

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON, CT  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
Regular Meeting  
November 18, 2015**

DATE: Wednesday November 18, 2015

TIME: 6.30 P.M.

PLACE: Conference A

**CANCELLED**

- AGENDA**
- A. Call to Order
  - B. Public Comments
  - C. Reading of Minutes.
    - 1. To Approve the October 7, 2015 Economic Development Commission Minutes. (Attachment 1)
  - D. Metro Realty presentation on Southern Health Center Neighborhood Planning Study ( Attachment 2)
    - 1. Motion to issue a referral for Metro Realty's petition to amend current Plan of Conservation and Development
  - E. Town Planner's Report
  - F. Economic Development Director's report (Attachment 3)
  - G. Town Council Liaison Report, Mr. Jeff Apuzzo
  - H. Elections of Economic Development Commission Members
    - 1. Chair : Augusto Russell
    - 2. Vice Chair: Brian Connolly
  - I. Old Business
    - 1. Yearly Meeting Schedule
    - 2. Breakfast Series
    - 3. Beautify Farmington – Holiday Kissing Balls
  - J. New Business
    - 1. Marketing Subcommittee Update
  - K. Adjournment

cc: Economic Development Commissioners  
Kathleen A. Eagen, Town Manager  
Paula Ray, Town Clerk  
Deb Bull, Administrative Assistant (by e-mail)  
Jeff Apuzzo, Town Council Liaison

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON, CT  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**DATE:** Wednesday October 7, 2015  
**TIME:** 6:30 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Farmington Town Hall, Conference Room A

**MINUTES**

**Present**

Augusto Russell  
Bob Reeve  
Brian Connolly  
Joe Howard

**Absent**

Jeff Apuzzo  
Dan Kleinman  
John Karwoski

**Staff**

Rose Ponte

**a. Call to Order**

a. Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm

**b. Public Comments**

a. N/A

**c. Reading of the Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to accept the September 16, 2015 minutes Howard / Connolly ).

i. **Approved unanimously.**

**d. Motion to Issue a Referral for the Charles House Project to TPZ**

A motion was made and seconded to issue a positive referral to TPZ for the Charles House Property. ( Howard/Connolly)

Commissioner Howard was very positive about the project and offered to attend the October 14<sup>th</sup> TPZ meeting on behalf of the EDC. Rose received communication via email from Commissioner Kleinman expressing that his only concern was traffic. He was pleased to know that the town contracted an independent traffic report from VHB. He has regularly worked with VHB and has complete confidence in them and their findings. Commissioner Russell thought that this project although residential should be considered by EDC because of the economic driver that it represents and the Brownfield remediation that would take place.

Commissioner Reeve recused himself from the discussion and abstained from the vote. The motion carried.

**e. Report of the Town Planner**

Town Planner gave a thorough overview of the projects TPZ is working on.

**f. Report of the Economic Development Director**

Rose reviewed the monthly report; commissioners did not have any discussion.

Commissioner Russell expressed that if at all possible he thinks EDC commissioners should visit the various companies with Rose. Rose will send meeting dates and see if commissioners are available.

**g. Town Council Liaison Report.**

- i. N/A.

**h. Old Business**

**a. October Breakfast**

160 registrations have been received for the October Breakfast. Miss Porter's will receive the proclamation.

**b. Website Design**

Commissioners will meet with the website committee and staff to discuss the economic development section of the website.

**i. New Business**

**a. Yearly 2016 meeting schedule**

Commissioner Reeve thought we should consider starting the meetings at 6:00 PM instead of 6:30. They will finalize the annual meeting schedule during the November meeting.

**b. Breakfast Series 2016**

Commissioner's discussed possible speakers for next year nothing was finalized.

**c. Officer Nominations.**

A motion was made (Reeve / Howard ) to nominate Augusto Russell for Chairman for 2016-2017 and to nominate Brian Connolly as Vice Chairman for 2016-2017.

- i. **Approved unanimously.**

**j. Adjournment**

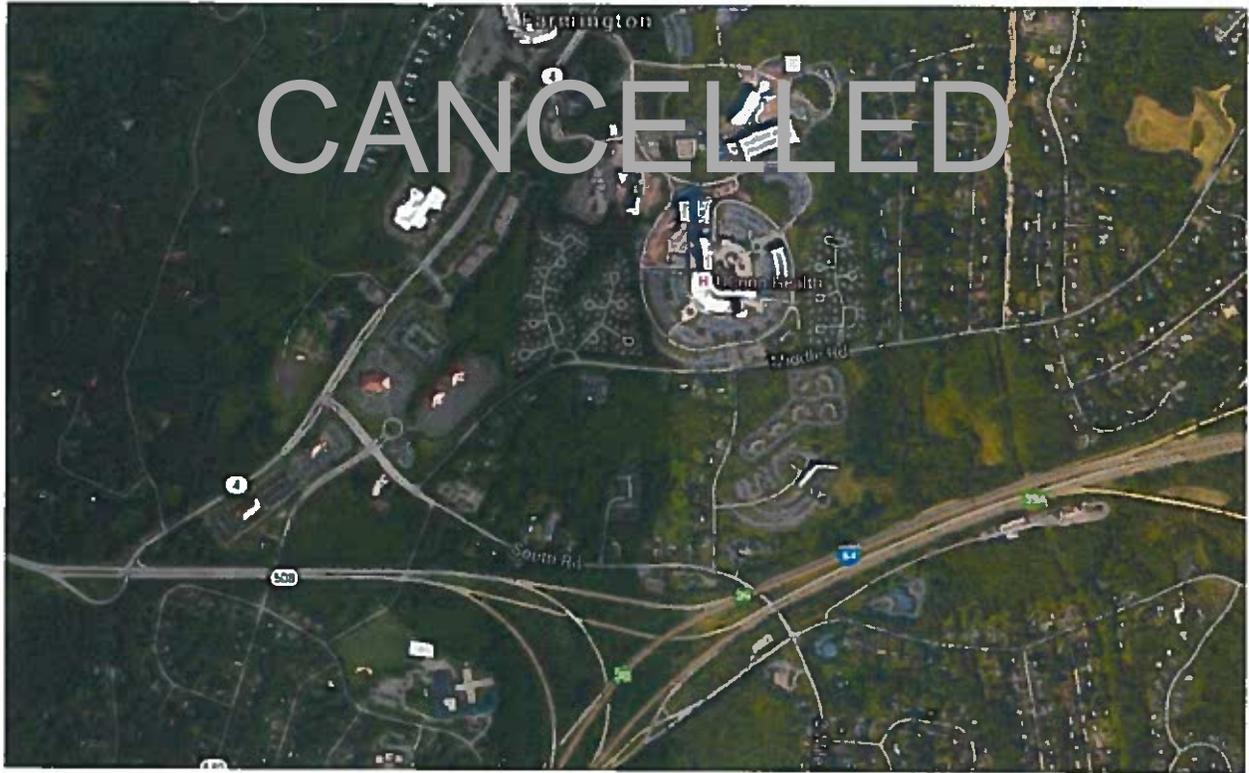
- a. A motion was made and seconded (Reeve / Howard ) to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm

- i. **Approved unanimously**

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Rose Ponte  
Economic Development Director**

**CC: Economic Development Commissioners  
Jeff Apuzzo, Economic Development Commission Liaison**

# Southern Health Center Neighborhood Planning Study Farmington, CT



October 2015

Prepared for Metro Realty Group, Ltd.



