



Building a National Zoning Atlas: Scaling Transparency & Consistency

July 20, 2022


Sara C. Bronin



Cornell AAP
Architecture Art Planning



Cornell Law School



Planners want people to engage in zoning - but people don't understand it.

CANTON

Zoning Regulation



Prepared for the
CANTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Town of Canton, Connecticut

Effective
May 12, 2014
Revised
October 29, 2021



Effective January 19, 2016

ZONING REGULATIONS FOR THE TOWN OF OLD LYME

Adopted: Initial Adoption of Zoning: January 11, 1941
Comprehensive Revision: February 13, 2008

Effective: Initial Adoption of Zoning: January 11, 1941
Comprehensive Revision: March 7, 2008

Amended: March 9, 2009
Effective: April 1, 2009

Adopted: School District (April 13, 2009)
Effective May 1, 2009

Adopted: Change to Section 4.10 Conservation Zone requirements - Gateway.
Re: Height, Building Height definition
Effective October 1, 2009

Adopted: Registry Regulations and amended Section 11.19 Seasonal Use, Year
Round Use (November 9, 2009)
Effective December 31, 2009

Adopted: Section 5 Use Regulations to add Alternative Energy Systems subject to
11.13 to Sections 5.1.3, 5.2.3 and 5.12.3

Adopted: Section 11.13 Special Regulations, Alternative Energy Systems
Effective June 1, 2010

Amended: Section 4.2.12 and Section 4.3 on July 12, 2010
Effective: August 1, 2010

Amended: Section 11.19A.3 Table of SLPOA Year Round Residents
Effective: May 9, 2011

Amended: Sections 2.4, 3.71, 3.72, 4.15, 5.6.3, 5.7.3, 5.10.2, 5.11.2, 6.1.8, 8.4.1.a(i),
11.28, 12.11.1, 12.8.2, 17A.3.7 and 17A.4
Effective: June 1, 2011

Amended: Section 4.4 Flood Hazard Regulations (w/copies of maps on 3 CD's)
Effective: July 18, 2011

ZONING REGULATIONS OF THE TOWN OF SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT

Original Regulations Adopted: May 1937
Last Amendment: March 1, 2019

SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL REGULATIONS FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT

Adopted: July 1985
Last Amendment: May 2, 1991

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS OF THE TOWN OF SHERMAN, CONNECTICUT

Subdivision Regulations Incorporated in
Zoning Regulations: September 5, 1947
Last Amendment: August 30, 2015

\$ 15.00

V

ZONING REGULATIONS

- Art. I. Title, Authority and Intent, §§ 100-120
- Art. II. Application of Regulations, § 200
- Art. III. Definitions, §§ 300, 310
- Art. IV. Establishment of Districts, §§400-582
- Art. V. General Provisions, §§ 510-595
- Art. VI. Administration and Enforcement, §§ 600-630
- Art. VII. Special Permits, §§ 700-790
- Art. VIII. Zoning Board of Appeal, § 800
- Art. IX. Amendment, §§ 900-904

TOWN OF LEDYARD



ZONING REGULATIONS

APPROVED - DECEMBER 13, 2018
EFFECTIVE - FEBRUARY 1, 2019
REVISED - March 9, 2020

TOWN OF CANTERBURY ZONING REGULATIONS

Adopted by the Canterbury Planning & Zoning Commission
Originally effective April 5, 1974
Revised through October 1, 2021

Town Of Canaan, Connecticut
(Falls Village)

