



# ROCKY HILL



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## Community Resilience Building Summary of Findings

August 2024



# **Town of Rocky Hill, Connecticut**

## **Community Resilience Building**

### ***Summary of Findings***

## **Overview**

The need for municipalities, regional planning organizations, academic institutions, corporations, states, and federal agencies to increase resilience to extreme weather events and a changing climate is strikingly evident amongst the communities across the state of Connecticut. Relatively recent events such as Super Storm Sandy, severe winter storms (2013 & 2015), COVID-19 pandemic, and Tropical Storm Isaias have reinforced this urgency and compelled leading communities like the Town of Rocky Hill to proactively collaborate on planning and mitigating risks. Ultimately, this type of leadership is to be commended because it will reduce the vulnerability and reinforce the strengths of people, infrastructure, and ecosystems and serve as a model for other communities in Connecticut, New England, and the nation.

Recently, the Town of Rocky Hill embarked on certification with Sustainable CT. As part of that certification, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Sustainable CT provided the Town with a community-driven process to assess current hazard and climate change impacts and to generate potential and prioritized solutions to improve resilience and sustainability. In August 2024, Rocky Hill's Core Team helped organize a Community Resilience Building process and workshop facilitated by TNC in partnership with Sustainable CT. The core directive of this effort was the engagement with and between community members to define strengths and vulnerabilities and the development of priority resilience actions for the Town of Rocky Hill.

The Rocky Hill Community Resilience Building Workshop's central objectives were to:

- Define top local, natural, and climate-related hazards of concern.
- Identify existing and future strengths and vulnerabilities.
- Identify and prioritize actions for the Town.
- Identify opportunities to collaboratively advance actions to increase resilience alongside residents and organizations from across the Town, and beyond.

The Town of Rocky Hill employed an “anywhere at any scale”, community-driven process called Community Resilience Building (CRB) ([www.CommunityResilienceBuilding.org](http://www.CommunityResilienceBuilding.org)). The CRB’s tools, reports, other relevant planning documents, and local maps were integrated into the workshop process to provide both decision-support and visualization around shared issues and existing priorities across Rocky Hill. The Rocky Hill Plan of Conservation and Development (2015) and the Capital Region Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2024) were particularly instructive as references. Using the CRB process - rich with information, experience, and dialogue - the participants produced the findings presented in this summary report. This includes an overview of the top hazards, current concerns and challenges, existing strengths, and proposed actions to improve Rocky Hill’s resilience to hazards and climate change today, and in the future.

The summary of findings transcribed in this report, like any that concern the evolving nature of risk assessment and associated action, is proffered for comments, corrections and updates from workshop attendees and other stakeholders alike. The leadership displayed by the Town of Rocky Hill on community resilience building will benefit from the continuous participation of all those concerned.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **Top Hazards and Vulnerable Areas for the Community**

Prior to the CRB Workshop, the Rocky Hill Core Team identified the top hazards for the Town, which were flooding and extreme precipitation events, extreme cold snaps and heat waves, and heavy wind events. Additional hazards highlighted by participants during the CRB Workshop included Nor’easters and blizzards during fall, winter, and spring months as well as storm conditions generated by hurricanes and tropical storms. These hazards have direct and increasing impacts on the infrastructure, environment, and residents of and visitors to Rocky Hill. These effects are seen within residential areas, natural areas (wetlands, rivers, forests, preserves), roads, bridges, businesses, farms, municipal facilities, churches, social support services, arts and culture, and other critical infrastructure and community assets within Rocky Hill.

## **Current Concerns and Challenges Presented by Hazards**

The Town of Rocky Hill has several concerns and faces multiple challenges related to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. In recent years, Rocky Hill has experienced a series of highly disruptive and damaging weather events including the 2011 Halloween nor'easter, large snowfall events winter 2015-2016 (84" cumulative), extreme wind events (October 2017), ice jams along Connecticut River (January 2018), Tropical Storm Isaias (August 2020), and other less impactful but more frequent events. Impacts from the 2011 Halloween nor'easter resulted in power outages across Rocky Hill for up to 10 days. Major blizzards dropped several feet of snow on the Town knocking out power and isolating residents and neighborhoods. The magnitude and intensity of these events and others across Connecticut have increased awareness of natural hazards and climate change, while motivating communities such as Rocky Hill to proactively improve their resilience.

This recent series of extreme weather events highlights that the impacts from hazards are diverse. In Rocky Hill this included riverine flooding of critical infrastructure, roads, and low-lying areas; localized flooding from stormwater runoff during intense storms and heavy precipitation events; and property damage and utility outages (lasting several days or more) from wind, snow, and ice. Longer periods of elevated heat, particularly in July and August, have raised concerns about vulnerable segments of the population, including elderly and/or disabled community members. The combination of these issues presents a challenge to preparedness and mitigation priorities and requires comprehensive, yet locally specific actions for the Town.

The workshop participants were generally in agreement that Rocky Hill is experiencing more intense and frequent storm events and heat waves. Additionally, there was a general concern about the increasing challenges of being prepared for the worst-case scenarios (e.g., major thunderstorms and hurricanes (Cat-3 or above)) particularly in the late summer and in the fall/winter months when more intense storms coincide with colder weather (i.e., snow/ice storms, Nor'easters, blizzards).



## ***Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges***

As in any community, Rocky Hill is not uniformly vulnerable to hazards and climate change. Certain locations, assets, and populations have been and will be affected to a greater degree than others. Workshop participants identified the following items as their community's key areas of concern and challenges across several broad categories. Vulnerabilities and associated mitigation actions identified in the current Capital Region Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Rocky Hill Municipal Annex (2024) are provided in Appendix A for cross reference.

### **Municipal Functions, Operations, & Growth:**

- Rocky Hill is dependent on volunteers for functions, resources, and services which can present a challenge if the volunteer pool shrinks due to the shifting interests amongst the younger generations, among others. Overdependence on volunteers which can results in “burn out” alongside a longer-term decline in the overall available of the volunteer base.
- Increases in population promoted via the increase in single and multi-family residences places greater demand on municipal services such as emergency services, human services, public works and roadways, among others.
- Currently limited information regarding the increased demand on municipal services in Rocky Hill due to the increases in population in recent years, which would help to potentially illuminate the need for additional staff and support resources.
- State data suggests Rocky Hill is more affluent (i.e., relatively high median income) then it actually is due to high number of private pay, assisted living facilities, which has affected the Town's ability to access state and federal funding.
- New apartment complexes provide temporary housing for transient populations such as young professionals and immigrant families that may be less likely to volunteer due to other time commitments.
- Fire Department has experienced a huge increase in call volumes lately which is becoming more difficult to manage due to capacity limitations amongst the volunteers.
- Concerns about the impact on local taxes and municipal budgets in the event the Town is required to hire professional fire service personnel due to a decline in the volunteer base.
- Pushback amongst residents regarding the need to increase the amount and availability of affordable housing from the current 5% towards the state's 10% target for municipalities. Demand for affordable units far exceed availability per the Rocky Hill Housing Authority.

## ***Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)***

- Growing concerns about the number of unhoused individuals in Rocky Hill and adjoining municipalities and the limited available resources to adequately support this population.
- Limited understanding of the scale and distribution of unhoused individuals in Rocky Hill. Recognition that unhoused individuals occupy spaces along Silas Deane Highway, Walmart Plaza, Dinosaur State Park, and Elmridge Park as well as many living in parked cars. General lack of clarity about the full scope and location of the unhoused population in Rocky Hill.
- Unhoused community in Rocky Hill is feeling the impacts of extreme shifts in weather including heat waves, cold snaps, and intense rainstorms.
- Ongoing and mounting challenges of food insecurity for segments of the Rocky Hill population.
- “Weather intensification” has become more pronounced especially with extreme cold snaps that have had notable effects on aging infrastructure and buildings (i.e., heat and water supply system failures).
- Limited and disjointed sidewalks and bike lanes from southwest corner to schools and the downtown area of Rocky Hill.
- Limited municipal incentives for owners of parking lots to take steps reduce the amount of stormwater runoff into municipal storm drains.
- Declining number of people interested in pursuing a career in the trades which has resulted in a limited workforce pool to fill critical maintenance and service position within municipal departments in Rocky Hill and the Capital Region in general.
- Escalating costs to process household non-recyclable waste (including food scraps that could be removed from waste stream) that is incorporated into local taxes that will become an increasing burden on residents.
- Multimillion dollars losses in agricultural crops in the last two years due to flooding of the Great Meadows, among other areas in Rocky Hill.
- Concerns about the ability of the agricultural community in Rocky Hill to be adequately prepared for both flooding and drought conditions all in a single season.
- Federal relief funding for agricultural losses are designed for large scale farms and are not reflective of smaller scale, New England farming models.
- Annual flooding from the Connecticut River brings large woody debris and entire trees down from upstream sources resulting in challenges and costs to manage for the Town. Impacts include reduced accessibility of public boat launches and damage to docks.

## ***Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)***

### **Emergency Management & Preparedness:**

- Concerns about the reoccurrence, frequency, and duration of drought conditions in central Connecticut and the impacts it is having on people, agriculture, and natural ecosystems.
- Cycles of drought and intense rainstorms coupled with a warming climate is increasing the risk of vector borne diseases across Connecticut including Rocky Hill.
- Predominance of above ground power lines resulting in ongoing high exposure to impacts from trees and tree limbs.
- Aging population has raised concerns about evacuation process and managing special needs of the population during emergencies including natural disasters.
- Increasing emergency call volumes and complexity of calls to Police Departments over last few years.
- Growing number of accidents on Interstate 91 (every 2-2.5 days) resulting in a response by the Rocky Hill emergency management services personnel, which places additional burden on local departments. Municipalities have expressed this concern with Connecticut Department of Transportation, but no resolution has been offered by the state of Connecticut. Rocky Hill Fire Department has received some compensation from the state for service calls on Interstate 91, to date.
- Aging of equipment needed to adequately address emergencies including equipment such as trucks and plows requires ongoing maintenance and eventual replacement.
- Proximity to Interstate 91 can present a vulnerability from external crimes.
- Emergency services is being stressed by the rising population in Rocky Hill with increases in the number of apartment complexes and new businesses.
- Town Garage is on Eversource's priority power restoration list, but any delays during power restoration wait periods could present life threatening circumstances amongst residents in Rocky Hill and adjoining communities.
- Concerns about previous and potential future flooding issues on Beach Road due to the undersized culvert potentially trapping residents with limited egress on a dead-end road.
- Rocky Hill Public Library does not have a back-up generator in place.

## ***Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)***

### **Roads, Bridges, Road Networks, & Dams:**

- Flooding on Silas Deane Highway near Exit 24 results in routine flooding of the Dialysis Center on Waterchase Drive.
- Combined flooding along the Mattabesset River and the Saw Mill Brook can results in impacts and inaccessibility to the western portion of France Street and residences in that area.
- Flooding issues at the end of Exit 24 off Interstate 91 has resulted in the need for water rescue of people via inflatable boats.
- Recent flooding along Main Street (near old Ames Headquarters) due to an inadequate pipe caused basement flooding up to 8 feet deep in adjoining condominiums.
- Elevated levels of traffic in recent years, especially along Main Street, which can be a concern due to accidents and speeding.

