

2025-2030 State of Connecticut DRAFT Conservation and Development Policies Plan Public Hearing

January 10, 2025

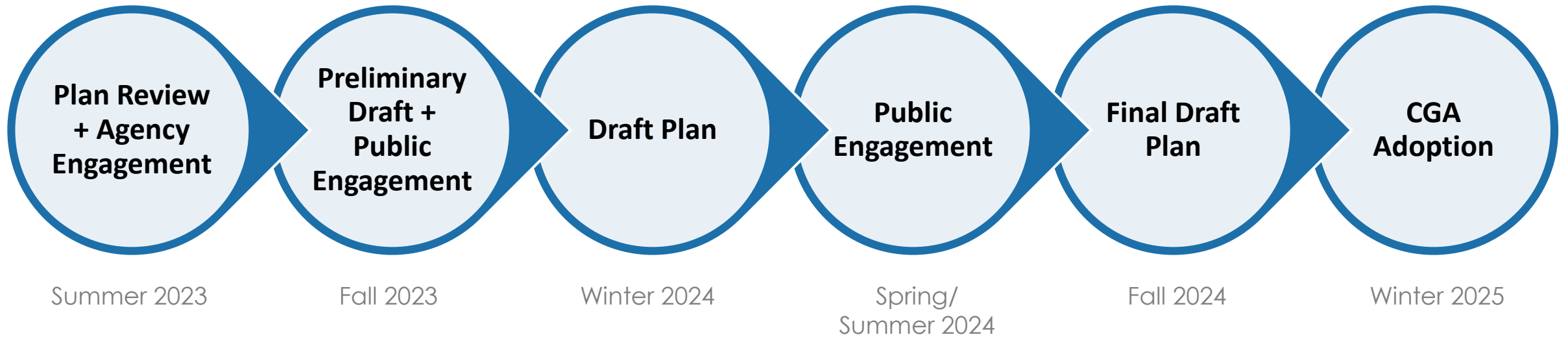


CONNECTICUT
Policy and Management

Planning Context

- *2018-23 Conservation and Development Policies Plan* adopted in **2022** and extended to 2024
- Commission on CT's Development and Future made recommendations regarding the C&D Plan in September 2023
- Pandemic-era federal funding drawing to a close during 2025-30 planning period

