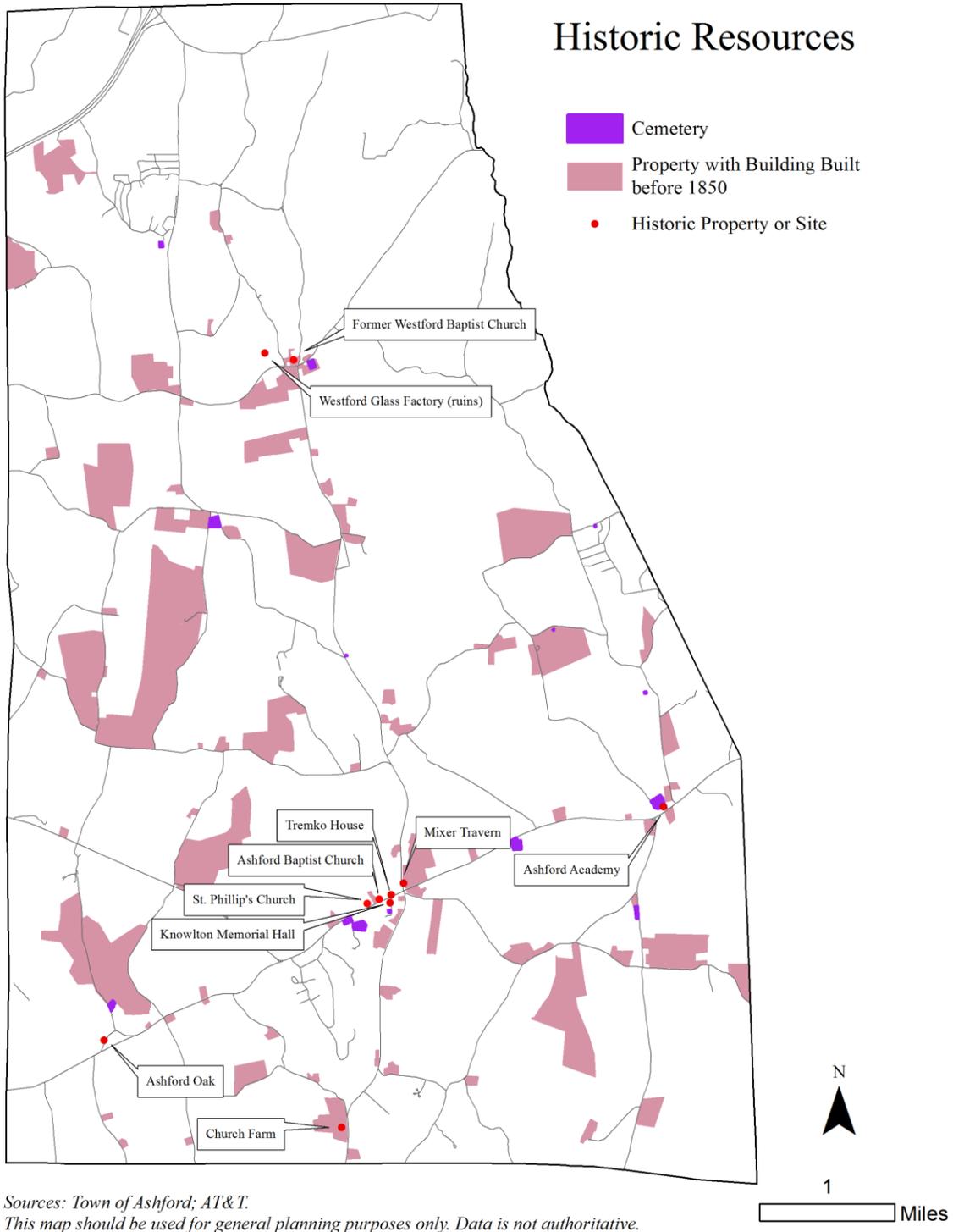
### *Other Historic Sites*

Other notable historic sites in Ashford include: the Old Connecticut Path which is a historic foot and horse path between Hartford and Boston that is partially on private land, the ruins of the Westford Glass Factory, and the Tremko-Stebbins House which was built in 1773 and which may one day be renovated to serve as a museum and headquarters for the Ashford Historical Society, in the heart of Warrenville. Historic churches in Ashford include two Greek revival-styled churches: the former Baptist church in Westford and the former United Baptist Church of Ashford in Warrenville, as well as St. Phillip the Apostle Church in Warrenville.



