



SHARON CONNECTICUT



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Community Resilience Building Summary of Findings

November 2025



Town of Sharon, 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), and Tropical Storm Isaias have reinforced this urgency and compelled leading communities like the Town of Sharon 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 Sharon 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 November 2025, Sharon'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 Sharon.

The Sharon 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 Sharon employed an “anywhere at any scale”, community-driven process called Community Resilience Building (CRB) (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 Sharon. The Sharon Plan of Conservation and Development (2006) and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Sharon Annex (2022) 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 Sharon’s resilience to hazards and climate change today, and in the future.

The summary of findings transcribed in this report, like any that concerns the evolving nature of risk assessment and associated action, are provided for comments, corrections and updates from workshop attendees and other stakeholders alike. The leadership displayed by the Town of Sharon 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 Sharon Core Team identified the top hazards for the Town. The hazards of greatest concern included flooding of rivers and streams, wildfires, ice storms, and intense and longer duration heat waves. Additional hazards highlighted by participants during the CRB Workshop included drought, Nor’easters and blizzards during fall, winter, and spring months as well as extraordinary storm events such as hurricanes and tropical storms. These hazards have direct and increasing impacts on the infrastructure, environment, and residents of and visitors to Sharon. These effects are seen within residential areas, natural areas (wetlands, rivers, forests, preserves), roads, bridges, businesses, farms, municipal facilities, churches, social support services and centers, health care facilities, and other critical infrastructure and community assets within Sharon.

Current Concerns and Challenges Presented by Hazards

The Town of Sharon has several concerns and faces multiple challenges related to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. In recent years, Sharon has experienced a series of highly disruptive and damaging weather events including the Halloween blizzard (2011), Superstorm Sandy (October 2012), large snowfall events during the winter of 2015-2016 (84" cumulative), extreme wind events (October 2017), Tropical Storm Isaias (August 2020), extreme precipitation event (July 2023), and other less impactful but more frequent events. Impacts from these events have included rain-induced, inland flooding along waterways and low-lying areas, basement flooding in homes, damage to bridges, culverts, and roadbeds as well as tree damage and associated power outages for multiple days. Major blizzards have dropped several feet of snow on the Town knocking out power and isolating residents living beyond blocked sections of roads. 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 Sharon to proactively improve their resilience.

This recent series of extreme weather events highlights that the impacts from hazards are diverse. In Sharon 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, basement flooding, 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, particularly in older homes without air conditioning. 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 Sharon 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, Sharon is not uniformly vulnerable to natural 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 Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Sharon Annex (2022) are provided in Appendix A for cross reference.

Municipal Functions, Operations, & Growth:

- Declining number of students at Sharon Elementary School (currently, 87 students) is a growing concern as it becomes more expensive per student with lower enrollment due to fixed costs such as maintaining the facilities and payroll for teachers and staff (“need more young families with school-aged children”). School maintenance is a large ongoing cost on the annual municipal budget.
- Lack of available and affordable residential properties for sale at any given time limits the number of younger individuals and families from moving to Sharon in search of their first homes in a safe and supportive community.
- Average cost of a house in Sharon is approximately \$800-900K.
- Sharon has the oldest average age for residents in the state of Connecticut at 68 years.
- Limited employment opportunities in Sharon and across the northwest corner of Connecticut.
- Long standing shift and exit of industrial manufacturing from the region reduced the ability of residents to work and live in the same locations (“different now between who is around and who isn’t”) (“Sharon has become a service-oriented economy”).
- People who do have jobs (trades/home maintenance/landscaping) in Sharon reside elsewhere such as places just over the border in New York, where the cost of living and housing is more agreeable.
- Sharon is highly dependent on volunteers for functions, resources, and services which can present a challenge if the volunteer pool shrinks due to the shifting interest amongst the younger generations.
- Current volunteers and paid staff are beginning to “age out” without additional support from new volunteers.
- Cell phone coverage is considered poor in Sharon as in many of the surrounding Towns in the northwest corner of the State.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Second-home owners do not typically get involved in volunteer opportunities and programs in Town which has been a point of tension between part-time and full-time residents.
- Growing safety concerns regarding motorists in Sharon often exceeding the local speed limits coupled with the tendencies to not come to full stops at signed intersections.
- Budgeted overtime for road crews with the Highway Department used to be for winter snow and ice storms, but now they are also being used for flooding, heavy rains, and wind events.
- Majority of households in Sharon are on individual private drinking water wells that are relatively shallow wells.
- Upstairs meeting room in Town Hall was noted as being very difficult to hear and therefore participant in meetings and events.

Emergency Management & Preparedness:

- Currently, there is not a single muster point or gathering spot for residents in case of emergencies in Town. The elementary school is potentially the best gathering spot but the facility does not have a back-up power generator.
- Less than adequate awareness amongst residents as to the location of emergency shelters.
- Limited awareness amongst full-time and seasonal residents regarding the need to “opt-in” or sign up to receive notifications through the Town’s Reverse 911 emergency alert system.
- Most neighboring towns are also rural with limited additional capacity and resources, which can create challenges when asked to respond to issues outside of Sharon per mutual aid agreements.
- Elderly residents can be difficult to reach during emergencies and sometime lack transportation options.
- Concerns about the impact of heat waves on elderly and those in housing that do not have air conditioning systems.
- Emergency management services such as Fire Department and Ambulance are finding it challenging to retain existing and recruit new volunteers, which may eventually have an impact on the level of services available to residents.
- Sharon is approximately 60 square miles which can make it difficult to get from one end to the other during storm events with road closures and prolonged safety detours.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- First responders sometimes use dirt roads or poorly maintained private roads to get close to wildfires and other emergencies (e.g., stranded/wounded hiker), which can present challenges and result in delays (“we are concerned about being able to protect the public in any situation”).
- Dirt roads are a large issue for ambulatory services not only in terms of access to a patient but also safety stabilizing and transporting a patient on a dirt road compromised by runoff (i.e., washouts, potholes, etc.).
- Growing concerns regarding the potential for more intense and widespread wildfires in Sharon and adjoining communities. Municipal staff have limited experience and appropriate equipment to effectively manage wildfires, especially large-scale burns in remote locations with poor access. Fuel loads on forested lands in Sharon are currently considered high by local officials, which is a concern when coupled with the recent extended droughts (“flash droughts”) in northwestern Connecticut (“high and growing fire risk”).
- Dead and standing trees along roadways are prone to falling and block roadways during extreme weather events, especially during ice storms with high winds.
- Influx of summer campers at the Silver Lake Conference Center increases the number and concentration of vulnerable populations in Sharon in case of emergencies (reportedly, 2026 will be the final year for the Center).
- Alcohol rehabilitation center (30 or so occupants) and the patients at the Sharon Hospital represent potentially vulnerable populations within the community in times of emergencies that may require additional considerations for care.
- Recent sharp declines in air quality due to distant wildfire presents concerns to residents with pre-existing respiratory and breathing issues.

Roads, Bridges, Culverts, & Road Networks:

- Sharon has the largest number of dirt road miles of any municipality in the State.
- Drainage systems along dirt roads can get compromised due to gravel and soil washing out on the road surface during heavy precipitation events as well as clogging the stormwater runoff diversions, culverts, and pipes.
- During the late winter and early spring months (“mud season”) dirt roads can be impassable for trucks due to wet and muddy conditions.
- Stormwater runoff and subsequent erosion of dirt roads have contaminated local water sources such as adjoining wetlands and streams and other sensitive environmental areas.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Many municipally owned and maintained bridges in Sharon are getting to the end of their life cycle and require attention.
- Lambert Road has a large pipe (6' plus) that gets clogged with debris during major precipitation events (Superstorm Sandy with 13" of rain) and results in localized flooding that can be dangerous to motorists.
- Roadways prone to short-term flooding (and not being safely passable) during heavy precipitation events include state roads south of the Clocktower, Millertown Road between Mudge Pond and Sharon Valley Road, Westwood Road #2 near a beaver pond, and portions of Cornwall Bridge Road.
- Relatively lengthy list of municipally owned and maintained bridges and culverts that need maintenance and repairs.
- Dead end roads with homes are difficult for Eversource to restore power service when downed trees have both blocked the road and brought down powerlines.

Stormwater, Septic, & Drinking Water Systems:

- Drinking water pumps for private wells and residential septic system pumps are compromised during power outages unless hooked up to a back-up power generator.

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 Sharon and the northwest corner of Connecticut.
- Invasive plants, pests, and pathogens are impacting native tree species (i.e., Northern Ash, etc.) in Sharon and across the northwest corner resulting in a high number of dead and dying trees near power lines or along roadways.
- Pests and pathogens impact the health of local forested lands. Spongey Moth (*Lymantria dispar dispar*) outbreaks caused significant losses to the hickory and oak tree populations in Sharon.
- Tick population continues to expand and is becoming a major public health problem with more complicated tick-borne illnesses beyond just Lyme Disease.
- Open space areas in Town continuously vulnerable to establishment of invasive species that can compromise native flora and fauna and the integrity of natural ecosystems.
- Traditional agricultural lands in Sharon have been converted to private estates in five locations in recent years.

Current Strengths and Assets

Just as certain locations, facilities, and populations in Sharon stand out as particularly vulnerable to the effects of hazards and climate change, other features are notable assets for Sharon’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.