Planning Process



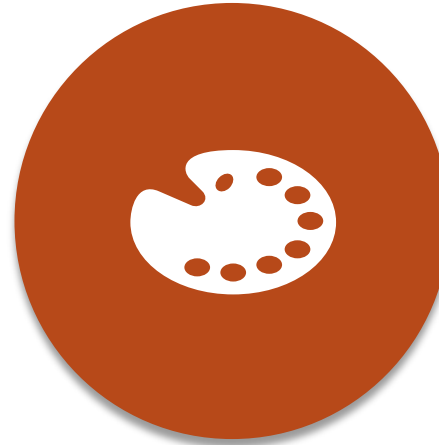
Guiding Principles



SUSTAINABLE



**EQUITABLE
+
JUST**



VIBRANT



RESILIENT

Visions

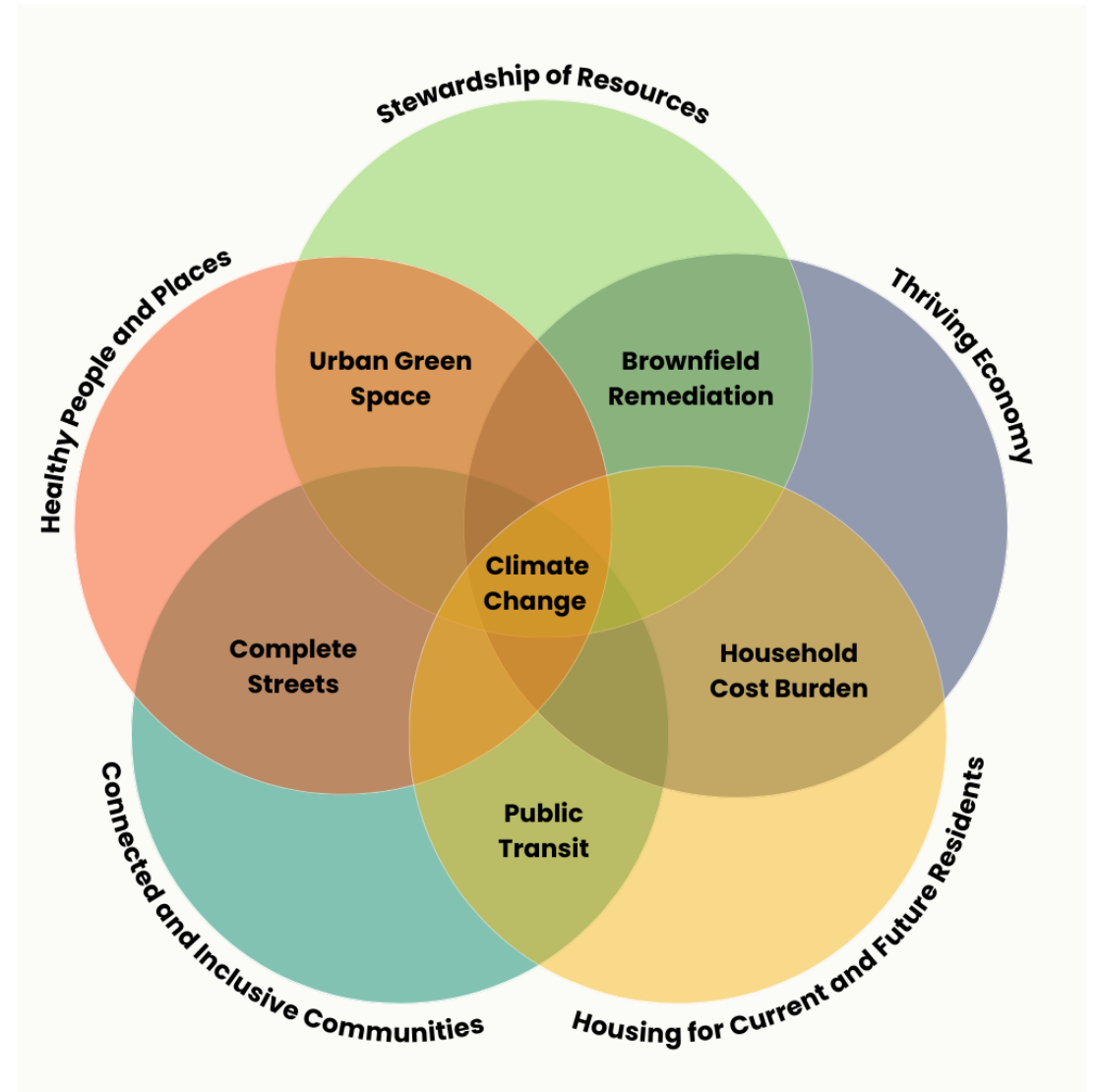
Thriving Economy

Housing for Current and Future Residents

Stewardship of Resources

Healthy People and Places

Connected and Inclusive Communities



Vision Elements

STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES

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



Courtesy: Connecticut Office of Tourism, Farmington River

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Current Strengths

- 110 state parks and 32 state forests^{xxxv} and more than 500,000 acres of land conserved by the state and its partners^{xxxvi}
- More than 50,000 acres of preserved farmland, maintaining agriculture as a vital part of Connecticut's economy^{xxxvii}
- Efforts to protect and restore Long Island Sound as an important habitat and major contributor to the regional economy^{xxxviii}
- More than 52,000 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 63 National Historic Landmarks, and more than 75,000 properties listed on the State Register of Historic Places^{xxxix}
- Development of critical energy infrastructure, expanded renewable energy programs, and residential and commercial investments in energy efficiency^x