*Ernest James' sawmill, which once stood in Warrenville*

Figure 21- Historic Sites



## ***Vision for Historic Resources***

*“The Town of Ashford will support efforts of property owners to preserve and enhance the Town’s historic resources, recognizing that Ashford is fortunate in that the Town still boasts colonial and early-American homes, Greek revival churches, antique barns, cemeteries, a town green, and four properties on the National Register of Historic Places.”*

## ***Issues***

- No complete inventory of historic homes and buildings
- Incomplete documentation of the Old Connecticut Path
- Removal of stone walls for development or sale
- The old Baptist Church in Westford has been unoccupied for a number of years and may be lost to fire, vandalism, or structural issues

## ***Buildings***

Objective 1: Protect historic buildings and sites in Ashford, especially historic villages

- a. Encourage the restoration, maintenance, and appropriate reuse of historic buildings and other sites, and make property owners aware of State, federal, and non-profit rehabilitation assistance
- b. Inventory locations of Ashford’s historic resources, including those not listed on the State and National registers, and incorporate that data into the regional GIS viewer
- c. Continue to encourage the Ashford Historical Society and other interested parties to host lectures and other events on the history of Ashford and give guidance for the restoration and maintenance of historic sites

## ***Stone Walls***

Objective 2: Protect historic stone walls that define past and present boundaries

- a. Consider adopting a “Stone Wall Ordinance” that would require landowners to obtain a permit before removing stonewalls along roads, rights of way, and property boundaries
- b. Create an inventory of existing stone walls along rights of way using orthophotography and LiDAR, and incorporate that data into the Regional GIS viewer
- c. Encourage regular mowing and brush cutting where stone walls line rights of way

## Ashford Center and Westford Special Planning Areas

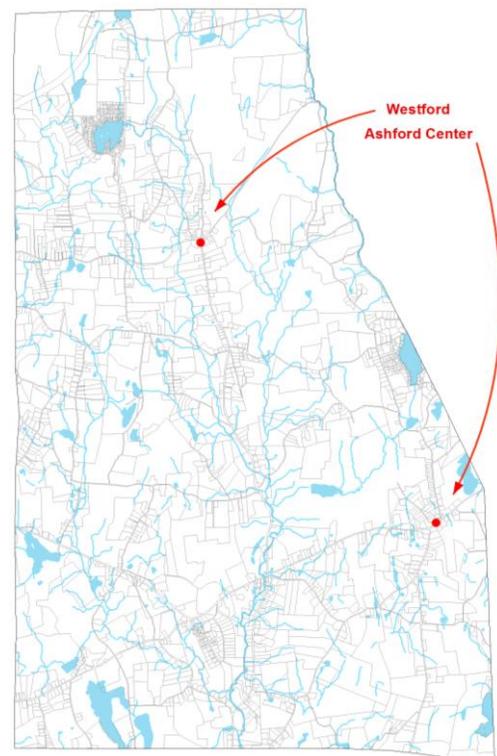
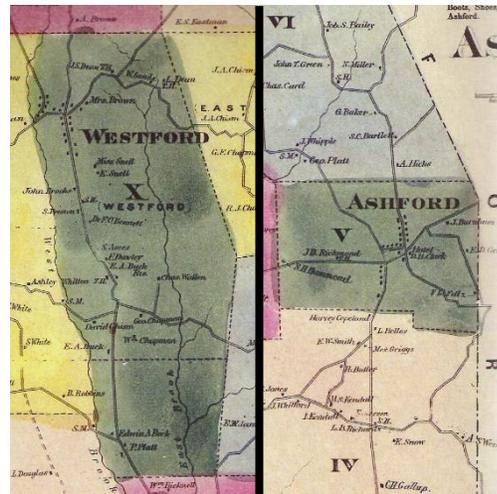
### *Vision for Ashford Center and Westford*

*“Ashford Center and Westford will retain their historic character and visual appeal through the active maintenance and enhancement of historic buildings and features.”*

The villages of Ashford Center and Westford are valuable representations of the Town’s history. Both villages have seen little development and are home to historically significant sites, architecture, cemeteries, farms, and stone walls. The former Westford Baptist church, which is now empty, still stands in the center of Westford, framing it as an archetypal small New England village.