- Clearly, the responsive and committed engagement exhibited by leadership, staff, and residents is a very appreciated strength within and across Sharon. Ongoing collaboration between municipal staff, committee/commission/board volunteers, business community, faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, adjoining municipalities, Northwest Hills Council of Government, and various state-wide organizations (i.e., Sustainable CT, The Nature Conservancy), among others, priorities identified herein will help advance comprehensive, cost-effective, community resilience building actions.
- Wonderful sense of community felt amongst residents in Sharon with friends, neighbors, and the Town lean on to help those in need of support (“there is a lot that goes on without recognition”).
- Residents respond during challenging situations or emergencies by working together to make sure everyone is being helped, as needed.
- Diverse backgrounds coupled with a wide array of expertise and skills amongst the staff, residents, and volunteers that are ready to step up and help the community routinely and especially during crises.
- Paid staff within the Town Hall and the Highway Departments, among others, have extensive institutional knowledge and experience having work together through many extreme weather emergencies in Sharon over the decades (“many “homegrown” staff that are from Sharon”).
- Municipal services and amenities are readily available to residents.
- Sharon Energy and Environmental Commission is working on developing a community calendar and newsletter to help increase awareness of opportunities for residents to get more engaged in civic and volunteer events.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Spatially concentrated or “tightly configured” town center, which helps with effectively and quickly communicating and coordinating during emergencies (“close proximity of buildings really helps”).
- Strong community desire to preserve and maintain the rural character of Sharon through open space protection and working agricultural landscapes.
- Most of the municipal buildings and facilities are well built.
- Sharon Hospital is proximate to other municipal amenities with ready access to emergency care for people in the northwest corner of Connecticut and across the border into New York is a highly appreciated community assets (“10-minute drive to Sharon ER instead of 45 minutes to Torrington”).
- Sharon Hospital has a helipad to receive supplies rapidly or to transfer critical patients to other facilities. The Hospital brings medical professionals and skilled health care providers to the area, which has a rapidly aging demographic generally in need of more care.
- Sharon Housing Trust is actively developing and providing low-cost housing with three properties under management and one that was recently acquired for conversion to housing.
- Sharon is an active member and participant in the Northwest Hills Council of Governments.
- Road Stream Crossing Management Plan for all bridges and culvert was finalized in 2017. Plan includes a flood risk analysis for all road stream crossings resulting in the identification of priority projects to help improve the resilience of this critical infrastructure in Sharon.
- Volunteers with the Sharon Fire Department, Emergency Management Services, and Ambulance Services are knowledgeable about the surrounding areas and how to access places in the event of an emergency. These municipal services are centralized and well-organized and can handle most issues in Sharon.
- Fire Department’s Firehouse is available for residents during emergencies and can provide sleeping accommodations for those in need.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Sharon's Town Hall has a back-up generator in place to provide continuity of power during outages.
- Sharon has a high ropes rescue team and multi-terrain vehicles for emergency operation in the more remote and rugged areas.
- Extensive collaboration between emergency management professionals and first responders in Sharon with other municipalities including Salisbury, Cornwall, Lakeville, and Kent as well as nearby towns of Millbrook and Amenia in New York.
- Mutual aid agreements are in place with these neighboring municipalities to provide as well as receive emergency management support, depending on availability and need.
- Public Works Department is involved with mutual aid task force and can call on other Towns for assistance as well as provide aid to others in need. Recently, Sharon responded to an ice storm that impacted the town of Goshen.
- Sharon has communication technology in place that can effectively reach residents (if they choose to sign up) during extreme weather emergencies.
- Sharon has a Reverse 911 system in place that residents can sign up for to receive emergency related alerts via email and/or text.
- Local radio station called Robinhood Radio Station is especially good at helping to share information to listeners during storm events.
- First Selectman sends out a monthly newsletter for those that sign up to receive the information.
- Sharon has a Facebook group that helps to get the word out about ongoings but may not be as reliable during major disasters with prolonged power outages.
- Reasonably reliable internet in Sharon.
- Shared borders with Dutchess County (New York) and Litchfield County (Connecticut) where 911 calls are received along the Connecticut side of Dutchess County and transferred to Litchfield County Dispatch to help coordinate effective responses by the closest first responders.
- New cell tower in the center of Sharon has reduced the time 911 calls take to go through the Litchfield County Dispatch system and out to first responders.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Litchfield County Dispatch is an asset for the community particularly when there is a need for coordinated responses to large scale incidents such as wildfires.
- Time needed to restore power to homes in Sharon after power outages has progressively decreased over the last decade.
- Community members truly care about the conservation of land and the natural resources in Sharon. Overall, the community is deeply passionate about the abundance and quality of the natural resources in Sharon as well as in the large ecological significance of the northwest corner of Connecticut.
- Sharon Land Trust, Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC), and the Housatonic Valley Association help support land protection and environmental stewardship efforts in Town. Sharon Land Trust recently reached an internal goal of protecting 30% of land in Town. The NCLC has one preserve in Westwoods and will be opening another public preserve in Sharon in 2026.
- Sharon has natural scenic beauty coupled with an abundance of accessible open space for outdoor activities.
- Close to 50% of the land in Sharon is undeveloped and/or conserved, which collectively represents a large diversity of habitat types and ecosystems. These lands help with climate resilience by allowing for the infiltration of precipitation (versus resulting in stormwater runoff) and increasing the amount of stored carbon in trees and soils.
- Multiple conservation focused/orientated organizations in Town committed to stewarding and protecting natural resources and encouraging use of natural areas by residents and visitors for outdoor recreation activities.
- Expertise on non-native and invasive plant removal and native species propagation, which helps enhance the integrity and functionality of ecosystems in Sharon.
- Ten Mile River watershed that stretches across state boundaries into New York is an area of collaboration on watershed management between the two states and the many supportive organizations.
- Housatonic Forest was identified as a community asset.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Indian Mountain is a shared ridgeline and place of collaborative land management between multiple municipalities and entities across two states.
- Initiative called Follow the Forest via the Housatonic Valley Associations increases awareness of important core forest blocks by highlighting their locations in Sharon and adjoining communities.
- Environmentally related commissions and boards are populated with active and knowledgeable members such as the Inland Wetland Commission that routinely conducts site visits to check-in on the condition and health of various wetlands.
- Audubon Society has two locations in Sharon and provides educational programming for children in the local school system.
- Local college preparatory schools invest in land stewardship on their campuses as well as sustainability projects (i.e., solar project at Hotchkiss School).
- Sharon has a robust and lengthy agricultural heritage with two working farms focused on beef operations. Many of the traditional agricultural lands are being protected by the Sharon Land Trust and represent opportunities for future re-establishment of local food production (i.e., new farms) for residents and visitors alike.
- Silver Lake and the Town Beach provide a great recreational location for families to cool off during the summer months.
- Park pavilion at the recreation and sports field complex includes bathrooms, is handicap accessible, and located near a playground for children.
- Sharon's Town Green provides a beautiful space for gatherings and convening events that help to connect and galvanize the community.
- Consistently high ambient air quality was raised as a strength (with the exception during recent distant wildfires, which have resulted in sharp declines in air quality).



Credit: Visit Connecticut



Credit: Town of Sharon



Credit: Connecticut Farmland Trust

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 Sharon'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, housing, education/school enrollment, demographics);
- **Infrastructure improvements** (i.e., roads, bridges and road crossings, stormwater management (culverts, green stormwater infrastructure), renewables (solar));
- **Quality of life improvements** (i.e., open space & accessibility, sustainability, health care/hospital, economic prosperity, affordable housing, 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 Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Sharon Annex (2022) are provided in Appendix A for cross reference with actions presented herein. Maps to support this CRB process, gathered from the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and The Nature Conservancy are provided in Appendix B.

Priority Actions

- Update, revise, and improve Sharon's Plan of Conservation and Development and ensure that projected impacts from climate change are fully integrated into future strategies and action in hopes of creating a more resilient community. Ensure the process for updating is rooted in a community-wide, full participation approach designed to enable residents to contribute and be heard as they define where their community will go and be in the future.

Priority Actions (cont'd)

- Identify opportunities to encourage more participation in local government and operations such as with the Fire Department, Emergency Management Services, Highway Department, and Ambulance, among others.
- Support job creation opportunities in Sharon via the exploration of different avenues to bolster the local economy including regulation review and modification, tax incentives, and citing opportunities.
- Increase the number of available housing units (i.e., apartments, multi-family duplexes, smaller single family “starter” homes, etc.) that are attractively priced to encourage younger generations to consider settling and raising families in Sharon.
- Continue to support the Sharon Housing Trust by looking to make available underutilized municipal and/or private buildings coupled with a concerted effort by the Planning and Zoning Commission to approve residential projects (i.e., cluster housing, 2-acre lots, etc.) with lower cost for residents that are looking to downsize and stay in Sharon (“versus downsize to Salisbury”). Work to identify ways to create lower cost housing opportunities for professionals who would like to live in Sharon (“live in the Town where you work”).
- Explore potential options to subsidize low-income housing developments and/or for collaborations with neighboring Towns and other organizations to bundle affordable housing with land conservation opportunities.
- Identify a centrally located community gathering space for use during emergencies and promote awareness of the space with all residents of Sharon.
- Work to retrofit electrical power systems at the Sharon Elementary School to allow for continuous use of the facility during usual school hours (regardless of power outages) as well as a proper emergency shelter and gathering space for residents during periods of crisis.

Priority Actions (cont'd)

- Investigate further opportunities to expand the solar capabilities (solar array(s) plus battery storage) at the parking lot used by the Sharon Elementary School as an alternative power supply for the school during power outages.
- Continue to steward the Town's natural resources and ecosystems, including the agricultural and natural lands.
- Work to limit the establishment of invasive plant species in Sharon by focusing on areas along roadways, open spaces, and residential properties.
- Seek and secure funding for Emergency Management Services and Fire Department to replace ageing and outdated equipment and to pay for personnel when there are no volunteers to fill critical positions.
- Secure a contingency fund to cover costs incurred by the Highway Department and road crews when dealing with storms that are more frequent and more intense (i.e., increased overtime for staff to clear and make roads safe after unforeseen non-winter storms).
- Provide Highway Department staff with educational information sessions on ways to manage stormwater runoff and erosion on dirt roads to help minimize impacts to adjoining wetlands and other ecologically sensitive areas.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of roadway infrastructure to prevent future failures and to inform priorities for ongoing roadway improvements.
- Advance priority road stream crossing projects as identified in the 2017 Road Stream Crossing Management Plan by securing grants and seeks other sources of funding.
- Continue to aggressively remove dead standing and dying trees located in proximity to power lines, utility rights-of-way, and/or along roadways to help reduce safety issues for motorists, road blockage, and power outages.

- Install a better audio-visual system in the upstairs meeting room in Town Hall to help ensure all present can hear and see presentations, deliberations, and decisions being made and to help foster greater civic engagement.

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.
- Convene a series of meetings to discuss the individual specifics and overlaps of various emergency response and operations plans in Sharon including the Hospital and the School facilities. Review all pertinent documents together as one coordinated group on an annual basis to help ensure awareness and efficiency of responses.
- Work to ensure preparedness of hospital and local medical teams for emerging infectious diseases that are becoming more prevalent due to climate changes such as dengue fever and zika virus with medicines to treat these infections widely available.
- Increase the availability and awareness amongst residents of emergency plans and where to seek shelter during disasters.
- Develop correspondence to be sent via mail and/or email to remind and inform residents of the multitude of municipal services offered through the town of Sharon, including emergency management.
- Explore potential to partner with the local radio station to broadcast alerts during emergency situations and therefore increase the reach of the Town's communications.
- Work towards establishing additional cell towers in Sharon to help improve the cell coverage on an everyday basis as well as before, during, and after emergencies.
- Identify and correct impacts to wetlands, streams, and other waterways from sediments and contaminants originating from stormwater runoff and erosion off roadways.
- Improve forest management practices to help increase biodiversity of species and habitat types and to ensure areas with the highest fuel loads (dead stands of trees) are revegetated with trees and shrubs (versus physically removing dead trees to reduce fuel loads).

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Work to reduce the spread and establishment of non-native, invasive plant species along the relatively high number of dirt roads in Sharon. Look to develop an agreeable invasive species control procedure for the Highway Department and road crews including the use of both herbicide and manual removal approaches.
- Examine and curtail current road maintenance practices such as using roadway fill containing seeds of invasive plant species. Look to remove invasive plant species along roadways where contaminated roadway fill has been used previously.
- Improve the management practices at Mudge Pond and Silver Lake to help protect against the spread of aquatic invasive species, ecological impacts from drought conditions, bank erosion, and sedimentation and pollution from stormwater runoff.
- Build on the momentum generated through the creation of the Mudge Pond Associates to better maintain and protect this critical natural resource including promoting better stewardship of privately-owned buffer areas around the Pond.
- Consider way to help Sharon Housing Trust with the completion and submittal of overly burdensome paperwork with appropriate state agencies in hopes of further accelerating the availability of lower cost housing in Town.
- Reexamine municipal regulations, zoning, and building codes related to limits on the number of short-term rentals (i.e., Air BnBs, etc.) with the intent of increasing longer term rentals instead.
- Examine examples from other communities where additional fees or taxes were levied on second homeowners to help fund the development of lower cost housing for full-time residents.
- Address agricultural zoning and covenant loopholes that have allowed large estates to be built in Sharon on converted agricultural lands (five properties converted to estates, to date).