### **Stormwater, Wastewater Systems, & Drinking Water Supply:**

- Current capacity of the stormwater drainage system may be inadequate to effectively manage current runoff volumes given the recent higher duration and intensity storms; particularly in the last two years. Much of the drainage system in Rocky Hill (pre-2014) was originally designed for peak 10-year storm events using data developed in the 1950's based on rainfall data between 1905 and 1951. A major design criteria update was issued in 2014 and is now continually updated based on recent storm events.
- Last town-wide drainage system study was conducted in 1974 and does not reflect current conditions 50 years later.
- Inability to define priorities for improvements to stormwater drainage system due to lack of adequate information about vulnerabilities and concerns that would come from a town-wide assessment.
- General lack of comprehensive monitoring of the current condition and capability of the stormwater drainage system across Rocky Hill.
- Majority of culverts in need of repair, retrofit, or replacement are below size thresholds required to be eligible for state and federal funding opportunities.
- Concerns that the new regional stormwater grant from Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to the Capital Region Council of Governments will focus primarily on the city of Hartford versus the other seven municipalities in the study area including Rocky Hill.



### ***Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)***

- Limited use of alternative techniques to trap and retain stormwater runoff such as green stormwater infrastructure (i.e., rain gardens, bioswales, tree pits, etc.) to help elevate the stress from major storms on the existing stormwater drainage system.
- Large number of privately-owned parking lot spaces that are current underutilized due to more people working from home. Impervious parking surfaces increase the amount of stormwater runoff required to be managed by current stormwater drainage system.
- The Metropolitan District wastewater treatment facility is situated within the Connecticut River floodplain and at risk from 1% annual chance of flood event.
- Sewer pump station down by Ferry Landing is susceptible to riverine flooding from the Connecticut River.

### **Watersheds, Wetlands, Rivers, Open Space, Forests, Agricultural Lands, & Trees:**

- Concerns about the impacts of more intense and extended droughts on forest species diversity and distribution over time in the forested landscapes of Rocky Hill and the entire Connecticut River corridor.
- Open space and undeveloped areas in Town continuously vulnerable to establishment of invasive species that can compromise native flora and fauna and the integrity of natural ecosystem.
- Great Meadows in Rocky Hill is subjected to flooding from the Connecticut River on a routine basis; particularly during the summer of 2023.
- Trees in certain areas along transportation corridors with power lines and/or near buildings present issues during more intense winter storms particularly when accompanied by high winds.
- Impacts to street trees due to a severe ice storm in 2011 coupled with elevated rainfall patterns and soil saturation has resulted in a less than healthy urban tree canopy. It is projected more street trees along major corridors like Main Street as well as along other road rights-of-ways will need to be cleaned up after future storms due to this decline in health and condition.
- Concerns that the community character of Rocky Hill will be affected if the tree canopy continues to decline.

## **Current Strengths and Assets**

Just as certain locations, facilities, and populations in Rocky Hill stand out as particularly vulnerable to the effects of hazards and climate change, other features are notable assets for Rocky Hill's resilience building. Workshop participants identified the following items as their community's key strengths and expressed interest in centering them as the core of future resilience building actions.

### **Municipal Functions, Operations, & Growth:**

- Clearly, the responsive and committed engagement exhibited by leadership, staff, and residents is a very appreciated strength within and across Rocky Hill. Ongoing collaboration between municipal staff, committee/commission/board volunteers, business community, faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, adjoining municipalities, Council of Government, health district, and various state-wide organizations (i.e., Sustainable CT, The Nature Conservancy), among others, on priorities identified herein will help advance comprehensive, cost-effective, community resilience building actions.
- Municipality and residents really care about their community with a “sense of community” where people come together and help one another as well as voicing their opinions in support or opposition of issues effecting their community.
- Town culture is focus on helping one another and making Rocky Hill a better due in part to the large number of long-stand, multi-generational households and families.
- Strong volunteer presence, despite declines over time, that are well qualified to manage issues and needs of the community.
- Dedicated municipal staff with a supportive work environment that lends itself to comradery within Town Hall and a willingness to collaborate with other municipalities on resource sharing and problem solving.
- Rocky Hill has services and access to resources that other municipalities consider a luxury (bulky waste, leaf and brush pick-up, clinical services, etc.) while maintaining a strong mill rate.
- Good balance of tax base between residential, commercial, and industrial, which helps to increase the economic resiliency of Rocky Hill.
- Located just outside of Hartford yet retains a small-town feel, which is appreciated by residents.

## **Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)**

- Great place to raise children because of the schools, community programming, and caring and supportive neighbors and staff.
- Excellent and award-winning school system in Rocky Hill.
- Rocky Hill is well positioned to attract and retain a diverse and skilled workforce given local employment opportunities and the proximity to Hartford.
- Town Departments are well staffed with resourceful and knowledgeable staff that work well together.
- Public Works Department is comprised of capable and skilled staff that can handle infrastructure issues effectively and efficiently in-house.
- Communications across Departments in Rocky Hill which lends itself to a high degree of collaboration.
- The Rocky Hill Community Center is recognized and respected as a true asset to the community by residents, staff, and visitors.
- Strong ties to the rich historical significance of Rocky Hill (three historic districts) including the archaeological sites such as the Dinosaur State Park.
- Town is well maintained including both public facilities as well as privately owned properties.
- Abundance of nursing homes and facilities with skilled staff in Rocky Hill.
- Twenty years of consistent and dedicated efforts and millions of dollars of funding focused on revitalizing the downtown area of Rocky Hill.
- Concerted effort directed to addressing the stigma amongst residents around the unhoused issue in the community.
- Great sense of community among residents and businesses resulting in a high level of community involvement and support for municipal events and activities.
- Electrical substation in Rocky Hill has been expanded to ensure additional capacity is available as economic development continues to increase.
- Close working relationship and ongoing coordination between the Town and the Metropolitan District.

## **Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)**

- Senior Center is a hub of activities throughout the year with affordable lunches, holiday meals, and opportunities to socialize with other Rocky Hill residents.
- Senior Center has a bus to assist with bringing residents to the Center.
- Increasingly diverse community with large number of residents of southeast Asian decent over the last 25 years.
- Town is responding to evolving needs of new residents including the upcoming installation of cricket pitch and the provisioning of culturally diverse meals in the schools (i.e., Halal hot lunches).
- Municipality celebrates Diwali with a school holiday and local celebrations.
- Board of Education and the Community Center are well supported and provide a draw for new families to Rocky Hill.
- Municipality is wired with fiber optic cable which represents a long-term commitment to newer internet technology that will not need to be replaced for several decades.
- Engineering and Planning Departments review all private development plans and make suggestion and offer alternatives to designs that integrate sustainable materials and practices such as green stormwater infrastructure. Feedback from developers has been favorable and is helping to build resilience and sustainability in Rocky Hill.
- Rocky Hill is actively engaged with pavement preservation efforts in hope of using less raw materials and reducing costs on paving needs.
- Sustainable Rocky Hill has engaged with the community and has become a recognized asset to the Town responsible for stimulating critical discussions about the future of municipality and ways to balance growth with cost efficiency.

### **Emergency Management & Preparedness:**

- Staffing is strong across Departments resulting in collaboration between fire fighters, public works staff, and Police Department. To date there has not been an emergency that couldn't be address via this collective in a timely fashion.
- Volunteer Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services, which is supported by full-time, professional service personnel. Other Departments in Rocky Hill provide additional support to these entities in times of crises.

## **Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)**

- Rocky Hill is geographically well positioned to receive aid and resources during major events given proximity to major transportation corridors including Interstate 91.
- Strong partnership with Hartford Fire Department that provides access for Rocky Hill to the Hartford Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to help manage events.
- Strong group of local contractors that are very responsive to urgent project needs of the Town such as quickly paving parking lots and installing playground spaces so a school could open on time as well as conducting recovery efforts after major storm events.
- Establishment of a Community Emergency Management Team (CERT) for Rocky Hill is currently being considered.
- Close working relationship with Eversource on tree canopy management and emergency response and recovery with routine quarterly meeting as well as embedded utility staff during and after major disasters. This ensures a smooth and functional exchange of information, either electronically or via phone, and enhanced communications.
- Electronic signboards in Town and websites/social media helps disseminate information regarding planned maintenance, closures, and updates.
- Reverse 911 or door-to-door outreach, plus mailings this past year to communicate upcoming and ongoing projects and situations in Rocky Hill.
- Rocky Hill Public Library and the Community Center can be opened to the public as cooling centers, as needed.
- Rocky Hill Human Services maintains a list of residents with special needs (i.e., mobility, special medical care needs (oxygen), etc.) and have assigned check-ins during storm events to ensure the proper care is provided in a timely fashion. Police Department assists with checking on listed residents at their homes during times of crises.
- Incoming calls to emergency medical services (EMS) are flagged if household is identified with individual with special medical needs.
- Eversource maintains a self-identified, voluntary, list of residents with medical needs requiring electricity. During outages Eversource staff will call directly to check-in and provide information regarding power outage status. If contact is not made with resident, Eversource staff will provide address to emergency management staff in Rocky Hill for further door-to-door visits as an added layer of service.



## **Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)**

- Department of Veterans Affairs is the second largest provider training for police and Federal Bureau of Investigation staff in the state and is in a trial phase for providing training to Rocky Hill Fire Department volunteers.

### **Stormwater, Waste Systems, & Drinking Water Supply:**

- Rocky Hill has an abundant and protected drinking water supply (provided by The Metropolitan District) that has not been subjected to contamination from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Redundancies in the supply line enhance service coupled with extra capacity to accommodate additional growth in demand for drinking water.

### **Watersheds, Wetlands, Rivers, Open Space, Forests, Agricultural Lands, & Trees:**

- Strong community desire to preserve and maintain the character of Rocky Hill through open space protection and working agricultural landscapes.
- Updated map of all open space with current interest in identifying privately owned and vacant parcels over 5 acres in size for acquisition by the Town. Approximately 7 million dollars available for allocation to open space acquisition per a 2017-2018 community referendum for 10 million (3 million has been spent on open space acquisition since referendum). Open space committee manages the funds and makes recommendations regarding privately owned parcels to acquire.
- Municipality, residents, and businesses place a great deal of emphasis on growing things in Rocky Hill from the urban tree canopy, agricultural produce, and community gardens (“we grow a lot of things in Rocky Hill – the historic roots of our community”).
- Town acquired a 80-acre farm with 60-acres being leased to active farmers along with the development of community gardens and a barn as a place to further educate residents and visitors on the value of farming.
- Eversource’s tree trimming operations in the center of Rocky Hill and along easements has resulted in a reduced number of outages and increase reliability of service.
- Curbside brush and leaf pickup events in place each year with some material being turned into mulch and compost for further use by residents.

## **Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)**

- Dividend Pond was recently cleaned up and now has many outdoor activities available to residents.
- Well maintained and used municipal park system in Rocky Hill including Elm Ridge Park, Dividend Pond, Quarry Park, and Surwilo Park.
- The riverfront along the Connecticut River is an important, unique, and valuable resource to Rocky Hill.



Credit: AllTrails

## **Recommendations to Improve Resilience**

A common theme among workshop participants was the need to continue community-based planning efforts focused on developing adaptive measures to reinforce Rocky Hill's strengths and reduce vulnerability to extreme weather, climate change and other common concerns raised. To that end, the workshop participants helped to identify several priority topics requiring more immediate and/or ongoing attention including:

- **Long-term vision and growth** (i.e. sustainable growth, volunteerism, conservation & recreation, affordable housing, agriculture, transportation, workforce development);
- **Infrastructure improvements** (i.e. roads/bridges/dams/road crossings, green stormwater infrastructure/management systems);
- **Quality of life improvements** (i.e. parks and recreation, open space & accessibility, sustainability, health & safety, economic prosperity, housing, education, regionalization);
- **Emergency management** (i.e. communications, outreach, education, continuation of services, business recovery, evacuation, vulnerable populations).