### *Objective 1: Preserve the historic character of both villages*

- a. Develop, through the Land Use Office, for Town-owned properties, and the Ashford Historical Society, for private properties, a plan to maintain current historic sites, and develop guidelines to ensure that future development and renovations conform to the villages’ historic character
- b. Ensure that cemeteries are being properly maintained
- c. Identify, and apply for, funds to be used toward preservation and restoration of historic sites
- d. Continue to prohibit further commercial development near or adjacent to historic structures
- e. Investigate the National designation of Westford as an historic area
- f. Preserve historic structures, sites, and artifacts in both villages



Data is not authoritative

# I. Energy

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Renewable energy has been a topic important to the leaders of Ashford and the Town has explored energy-saving solutions, not only for environmental benefits but also for cost savings. In 2009 the Town began participation in the Clean Energy Communities program of the Clean Energy Finance Investment Authority, now CT Green Bank, and the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund. The Clean Energy Communities program offers grants for energy-saving projects and



*ACETF at the Ashford Business Association Business Fair*

requires towns to meet energy reduction benchmarks. Using the 2007-2008 fiscal year as a baseline, the Town pledged in 2009 to reduce energy consumption by 20%, by 2018, in municipal buildings, and voluntarily purchase 20% of the energy in those buildings from clean, renewable sources, by 2018.

The Ashford Clean Energy Task Force (ACETF), working with the Board of Selectmen and other elected and appointed officials, seeks to identify ways in which residents can come together to preserve and improve the environment, push for clean, renewable energy sources, and promote a secure energy supply for the future. The ACETF has promoted a better understanding of energy efficiency and renewable energy in Ashford through educational programs, energy fairs, tabling at community and school events and publishing regular Green tips and other materials. One major effort was encouraging residents to sign up for CTCleanEnergyOptions, a program through Energize Connecticut. Through this program, approved by the Connecticut Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA), customers of Eversource Energy, the local electric utility company, may choose to support clean energy made from approved renewable sources such as wind, solar, and biomass. When residents do so, the Town earns recognition for supporting clean, renewable energy and is eligible to receive free solar panels on a town building, or the equivalent in funds towards a clean energy or energy efficiency project. The ACETF has also worked to promote the Home Energy Solutions program, or home energy audits. A home energy audit is a great first step for residents to determine how much energy their house uses and what improvements they can make to save money and energy.



*Photovoltaic panels at Pompey Hollow Senior Housing*

In 2013, the Towns of Ashford, Chaplin, Hampton, and Pomfret contracted with a private company, through the Solarize CT program, to offer reduced-cost photovoltaic energy system installations to residents. The program resulted in installations on 25 homes in Ashford. The Town has also lowered its energy use and costs by upgrading lighting to Light-Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs in several municipal facilities, including the Public Works Garage, Ashford School, and in outdoor lighting. A Bright Ideas grant of \$5,000 was earned by the Town, and was used to help defray the cost of the LED upgrades. In addition, using the State's Zero Emissions Renewable Energy Credit (ZREC) program, the Town has installed photovoltaic systems at Town Hall, the Ashford Volunteer Fire Department's Warrenton station, and Pompey Hollow Senior Housing.

## ***Vision for Energy***

*“The Town of Ashford will work toward attaining a greater level of energy efficiency in municipal buildings and will provide more of that energy from renewable sources, while encouraging the public to do the same.”*

### ***Issues***

- No current energy assessment for *all* municipal facilities
- Changes in State and Federal programs affect incentives for adoption of renewable and energy-efficient measures

### ***Municipal Planning Objectives***

Objective 1: Reduce energy consumption and increase the use of energy from renewable sources in municipal buildings

- a. Assess Town progress relative to energy consumption goals
- b. Explore cost-effective ways in which the Town could purchase a higher percentage of clean energy credits, if goals cannot be met in other ways
- c. Perform an energy assessment for additional municipal facilities
- d. Create a holistic energy plan for the Town, using the results of *Objectives a, b, and c*
- e. Use earned funds from the Clean Energy Options program to seed further energy reductions and cost savings

### ***Partnerships***

Objective 2: Foster partnerships for reduced energy consumption and promotion of renewable options

- a. Partner with other task forces and community groups to support efforts to grow shared renewables in Connecticut
- b. Continue to investigate shared renewable projects in town
- c. Continue to promote energy efficiency and renewable options to residents.
- d. Continue to work with local companies to promote existing and new ways to save residents money and energy at the same time
- e. Advise local farms and businesses on available and new energy efficient resources, programs, and financing opportunities, and assist them in becoming more energy-efficient, and in finding cost-effective ways to adopt renewable technologies



# Ashford 2015 – 2025

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The future of the Town of Ashford depends heavily on the foresight of leaders and policy builders and their ability to leverage usable land and space to ensure appropriate growth that complements the Town's need for conservation of agricultural land and natural resources, by concentrating development and reducing the tax burden placed on the average citizen.