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Work to further protect traditional agricultural lands in Sharon and look to encourage a renewal of local food production for local consumption. Explore possibility of setting up community gardens for residents to grow food.
- Continue to support and improve efforts to reduce food insecurity in Sharon by increasing the availability of food at local pantries for those in need.
- Conduct an analysis of roadway issues in Sharon such as number and location of accidents and segments of roads with highest excessive speeding in hopes of gaining a better understanding where and when safety issues occur.
- Continue to advance ongoing road improvements on River Road.
- Complete assessment and planning for a 10-year process to maintain municipal owned bridges across Sharon.
- Explore further the potential for wildfires in remote locations (i.e., lightning strikes on mountaintops) as well as potential strategies and approaches to gaining access to remote areas (“outside of normal/established access routes”). Look to adjoining Towns and other communities nationally that have faced similar situations for examples of successful best management practices for potential application in Sharon.
- Secure and activate a General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) with walkie talkies and mobile two-way radios on Sharon Mountain to help assist with quicker and better coordinated rescue operations.
- Seek out information from willing residents about their background and skill sets in hopes of better aligning or connecting expertise with available volunteer opportunities in Town.
- Initiate the creation of an energy policy for Sharon to ensure continuity of services and local availability of power via renewable energy options during emergency situations.

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Encourage training for Public Works Department and partners (i.e., Stream Smart Training Program) related to ensuring road crossings and culvert repairs and upgrades are done in the most environmentally friendly manner using nature-based or green stormwater management approaches, where appropriate.
- Continue to engage and discuss opportunities to advance the “Resilient and Connected Lands Network” efforts in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, Northwest Hills Council of Governments, and private and public landowners (i.e., MDC, etc.) (see land use map in Appendix B (Pages 43 & 44)).
- Increase monitoring and public awareness about diseases related to changes in climate (i.e., ticks, mosquitoes, etc.).
- Periodically convene the community members that participated in Sharon’s Community Resilience Building workshop (November 2025) to discuss progress, keep in touch on community challenges and opportunities, and reassess existing or develop new actions with the goal of improving the Town’s resilience and sustainability going forward.
- Continue to remove hazardous deadwood fuel load in proximity to buildings.
- Explore potential for installing air filters in emergency shelters to help reduce the impact of poor air quality due to wildfires on residents using the shelters.



Credit: Town of Sharon

CRB Workshop Participants: Department/Organization

Town of Sharon – Office of the First Selectman
Town of Sharon – Office of Selectman
Town of Sharon – Homeland Security
Town of Sharon – Town Highway Department
Town of Sharon – Social Services
Town of Sharon – Office of the Land Use Administrator
Town of Sharon – Office of the Fire Marshal & Building Official
Town of Sharon – Sharon Energy and Environmental Commission
Town of Sharon – Conservation Commission
Town of Sharon – Local Emergency Planning Committee
Town of Sharon – Sewer & Water Commission
Town of Sharon – Inland Wetlands & Watercourse Commission
Town of Sharon – Planning & Zoning Commission
Town of Sharon – Long Range Planning Committee
Sharon Land Trust
Sharon Ambulance
Sharon Hospital
Sharon Historical Society & Museum
Housatonic Valley Association

Sharon Core CRB Project Team

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Katy Kinsolving – Sharon Energy and Environmental Commission

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The Nature Conservancy – Drew Goldsman (Small Group Facilitator)

Sustainable CT – Jessica LeClair (Small Group Facilitator)

Sustainable CT – Torin Radicioni (Scribe)

The Nature Conservancy – Kai Lo Muscio (Scribe, IT Manager)

Sustainable CT – Summer Mitchell (Scribe)

Sustainable CT – Katie Meder (Scribe)

Recommended Citation

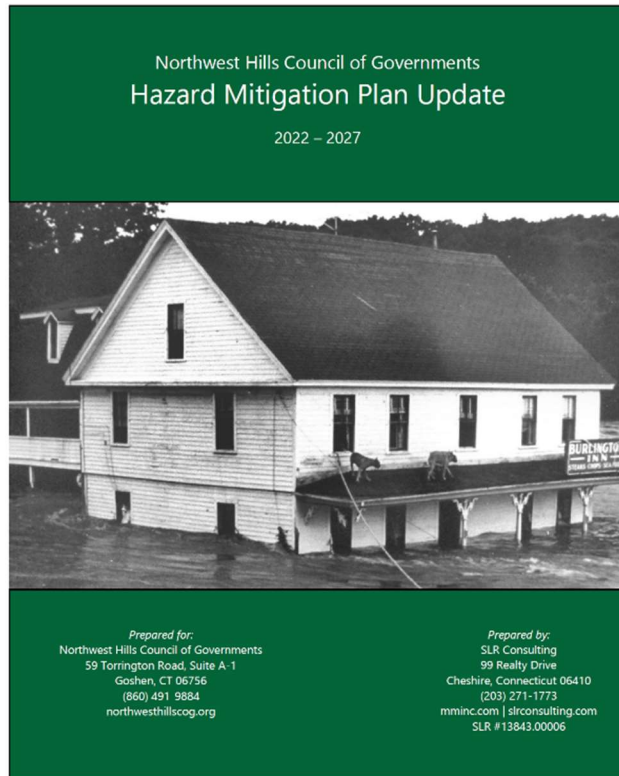
Town of Sharon Online Community Resilience Building Workshop - Summary of Findings Report. (2025). Community Resilience Building Program. The Nature Conservancy and Sustainable CT. Sharon, Connecticut.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the Town leadership, staff, and community members for their willingness to embrace the process in hopes of a more resilient future for Sharon. This online Community Resilience Building Workshop was made possible in large part through the dedicated contribution of the facilitation team members who skillfully conducted the Sharon Community Resilience Building workshop in close partnership with the Town's Core CRB Project Team.

Appendix A

Sharon, Connecticut Mitigation Actions*



***Gathered from the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Sharon Annex (2022) .**

Action SHR-01	
Register as a Sustainable CT community and make progress with the hazard mitigation goals associated with registration.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$0 - \$25,000
Funding	OB, Sustainable CT
Timeframe	2022
Priority	High

Action SHR-02	
Remain engaged with FEMA and the State during the Housatonic River Watershed flood map updates. Review draft maps and provide comments to FEMA.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$0 - \$25,000
Funding	OB
Timeframe	2022 – 2023
Priority	Low

Action SHR-03	
Refer to the Morris Low Impact Sustainable Development Design Manual, created to be a regional resource by the Northwest Conservation District and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments, to incorporate LID guidance and regulations into the local Zoning Regulations or Ordinances	
Lead	Planning, DPW, ConCom
Cost	\$0 - \$25,000
Funding	OB, NCD
Timeframe	2022 – 2023
Priority	Low

Action SHR-04	
Fully incorporate the provisions of the DEEP model flood regulations into the local flood damage prevention regulations (or ordinance), including but not limited to the required design flood elevations for the first floor, building electrical systems, and building mechanical systems.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, FEMA Grant, CT DEEP
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	High

Action SHR-05	
Increase Substantial Damage and Substantial Improvement lookback periods to two or more years.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, FEMA Grant, CT DEEP
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	High

Action SHR-06	
Mitigate the risk of snow accumulation and icing on the Town Hall's Slater Roof through development of snow and ice clearing protocols and/or structural measures (such as installation of heating coils or roof reinforcement).	
Lead	DPW
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Med

Action SHR-07	
Back up IT data to the cloud, to both ensure it is protected from a local hazard event, and to enable continued remote operations in case the local server is not accessible.	
Lead	EMD, IT
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Med

Action SHR-08	
Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct historic resource surveys, focusing on areas within natural hazard risk zones (flood zones, wildfire hazard zones, steep slopes) to support the preparation of resiliency plans across the state.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT SHPO
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Low

Action SHR-09	
Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct outreach to owners of historic properties to educate them on methods of retrofitting historic properties to be more hazard-resilient while maintaining historic character.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT SHPO
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Low

Action SHR-10	
Provide information on the dangers of cold-related hazards to people and property.	
Lead	EMD; First Selectman
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT DEMHS
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Low

Action SHR-11	
Use the CT Toxics Users and Climate Resilience Map to identify toxic users located in hazard zones within your community. Contact those users to inform them about the CT DEEP small business chemical management initiative.	
Lead	Planning; Chamber
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT DEEP
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Low

Action SHR-12	
Review culvert conveyances based on existing hydrology and Northeast Regional Climate Center guidance.	
Lead	DPW
Cost	\$50,000 - \$100,000
Funding	OB, CIP, CT DEEP
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Priority	High

Action SHR-13	
Take the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) Road-Stream Crossing Inventory analysis into consideration when upgrading and replacing infrastructure, including the restoration prioritization results.	
Lead	DPW
Cost	\$50,000 - \$100,000
Funding	OB, HVA
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Priority	Med

Action SHR-14	
Conduct an evaluation at the main business area near the supermarket (Low Road, Murtagh Road, and Route 41 (North Main Street)) to determine appropriate flood mitigation measures.	
Lead	DPW
Cost	\$50,000 - \$100,000
Funding	OB, CIP, FEMA Grant
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Priority	Med

Action SHR-15	
Institute a locally-controlled Reverse-911 system (in addition or instead of that managed by LCD).	
Lead	EMD
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT DEMHS
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Priority	Low

Action SHR-16	
Encourage residents to purchase and use NOAA weather radios with alarm features	
Lead	EMD
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT DEMHS
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Priority	Low

Action SHR-17	
Ensure that the Hatch Pond dam failure area is included in the CTAlert system.	
Lead	EMD
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT DEMHS
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Priority	Low

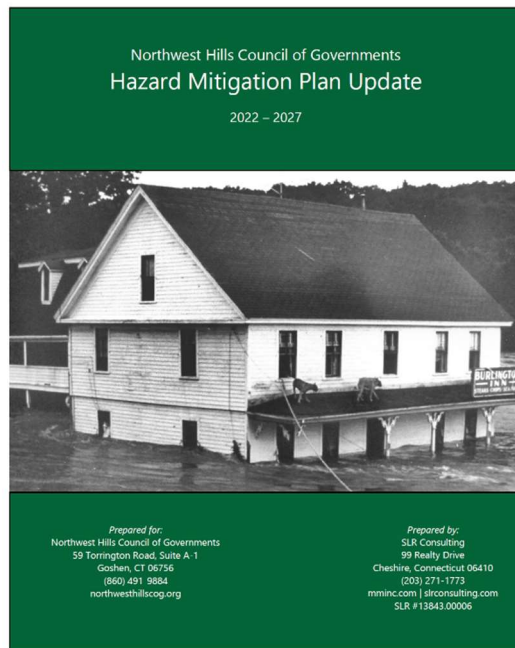
Action SHR-18	
Improve emergency power capabilities at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Water Treatment Facility (which currently share a single portable generator).	
Lead	DPW; EMD
Cost	More than \$500,000
Funding	CIP, FEMA Grant, CT DEMHS
Timeframe	2024 – 2026
Priority	Med