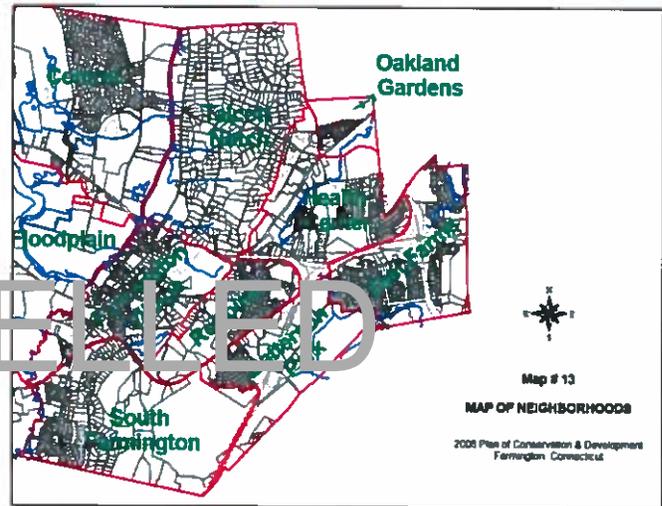
## Introduction

The UCONN Health Center Neighborhood has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades as the UCONN Health Center (UHC) began implementation of its "Research Strategic Plan" and the State implemented the Bioscience Connecticut Initiative. The Bioscience Connecticut Initiative is an ongoing \$864 million state economic development program to expand the bioscience cluster surrounding the UHC. Investments include \$318 million in renovations to existing laboratory, instructional, and hospital space, and \$521 for a new Ambulatory Care Center, a new patient care tower at the John Dempsey Hospital, new incubator space for biotechnology start-ups, new laboratory space for the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, and new parking garages. A report by the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis projects that the Bioscience Connecticut Initiative will result in an additional 683 jobs on the UHC campus alone by 2017. By 2037, these investments are projected to produce 16,400 direct, indirect, and induced jobs.

As a result of these investments, the neighborhood has become a hub for cutting-edge bioscience research and development, quality medical education and training, and quality medical care. These types of uses thrive in tight clusters, such as the Health Center neighborhood because they are dependent not only on state-of-the-art facilities, but also on intellectual capital. Moreover, the neighborhood is well-suited for housing this biotech/ life sciences cluster due to its excellent interstate transportation access, relatively low mill rate and location in a community known for its high quality educational and town services. The Town of Farmington has an opportunity to leverage public and private investments in the Health Center Neighborhood to bolster its national and international significance and prestige as a leader in bioscience, which can help to sustain and enhance quality of life for all Farmington residents.

Given the level of continued investment in the neighborhood (the National Institute of Health just announced a \$3.7 million dollar grant for Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine to develop a new system for understanding the 3D genome – just one of many examples of federal investments in the neighborhood), the rate of recent development and the national and international significance of the facilities and research in the neighborhood, the Farmington Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) should specifically address the Town's goals and objectives for the future of the Health Center Neighborhood. The critical mass of medical, research and laboratory facilities and supportive services that have developed recently has augmented demand for more intense land use in the neighborhood. Precipitated by the tremendous investments already made and the Bioscience Connecticut Initiative's plans for continued growth, the rate of change in land uses is likely to accelerate. The Director of UCONN's Institute of Regenerative Engineering has likened UHC's plans for the area to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, where more than 200 small, medium and

Figure 1. Excerpt from Neighborhoods map in 2007 POCD



large companies surround the campus, supporting research and development, while spinning off new companies and technologies. Therefore, the Town should act now to guide this continued growth in a way that complements what currently exists while capitalizing on the potential for this life sciences cluster.

This study makes recommendations for future development in the area based on a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions and historic development, the physical potential for future development, other planning efforts, and neighborhood stakeholder input. Regardless of the recommendations, the study highlighted the need for the Town of Farmington to set a course for this neighborhood. Change is difficult for most people, especially when shrouded in uncertainty. Because significant state investments in the area have pre-empted local land use control and the Town's Planning & Zoning Commission has frequently re-zoned properties in the neighborhood without strong support in the current Plan of Conservation and Development to do so, neighborhood residents have felt uncertain about the future of their homes and properties.

## Study Area

The current Farmington POCD defines the "Health Center Neighborhood" as the area generally north of Interstate 84 and the Route 4 Connector encompassing Farmington Avenue commercial properties north to Old Mountain Road, the UCHC campus, and east to the Interstate 84 and Route 9 interchange (see excerpt of map above). As much of the Farmington Avenue corridor has been developed, this study focused in particular on the southern area of the larger Health Center Neighborhood. This area is roughly delimited by Interstate 84 and the Route 4 connector to the south, Route 4 to the west, Middle Road to the north and the utility right-of-way paralleling West Gate Road to the east.

Figure 2. Study Area



## Historic Development

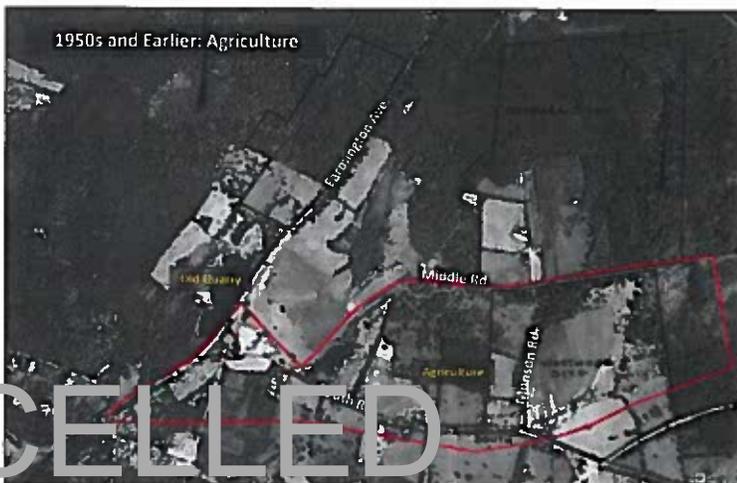
The transformation of the Health Center Neighborhood and Study Area from an agricultural area to the bustling bioscience and medical services cluster that exists now began with the construction of Interstate 84 and the State Legislature's decision to locate the UCHC here. The following series of aerial photos depict this transformation over the past several decades.

In the 1950s Farmington Avenue, Middle, Munson and South Roads were all bordered by farmland; however, at that time, plans for the location of Interstate 84 were solidifying.

By 1965, low-density suburban development had started in the Study Area and larger Health Center Neighborhood with single-family homes along Middle, Munson and South Roads. the construction of a church on South Road and subdivisions off of Middle Road (Valley View Drive and Cedar Ridge Drive). A Legislative Committee selected the site for the UCONN Health Center in 1962 with original plans calling for a 400-bed University hospital. At the same time, Interstate 84 was under construction in other parts of the State.

By 1970, John Dempsey Hospital is constructed with only 200 beds, Interstate 84 is complete with an exit to Patrick Flood Road, and a few more single-family dwelling units have been built in the area.

By 1990, the Route 4 Connector is complete and significant more commercial and residential development has occurred, precipitated by the arrival of the Interstate and Hospital. Farmington Avenue has experienced much more intensive development with the Exchange now built. Higher density residential uses located off of Talcott Notch Road have developed, as well as Farmington Meadows within the Study Area. Further on-campus Health Center development has occurred. And, several office buildings, including the Heublein complex, have developed around the Munson, South Road area.