## ***Land Use***

Ashford's Technology Development and Interstate Interchange Development zoning districts are on the periphery of Town and are tied to transportation. Development in these areas should minimally impact the Town's residential neighborhoods, historic village centers, and rural lands.

The Warrenville-West Ashford area of Town should follow a shared vision for the promotion of civic activities and advancement of commercial and light industrial enterprises, following traditional land use patterns and employing architectural and site elements designed to create an aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian-friendly environment.

## ***Land Preservation***

Ashford is currently fortunate to have a great share of the land permanently preserved or functionally managed. Future preservation efforts should focus on sections of Town with large, contiguous blocks of currently unprotected forests and farmland. The Mount Hope River riparian corridor should also be prioritized for preservation to protect the integrity of a valuable surface water source. Also, the alignment of the Old Connecticut Path should be better documented and recognized. Then, efforts should be made to preserve that corridor for public access, and possible inclusion in the Connecticut Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System.

## ***Transportation***

Future transportation planning in Ashford should focus, first, on providing for non-motorized options throughout Town, but especially in the Warrenville-West Ashford area. Warrenville and West Ashford are currently not connected with sidewalks or paths. Connecting the two villages with one another and surrounding parks and trail systems should make attractive commercial development more attainable. In the past, the issue of bicycle transportation on Route 89 has also been spoken to by bicycle advocates. A proposed on-road bicycle lane, born out of proceedings of Our Town – Our Future, could link Bigelow Hollow State Park in Union with Mansfield Hollow State Park in Mansfield, bisecting Ashford and connecting Lake Chaffee, Westford, Ashford School and Warrenville.

Ashford should also continue to identify and prioritize roads with high scenic value, including dirt roads, roads abutting forests, water, and farmland, and roads with scenic vistas, for future Scenic Road designation.