Action SHR-19	
Install a headwall at the culvert beneath Kings Hill Road along Guinea Brook.	
Lead	DPW
Cost	\$100,000 - \$500,000
Funding	CIP, FEMA Grant, CT DEEP
Timeframe	2024 – 2026
Priority	Med



#	Action Description	Regional Theme	Lead Department	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe for Completion	Weighted STAPLEE Criteria										Total STAPLEE Score				
							Benefits					Costs									
							Social	Technical (x2)	Administrative	Political	Legal	Economic (x2)	Environmental	Social	Technical (x2)	Administrative		Political	Legal	Economic (x2)	Environmental
SHR-01	Register as a Sustainable CT community and make progress with the hazard mitigation goals associated with registration.	Sustainable CT	Planning	\$0 - \$25,000	OB, Sustainable CT	2022	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	
SHR-02	Remain engaged with FEMA and the State during the Housatonic River Watershed flood map updates. Review draft maps and provide comments to FEMA.	Flood Map Updates	Planning	\$0 - \$25,000	OB	2022 - 2023	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	-1	-1	0	0	4	
SHR-03	Refer to the Morris Low Impact Sustainable Development Design Manual, created to be a regional resource by the Northwest Conservation District and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments, to incorporate LID guidance and regulations into the local Zoning Regulations or Ordinances.	Low Impact Development	Planning, DPW, ConCom	\$0 - \$25,000	OB, NCD	2022 - 2023	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
SHR-04	Fully incorporate the provisions of the DEEP model flood regulations into the local flood damage prevention regulations (or ordinance), including but not limited to the required design flood elevations for the first floor, building electrical systems, and building mechanical systems.	Flood Regulations	Planning	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, FEMA Grant, CT DEEP	2022 - 2024	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	-1	-1	0	0	6	
SHR-05	Increase Substantial Damage and Substantial Improvement lookback periods to two or more years.	Flood Regulations	Planning	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, FEMA Grant, CT DEEP	2022 - 2024	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	-1	-1	0	0	6	
SHR-06	Mitigate the risk of snow accumulation and icing on the Town Hall's Slater Roof through development of snow and ice clearing protocols and/or structural measures (such as installation of heating coils or roof reinforcement).	Snow Removal	DPW	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB	2022 - 2024	0	0.5	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
SHR-07	Back up IT data to the cloud, to both ensure it is protected from a local hazard event, and to enable continued remote operations in case the local server is not accessible.	Data & IT Protection	EMD, IT	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB	2022 - 2024	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	5	
SHR-08	Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct historic resource surveys, focusing on areas within natural hazard risk zones (flood zones, wildfire hazard zones, steep slopes) to support the preparation of resiliency plans across the state.	Historic & Cultural Resources	Planning	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT SHPO	2022 - 2024	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	5	
SHR-09	Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct outreach to owners of historic properties to educate them on methods of retrofitting historic properties to be more hazard-resilient while maintaining historic character.	Historic & Cultural Resources	Planning	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT SHPO	2022 - 2024	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	5	
SHR-10	Provide information on the dangers of cold-related hazards to people and property.	Public Education	EMD; First Selectman	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT DEMHS	2022 - 2024	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	4	
SHR-11	Use the CT Toxics Users and Climate Resilience Map to identify toxic users located in hazard zones within your community. Contact those users to inform them about the CT DEEP small business chemical management initiative.	Small Business Chemicals	Planning; Chamber	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT DEEP	2022 - 2024	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	-1	0	0	0	5	
SHR-12	Review culvert conveyances based on existing hydrology and Northeast Regional Climate Center guidance.	NRCC Guidance	DPW	\$50,000 - \$100,000	OB, CIP, CT DEEP	2023 - 2025	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	
SHR-13	Take the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) Road-Stream Crossing Inventory analysis into consideration when upgrading and replacing infrastructure, including the restoration prioritization results.	HVA Road-Stream Crossing	DPW	\$50,000 - \$100,000	OB, HVA	2023 - 2025	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	-1	0	5	
SHR-14	Conduct an evaluation at the main business area near the supermarket (Low Road, Murtagh Road, and Route 41 (North Main Street)) to determine appropriate flood mitigation measures.	Study	DPW	\$50,000 - \$100,000	OB, CIP, FEMA Grant	2023 - 2025	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	
SHR-15	Institute a locally-controlled Reverse-911 system (in addition or instead of that managed by LCD).	Emergency Alerts	EMD	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT DEMHS	2023 - 2025	1	0.5	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	4	
SHR-16	Encourage residents to purchase and use NOAA weather radios with alarm features	Emergency Alerts	EMD	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT DEMHS	2023 - 2025	1	0.5	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	4	
SHR-17	Ensure that the Hatch Pond dam failure area is included in the CTAlert system.	Emergency Alerts	EMD	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT DEMHS	2023 - 2025	1	0.5	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	4	
SHR-18	Improve emergency power capabilities at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Water Treatment Facility (which currently share a single portable generator).	Critical Facility Backup Power	DPW; EMD	More than \$500,000	CIP, FEMA Grant, CT DEMHS	2024 - 2026	1	0.5	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	5	
SHR-19	Install a headwall at the culvert beneath Kings Hill Road along Guinea Brook.	Culvert & Bridge Upgrades	DPW	\$100,000 - \$500,000	CIP, FEMA Grant, CT DEEP	2024 - 2026	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	5