In direct response, the Community Resilience Building workshop participants developed the following actions and identified, but not ranked, them as priority or as additional actions. Mitigation actions from the Rocky Hill Municipal Annex within the Capital Region Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2024) are provided in Appendix A for cross reference with actions presented herein. Maps provided during the CRB Workshop, gathered from the Rocky Hill Plan of Conservation and Development (2015) and the Capital Region Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2024) are provided in Appendix B.

## **Priority Actions**

- Establish a committee to generate new, creative, and different approaches to encouraging and securing additional volunteers for serve across Rocky Hill including participation on boards, commissions, and committees as well as with the Fire Department. Explore successful volunteer recruitment and retention models/programs amongst other neighboring communities and the Capital Region Council of Governments.

## Priority Actions (cont'd)

- Conduct a town-wide stormwater drainage and associated utilities study that identifies the current capacity (both under-sized and adequate) and condition of those systems. Use outputs of study to prioritize projects and work to advance implementation over time.
- Explore opportunities to amplify and expand the current social services efforts with additional funding with a focus on engagement with and care for issues such as mental health, housing, and food insecurity, among others critical issues in Rocky Hill.
- Ensure that the upcoming Plan of Conservation and Development update is conducted in a highly inclusive manner to ensure the community helps to guide the future development and growth in Rocky Hill.
- Develop a community-wide strategic and operational plan in concert with monthly budget reviews (budgeted to actual costs) and guided by the overarching Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Explore new opportunities to cost share and collaborate on staffing, critical resources, and equipment with neighboring communities.
- Consider expanding municipal departments and services as Rocky Hill continues to grow. This may require the Town being open to new ideas and approaches to operating that help to meet the current and future needs of the community.



Credit: Wikipedia



Credit: Kelson Row



Credit: Tripadvisor

## Additional Actions

- Engage with neighboring municipalities regarding priority actions generated during Community Resilience Building workshops in hopes of fostering more regional approaches and projects over time.
- Conduct outreach to help increase the education on personal and group preparedness (i.e., emergency grab bags, phone trees, etc.) for elderly residents and elderly housing facilities.
- Work to increase the number of community wide events to help increase community awareness and prevention associated with drug abuse, mental health issues, among others (i.e., Prevention Palozza).
- Utilize information and actions generated during Rocky Hills Community Resilience Building process to help inform the upcoming update to the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Ensure that the upcoming update to the Rocky Hill Plan of Conservation and Development places ample emphasis on engagement residents and businesses and utilization of information collected during the process (i.e., online surveys, public workshops, report out meetings, etc.).
- During the Plan of Conservation and Development update ensure that green stormwater infrastructure and low impact development approaches and projects are fully integrated in hopes of increasing the overall resilience of Rocky Hill.
- Continue to work with the Capital Regional Council of Governments on a grant from Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to conduct regional stormwater study. Look to ensure Rocky Hill is including in the study area for that grant along with the other seven municipal within The Metropolitan District's service area.
- Work with the agricultural community in hopes increasing planning and preparedness for flooding on farmlands in Rocky Hill.



## Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Explore grant and other funding opportunities to help the agricultural community in Rocky Hill recover from losses associated with the escalation of major flooding events.
- Look to further educate the residents of Rocky Hill on what affordable housing is and the ongoing need for additional construction of affordable housing to meet the state mandate of 10% of housing stock given the current 4.6-5% in Rocky Hill.
- Increase responses to needs between the Affordable Housing Sub-committee's efforts and plan with increases in affordable housing via the Rocky Hill Housing Authority.
- Promote programing to help residents assess the home energy use and potential improvements (i.e., heat pumps) to increase energy efficiency to make the community more resilient given the escalating periods of extreme heat.
- Continue to advance Complete Streets priority planning and projects in Rocky Hill including reducing the disjointed nature of sidewalks and installation of bike lanes where possible. Ensure focus is placed on providing better connections from the southwestern portions of Rocky Hill to schools and the downtown area.
- Work with the Capital Region Council of Governments to reduce municipal solid waste (household trash) due to the increasing cost and mounting burden on Rocky Hill's annual budget (i.e., Trash Talk Forums, etc.).
- Continue to advance newly adopted MS4 stormwater runoff regulations in hopes of reducing peak flood flows as well as localized water quality benefits.
- Work to better understand the location and size of the unhoused population in Rocky Hill in coordination with neighboring municipalities such as Wethersfield along the Silas Deane Highway.
- Given reliance on volunteers and the "work-from-home" culture, consider including workspaces in firehouses to accommodate the needs of residents that would otherwise be willing to volunteer.

## Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Continue to advance plans to renovate two of the four Firehouses in Rocky Hill and look to move forward to plans to build an additional facility to help better serve growing community needs.
- Work to obtain funding for the design and construction of a new Town Garage Facility with back-up generator to better accommodate community needs year-round.
- Continue to participate in regional information sharing opportunities with partners including Capital Region Council of Governments and other municipalities with a focus on collaboration to secure funding and solve issues.
- Explore a microtransit option in addition to minibus service for seniors in partnership with neighboring municipalities.
- Ensure that critical municipal equipment is routinely maintained and replaced prior end of stated life cycle.
- Work via the Capital Improvement Subcommittee to the Town Council to integrate stated priority actions and identify supplemental, external funding sources to get resilience-related plans and projects advanced and implemented.
- Explore opportunities to underground important transmission lines and infrastructure to prevent impacts from high winds and winter storms on overhead transmission wires.
- Continue to expand wireless communication coverage and capabilities in Rocky Hill.
- Work to complete all priorities identified in the sidewalk plan for Rocky Hill.
- Ensure that green stormwater infrastructure and other ways to reduce risk and improve the environment are incorporated into new projects and development during municipal review of plans and permits.

## **CRB Workshop Participants: Department/Organization**

Town of Rocky Hill – Office of the Mayor  
Town of Rocky Hill – Office of the Town Manager  
Town of Rocky Hill – Planning and Zoning Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Building and Permits Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Fire Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Police Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Emergency Management Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Public Works Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Engineering Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Community Development Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Human Services Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Parks and Recreation Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Finance Department  
Town of Rocky Hill – Information Technology  
Town of Rocky Hill - Facilities  
Town of Rocky Hill – Sustainable Rocky Hill Task Force  
Town of Rocky Hill – Planning and Zoning Commission  
State Representative – Connecticut’s 29<sup>th</sup> House District  
Capital Region Council of Governments  
Central Connecticut Health District  
The Metropolitan District  
Connecticut Veterans Home and Hospital  
Eversource

## **Rocky Hill Core CRB Project Team**

Kim Ricci – Town Planner and Zoning Enforcement Officer

Ray Carpentino – Town Manager

Phil Cyr – Director of Facilities

Mike Garrahy – Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director

Joe Lentini – Field Operations and Highway Superintendent

Steven Sopelak – Director of Community Development Services

Jason Scott – Civil Engineer and Inspection Coordinator

## **Online CRB Workshop Facilitation Team**

The Nature Conservancy – Adam Whelchel, Ph.D. (Lead Facilitator)

Sustainable CT – Jessica LeClair (Small Group Facilitator)

The Nature Conservancy – Kai Lo Muscio (IT Coordinator/Manager)

Sustainable CT – Inez Ortiz (Scribe)

The Nature Conservancy – Margaret Broughton (Scribe)

Sustainable CT – Dorothy Piszczek (Scribe)

The Nature Conservancy – Eve Robinson (Scribe)

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# Appendix A

## Rocky Hill

### Mitigation Action Plan and Actions\*



#### 25 Rocky Hill

##### Community Overview

Rocky Hill covers 13.9 square miles with a population of 20,845 (2020 Census). Elevation ranges from 30 feet to 400 feet. Land drains primarily to the Connecticut River Watershed, though the southwest portion of Town drains to the Mattabesset River. Major watercourses include the Connecticut River and Dividend, Goff, Hog, and Saw Mill Brooks. Principal transportation routes include Interstate 91 and State Routes 99, 3, 160 and 400. An active freight rail line, owned by Providence-Worcester Railroad, runs north-south along the Connecticut River. Paralleling the rail line is the Buckeye Jet Fuel line which runs from New Haven to Bradley International Airport. The State Veterans Home and Hospital and Dinosaur State Park are among approximately a dozen State agencies located in Town. Rocky Hill's major industries include professional, scientific and technical services, finance and insurance, warehouse/distribution, health care and construction.

In Rocky Hill, development patterns are guided by stringent building codes and planning and zoning ordinances that prohibit construction within flood plains. Over the recent five-year period, the town has witnessed a moderate level of development, and this trend is expected to continue for the next three years. Predominantly, the development over the past half-decade has revolved around residential projects, and this emphasis on residential development is projected to persist in the foreseeable future. Development/redevelopment is not increasing risk to natural hazards.

##### Critical Facilities

A number of critical facilities in Rocky Hill include the Police Station (Emergency Operations Center), Town Hall/Community Center, Public Library (back-up shelter and warming/cooling center), three volunteer fire stations, the High School (primary shelter), and West Hill School.

**\*Gathered from the Rocky Hills Municipal Annex within the Capital Region Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2024).**



Table 25-4: Active Mitigation Strategies and Actions, Rocky Hill

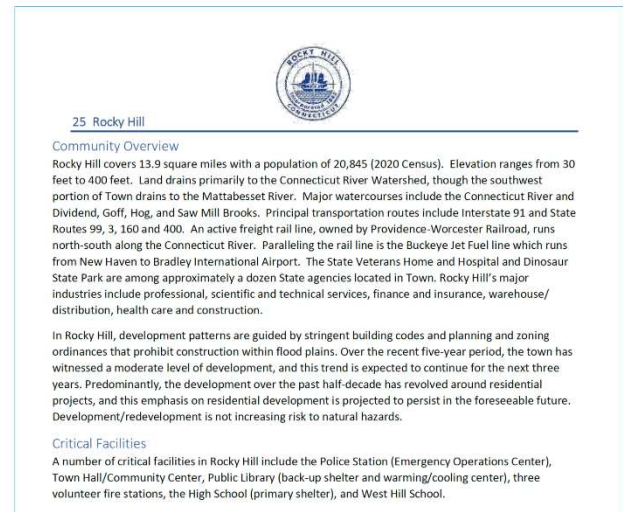
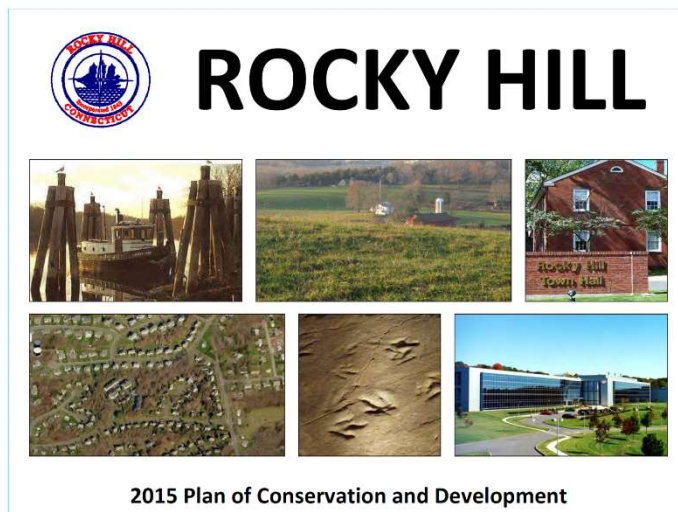
Number	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Actions	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Goal	Type of Action	Responsible Department	Approx. Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe	Priority	Hazard(s)	EJ?	PERISTS Score	STAPLEE Score	PERSISTS x STAPLEE =
RH1	Assess the capacity of the shelters and ensure the town has the capability to meet the needs of different vulnerable populations.	Ensure that critical facilities are resilient, with special attention to shelters and cooling centers.	Preparedness & Emergency Response	Emergency Management	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	01/2025 - 12/2025	High	All Hazards	No	19	7	133
RH2	Acquire a generator for the town library.	Ensure that critical facilities are resilient, with special attention to shelters and cooling centers.	Preparedness & Emergency Response	Emergency Management	\$100,000 - \$500,000	FEMA HMA; STEAP	07/2024 - 06/2025	High	All Hazards	No	19	5	95
RH3	Ensure that transportation and transit options are available to bring people to cooling centers.	Address risks associated with extreme heat events, especially as they interact with other hazards.	Preparedness & Emergency Response	Emergency Management	\$10,000 - \$50,000	Transit; IJIA BBFP	07/2024 - 06/2026	Medium	Extreme Heat	No	18	3	54
RH4	Apply for funding to install a box culvert on Beach Road and raising the road above the 1% annual-chance flood elevation.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Structural Project	Public Works	\$500,000 - \$1M	STEAP; IJIA AOP; FEMA HMA	07/2024 - 06/2026	High	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	19	4	76
RH5	Conduct an assessment of France Street, situated near the Berlin line in Rocky Hill, to address access concerns and	Invest in resilient corridors to ensure that people and services are accessible during floods and that development along	Structural Project	Public Works	\$50,000 - \$100,000	STEAP; Municipal CIP Budget	07/2025 - 06/2027	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	6	108