By 2004, even more residential, especially senior housing, and office commercial development has taken hold. O'Meara Ridge and O'Meara Farms, both active adult housing developments, are in place. Middlewoods and Arden Courts have been built along Middle Road and at the intersection of Middle and South Roads. Additional medical offices have developed along Farmington Avenue and South Road. And, additional low-density single-family residential units have developed along Middle Road.

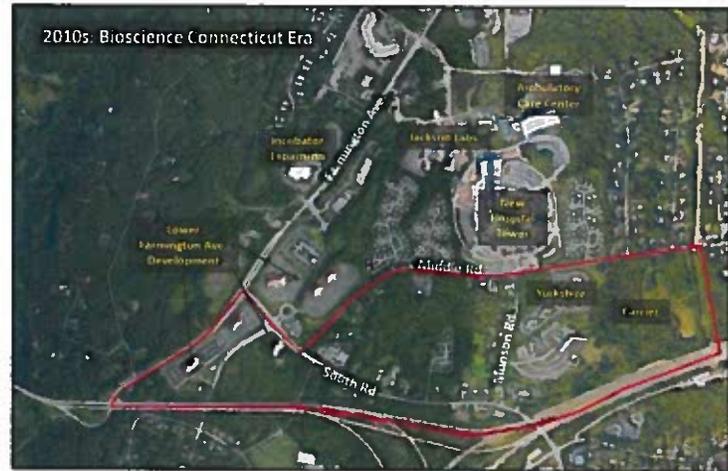
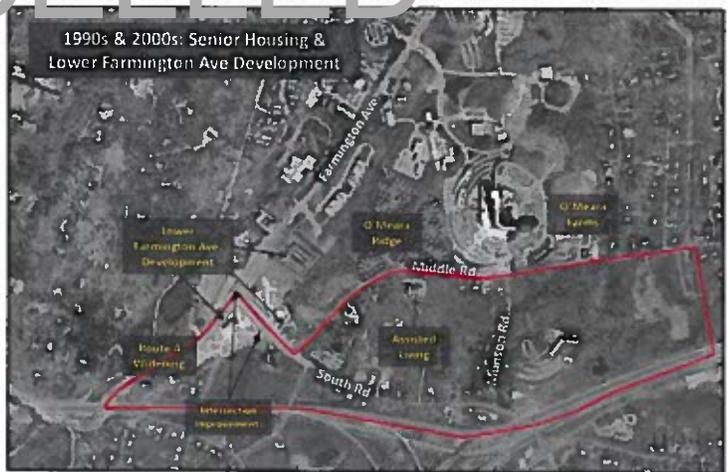
In addition to significant expansion of facilities on the UCHC campus, the last decade has brought more higher-density residential development and commercial office development to the neighborhood and Study Area.

As is evident from this history, while Bioscience Connecticut has spurred significant new interest and development in the neighborhood, the general transformation of the Health Center Neighborhood really began with the arrival of the interstate and the Hospital.

### Land Use Change Analysis

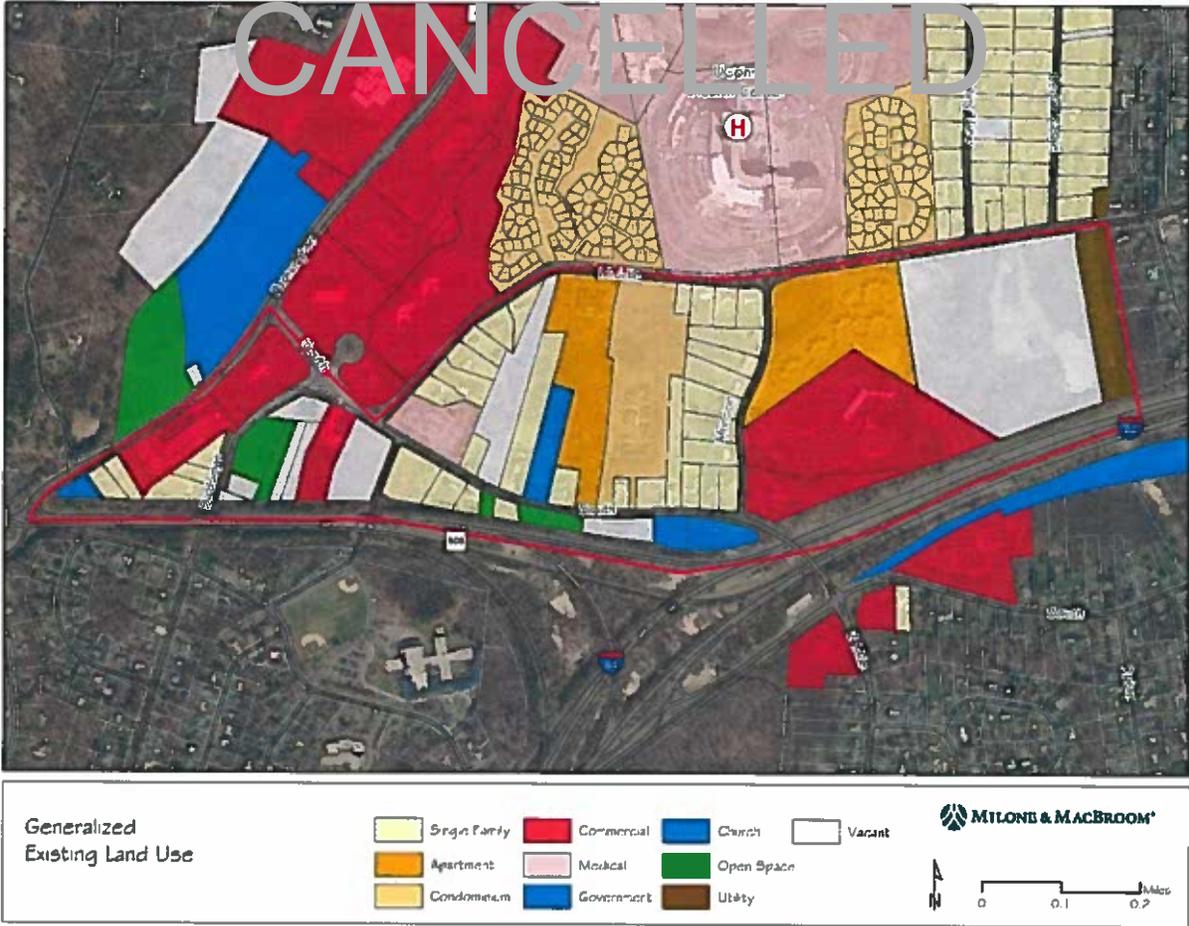
Over the last two decades, the UCHC has evolved from a medical services center to a leading bioscience research and development campus. There has also been substantial private investment in the Health Center neighborhood, particularly along Farmington Avenue, South Road, and Middle Road. The transformation of this neighborhood into commercial office and higher density housing is evident in the existing land use map in Figure 3. The map reflects only built properties; however, there are additional approved and under-construction projects that will change land uses in the near future, including a multi-family project in the eastern portion of the Study Area along the south side of Middle Road, and medical office buildings on Birdseye Road and the southern portion of Farmington Avenue.

Overall, nearly 3,000,000 square feet of medical and commercial development currently exists in the Health Center Neighborhood, as shown in Table 1. In addition, several high-density and/or very high-



density residential developments (as defined by the Town’s 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development, high-density is three to five units per acre, very high-density is over five units per acre) have co-located in the Health Center neighborhood, taking advantage of its proximity to medical services and other nearby amenities such as West Farms Mall along with easy transportation access and public transit availability. These developments range from single-family cluster subdivisions (O’Meara Farms), to assisted living facilities (Middlewoods), to apartments (Village at Yorkshire). Most of these developments are age-restricted, catering to people 55 years old and over. Over 400 units of housing have been built or are under construction since 1997, as shown in Table 2.