ZONING REGULATIONS

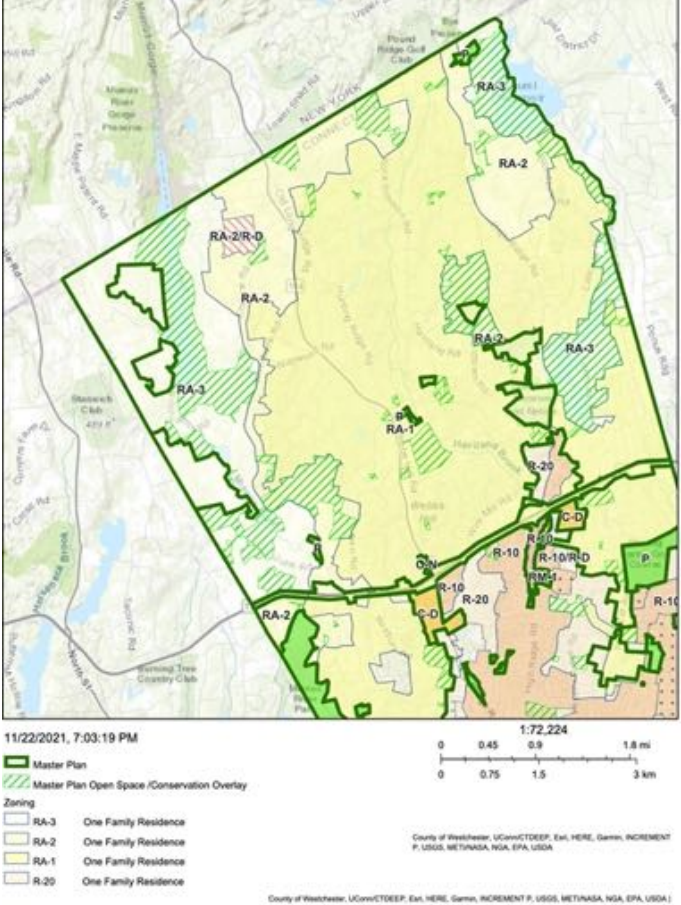
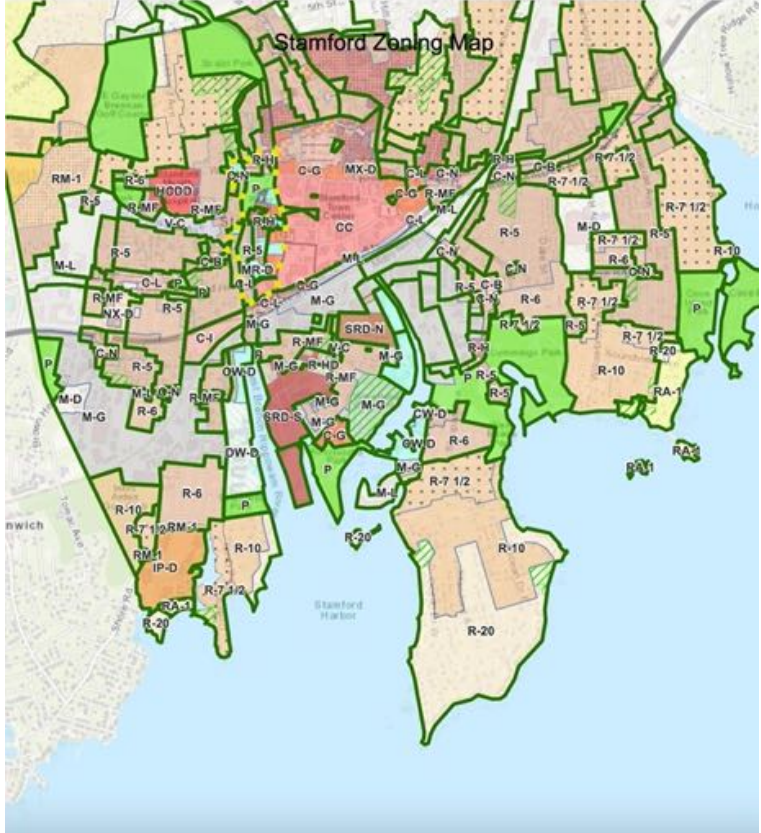
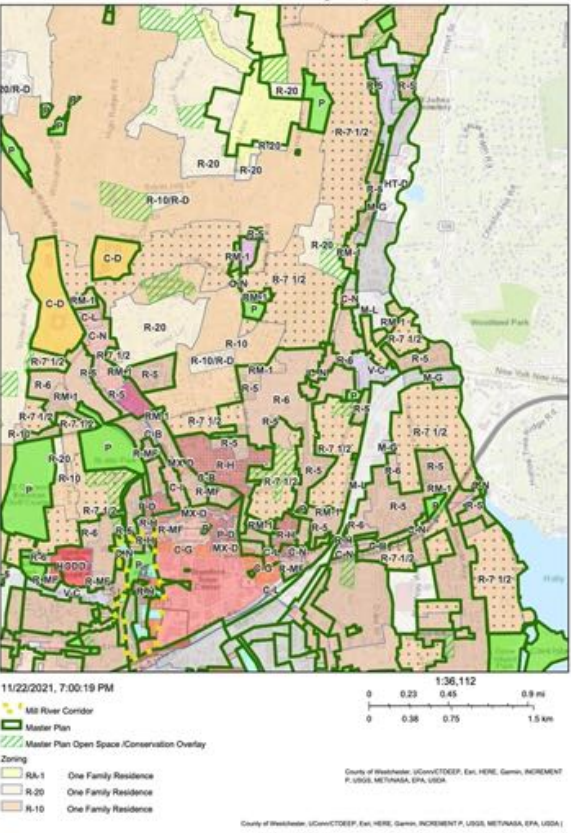