Number	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Actions	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Goal	Type of Action	Responsible Department	Approx. Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe	Priority	Hazard(s)	EJ?	PERISTS Score	STAPLEE Score	PERSISTS x STAPLEE =
	determine necessary road improvements.	corridors is resilient over the long term.											
RH6	Conduct a town wide assessment of stream crossings to identify vulnerabilities and develop a priority list for maintenance and upsizing.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Structural Project	Public Works	\$10,000 - \$50,000	DCRF; Municipal CIP Budget	07/2025 - 06/2027	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods/Tidal Connecticut River Flooding	No	18	6	108
RH7	Work with MDC to address flooding concerns at the Rocky Hill Water Pollution Control Facility, Waterchase Drive, the Pump station on Main St and Brook St and Pratt St.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Water & Wastewater Utility Projects	Planning	\$500,000 - \$1M	CWSRF; FEMA HMA; STEAP	07/2026 - 06/2027	High	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	19	6	114
RH8	Work with MDC to address flooding concerns at Waterchase Drive.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Water & Wastewater Utility Projects	Public Works	\$500,000 - \$1M	CWSRF; FEMA HMA; STEAP	07/2026 - 06/2027	High	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	19	6	114
RH9	Work with the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) to develop an appropriate scope of work to address flooding and extreme heat concerns in Resilient Opportunity Areas (ROARs).	More than one goal.	More than one type	Public Works	\$0-\$10,000	CIRCA	07/2024 - 06/2027	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods/Extreme Heat/Tidal Connecticut River Flooding	No	18	5	90
RH10	Contact the owners of Repetitive Loss Properties and nearby properties at risk to inquire about mitigation undertaken and	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as	Property Protection	Planning	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	01/2026 - 12/2026	High	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	19	7	133

Number	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Actions	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Goal	Type of Action	Responsible Department	Approx. Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe	Priority	Hazard(s)	EJ?	PERSISTS Score	STAPLEE Score	PERSISTS x STAPLEE =
	suggest options for mitigating flooding in those areas. This should be accomplished with a letter directly mailed to each property owner.	climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.											
RH11	Conduct outreach to local small businesses with the aim of preventing the accidental release and pollution from chemicals stored and used at their facilities during or following natural hazard events.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Prevention	Emergency Management	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	01/2025 - 12/2025	Low	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	7	126
RH12	Review the Connecticut Cultural Resource Information System (ConnCRIS) to identify and understand historic and archaeological resources in areas of hazard risks found here: <a href="https://conncris.ct.gov">https://conncris.ct.gov</a> .	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Property Protection	Planning	\$0-\$10,000	SHPO; Municipal Operating Budget	01/2026 - 12/2026	Medium	Wildfires /Tornadoes and High Winds/Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	9	162
RH13	Participate in EMI courses or the seminars and annual conference held by the Connecticut Association of Flood Managers.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Education and Awareness	Floodplain Manager	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	01/2025 and annually during this month	Medium	All Hazards	No	17	6	102
RH14	Update town website to include hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness tips for town residents, including sections corresponding to each hazard considered in this Plan Update.	More than one goal.	Education and Awareness	Planning	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	01/2025 - 12/2025	Medium	All Hazards	No	17	7	119

# Appendix B

## Rocky Hill Map Resource Packet\* Used During Workshop

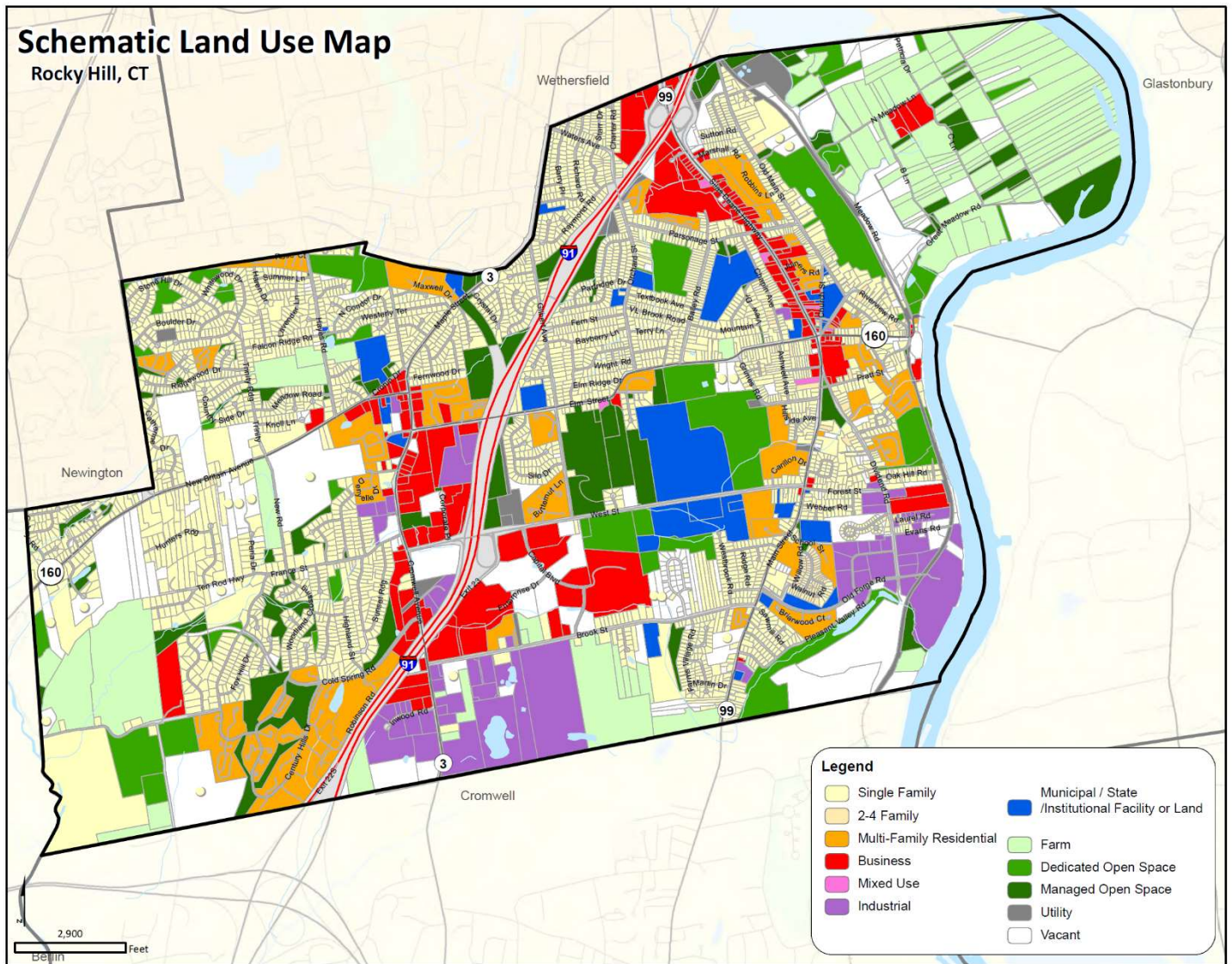


**\*Gathered from Rocky Hill's Plan of Conservation and Development (2015) and the Capital Region Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2024).**