Figure 3. Existing Land Use (2015)



The volume and density of uses already existing in the neighborhood are consistent with basic planning principles of locating intense uses in areas with existing infrastructure. As UCONN continues to purchase off-campus properties (including the Heublein building on Munson Road, as well as 195 and 400 Farmington Ave) and the Bioscience Connecticut Initiative continues to expand, the remaining low-density single-family and vacant properties appear to be logical targets for further intense development.

**Table 1.***Medical/ Commercial Development in the UCONN Health Center Neighborhood*

Address	Use	Building Area (Sq. Ft.)	Year Built
Middle Rd/ Farmington Ave	UCHC Campus	2,300,000	1969-2015
Jackson Labs - Discovery Drive	Research Labs	183,500	2014
Farmington Avenue	Medical Offices Not in MOC	30,000	Varies
308 Farmington Avenue	Professional Offices	42,858	1998
399 Farmington Avenue	Medical Offices	77,880	2005
499 Farmington Avenue	Medical Offices	54,000	2004
505 Farmington Avenue	Medical Offices	67,314	2012
2 Farmglen Blvd	Hotel	229,900	1998
11 South Road	Medical Offices	43,840	2008
21 South Road	Medical Offices	43,840	2008
30 South Road	Professional Offices	12,979	2012
35 South Road	Daycare	8,950	2004
<b>Existing Commercial Development</b>		<b>2,964,161</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Additional Approved Commercial</b>			
521 & 529 Farmington Avenue	Medical Offices	20,000	
32, 36, 38 Birdseye Road	Medical Offices	34,800	
<b>Existing and Approved Commercial Development</b>		<b>3,018,961</b>	<b>-</b>

*Source: Town of Farmington Assessors Office***Table 2.***Residential Development in the UCONN Health Center Neighborhood Since 1995*

Address	Use	Housing Units	Year Built
45 South Road (Arden Court)	Nursing Home	56	1997
509 Middle Road (Middlewoods)	Assisted Living	73	1998
O'Meara Farm	Condo (Age Restricted)	104	2002
O'Meara Ridge	Condo (Age Restricted)	50	2005
465 Middle Road (Yorkshire)	Apartments (Age Restricted)	91	2008
Lot 2B Middle Road (Carrier)	Condo (Age Restricted)	94	Under Construction
<b>All Residential Development</b>		<b>412</b>	<b>-</b>

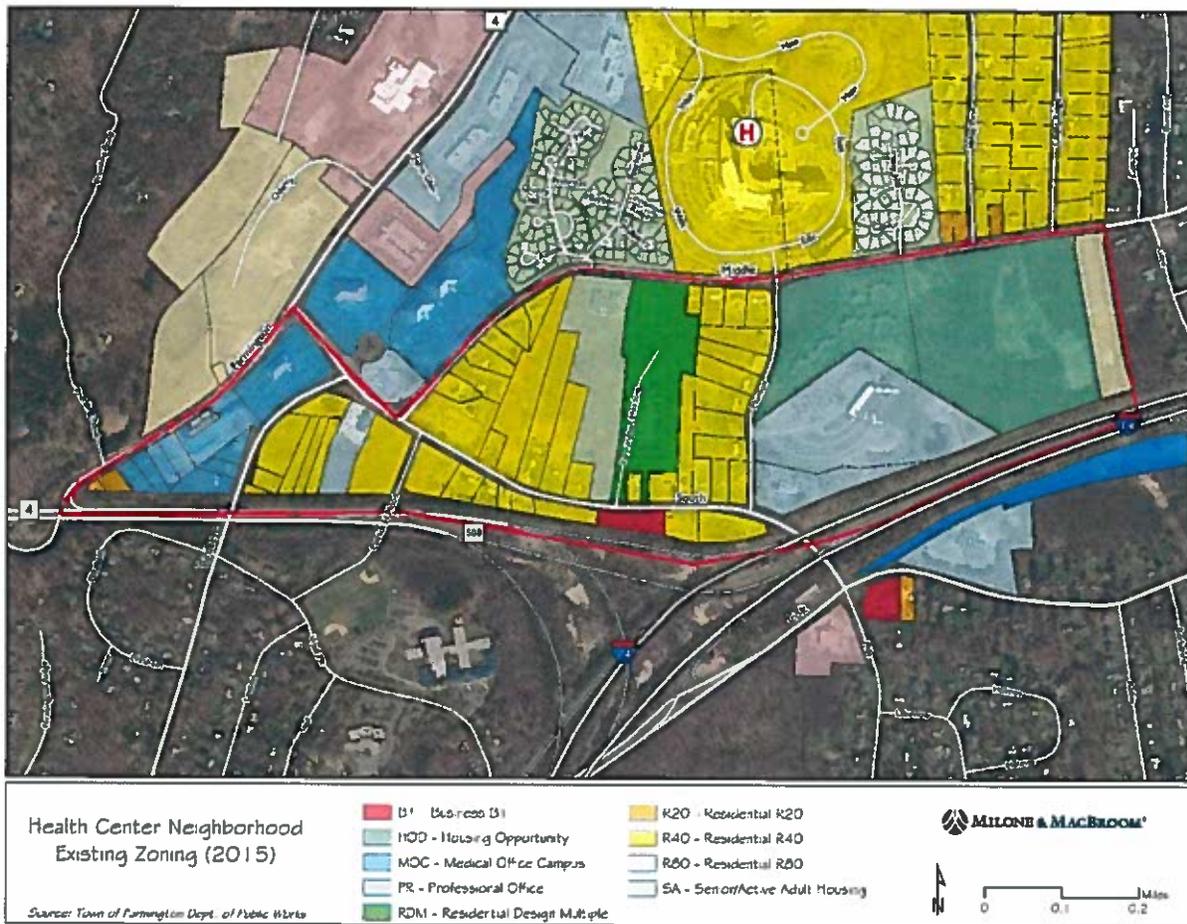
*Source: Town of Farmington Assessors Office*

## Zoning and Zone Changes

### Existing Zoning

The Study Area contains a mix of low-density residential, very high-density residential, and professional and medical office zones, as seen in Figure 4. The eastern and western portions of the Study Area contain higher intensity uses. With the exception of the state-owned commuter parking lot, all parcels between Birdseye Road and Farmington Avenue are in the Professional Office (PR) or Medical Office Campus (MOC) zone. The four parcels east of Munson Road are in the PR and Housing Opportunity (HOD) zone. The middle portion of the Study Area is primarily low density residential, with the exception of an undeveloped Business District 1 (B1) parcel at 8880 South Road, the Acstar office building at 30 South Road, and two high-density and very high-density residential complexes in the Senior/Active Adult (SA) and Residential Design Multiple (RDM) zones respectively.

Figure 4. Current Zoning in Health Center Neighborhood



### Bioscience Enterprise Zone

The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) has established a Bioscience Enterprise Corridor Zone in Farmington and surrounding municipalities. This designation provides tax incentives and abatements to companies with less than 300 employees who engage in bioscience, biotechnology, pharmaceutical or photonics research, and businesses engaged in the study

of genes, cells, tissues, and chemical and physical structures of living organisms. The incentives apply to businesses that relocate to the target area, or existing businesses who expand or renovate their operations.