Current Challenges

- A global climate crisis caused by an increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, leading to higher temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, increased probability of drought, more frequent and intense storms, and diminishing air and water quality^{xii}
- Long Island Sound is expected to rise 20 inches higher than the national tidal datum by 2050, leaving 61% of Connecticut's residents who live in the coastal area, as well as critical infrastructure and sensitive habitats, vulnerable to increased erosion and higher frequency of flooding^{xiii, xiii}
- The sixth mass extinction crisis may lead to the decline and loss of many of Connecticut's species, especially the ~600 listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern^{xiv, xiv}
- Loss, conversion, and/or fragmentation of working and conservation lands^{xvi}
- Ensuring that the benefits of stewardship efforts are shared equally among Connecticut's residents, with a particular focus on underserved and vulnerable communities



Courtesy: R. Augur, Wallingford

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Stewardship of Resources Targets

To accomplish this Vision, state agencies will direct plans, programs, and investments towards the following targets, which seek to capitalize on current strengths while addressing current challenges:

- Advancing meaningful and equitable strategies to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change across all sectors, including recommendations from the Governor's Council on Climate Change 2021 *Taking Action on Climate Change and Building a More Resilient CT for All* report
- Planning for and investing in the resilience of critical infrastructure, including transportation, communications, water, wastewater, and energy assets
- Planning for and adapting to the effects of sea-level rise, including consideration of development avoidance and retreat
- Encouraging sustainable development techniques in new development and redevelopment
- Encouraging nature-based solutions – actions that incorporate natural features and/or processes– in development and conservation activities to increase the resiliency of natural resources and neighborhoods
- Improving water quality in drinking water watersheds and conserving drinking water supplies through watershed scale management of the built environment
- Preserving, protecting, and enhancing the quality and connectivity of critical habitats, natural lands, riparian and coastal buffer zones, and open spaces
- Preserving, protecting, and restoring farmland and farm operations and investing in climate-smart agricultural and aquacultural production and practices
- Preserving, protecting, and restoring historically, culturally, and architecturally significant sites, structures, landscapes, buildings, and objects, especially those underrepresented by traditional historic and cultural preservation practices
- Increasing accessibility to natural, cultural, and historic resources to increase the health of communities across urban and rural contexts
- Transitioning towards a fossil fuel-free energy system while enhancing efficiency, resilience, equity and the protection of natural lands
- Increasing capacity and sustainability of in-state management of Municipal Solid Waste
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity

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Appendix B – Plans and Programs

Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan, 2025-30

APPENDIX B: Plans and Programs

Thriving Economy

Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)

- Economic Action Plan – outlines strategies for “driving inclusive growth” in Connecticut
- Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development (OBRD) – provides technical and financial assistance for brownfield redevelopment including mixed use, residential, commercial, industrial, retail, and open space uses
- Connecticut Office of the Arts Strategic Plan 2022-27 – informs the Connecticut Office of the Arts as they work to “enhance, support, and empower the Arts for every resident”
- Connecticut Office of Tourism FY23 Strategic Plan – presents strategies to position Connecticut as a tourism destination and increase awareness of tourism assets
- Connecticut’s Manufacturing Strategic Plan – aims to develop Connecticut into an internationally recognized leader in manufacturing

Governor’s Workforce Council

- Workforce Strategic Plan 2020 – makes recommendations to improve the state’s workforce and employment system

Department of Labor (DOL)

- Office of Apprenticeship Training – the only federally authorized entity in Connecticut for Registered Apprenticeship Programs to increase workforce recruitment and proficiency, help employers transfer occupational skills to a new generation of workers, and promote succession planning

Department of Agriculture (DoAg)

- CT Grown Program – identifies and promotes Connecticut’s agriculture and aquaculture products
- Farm Transition Grants – grant program to support the diversification of existing farm operations, transitioning to value-added agricultural

*Denotes a plan required to be consistent with the C&D Plan

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Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan, 2025-30

productions and sales, and other venues in which a majority of products sold are grown in the state

- Farmland Restoration, Climate Resiliency and Preparedness – grant program to increase long-term climate resiliency of farming operations and decrease farm vulnerability to extreme weather events