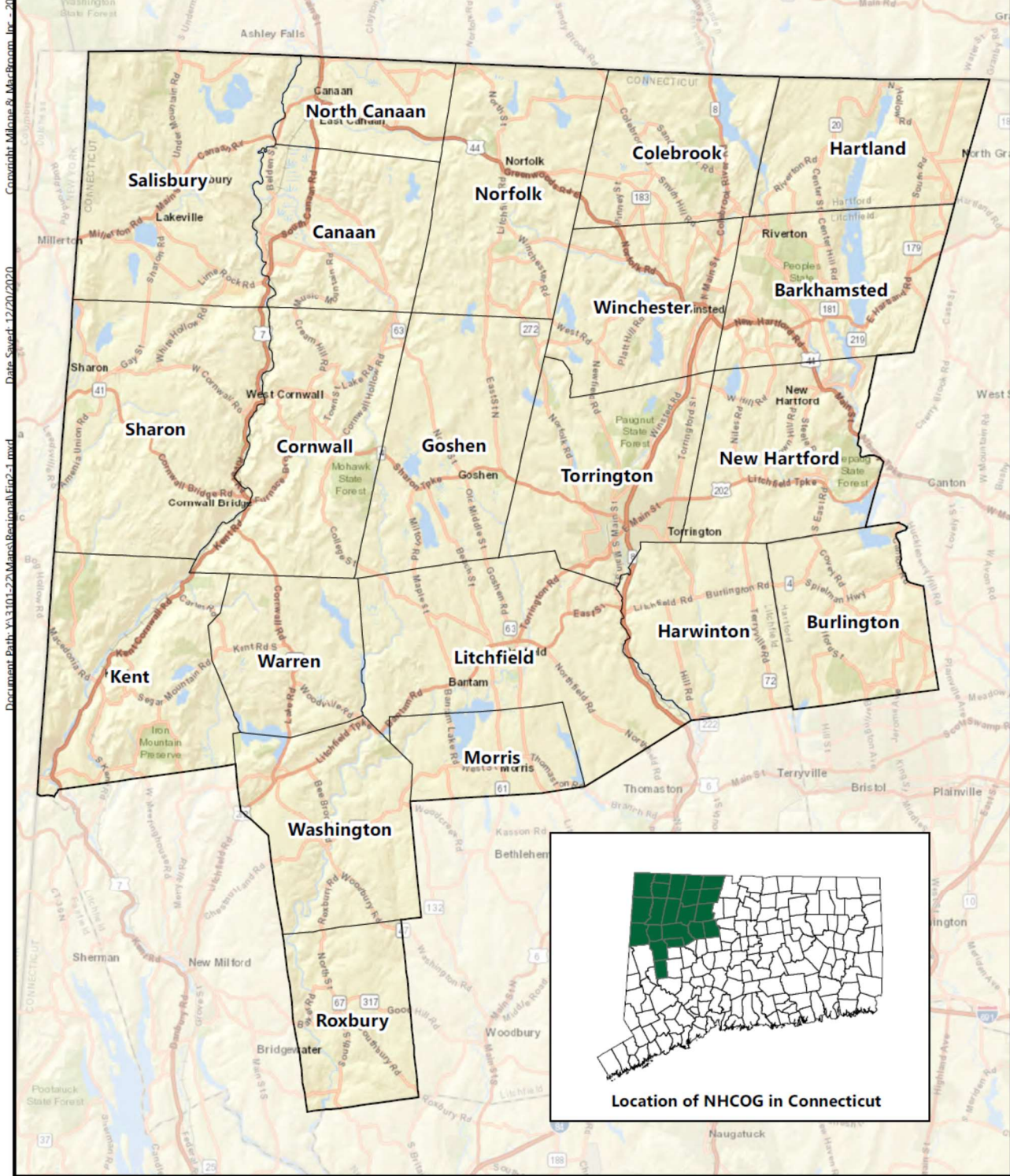
Appendix B

Sharon, Connecticut Map Resource Packet* Used During CRB Workshop

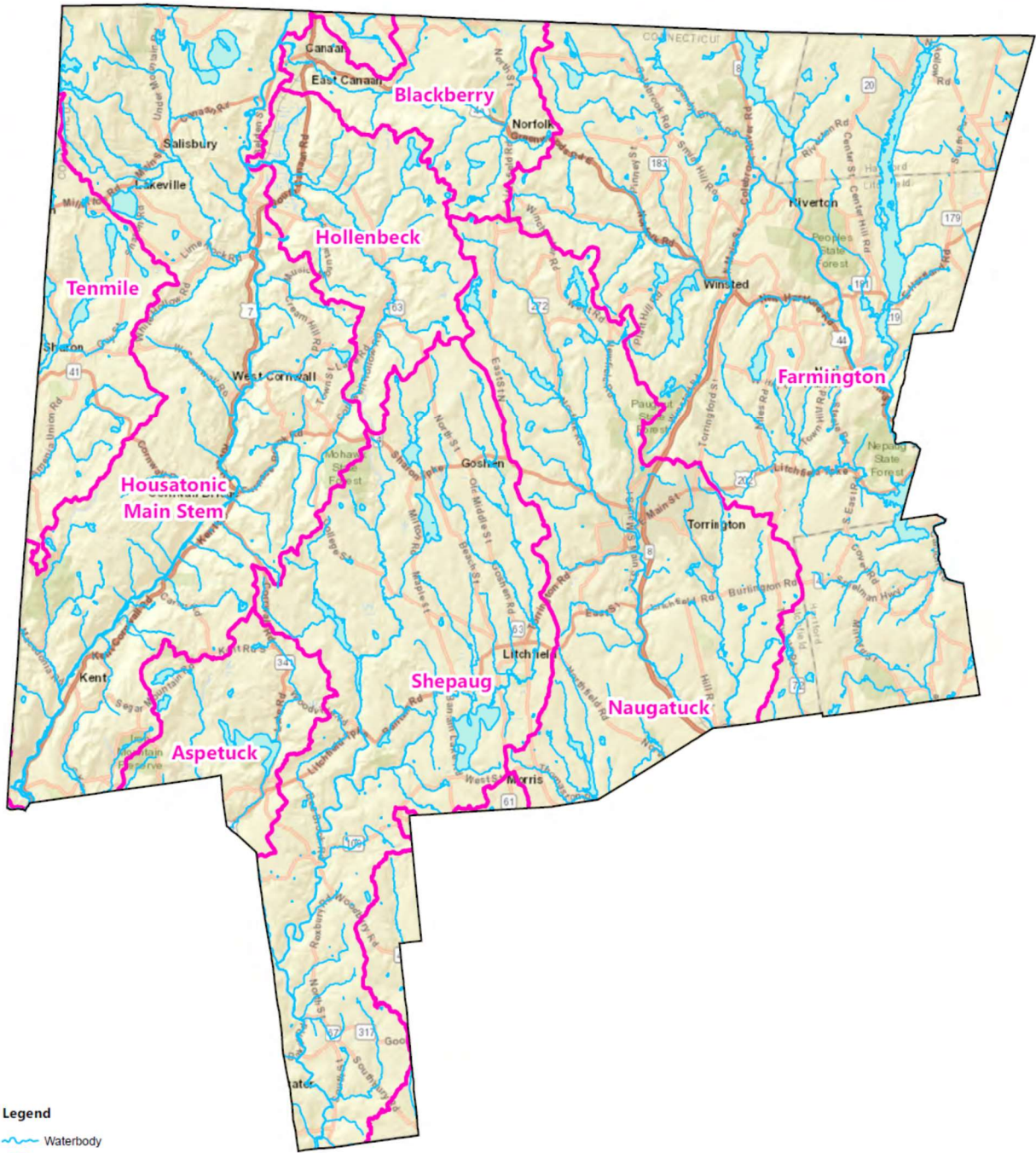


***Gathered from the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2022) and The Nature Conservancy.**

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				PROJ. NO. 3843-06
				FIG. 2-1



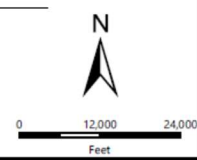
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- Legend**
- Waterbody
 - Regional Drainage Basins
 - Waterbody

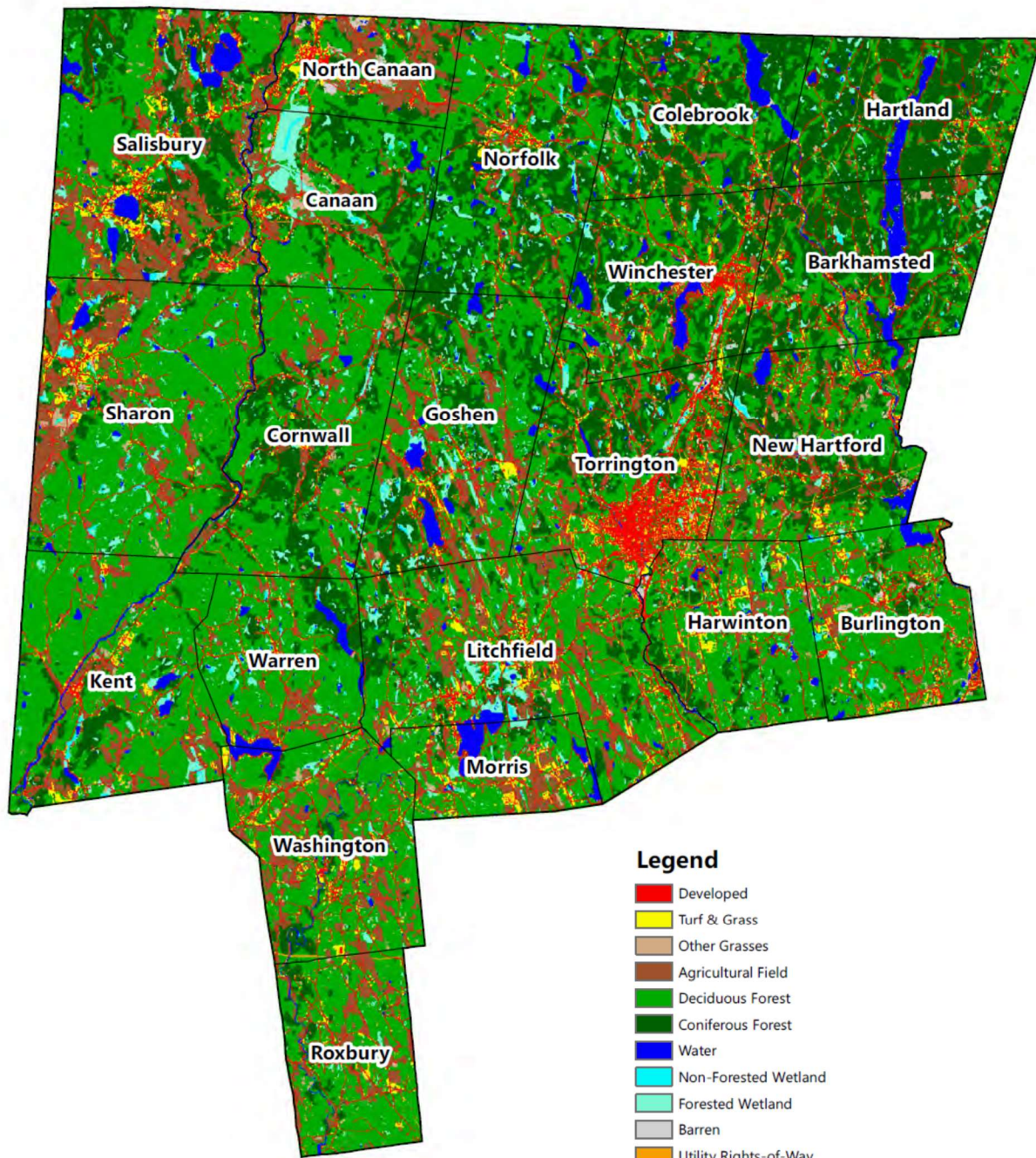

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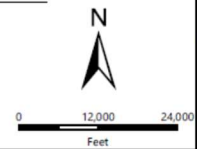
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FIG. 2-4



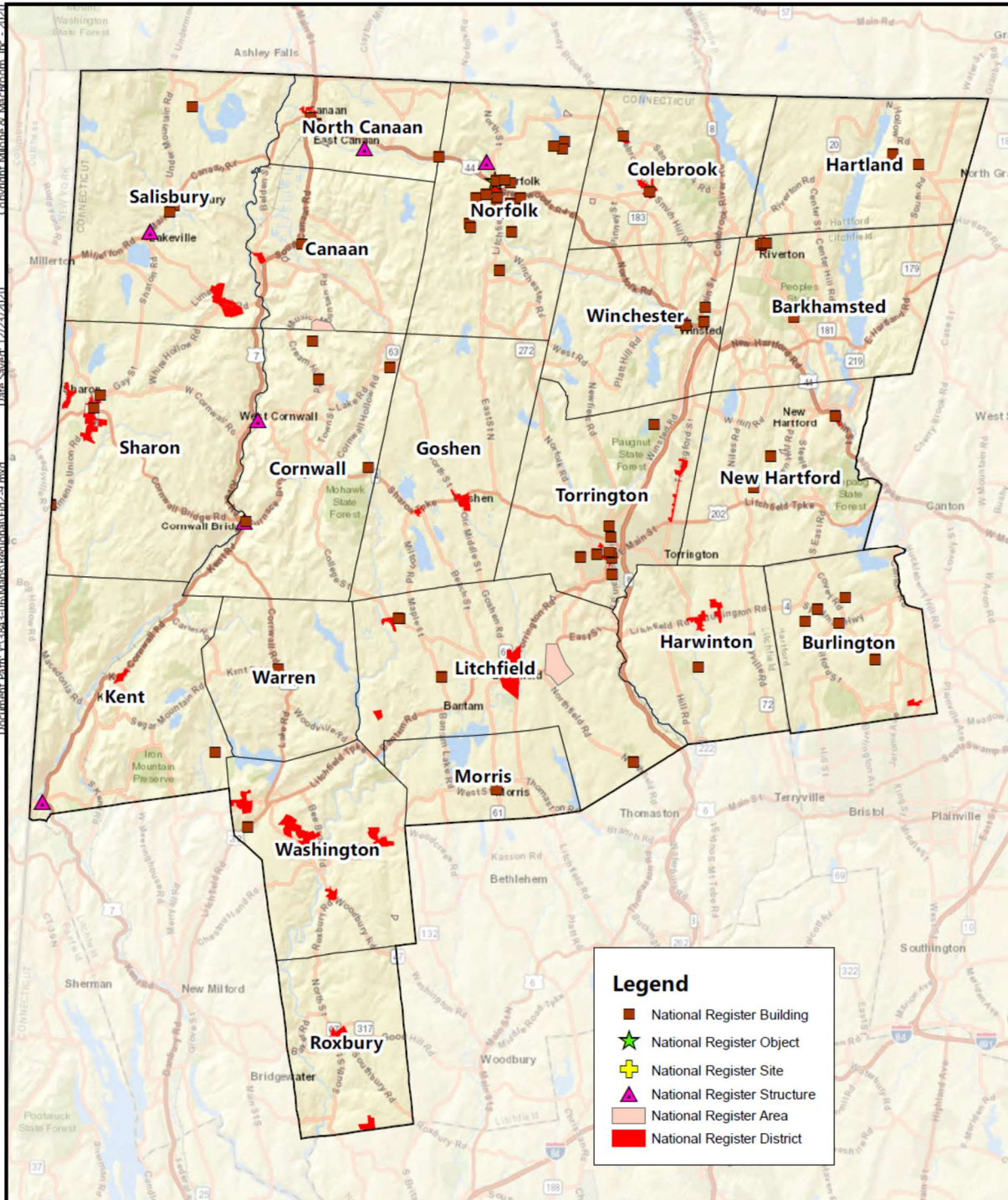

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2015 LAND COVER
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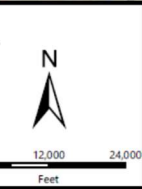
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PROJ. NO.	3843-06