# Schematic Land Use Map

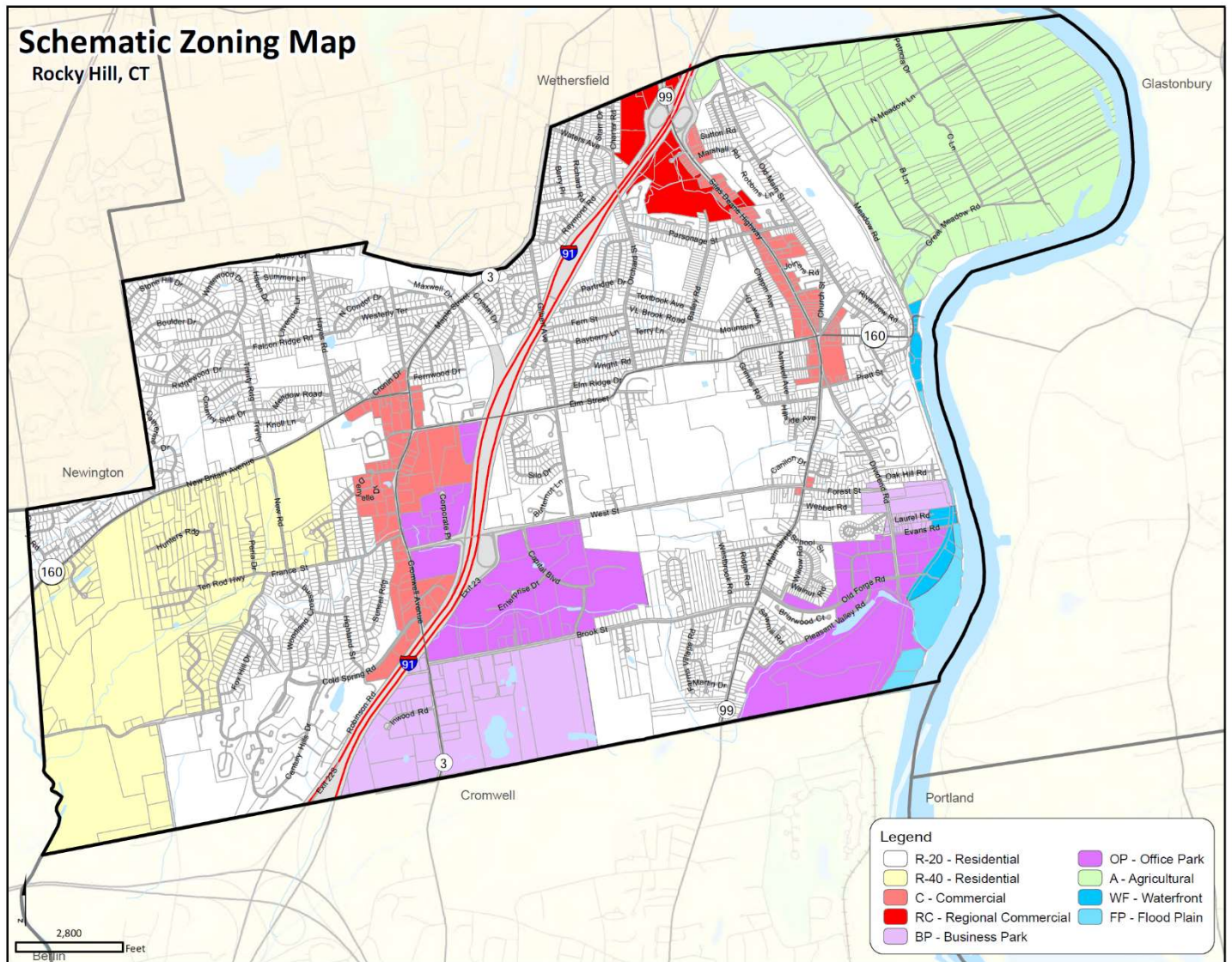
Rocky Hill, CT





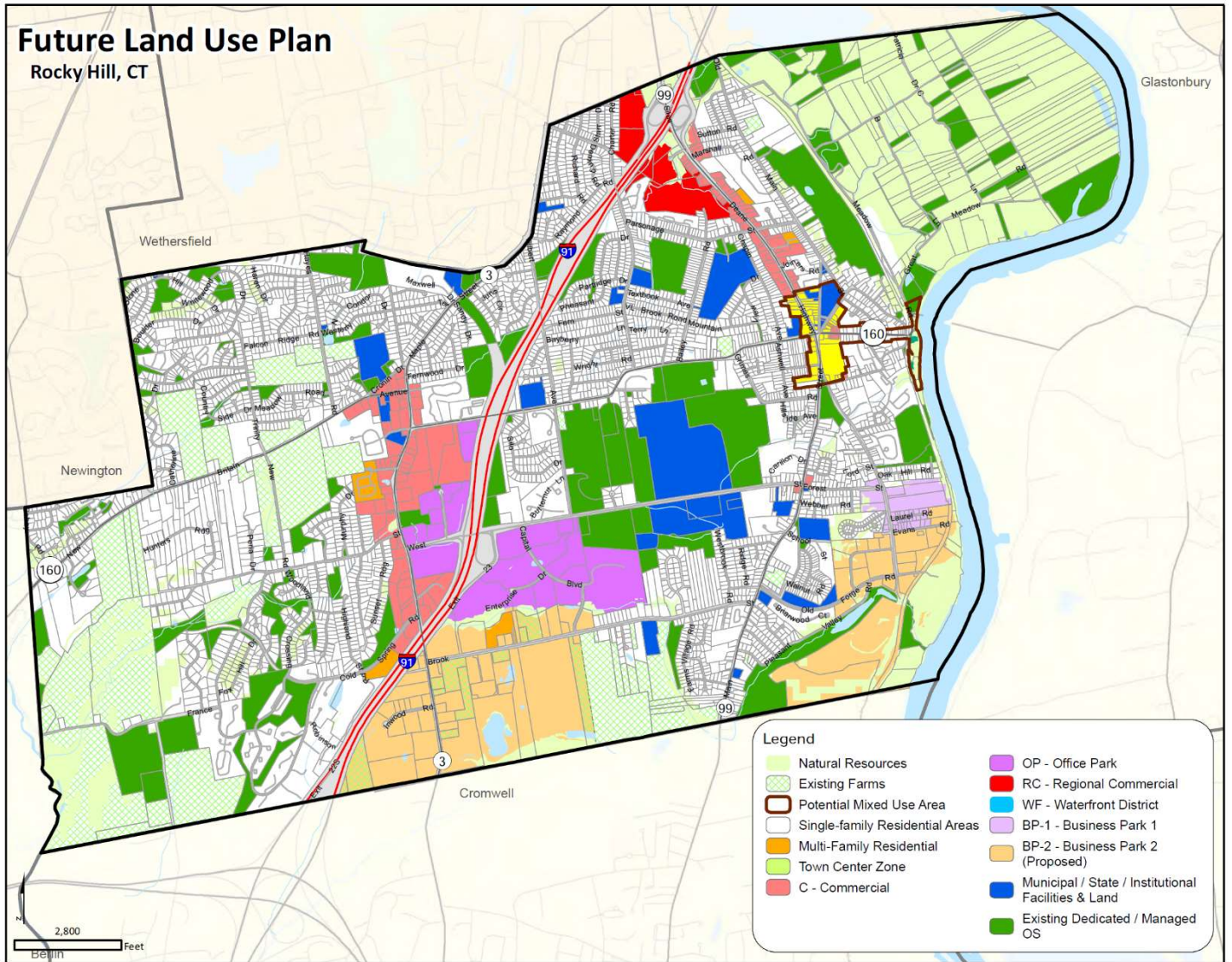
# Schematic Zoning Map

Rocky Hill, CT

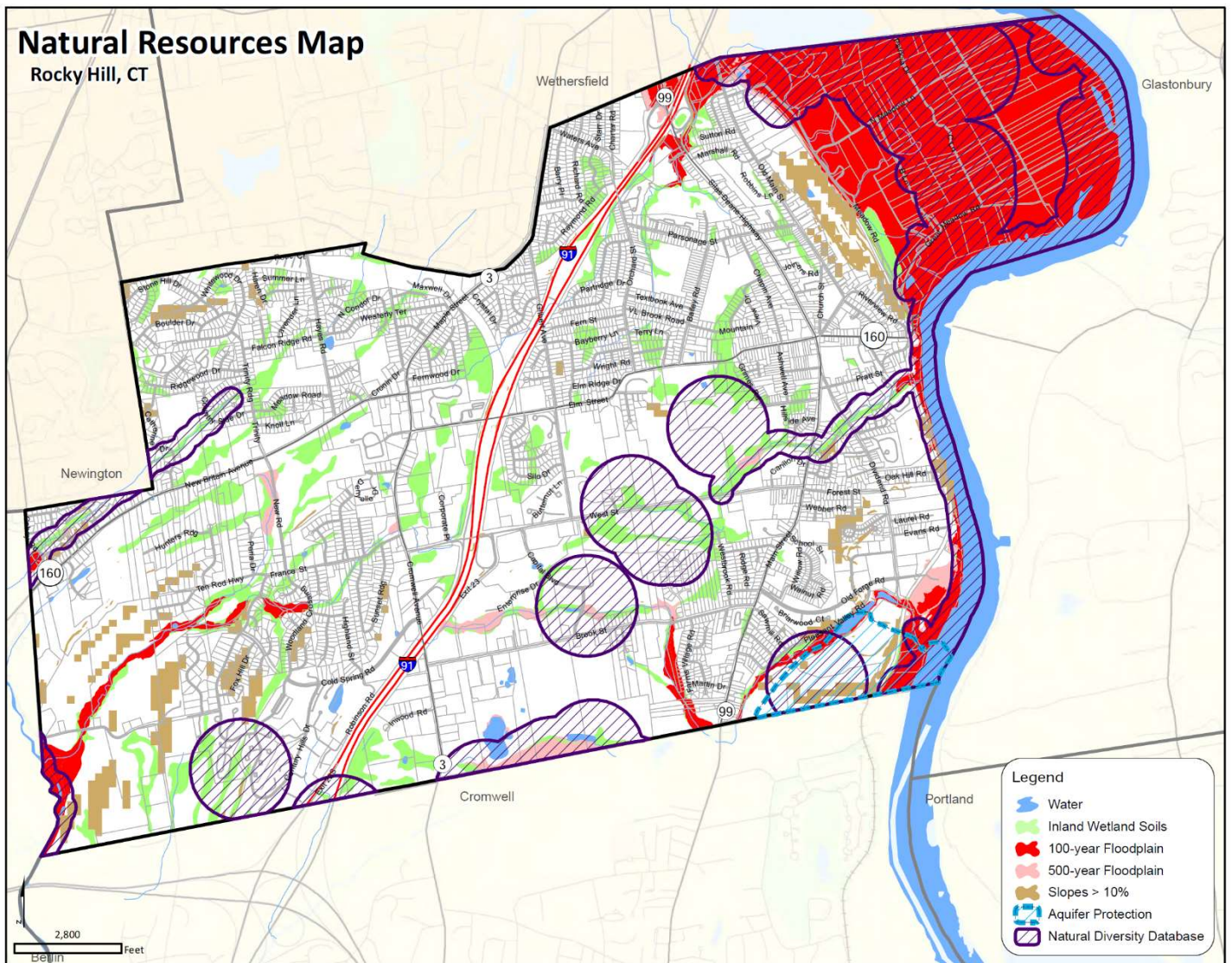


# Future Land Use Plan

Rocky Hill, CT