### Recent Zone Changes

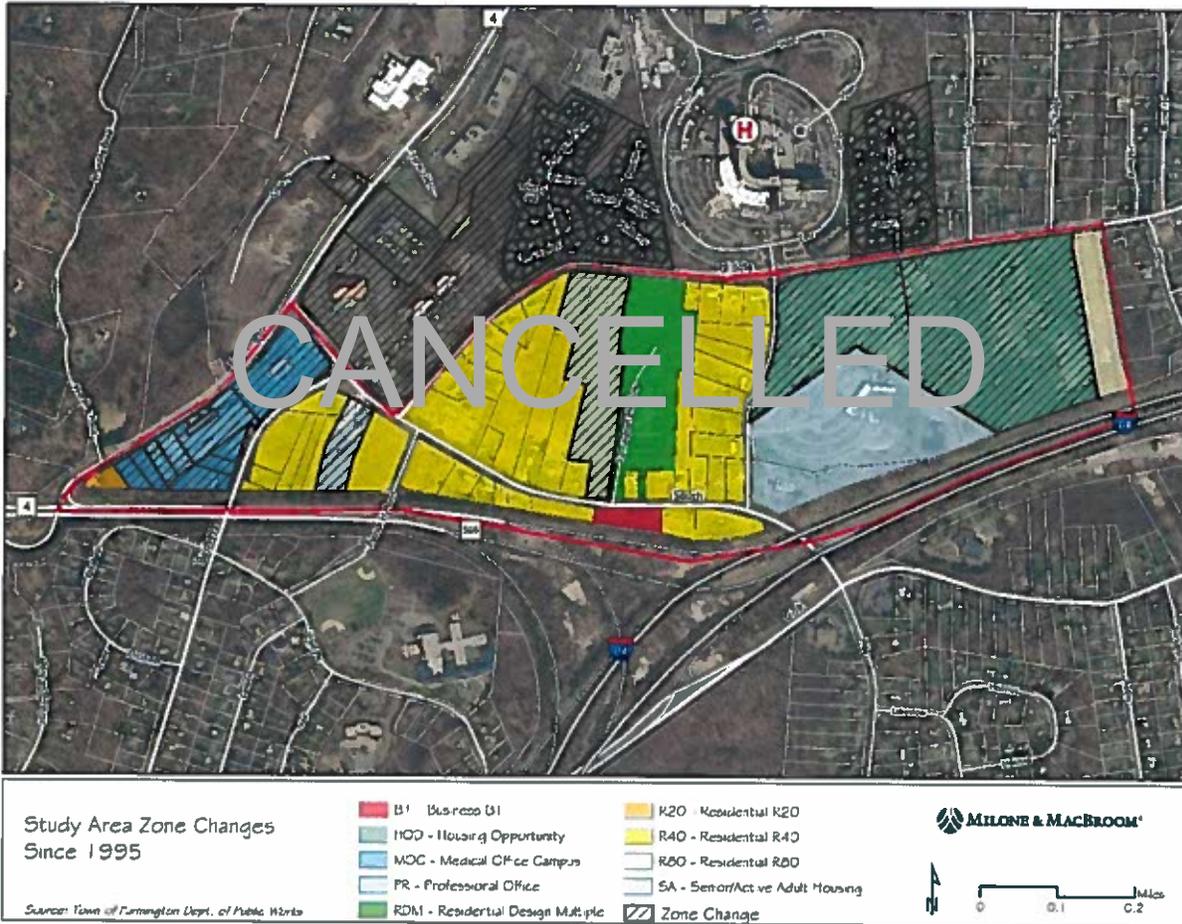
Over the last two decades nearly all private development in the Study Area has required a zone change. These changes are summarized in Table 3 and shown in Figure 5. In the late 1990s, the Town added the Senior/Active Adult Housing (SA) Zone to its regulations. Since then, three SA parcels (O’Meara Ridge, O’Meara Farm, and Middlewoods) were developed adjacent to Health Center complex. In 2010, a new Medical Office Campus (MOC) zone was established in the Health Center neighborhood. Since then, 12 parcels have changed to the MOC zone. The MOC zone is unique in that its parking requirements and impervious surface calculations are done for the entire MOC district as opposed to a single parcel. Prior to transitioning to MOC zoning, several parcels had already been re-zoned from R-40 to Professional Office (PR). Due to restrictive coverage requirements in the PR zone, though, already developed properties were changed again to MOC specifically to enable further development on adjacent lands. None of these zone changes were initiated by the Town’s Planning and Zoning Commission; however, they were all approved by that body.

**Table 3.**  
*Zone Changes in the UCONN Health Center Neighborhood Since 1995*

Parcel	Former Zone	Initial Zone Change	New Zone	Year of Zone Latest Change
2 Farm Glen Boulevard (Homewood)	PR	N/A	BR	1997 *
Senior - Active Adult Housing (SA) Zone Established				1999*
O’Meara Farms	PR/R40	N/A	SA	1999*
O’Meara Ridge	R40	N/A	SA	2000 *
509 Middle Road	R40	N/A	SA	2000 *
45 South Road	R40	N/A	PR	2004 *
435 Middle Road	PR/R40	N/A	HOD	2007
Medical Office Campus (MOC) Zone Established				2010
11 South Road	R40	PR	MOC	2011
21 South Road	R40	PR	MOC	2011
30 South Road	R40	N/A	PR	2004
35 South Road	R40	PR	MOC	2011
399 Farmington Avenue	R20	N/A	MOC	2011
499 Farmington Avenue	R40	PR	MOC	2011
501 Farmington Avenue	R40	PR	MOC	2011
529 Farmington Avenue	R20	N/A	PR	2011
406 Farmington Avenue	R80	N/A	BR	2013
32 Birdseye Road	R20	N/A	MOC	2013
36 Birdseye Road	R20	N/A	MOC	2013
38 Birdseye Road	R20	N/A	MOC	2013
505 Farmington Avenue	R20	N/A	MOC	2015
521 Farmington Avenue	R20	N/A	MOC	2015
529 Farmington Avenue	R20	N/A	MOC	2015

\* Approximate time frame.

Figure 5. Current Zoning and Zone Changes Since 1995



## Infrastructure

### Utilities

Adequate infrastructure, notably public water and sanitary sewer, are necessary to support higher density development in the Study Area. This section provides an overview of existing utilities and planned improvements.

#### Public Water

Public water is provided to the Study Area by the Metropolitan District Commission. The Study Area is served by water mains on Middle Road, Munson Road, South Road, Patrick Flood Road, and Farmington Avenue.

#### Sanitary Sewer

Sanitary sewer service is provided by the Town of Farmington. The Study Area is currently served by publicly maintained sewer lines on Farmington Avenue, Middle Road, South Road, Birdseye Road, and Patrick Flood Road. The Talcott Notch neighborhood to the west of Farmington Avenue has been designated as a sewer avoidance area. The Town is currently undertaking a \$57 million upgrade of its Water Pollution Control Facility, increasing its treatment capacity to 6.3 million gallons per day. These

upgrades will have adequate excess capacity to support future growth in the Health Center neighborhood.

#### *Other Utilities*

Natural Gas service provided by Connecticut Natural Gas is available within the Study Area, although it is not used by all parcels. Higher density developments such as the UCONN offices at 16 Munson Road and the medical offices at 499 and 501 Farmington Avenue are already served by natural gas. Most of the low density residential parcels utilize oil, propane, or electric heating systems.