Figure 22- Future Land Use Plan

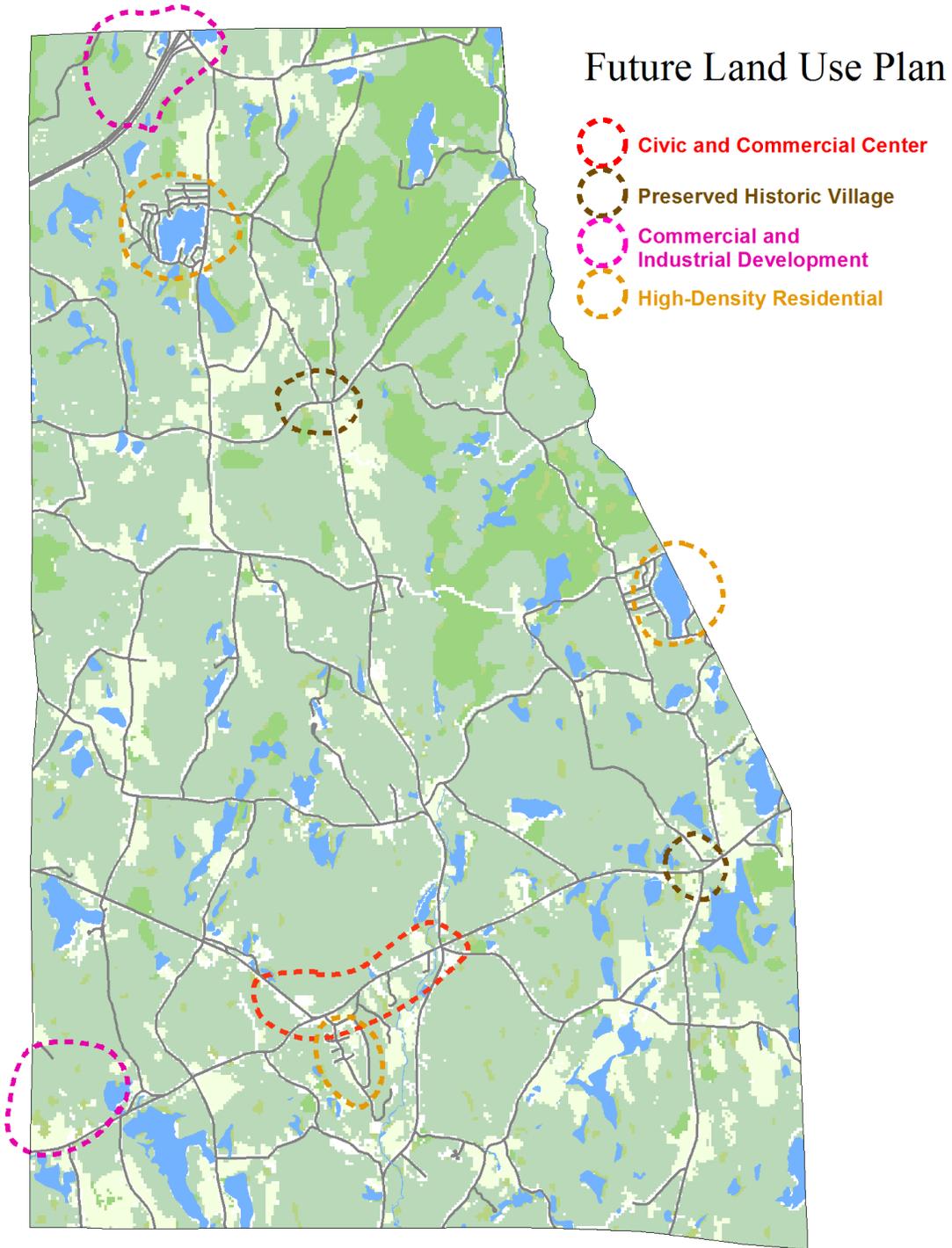


Figure 23- Land Preservation Plan