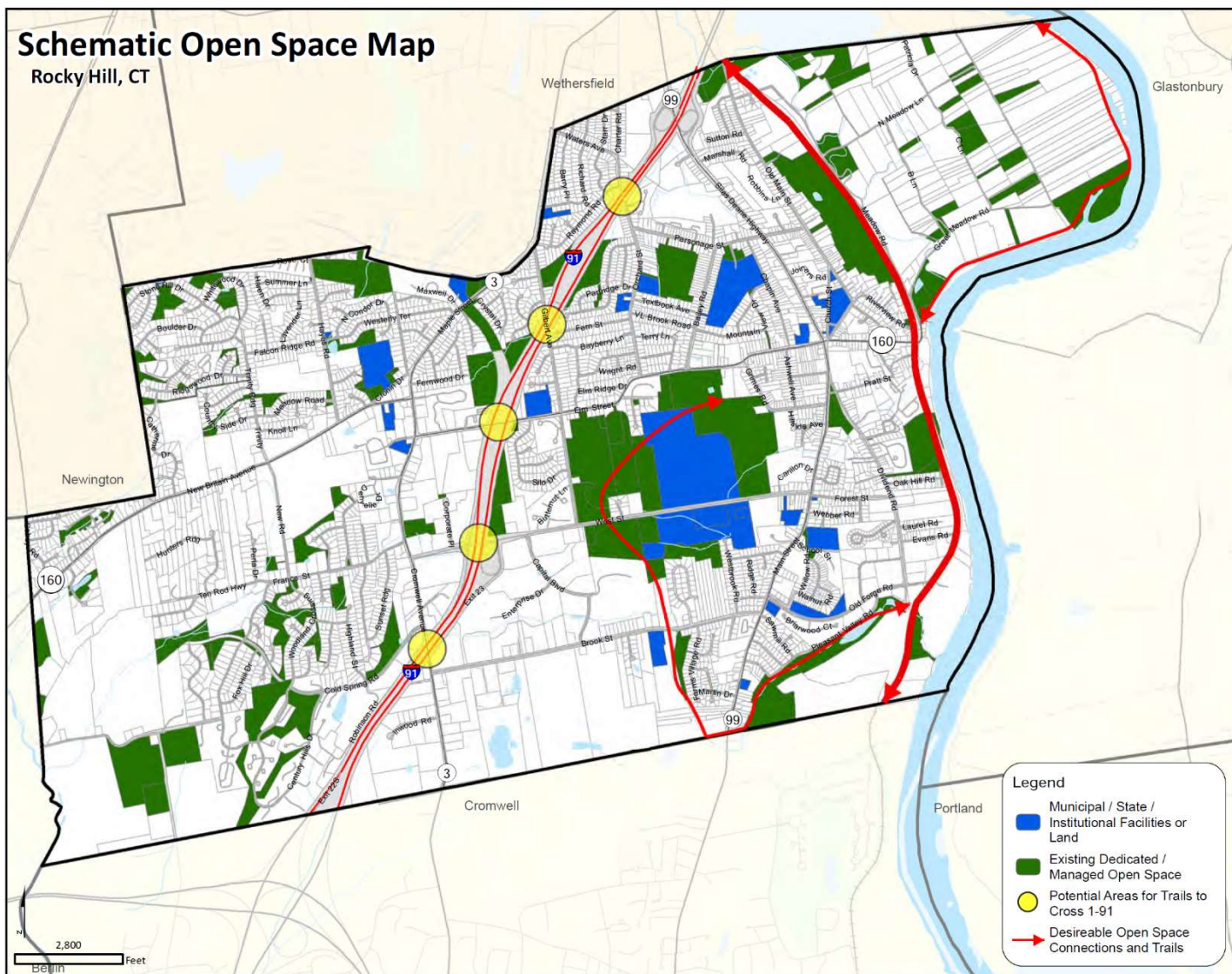




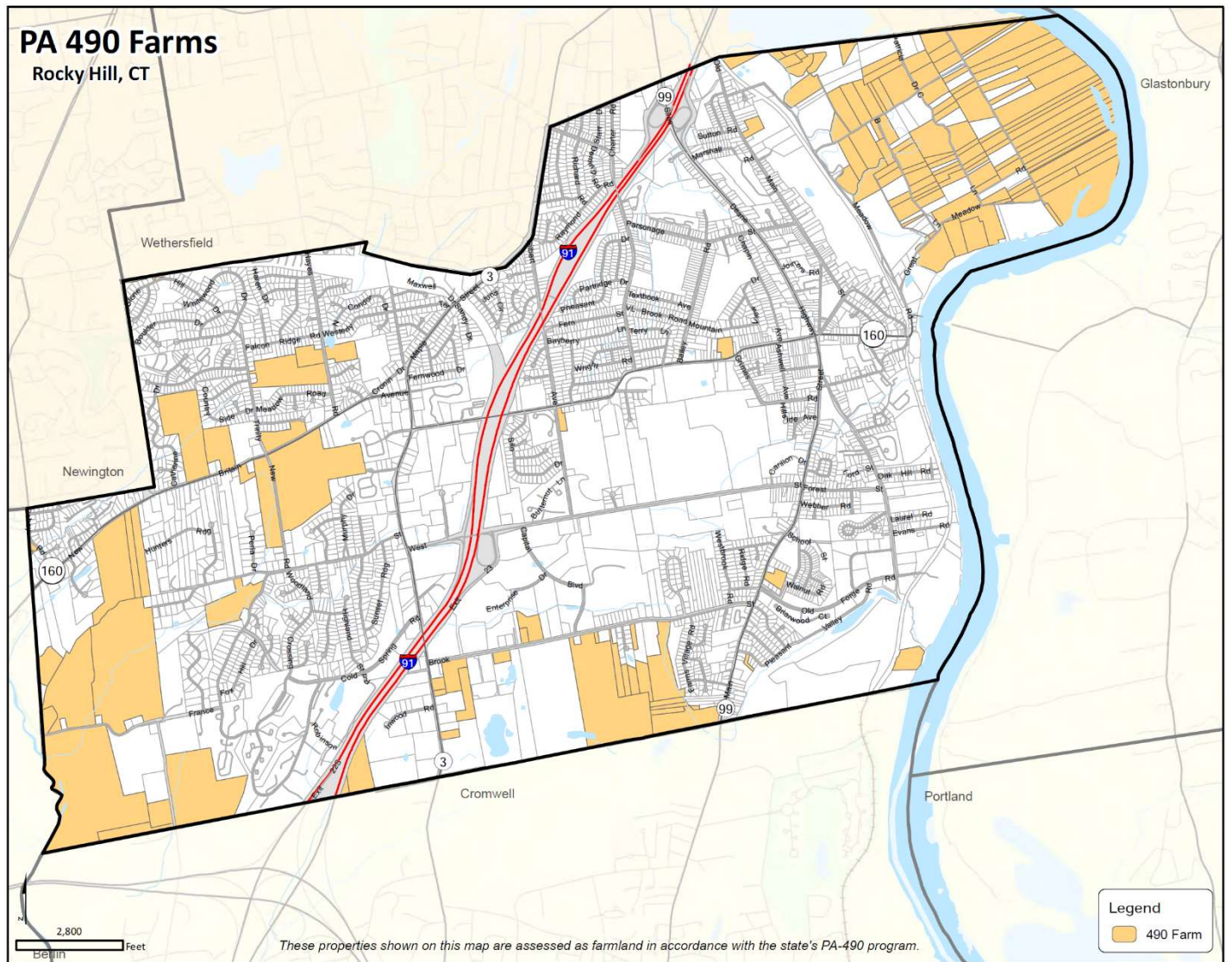


# Schematic Open Space Map

Rocky Hill, CT

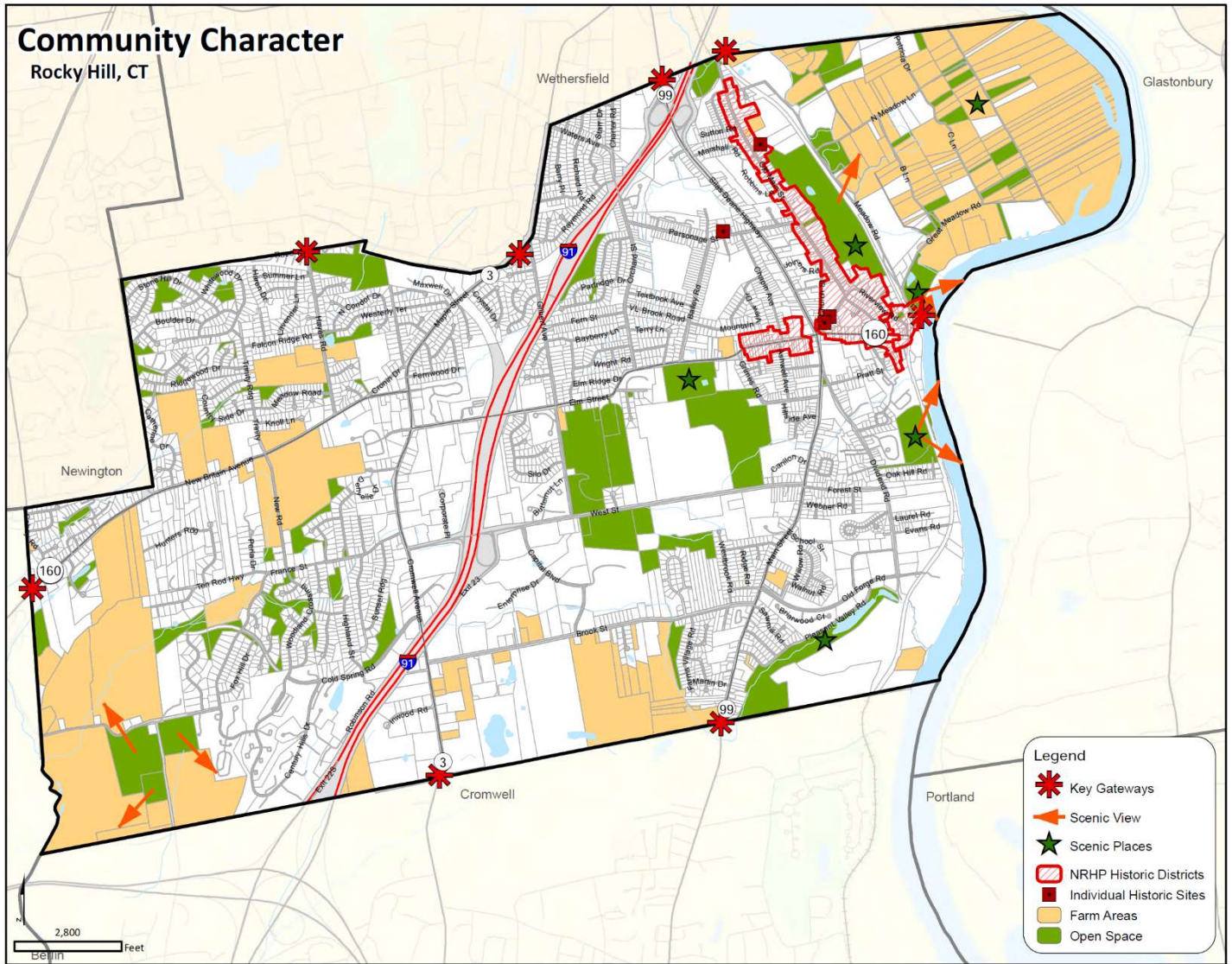






# Community Character

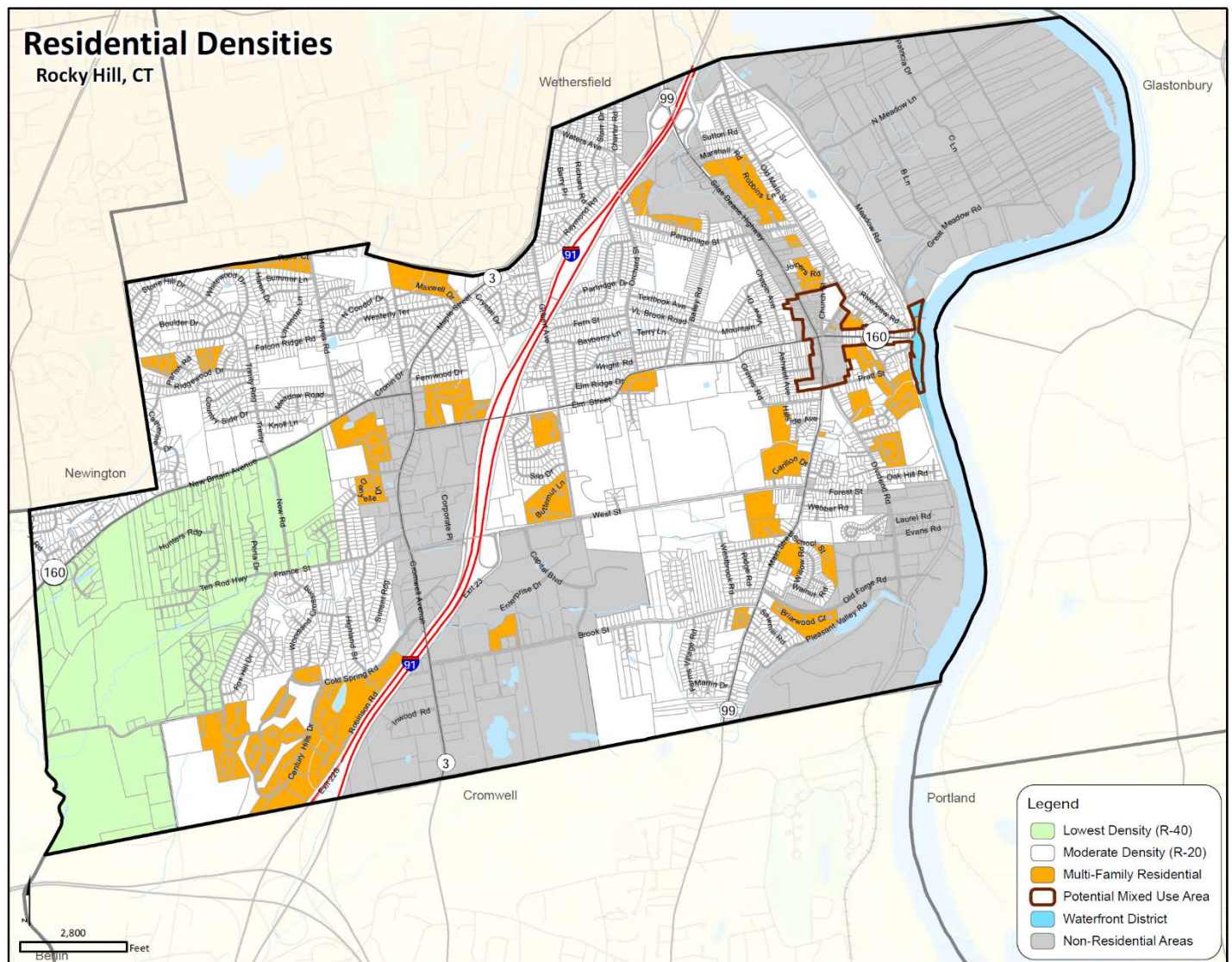
Rocky Hill, CT