Electric transmission to the neighborhood has recently changed. The sub-station off of Talcott Notch Road which serves UCH recently extended transmission along Farmington and South Roads to the junction of South and Middle Roads. This is coupled with supply that comes along Middle Road out of West Hartford provides redundant power supply which is important to research and medical uses that have critical facilities that cannot lose power.

#### Transportation

##### *Highways*

The Study Area is bounded by several major highways, including Interstate 84 and Route 4. The interchange of Interstate 84 and Route 9 is located approximately 1 mile to the east. The neighborhood is well-served by Exit 39 off of Interstate 84, but is also easily accessible from Exit 38. Traffic volumes on Farmington Avenue at South Road are approximately 23,700 vehicles per day. Average daily traffic on South Road ranges from 7,400 to 15,300 vehicles per day while Middle Road has the lowest average daily traffic of 3,200 vehicles per day. In the early 2000s, Farmington Avenue was widened and the intersection of Farmington Avenue and South Road underwent a major reconfiguration. Long range planning studies call for highway access improvements in the Health Center neighborhood, including ramp reconfiguration, direct access between Route 9 and Route 4, and potential utilization of the unused "stacks" at the I-84 and Route 9 interchange.

##### *Transit*

As UCHC expanded off of its main campus, it implemented shuttle services between the main campus and its satellite locations. UCHC currently operates 5 shuttle bus routes which provide connections between the Health Center and Munson Road, South Road, and Farmington Avenue. The shuttle system helps to facilitate the kinds of collaborative interactions that are vital to the life sciences cluster concept, in which enough resources and intellectual capital is located and interacting to develop a sustainable competitive advantage over other areas.

Public transit service to the Health Center neighborhood is provided by Connecticut Transit. The Health Center is currently served by three bus routes:

- *Route 66* – Connections to Unionville, West Hartford and Hartford
- *CT Fastrak Route 121* – Connections to Newington, West Hartford, Hartford, East Hartford and Manchester
- *Route 506* - Connections to New Britain

Route 506 stops on Munson Road, while Route 66 enters the medical offices off of South Road. All routes converge on the UCHC circulator road. Transit service to the Health Center has expanded with the introduction of CTFastrak in March of 2015, cutting the travel time from Downtown Hartford to about 30 minutes. Due to these recent improvements, the Town has applied for a STEAP grant to construct several new bus shelters along Farmington Avenue.

### *Transportation Studies*

#### *Capitol Region Transportation Plan (2015)*

The Capitol Region Transportation Plan provides a 25-year overview of the major transportation investments for the Greater Hartford region. Recommended improvements to the area surrounding UCONN Health Center centers on improvements to the I-84 interchanges with Route 9, Route 4, and Route 6. Key elements include elimination of the eastbound bottleneck near Route 9, elimination of left-hand ramps, better access to Route 9, and direct access from Route 4 to Route 9 southbound.

#### *UCONN Transportation Safety and Improvements Study: Farmington and Hartford (ongoing)*

The upcoming study will recommend multi-modal transportation enhancements between UCHC in Farmington and the future UCONN Hartford Branch in Downtown Hartford. The study is expected to be completed in 2017.

## Development Constraints

MMI conducted an analysis of development constraints in the study including wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, shallow depth-to-bedrock soils, and the presence of aquifers. These constraints are summarized on the following pages and can be seen in Figure 6.

### *Wetlands*

Wetlands are defined by the National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS), as areas that contain one of three soil types: Poorly drained, very poorly drained, and alluvial and floodplain soils. According to the Town of Farmington *Designated Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Map*, there are three major wetlands within the Study Area. Wetland areas should be verified by a certified soil scientist prior to development, as the exact boundaries of wetlands may differ from the NCSS. The first wetland is approximately 11.6 acres and contains a mix of poorly drained and very poorly drained soils. It is located between South Road, the Route 4 connector, Birdseye Road, and Patrick Flood Road. Frontage along South Road in this areas has already been developed; however additional development to the rear would be challenged by this wetland. The second and largest wetland in the Study Area is approximately 40 acres of poorly drained soils located between Middle Road, Munson Road, and South Road. Single-family residential development has occurred in this wetland area along Munson and Middle Roads. Development deep within this area would be limited by this large wetland. The third wetland is located on the eastern edge of the Study Area south of Middle Road.

### *Steep Slopes*

The POCD recommends that only very low density (up to 0.5 units per acre) development be permitted in areas where the average slope exceeds 20 percent. The Plan also contains language that seeks to prohibit disturbances, including building construction and vegetation clearing on slopes of 25 percent or higher. Within the Study Area, the only significant area of steep slopes in excess of 25 percent is found

east of Munson Road between the Yorkshire Village apartment complex and planned Carrier development.

### Flood Plains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) classifies flood hazard zones based on the annual probability of flooding. The far eastern portion of the Study Area is within FEMA Flood Zone A, which has a 1% annual chance of flooding.

### Shallow to Bedrock Soils

Shallow to bedrock soils are areas where the depth to bedrock is less than 20 inches. These areas are challenging for building foundations, underground utilities, and stormwater infiltration. There are no shallow to bedrock soils within the Study Area. However there are two vacant parcels on Farmington Avenue that consist of shallow to bedrock soils, which may impede their future development.

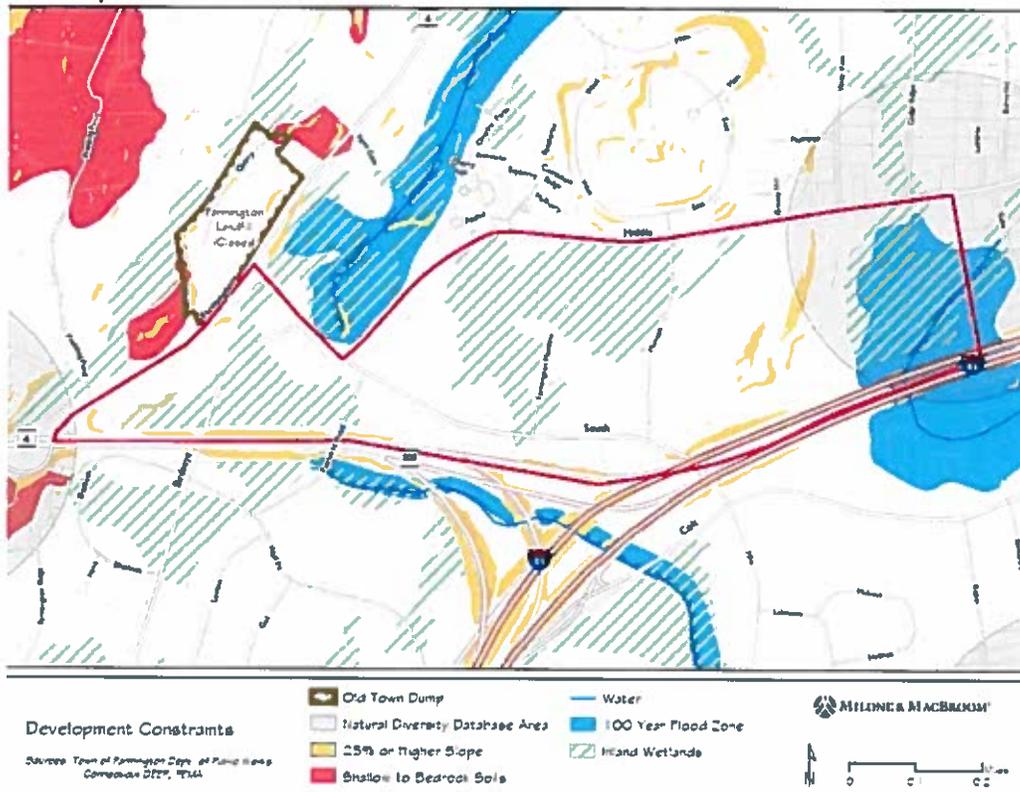
### Natural Diversity Database Area

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has inventoried habitats across the state that contain threatened or endangered species of concern. These sites are included in a special survey, called the Natural Diversity Database (NDD). To protect sensitive locations, DEEP creates half mile buffers around the approximate locations of significant natural communities or protected species. The far eastern part of the Study Area is located in an NDD area. Future development should ensure that these protected species are not negatively impacted.