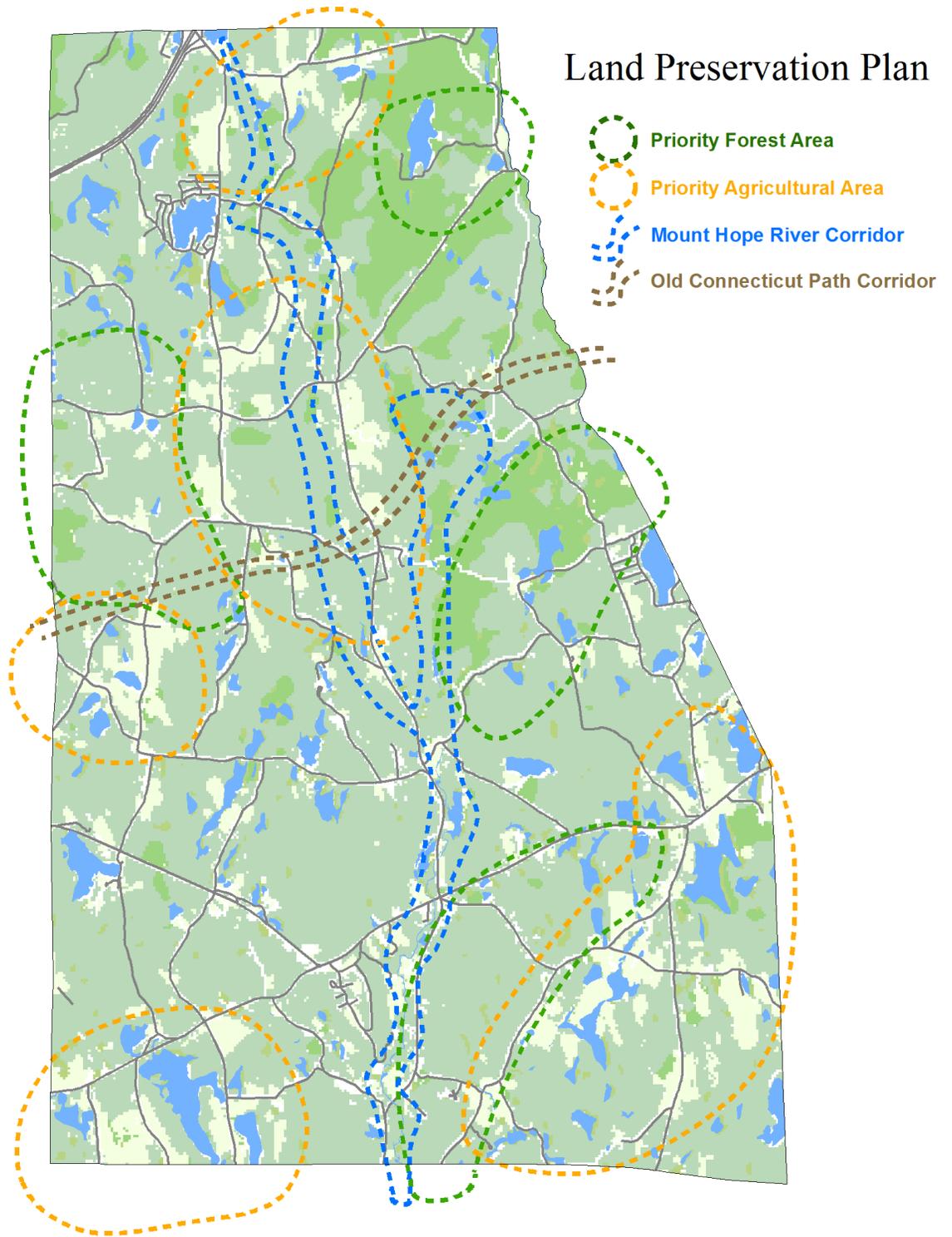
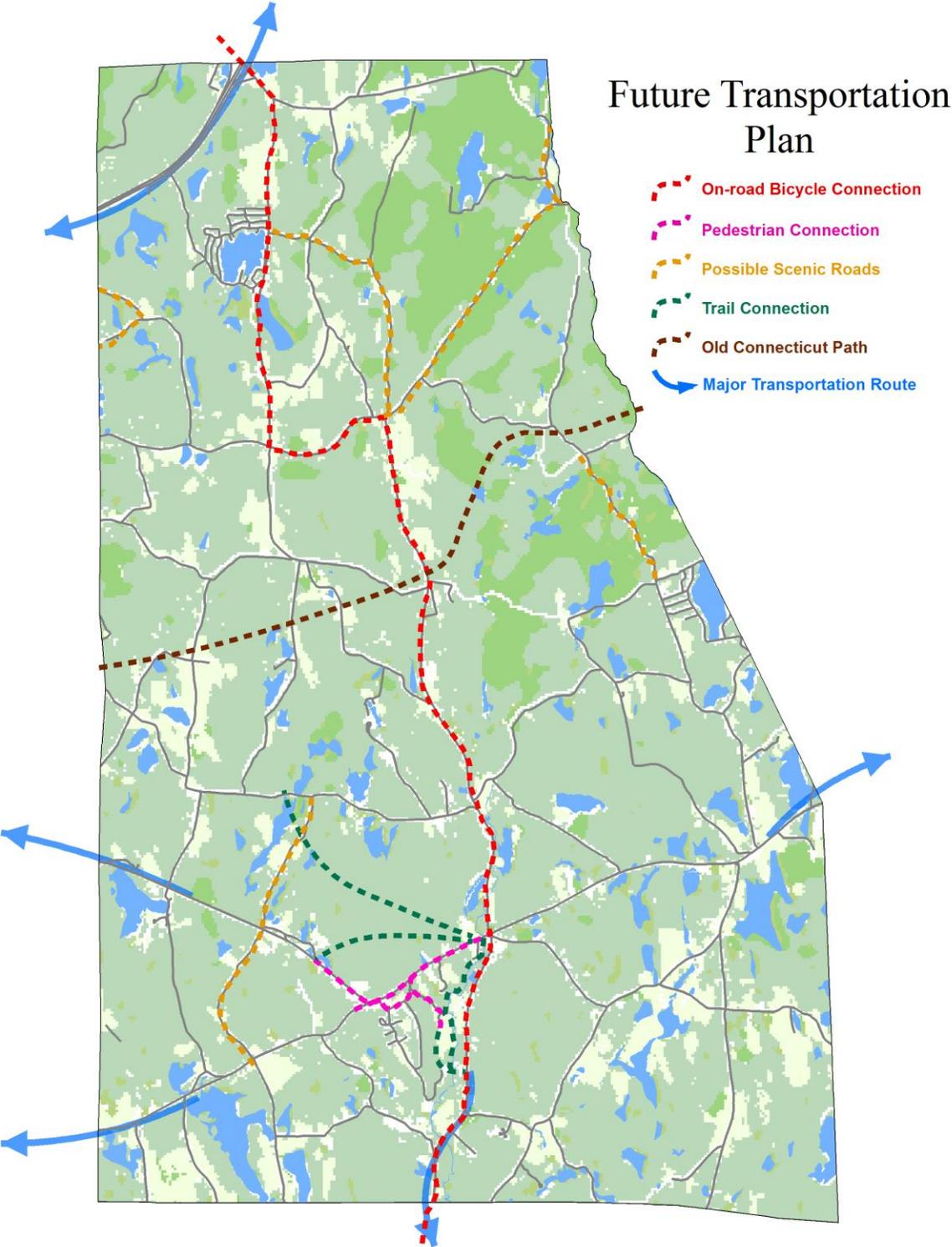