FIG. 2-8



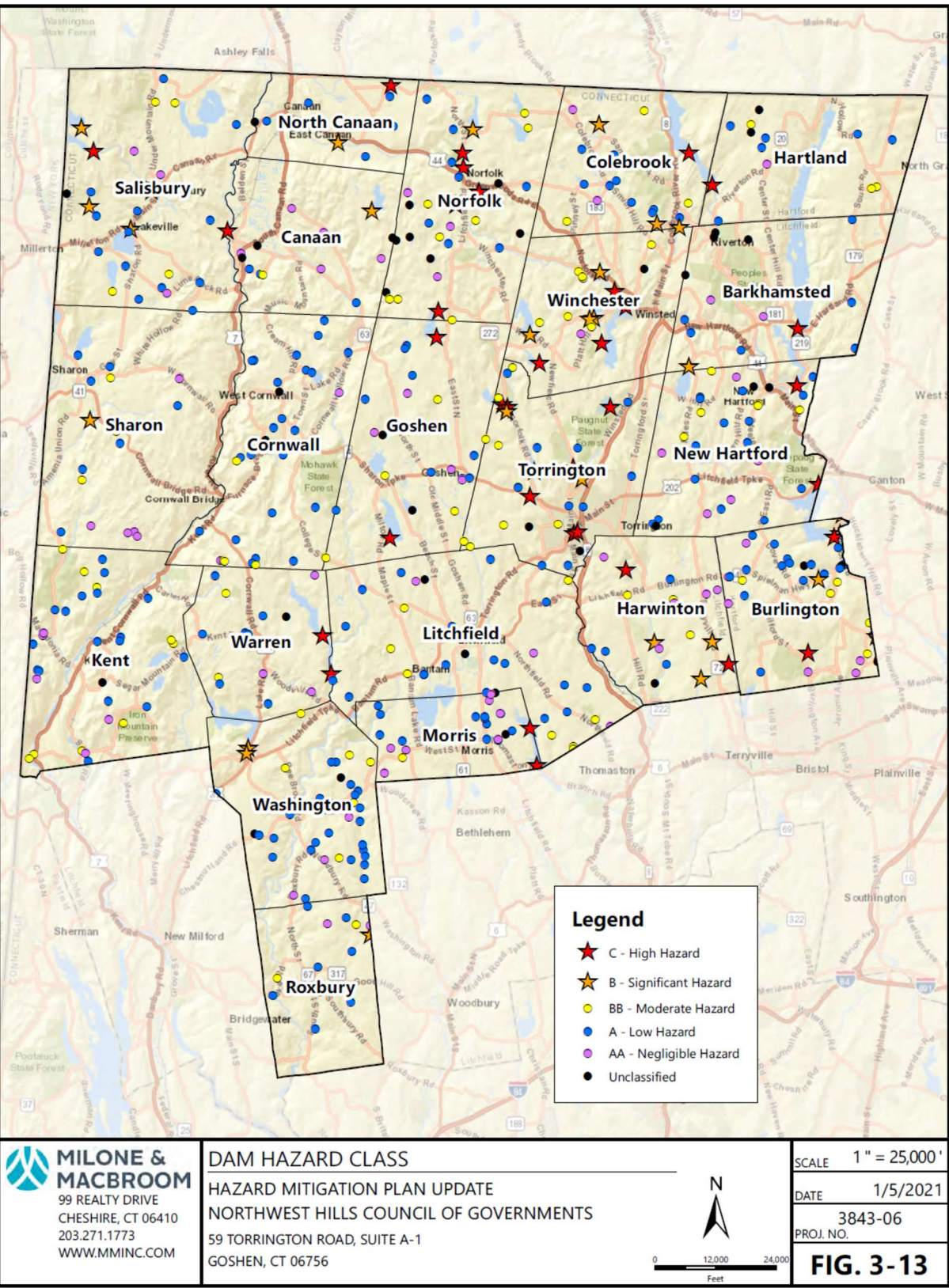

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HISTORIC RESOURCES
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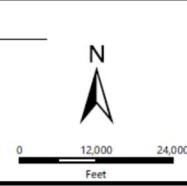
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PROJ. NO.	3843-06
FIG. 2-9	

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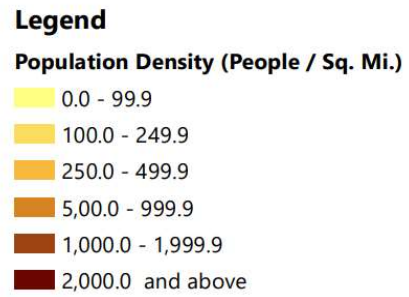
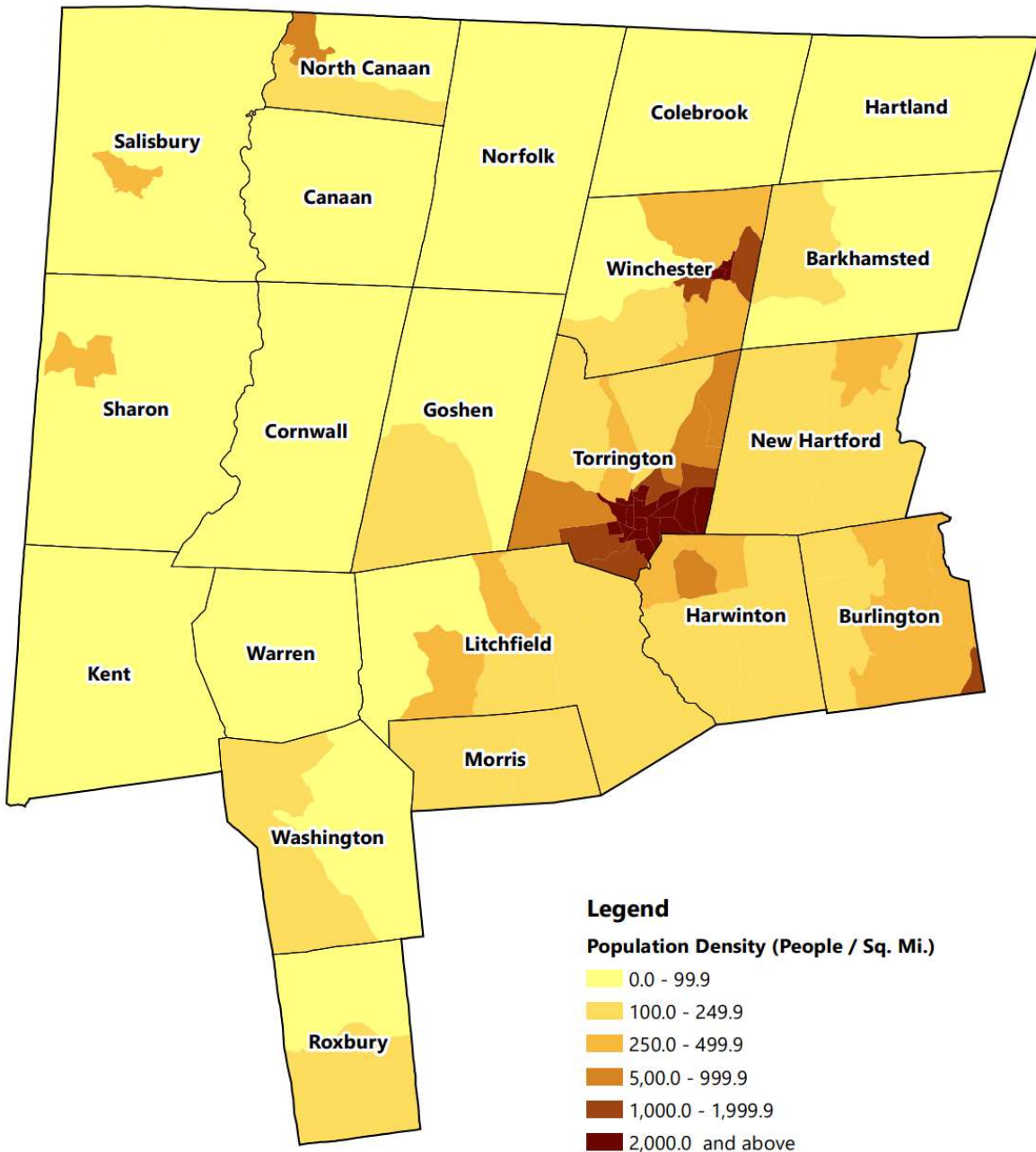



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DAM HAZARD CLASS
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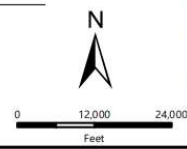


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DATE	1/5/2021
PROJ. NO.	3843-06
FIG. 3-13	



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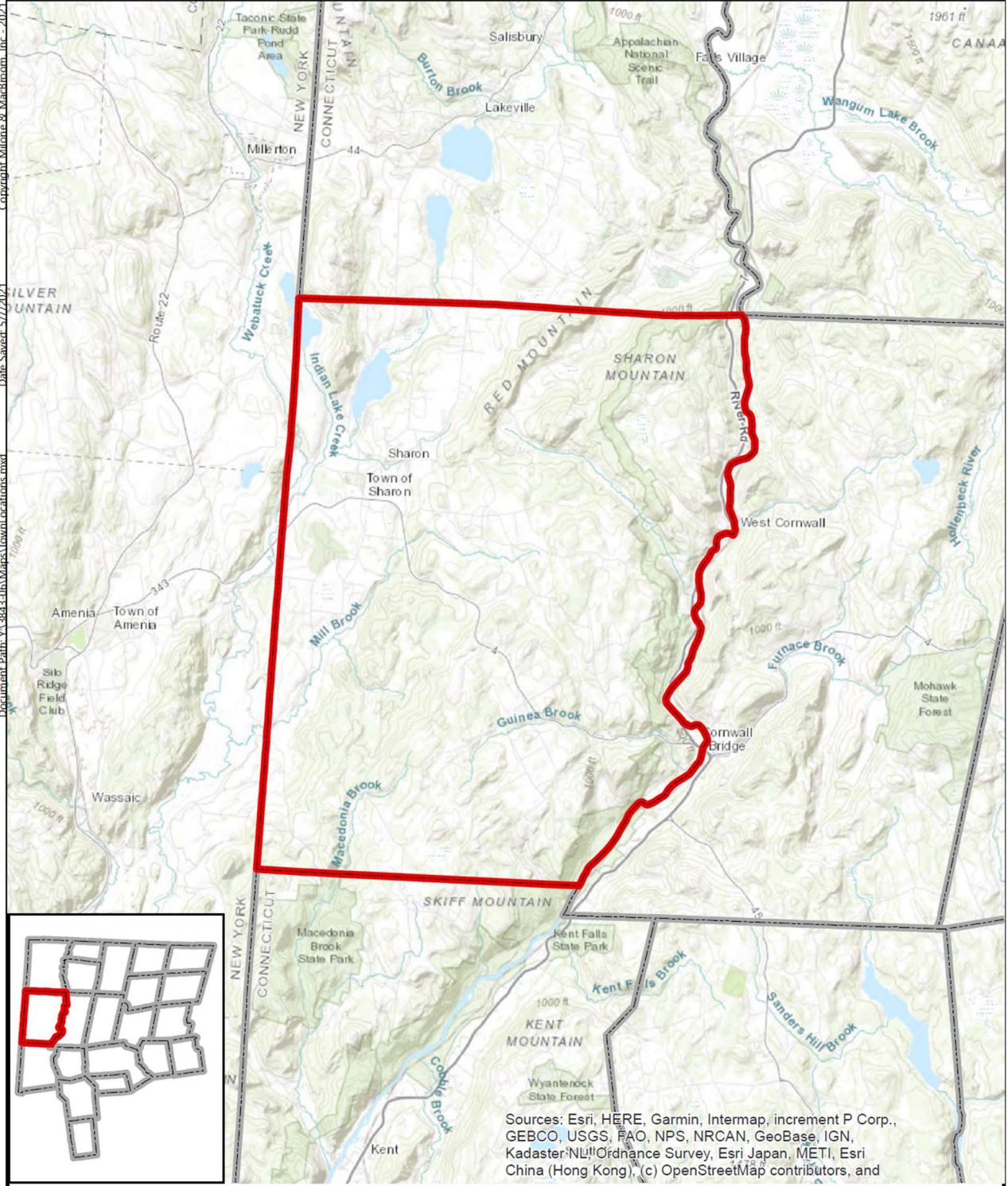
POPULATION DENSITY
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SCALE 1" = 25,000'
 DATE 12/21/2020
 PROJ. NO. 3843-06