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)

- Connecticut Brownfield Remediation Liability Relief Programs – work closely with DECD’s Office of Brownfield Remediation and Redevelopment to provide liability relief and financial assistance for cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields.
- Urban Sites Remedial Action Program – DEEP and DECD work together to facilitate the transfer, reuse, and redevelopment of potentially polluted properties located within a distressed municipality or targeted investment community.
- DEEP CERCLA 128(a) Brownfield Grant Program – DEEP’s Remediation Division was awarded funding from EPA to administer to brownfield sites under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to provide grants to municipal and non-profit entities to assess or cleanup brownfield sites. The purpose of the grant program is to encourage and enable the creation, preservation, or addition of park space, greenways, or other recreational space, or other property used for nonprofit purposes. Funding through this grant program is available through federal fiscal year 2027.
- Coastal Management Program – encourages water-dependent uses and facilities in shorefront areas and promotes public access, while requiring that coastal hazard areas be managed to ensure that hazards to life and property are minimized, coastal development allows for tidal wetland migration and incorporates Low Impact development techniques.
- Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan* – identifies significant economic activity associated with outdoor recreation in Connecticut including the top-value-added activities, and establishes goals for enhancing access, quality and preservation/ protection of these important resources

Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

- CT DAS SBE/MBE Program Certification Program also known as the Supplier Diversity or Set-Aside Program - provides enhanced opportunities for small or minority-owned businesses

*Denotes a plan required to be consistent with the C&D Plan

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Policies

guide agency planning,
programming and
policymaking

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

Leverage federal and private financial resources to support programs and projects that balance priorities

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

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

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

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

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

Implementation Measures

to guide agency actions that are required to be consistent with the C&D Plan:

- Acquisition of real property
- Development or improvement of real property
- Acquisition of public transportation equipment or facilities

- Draft proposes **legislative change** to increase threshold from \$200,000 to \$1 million for actions required to be consistent with Plan in return for some form of documentation of consistency
- Implementation measures designed to aid in determining consistency of actions
- Intent is to increase transparency around agency decision making and implementation of the Plan
- Agencies to assist OPM-ORG in developing process around reporting – may be on a programmatic basis