### Aquifers

There are no aquifers within the Study Area.

Figure 6. Development Constraints



## Future Development Potential

The greatest potential for economic growth in the Health Center neighborhood comes from the expansion of small companies through UCONN's Technology Incubation Program (TIP). The TIP provides laboratory space for startup companies ranging from 200 to 1,000 square feet. The Bioscience Connecticut Program will double the amount of incubator space in Farmington to 56,000 square feet, supporting up to 50 companies. It is anticipated that as bioscience startups outgrow their incubator spaces, there will be demand for new off-campus office and laboratory space in the surrounding neighborhood.

Limited vacant land without environmental constraints remains along Farmington Avenue from the Route 4 connector to Taicott Nitch Road, limiting future development potential in the Health Center neighborhood despite significant demand. The Town's zoning regulations do not support the densification of developed parcels along this corridor, which will steer future private development elsewhere. Due to its proximity to UCHC, planned highway access improvements, and its existing water and sewer infrastructure, it is likely that the area between Middle Road and Interstate 84 will continue to see market demand for professional office, laboratory, and high-density residential land uses.

## Planning Analysis

### Farmington Plan of Conservation and Development (2007)

The Town of Farmington POCD adopted in 2007 offers conflicting language that both supports the expansion of the biosciences cluster around UCHC while simultaneously limiting development in its adjacent residential areas. One of the POCD'S planning objectives is to "Continue to maintain a close working relationship with the University of Connecticut Health Center. Undertake a program, which will make Farmington attractive to the development of bioscience industry within the town."

The POCD identifies six development policies for the Health Center Area:

1. Based upon the configuration of the lots, the presence of significant wetlands and existing land use patterns, the area bounded by Munson Road, Middle Road and South Road should remain classified as low density residential.
2. Property not already categorized commercial and situated to the south of South Road should be categorized as low density residential.
3. Sidewalk development within the area of Route 4 should be expanded to facilitate pedestrian access. Sidewalks or trails should be installed to link the residential portion of this neighborhood with Route 4.
4. Maintain the former landfill site as limited storage area.
5. Coordinate land use policies with the Health Center, which may seek to expand more of their facilities off campus.
6. Consider adding additional retail services along Route 4 in order to serve the nearby residential neighborhood.

The Future Land Use map generally reflects the existing land use patterns in the Study Area when the POCD was adopted in 2007. The map indicates that the Study Area contains a mix of low-density residential (1.4 units per acre), high-density residential (3.5+ units per acre), institutional/government, and office uses.

When the Plan was adopted in 2007, there was still developable commercially-zoned land within the larger neighborhood and the Bioscience Connecticut Initiative had not yet begun. Logically, the Plan wanted to steer development towards Farmington Avenue. However, since the Plan's adoption, most of the vacant land in the corridor has been developed and demand for additional lab and office space has grown significantly with the State's investments. The lack of a long-term land use vision for the Health Center neighborhood has resulted in significant re-zoning in the area on an ad hoc basis and uncertainty for property owners.

#### Town of Farmington Strategic Plan (2014)

The Town of Farmington's 2014 Strategic Plan supports the retention, expansion, and attraction of businesses in order to grow the Town's tax base. The Plan recommends that continued support be provided to the Town Council's UCONN subcommittee and that the Town continue to coordinate with UCONN about UCHC expansion and bioscience efforts. Recognizing the growth of the bioscience cluster, the Strategic Plan also recommends rezoning a vacant 86-acre parcel south of the Study Area, across from Batterson Park, to support professional office or research and development.

#### CRCOG Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (2014)

The Regional POCD Future Land Use Map indicates that the Study Area is located in the Middle Intensity 1 and Middle Intensity 2 Development Areas. The Land Use Policy Matrix states that Middle Intensity Areas may have higher density zoning which includes mixed use, industrial, multi-family residential, planned industrial, planned residential, regional-scale commercial, town center, and town-scale commercial uses. The area surrounding UCHC is identified as a municipal focus area, being one of two major economic growth areas in Farmington. Future development is anticipated to be closely linked to UCHC, including medical offices and laboratories.

#### Conservation and Development Priorities: The Plan for Connecticut (2013)

The State Conservation and Development Priorities Plan is centered on six Growth Management Principals which generally encourage development in areas with existing infrastructure and along major transportation corridors.

According to the State Locational Guide Map, the Study Area contains a mix of Priority Funding Areas and Balanced Priority Areas. **Priority Funding Areas** are locations with the infrastructure needed to support higher density development such as public water and sewer, and transit service. The entire Study Area is served by public water and sanitary sewer. In addition, local bus service is provided by CT Transit along Farmington Avenue, South Road, and Munson Road.

**Balanced Priority Areas** are delineated based on the presence of both conservation and development factors. Conservation factors that are present within the Study Area include wetlands and agricultural soils. Growth is recommended in these areas so long as they are sensitive to the underlying environmental constraints.

## Neighborhood Input

All property owners in the primary Study Area, as identified by the latest data available from the Town Assessor were mailed invitations to two neighborhood planning meetings. The meetings were held on September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> in the Jefferson Radiology Suite at 399 Farmington Avenue. Approximately sixteen individuals attended one or both meetings.

Participants identified the strengths of their neighborhood as follows:

- UCHC has brought jobs, prestige and diversity
- Still a livable area
- Property values strong
- Committed, invested property owners

Participants also identified the following issues and concerns with their neighborhood:

- Traffic, speeding – Residents have seen an increase in overall traffic coupled with increasing speeds presenting safety concerns as well as detracting from quality of life.
- Lack of amenities and integration of pedestrian uses – The lack of a continuous sidewalk network ringing Middle, Munson and South Roads prevents residents as well as UCHC campus employees from being able to take advantage of a logical recreational loop. In addition, the existing sidewalk along Middle Road is separated from the street by a metal guardrail near its junction with South Road. The guardrail prevents pedestrians crossing from the opposite side of Middle from easily accessing the sidewalk. There are also opportunities for additional pedestrian connections throughout the Study Area, e.g. direct pedestrian connections from O’Meara Farms to medical office building complexes off of South Road. Because of the volume of employees, as well as the number of higher-density residential units in the area, there is significant demand for pedestrian amenities in the neighborhood.
- Lack of integration with existing single-family residential uses – Residents expressed frustration that existing low density single-family uses are not integrated into development plans.
- Uncertainty over future – Residents are concerned about the future of their homes and properties with many expressing the desire to remain in their homes.
- Spot zoning – The history of development in the neighborhood has entailed significant re-zoning on an ad hoc basis which contributes to residents’ uncertainty over the future of their own properties.
- Potential negative impacts on property values – Residents are concerned that should they remain in their homes while development continues to occur around them, their property values will fall.
- Threat of eminent domain – Participants in the meetings were not confident that the Town would not attempt to use eminent domain for economic development purposes in their neighborhood.
- Lack of planning – Residents expressed frustration over not knowing the Town’s objectives for the area so that they could plan accordingly for their properties.
- State’s plans not transparent – Participants also expressed frustration with the State’s lack of transparency in its plans for the Health Center neighborhood.