FIG. 2-5

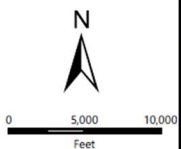
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Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp.,
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 Kadaster/NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri
 China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and

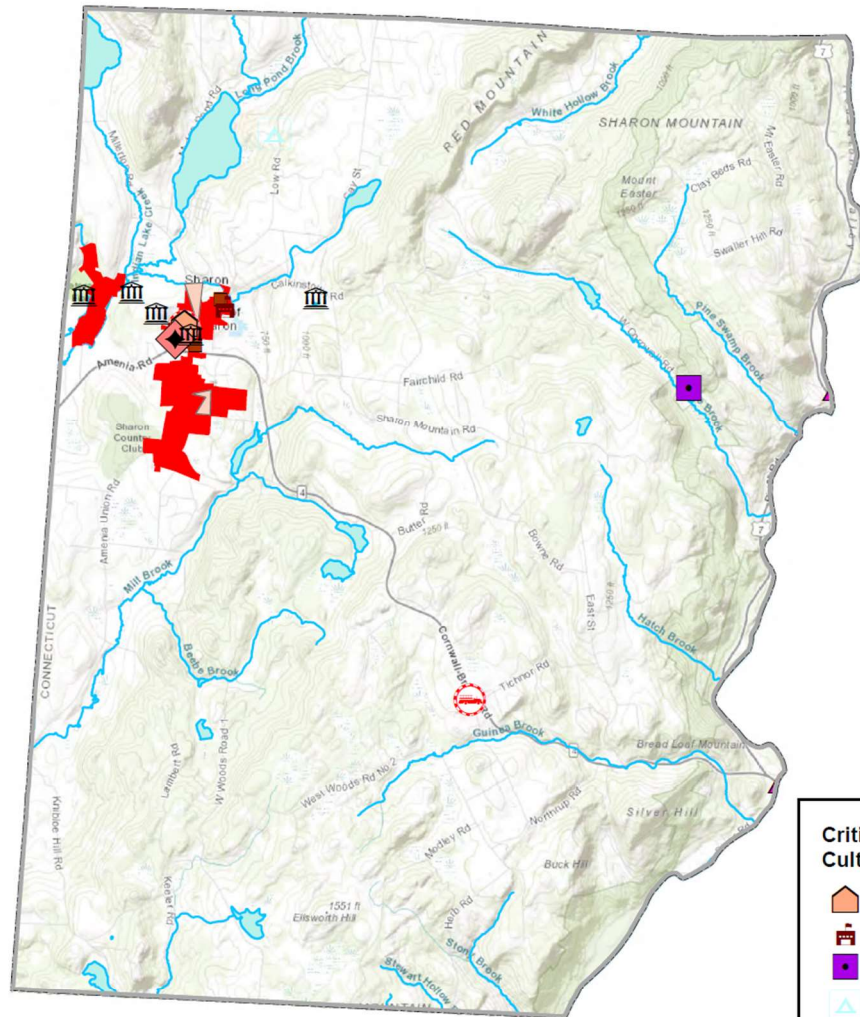
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REGIONAL LOCATION: SHARON
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SCALE	1" = 11,005'
DATE	5/7/2021
PROJ. NO.	3843-06

FIG. 2-1

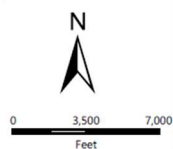


Critical Facilities & Cultural Resources

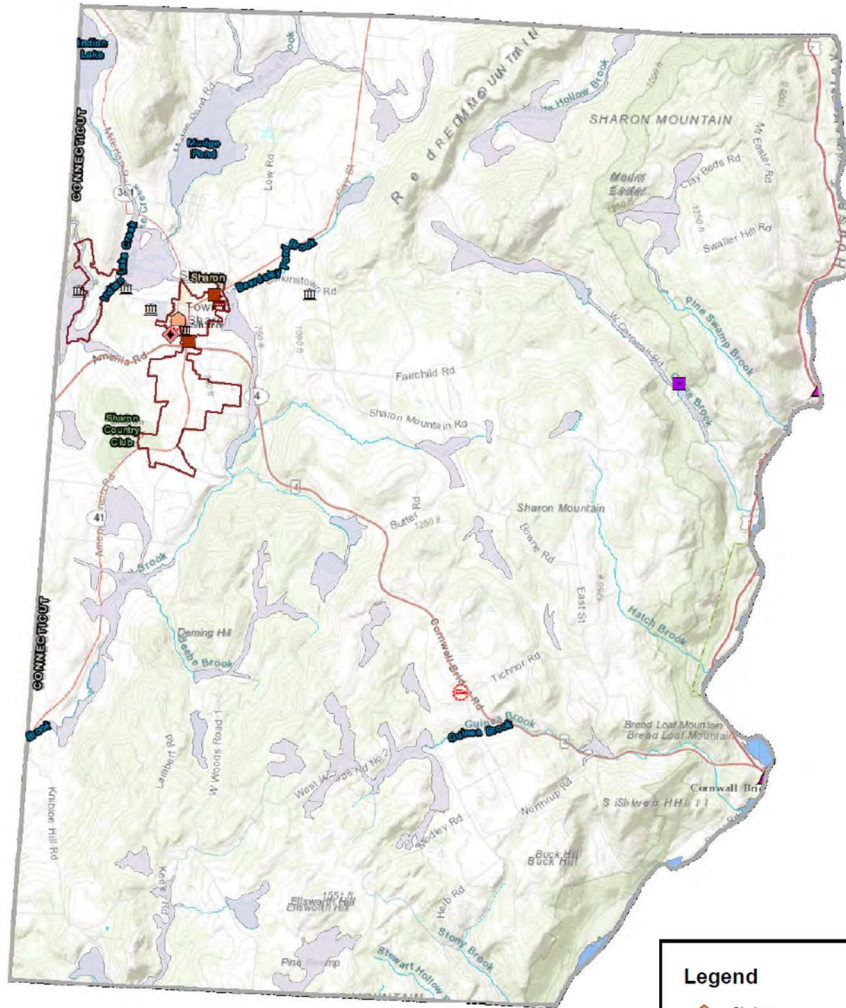
- Shelter
- School
- Care Facility
- Church-based camp
- EMS
- Emergency Response
- Fire Station
- Municipal Facility
- National Register Building
- National Register Structure
- National Register Area
- National Register District

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CRITICAL FACILITIES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
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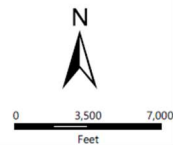
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 DATE 5/7/2021
 PROJ. NO. 3843-06
FIG. 2-2



Legend	
	Shelter
	School
	Care Facility
	Church-based camp
	EMS
	Emergency Response
	Fire Station
	Municipal Facility
	National Register Building
	National Register Structure
	National Register District
	Flood Zone A
	Flood Zone AE
	FLOODWAY
	X500

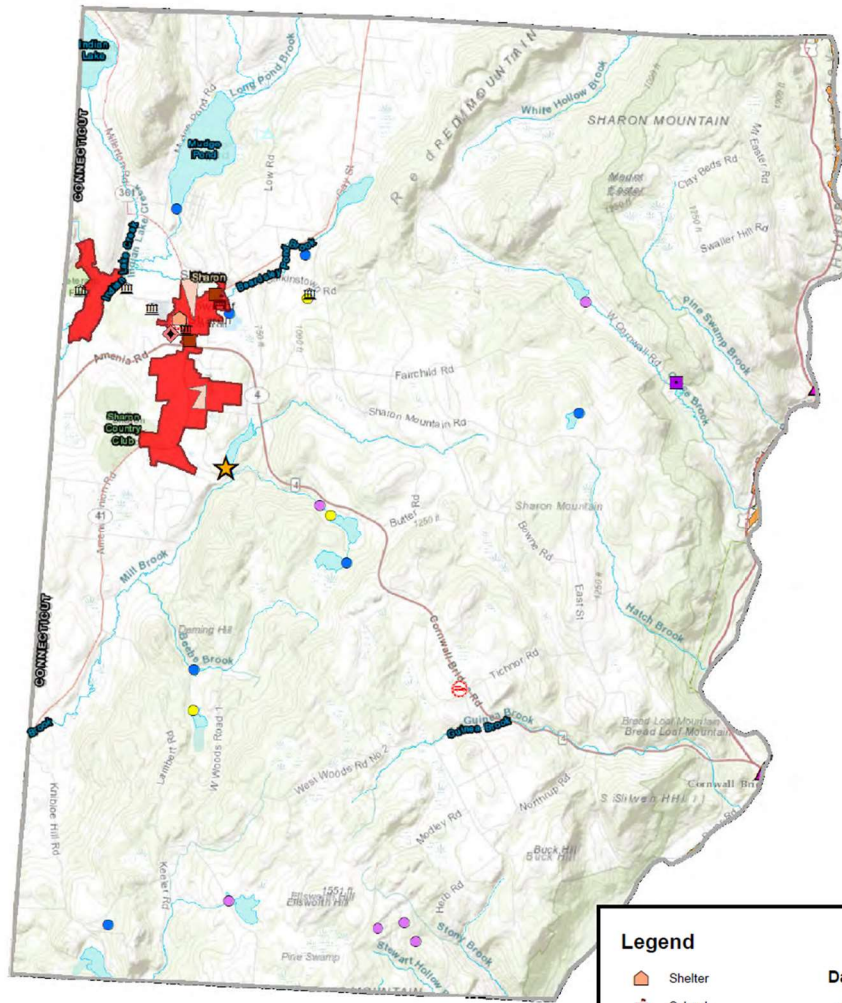
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FLOOD RISK AREAS
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SCALE 1" = 7,933'
 DATE 5/10/2021
 3843-06
 PROJ. NO.