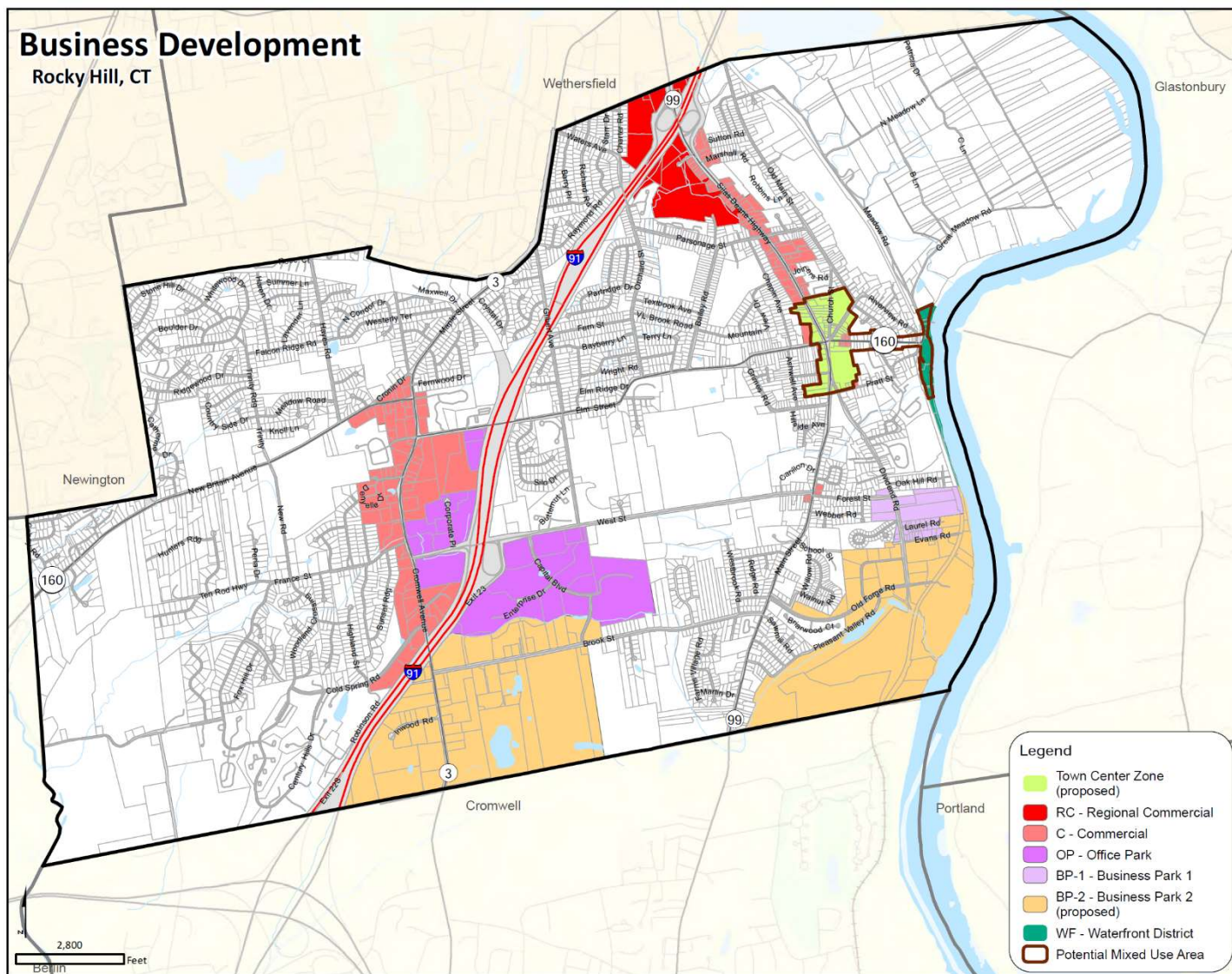
# Residential Densities

Rocky Hill, CT



# Business Development

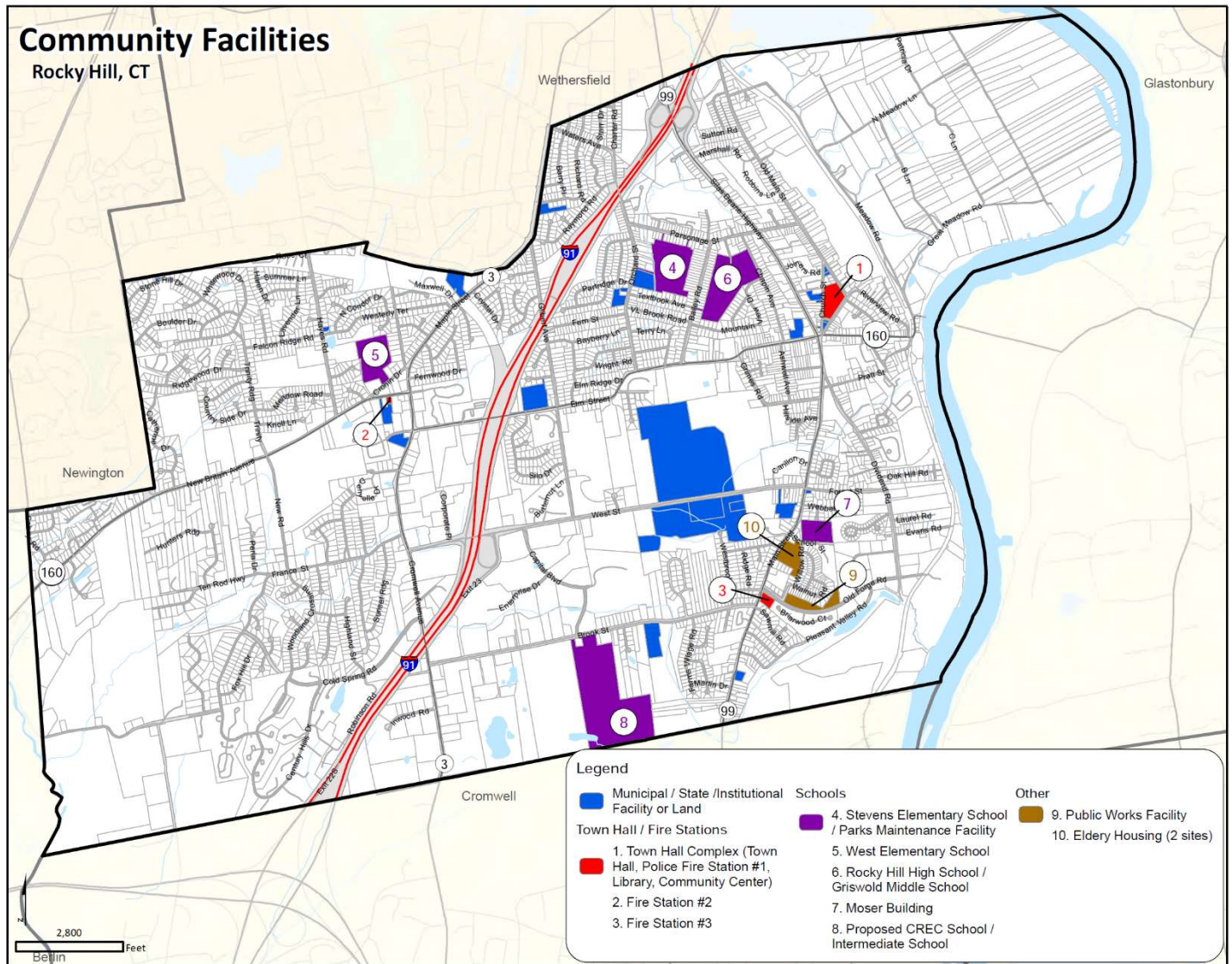
Rocky Hill, CT

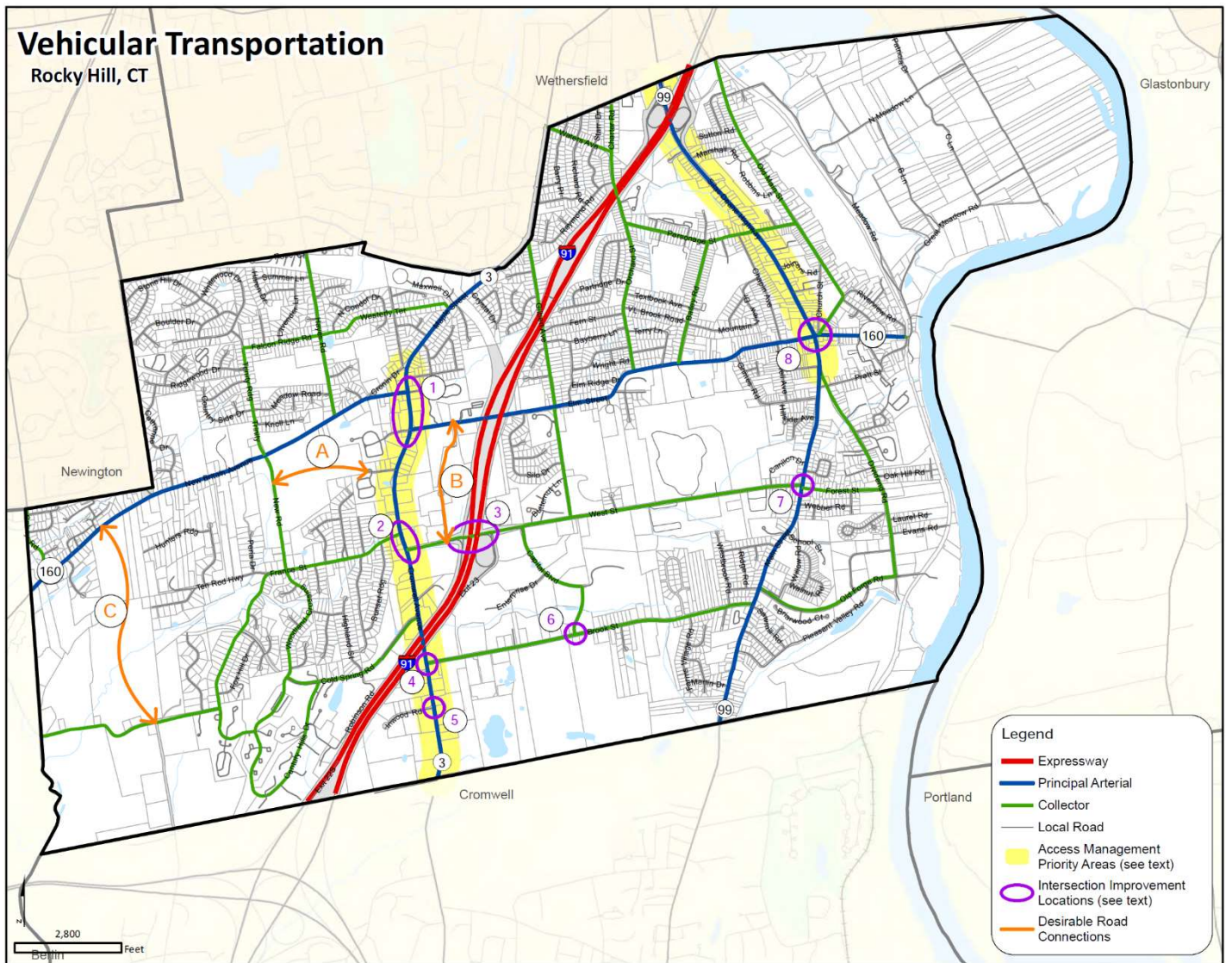




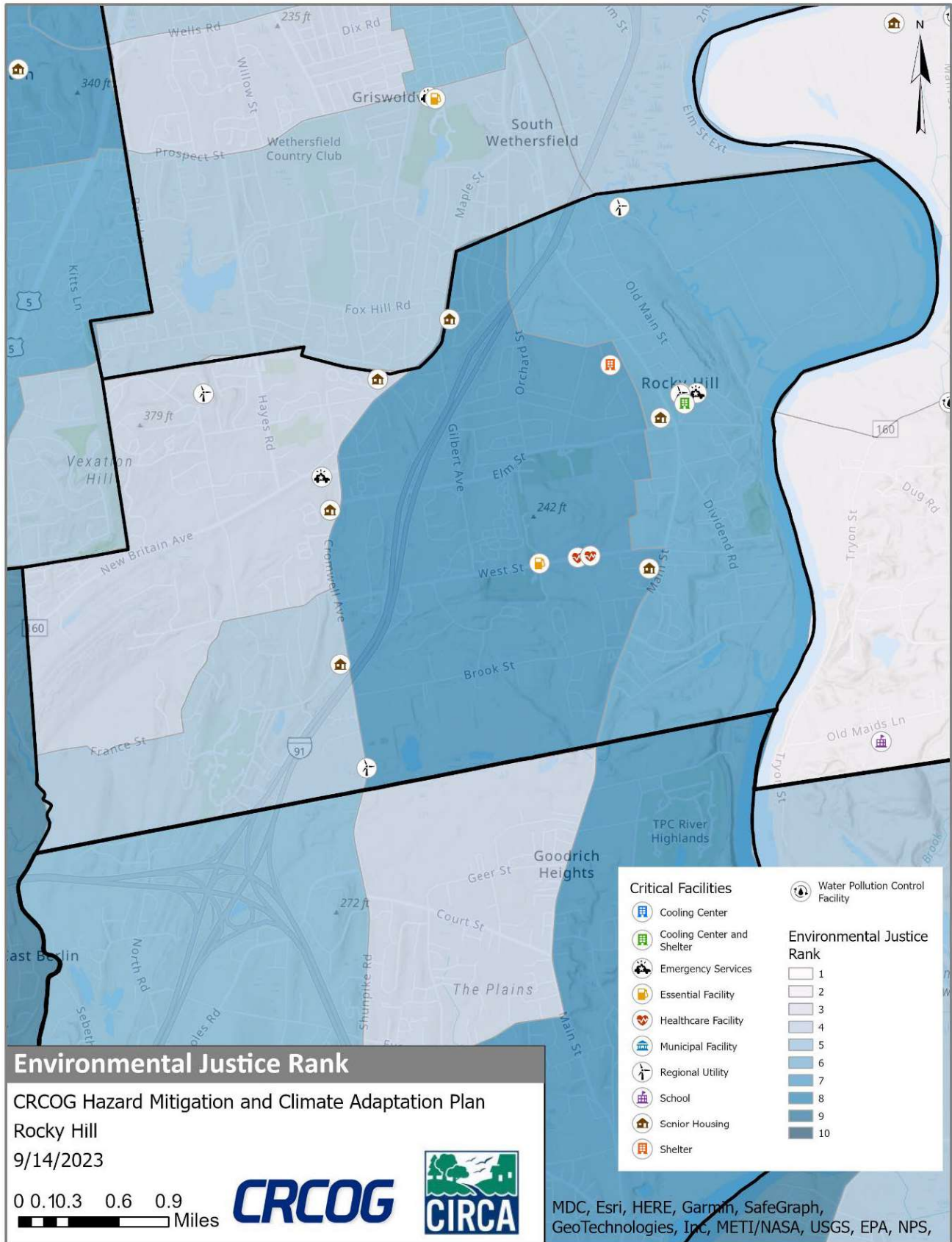