Most participants in the meetings do not want commercial office development in the Middle, Munson and South Roads area. Some participants signaled that further higher density residential uses in that specific area would be appropriate, provided that pedestrian amenities were increased and enhanced. Residents also acknowledged that they cannot prevent their neighbors from selling to developers and that they have little confidence that the Town would prevent further development in this area. There was also acknowledgement that property values would likely increase if plans and zoning clearly indicated the Town's desire to intensify uses in the area.

## Recommendations

The Town of Farmington has an opportunity to build upon tremendous investment already made in the Health Center neighborhood. Other areas of the community, such as the parcels singled out in the Town Strategic Plan, may also provide opportunities to capture spin-off demand for further medical office and lab development. However, maintaining a tight cluster of development around UCHC, with the transit and shuttle services that already exist and may expand, fosters research and development by increasing opportunities for interactions out of sheer proximity. Supporting this world-class bioscience cluster and the skilled workforce behind it can build the Town's tax-base through not only tax revenues from properties in the neighborhood, but also the indirect enhancement of property values throughout the community as Farmington's reputation as the home of an internationally significant life-sciences cluster becomes firmly established.

The development opportunities that remain in the Health Center neighborhood are limited by some environmental constraints such as wetlands. However, the Study Area is a logical area for an intensification of land uses due to its available infrastructure, transportation access, proximity to the UCHC campus, and adjacent more intense land uses. While a logical area for intensification of uses, the Town must be mindful and respectful of the single-family properties and residents that remain as further development occurs. Therefore, the following principles and recommendations underpin the recommended plan for the Study Area shown in Figure 6:

- The Town will not use eminent domain for future economic development
  - The Town should clearly articulate in its POCD or elsewhere that it has no intention of using eminent domain in the Health Center Neighborhood for economic development purposes.
- The Town will strive to address traffic concerns
  - The Town should enforce speed limits in the neighborhood.
  - The Town's Engineering Department, in collaboration with UCHC, should explore the potential for traffic calming along Middle, Munson and South Roads.
  - The Town must actively participate in State and regional transportation planning to ensure that the concerns of entire neighborhood are addressed.
- Pedestrian safety and accessibility will improve
  - The Town and State should work to complete gaps in the sidewalk system ringing Middle, Munson and South Roads.
  - The Town's Engineering Department should evaluate the potential and need for crosswalks on Middle, Munson and South Roads.
  - The Planning and Engineering Departments should evaluate opportunities for additional off-street pedestrian connections to existing development along Farmington Avenue and the western end of South Road.

- Property values for all owners will be protected
  - Adopting and implementing a well thought-out plan that establishes a predictable future for property owners and the neighborhood will help to protect property values.
  - Ensuring future development does not detract from existing land uses will help protect property values.
- Zoning and land use conflicts will be reduced
  - The Town should adopt a plan for the neighborhood and implement it.
  - The Town should establish zoning that enables logical phased development while ensuring protection for existing single-family residential uses.
  - If the Town adopts new zoning in accordance with a plan for the neighborhood, then zone changes should be minimized.

The recommended plan for the Study Area and surrounding area is shown in Figure 7. The plan calls for the continued development of the mixture of land uses that have been developed over the last two decades: clustered and multi-family residential and commercial office.

Specifically, the plan highlights the southern portion of the Health Center Neighborhood as an area for **Very High-Density Residential and/or Medical Office Campus** use. Very high-density residential is defined as five or more units per acre, to be consistent with the terminology used in the Town's current Plan of Conservation and Development. For reference, the recently built Village at Yorkshire is approximately six units per acre, and would qualify as very high-density residential. Medical Office Campus use are uses that are currently allowed under Medical Office Campus zoning and include: medical offices and laboratories, surgical centers, rehabilitation centers, medically related research and development facilities, day care centers, parking structures and food service for employees – not restaurants open to the public.

The plan also highlights pedestrian connections needed to complete the sidewalk network in the neighborhood as well as an additional potential pedestrian connection between O'Meara Farms and existing South Road medical office complexes.

In order to ease the transition to these more intense uses the Planning and Zoning Commission should explore regulatory means for protecting and respecting existing land uses, such as:

- Establishing a minimum acreage requirement, such as 2 acres, for higher intensity development. The majority of single-family residential parcels in the neighborhood are roughly one acre. Establishing a minimum requirement will help prevent leapfrogging of new development by forcing assemblage of properties.
- Encouraging new development Medical Office Campus or very high-density residential uses be adjacent to an existing Medical Office Campus or high- to very high-density residential use. In concert with provisions that will require assemblage of properties, such a requirement will force a logical phasing of development in the neighborhood. It would prohibit an intense development in the midst of current low-density residential properties.
- Strengthening standards for buffering between new development and existing low-density residential uses will help to minimize visual impacts, and light and noise trespass. Standards should address landscaping, site grading, fencing and other design features aimed at screening and buffering existing single-family properties.

- Requiring the provision of pedestrian amenities, and that site plans consider and treat the possibility of pedestrian interconnections with other higher density residential and/or office developments, will help to complete the pedestrian network, as well as encourage site design that is respectful of existing properties.
- Establishing access management standards and encouraging site design that anticipates the potential for future parking lot and driveway connections will help to ensure cohesive development of the neighborhood while reducing traffic conflicts.

These recommendations are consistent with regional and State plans and programs, such as the Bioscience Enterprise Zone, to grow density and investment in the neighborhood. Amending the Farmington 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development to incorporate these recommendations will reflect recent development, reduce uncertainty over future land uses, ensure logical and cohesive development and enable the town to seize the opportunity for bolstering its reputation as the home of the Bioscience Connecticut Initiative.

CANCELLED

Figure 7. Recommended plan for southern portion of Health Center Neighborhood



**Economic Development Director Report  
October 2015**

**Business Visits:**

During the month of October I met or visited with the following:

1. Dunkin Donuts attorney, Tim Furey
2. Artistica Pizzeria, Demetrios Toledis
3. Urstadt Biddle, Willing Biddle, President and Chief Operating Officer
4. CenterPlan, Robert Landino,
5. Milone &McBroom, Rebecca Auger
6. Ducci Electric, Rich and William Ducci
7. Farmington Chamber of Commerce, Brendan Moran, President
8. Elvgren Associates, Anne Elvgren
9. Tunxis Foundation, Helen Sneed, Executive Director
10. HEDCO, Fernando Rosa, president
11. Sandy Electrolysis, Sandy Gazdowicz, owner
12. Allstate Insurance, Jeff Bernitch, owner
13. Gorman York, John Cohn
14. CT Main Street, Susan Westa
15. Metro-Hartford Alliance, Becky Nolan, VP of government services

**EDC Events**

October 14 Business Breakfast  
Vivid Hues Ribbon Cutting

**Partnerships Events and meetings**

CEDAS Monthly Board Meeting

UConn-Farmington quarterly meeting

Hartford- Farmington Fienemann Road Project meeting

Subcommittee for Future Land Development Committee Meeting

Farmington Chamber executive board meeting

Farmington Chamber economic summit planning meeting

**Publications and Communications**

Fall Business Newsletter

October Business Breakfast E-Invite

Fall Business Breakfast Press Release

Farmington Patch Post for Artistica Pizzeria