FIG. 3-1



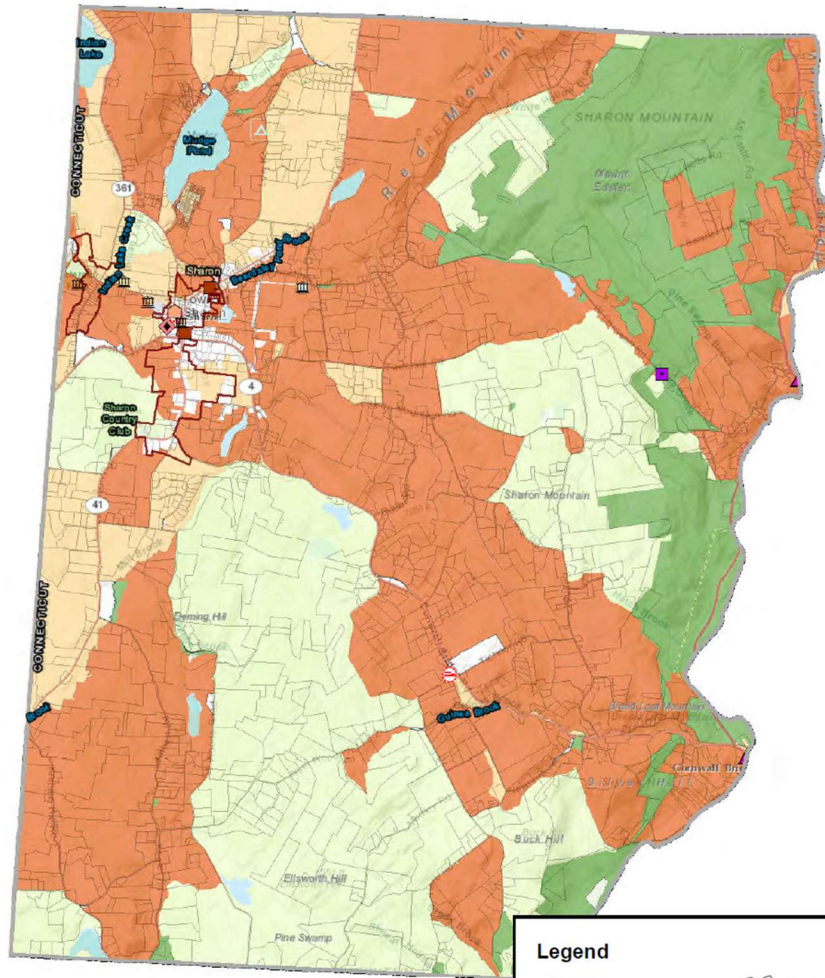
Legend

	Shelter		B - Significant Hazard
	School		BB - Moderate Hazard
	Care Facility		A - Low Hazard
	Church-based camp		AA - Negligible Hazard
	EMS		Dam Failure Inundation
	Emergency Response		
	Fire Station		
	Municipal Facility		
	National Register Building		
	National Register Structure		
	National Register Area		
	National Register District		

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DAM FAILURE RISK AREAS
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SCALE 1" = 7,932'
 DATE 5/10/2021
 3843-06
 PROJ. NO.
FIG. 8-1

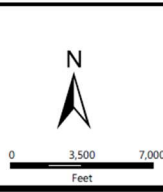


Legend

Shelter	No Vegetation
School	Interface
Care Facility	Intermix
Church-based camp	Low Density Development Vegetation
EMS	Uninhabited Vegetation
Emergency Response	
Fire Station	
Municipal Facility	
National Register Building	
National Register Structure	
National Register District	

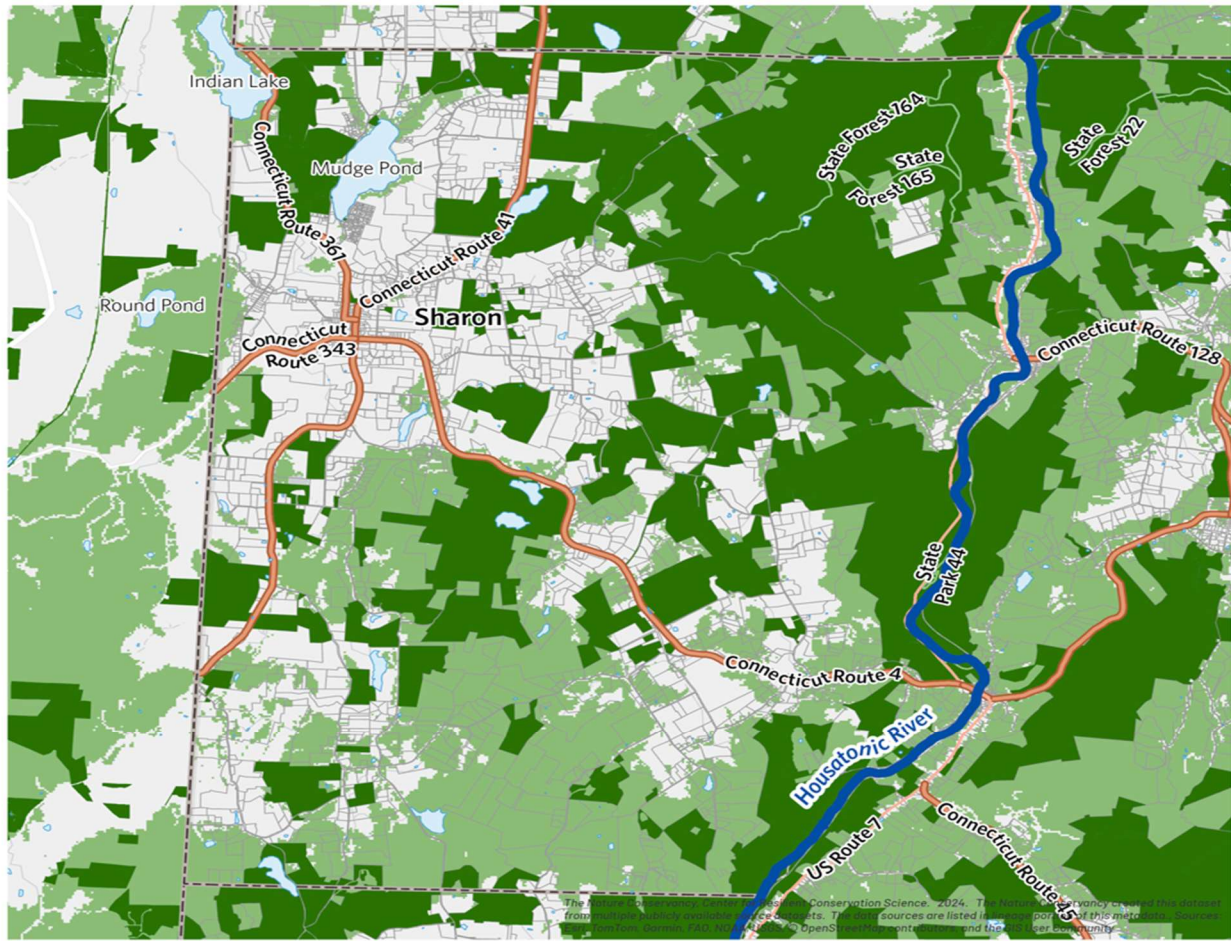
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WILDFIRE RISK AREAS
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SCALE	1" = 7,933'
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PROJ. NO.	3843-06
FIG. 9-1	

Resilient and Connected Lands in Sharon, Connecticut



The Nature Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Conservation Science © 2024. The Nature Conservancy created this dataset from multiple publicly available geographic datasets. The data sources are listed in the metadata. Sources include: National Geographic, OpenStreetMap, and the local community.



Legend

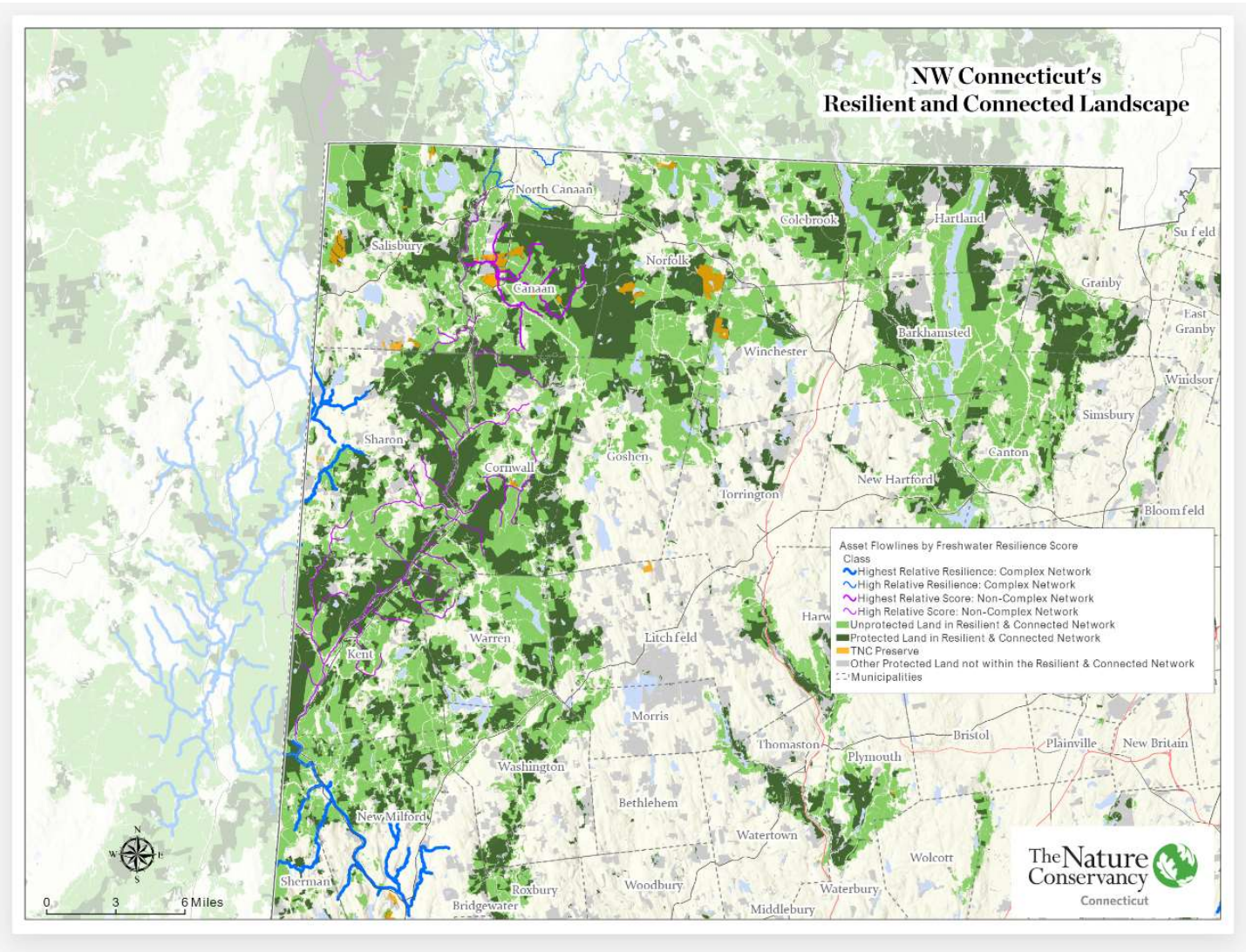
- Connecticut Route
- Local Roads
- Parcel Boundaries
- Municipal Boundaries
- Major Rivers
- Body of Water
- Secured Lands
- Resilient and Connected Network



Map by Christian Schluter | TNC's Connecticut Field Office

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Source: The Nature Conservancy



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