Figure 24- Future Transportation Plan



# Plan Implementation

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A plan of conservation and development is an evolving document, it should be reviewed and amended to represent the changing conditions of the Town, and implemented to fulfill its functional purpose and statutory intent.

## ***Maintenance Schedule***

The 2015 POCD will be reviewed at least once annually, as frequently as needed, by the Ashford Board of Selectmen and Ashford Planning and Zoning Commission or special committee established for carrying out plan implementation. It will be the responsibility of those officials and board and commission members involved in the plan review process to coordinate with other responsible groups—such as the Parks and Recreation Commission—for action implementation, necessary budgeting, and the establishment of project timeframes.

## ***Action Implementation***

Parties that may be responsible for implementing each action are identified on pages 76 and 77. It should be noted, however, that these assignments are subject to review by those groups and persons.

A- Assessor  
ABA- Ashford Business Association  
AC- Agricultural Commission  
ACETF- Ashford Clean Energy Task Force  
ADTC- Ashford Democrat Town Committee  
AGC- Ashford Garden Club  
AHS- Ashford Historical Society  
ALPOA- Ashford Lake Property Owners Association  
ARTC- Ashford Republican Town Committee  
ASD- Ashford School District  
BOE- Board of Education  
BOF- Board of Finance  
BOS- Board of Selectmen  
CC- Conservation Commission  
COG- Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments

EDC- Economic Development Commission  
EHHD- Eastern Highlands Health District  
EMD- Emergency Management Director  
IWWC- Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission  
LCIA- Lake Chaffee Improvement Association  
OTOF- Our Town - Our Future  
PRC- Parks and Recreation Commission  
PTO- Parent Teacher Organization  
PWD- Public Works Department  
PZC- Planning and Zoning Commission  
R19- Regional School District 19  
SC- Earl W. Smith Senior Center staff  
TC- Town Clerk  
VFD- Volunteer Fire Department  
WM- Webmaster

## Governance

Action	Responsible Parties
1a	WM, TC
1b	TC, BOS
1c	OTOF, ASD, PRC
1d	SC, BOS, BOF
1e	OTOF, BOS, BOF
2a	COG, BOF, BOE
2b	BOF, BOS, BOE
2c	BOS, BOF, PWD, VFD
2d	OTOF, VFD, BOS
3a	BOF, CC
4a	PWD, AHS
4b	PZC, EDC, PWD
4c	PWD
4d	PWD, CC
4e	PWD, CC
4f	PWD, CC, AHS
5a	BOF, PWD, BOE, VFD, BOS
5b	BOF, PWD, BOE, VFD, BOS
5c	AGC, CC, OTOF
5d	PZC, PWD
6a	OTOF, PZC
7a	PRC, OTOF, ASD
7b	PRC, ALPA, LCIA, BOF
7c	SC, PRC, ASD
7d	PRC, ASD, BOE
7e	PRC, BOE, SC, ASD
7f	PRC, CC