# Community Facilities

Rocky Hill, CT









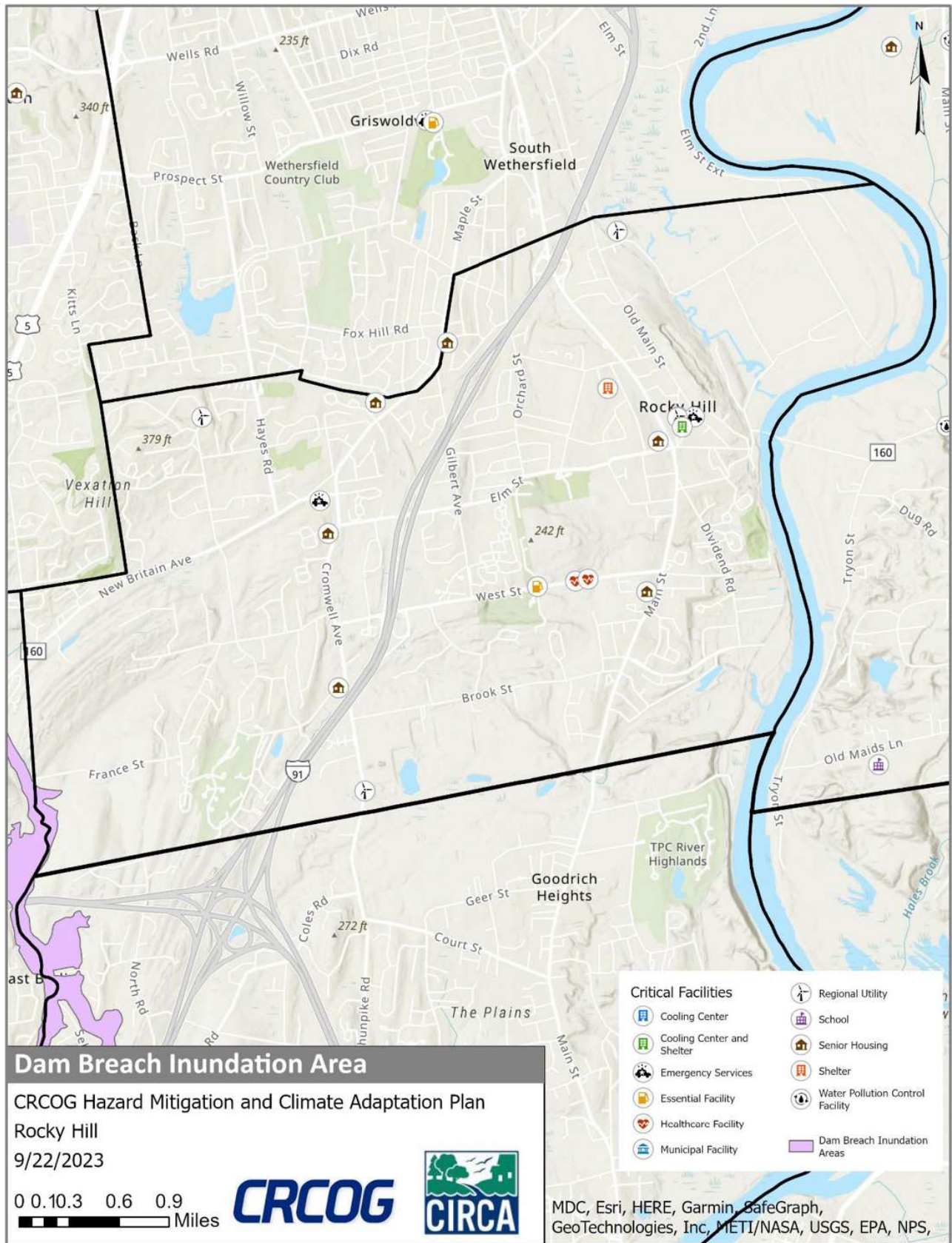
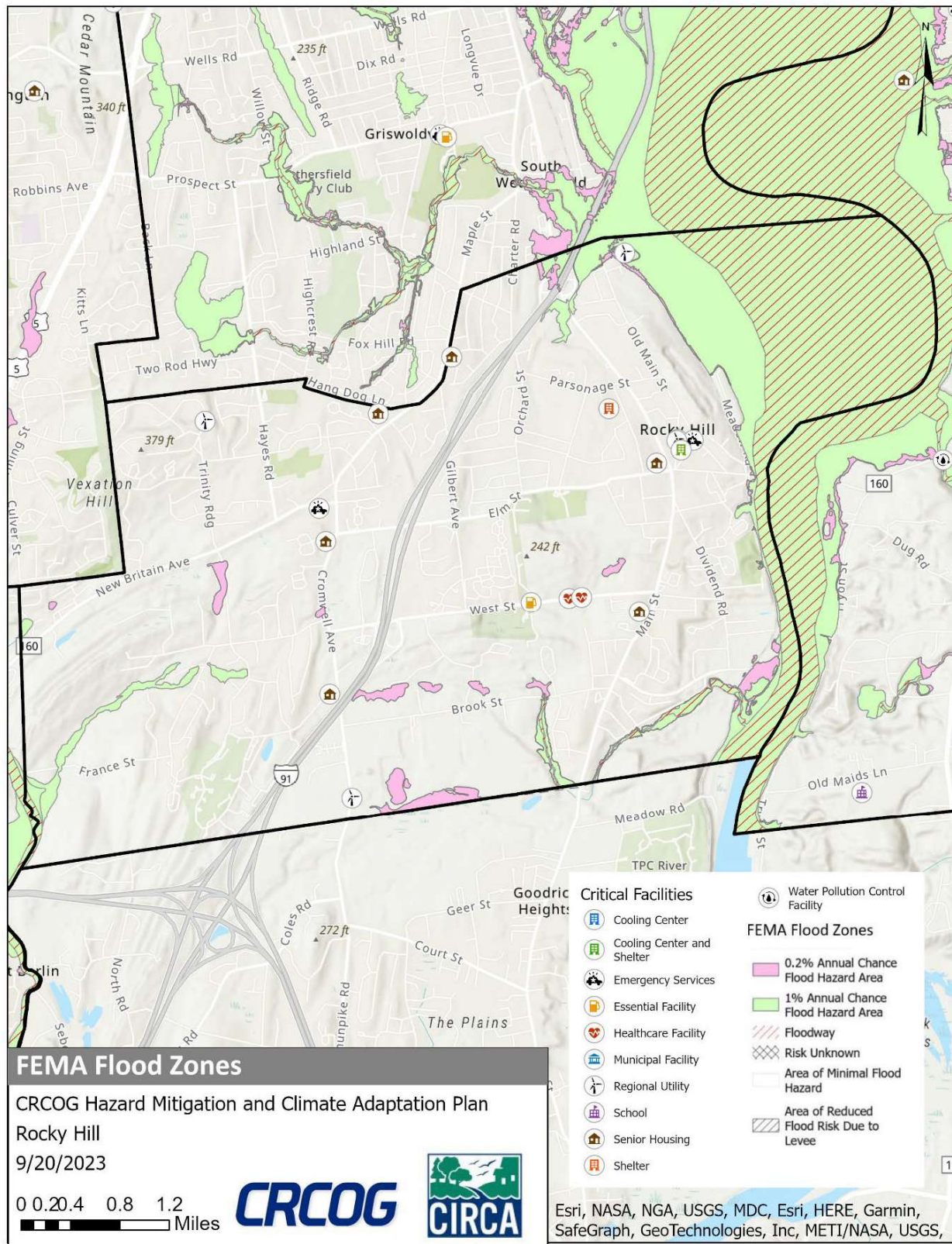




Figure 25-2: FEMA Flood Zones and Critical Facilities, Rocky Hill





[www.CommunityResilienceBuilding.org](http://www.CommunityResilienceBuilding.org)