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


- Sample -

Other Implementation Proposals

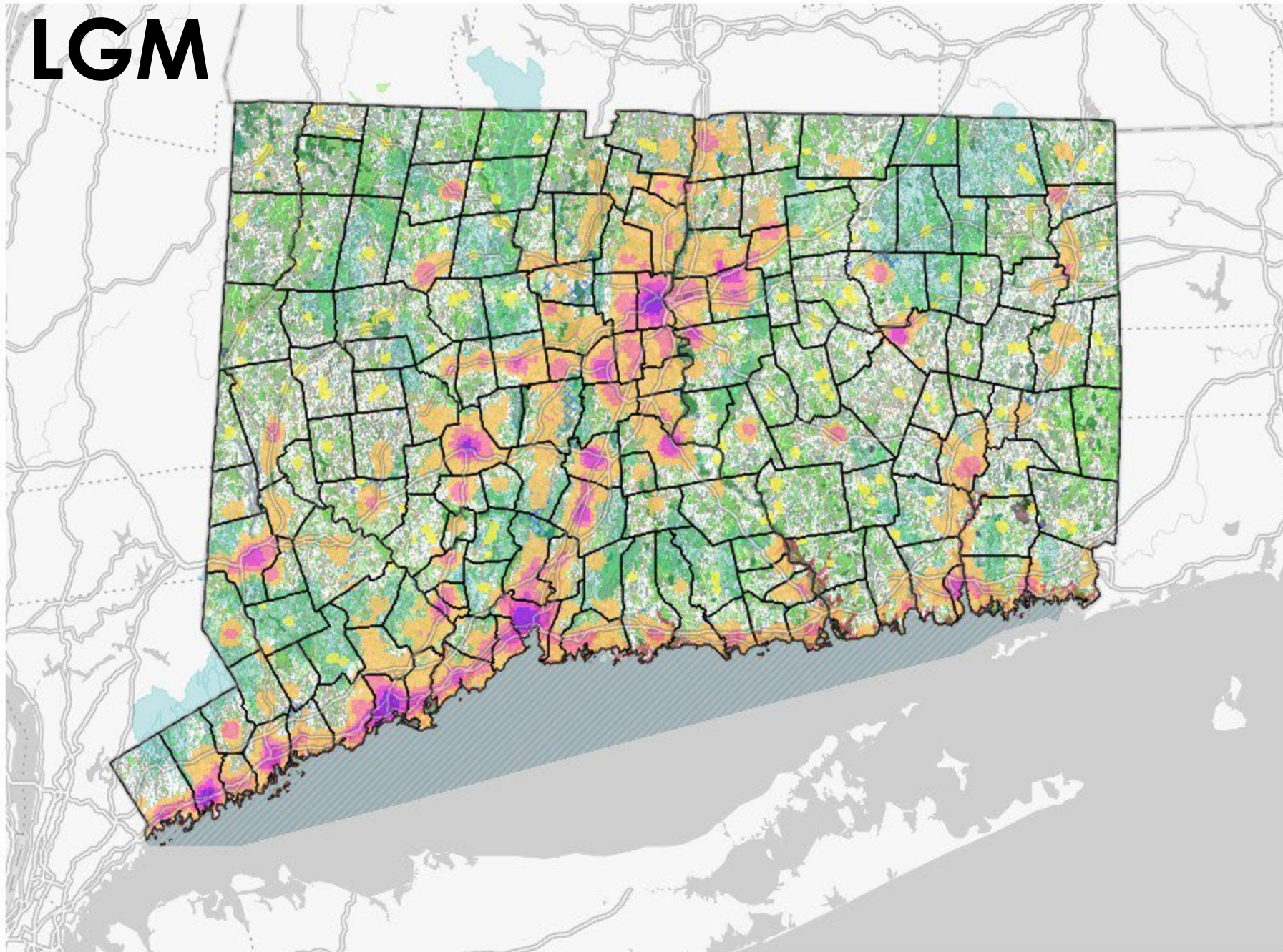
- Convene ad hoc implementation committee of agencies during life of Plan
 - Forum for reviewing opportunities to combine efforts and integrate resources for agency plans, programming and policy development; as well as balancing conflicting priorities
 - Help develop process for documenting required consistency of actions
 - Update Appendix B - Plans and Programs resource - on an annual basis
 - Develop GIS resource of agency activities
- Annually engage Continuing Committee of CGA around implementation
- Regularly offer opportunities for stakeholder engagement around implementation



Locational Guide Map (LGM)

- General guidance for applying the policies and implementation measures of the C&D Plan
 - Not a Priority Funding Area map - descriptive not prescriptive
 - Identifies activity centers and conservation factors
 - Activity centers are where employment hubs, civic uses, transportation assets, cultural attractions and medical and educational institutions cluster at a local scale
 - Activity centers vary in intensity
 - Conservation factors - resources to be restored, preserved and/or protected - are identified throughout
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LGM



Activity Zones

- Major
- Regional
- Local
- Suburban
- Rural

Tribal Reservation Lands

- State Recognized
- Federally Recognized

- Aquifer Protection Areas
- Hurricane Surge Inundation
- Drinking Water Watersheds
- Critical Habitats
- Draft 2023 Protected Open Space
- Core Forest (small)
- Core Forest (medium)
- Core Forest (large)
- Inland Wetland Soil
- Prime Farmland Soil

Next Steps

- Continuing Committee must submit its recommendations to General Assembly within 45 days of completion of public hearing (CGS Sec. 16a-30)
- Legislative proposals recommended by draft Plan
 - Revise CGS Sec.16a-31 to increase threshold to \$1 million for state agency actions required to be consistent with the Plan
 - Repeal Chapter 297a (16a-35c – 16a-35h) Priority Funding Areas