## Public Safety

Action	Responsible Parties
1a	VFD, EMD
2a	VFD, BOF
3a	VFD, BOF
3b	VFD, BOF, BOS

## Education

Action	Responsible Parties
1a	BOE, ASD, R19, BOF
1b	BOE, BOF, ASD, COG
1c	BOE, BOF, ASD, COG
1d	BOE, BOF, ASD, COG
2a	ASD, BOE
2b	ASD, BOE
2c	ASD, BOE, PTA
2d	ASD, BOE, PTA, OTOF
2e	ASD, BOE, PTA, OTOF
2f	ASD, BOE, PTA, OTOF
2g	ASD, BOE, PTA, OTOF
3a	ARTC, ADTC

4a	R19, PTA
4b	R19, PTA
4c	R19, PTA
4d	R19, PTA

## Economic Development

Action	Responsible Parties
1a	EDC, ABA, AC
1b	ADC, PZC
1c	EDC, OTOF
1d	EDC, PZC
2a	EDC, PZC
2b	EDC, PZC, ABA, COG
2c	EDC, PZC, ABA, COG
2d	EDC, BOS, BOF
3a	EDC
3b	EDC
3c	EDC
<b>Warrenville-West Ashford SPA</b>	
1a	EDC, OTOF, ABA
1b	EDC
1c	EDC, ABA, OTOF, BOS
1d	EDC
1e	EDC
2a	BOS, BOF, PZC, EDC
2b	BOS, BOF, CC, EDC
3a	EDC, PZC
3b	PZC, EDC
3c	EDC, CC, BOS
3d	PWD, BOS, EDC
3e	EDC, BOF, BOS
<b>Wagon Shed Properties SPA</b>	
1a	BOS, EDC
1b	BOS, BOF, EDC
1c	BOS, BOF, EDC
2a	EDC, BOS, BOF
2b	EDC, PZC
2c	EDC, CC
2d	EDC, BOF
3a	EDC
3b	EDC

<b>Interstate 84 Interchange SPA</b>	
1a	EDC, COG, <i>land owners</i>
1b	EDC, PZC
1c	EDC, <i>neighbor towns</i>
2a	EDC
2b	EDC, BOF
2c	EDC
2d	EDC, <i>Town of Union</i>
3a	EDC, LCIA
3b	EDC, CC, AGC, PZC
3c	EDC, PZC

## Housing

Action	Responsible Parties
1a	PZC
1b	PZC, CC
2a	PZC, LCIA, ALPOA
3a	PZC
3b	PZC
3c	PZC
3d	PZC, <i>social worker</i>

## Agriculture

Action	Responsible Parties
1a	AC, CC, OTOF
1b	CC, AC, OTOF
1c	ASD, AC
1d	BOF, AC
1e	PZC, AC, CC
1f	AC
1g	R19, AC
1h	AC, EDC
1i	AC, CC
1j	AC
2a	AC, CC, BOF, BOS
2b	BOF, AC, CC

## Natural Resources

Action	Responsible Parties
1a	CC, AC, COG
1b	CC, BOF
1c	CC, BOF
1d	CC, COG
2a	CC
2b	CC
2c	CC, PZC
3a	CC, PWD
3b	CC
3c	CC
3d	CC, PWD
4a	CC, CLIA, ALPOA
4b	CC, CLIA, ALPOA
4c	CC, CLIA, ALPOA
4d	CC
5a	CC
5b	CC

5c	CC, AC
5d	CC
6a	CC, COG
6b	CC, PZC
6c	CC, BOF
6d	CC, BOF, BOS
6e	CC, OTOF
6f	CC
7a	CC, BOF

### Lake Chaffee and Ashford Lake SPAs

1a	CC, LCIA, ALPOA
1b	CC, CLIA, ALPOA
1c	CC, EHHD
1d	CC, EHHD

## Historic Resources

Action	Responsible Parties
1a	AHS, OTOF
1b	AHS
1c	BOS, AHS
2a	PZC, AHS
2b	AHS, COG
2c	PWD, AHS

### Ashford Center and Westford SPAs

1a	PZC, AHS
1b	AHS, <i>local cemetery stewards</i>
1c	AHS, BOS, BOF
1d	PZC, EDC, AHS
1e	AHS
1f	AHS

## Energy

Action	Responsible Parties
1a	ACETF, BOF
1b	ACETF, BOF
1c	DPW, ACETF
1d	ACETF, BOS
1e	BOF, ACETF
2a	ACETF, ABA
2b	ACETF
2c	ACETF, OTOF
2d	ACETF, ABA
2e	ACETF, ABA, AC



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