NEW FAIRFIELD



ZONING REGULATIONS

April 4, 2016



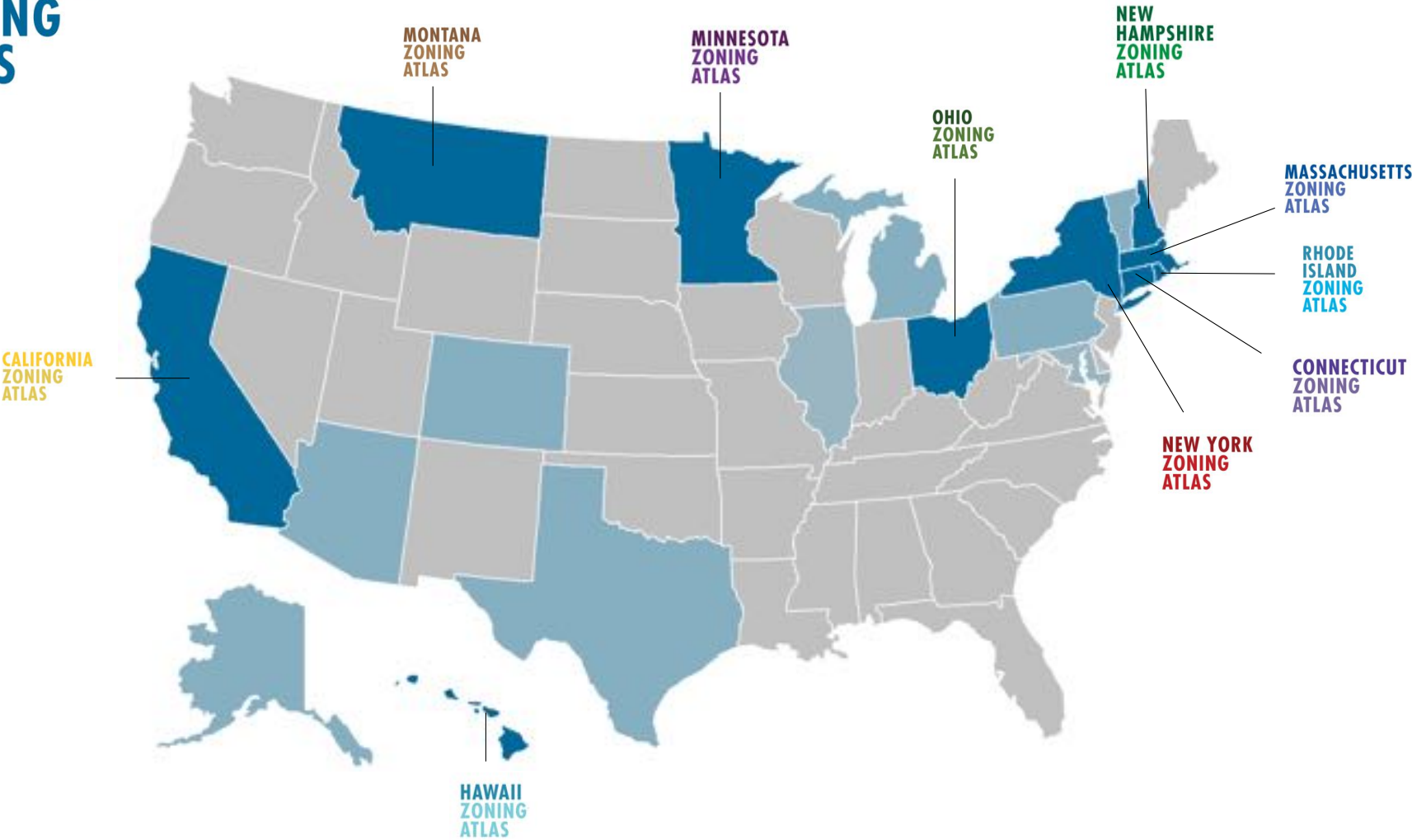


Standardized information can help people understand zoning.



It can also help planners evaluate zoning in one or more jurisdictions.

NATIONAL ZONING ATLAS





www.zoningatlas.org

HOW TO MAKE A ZONING ATLAS:

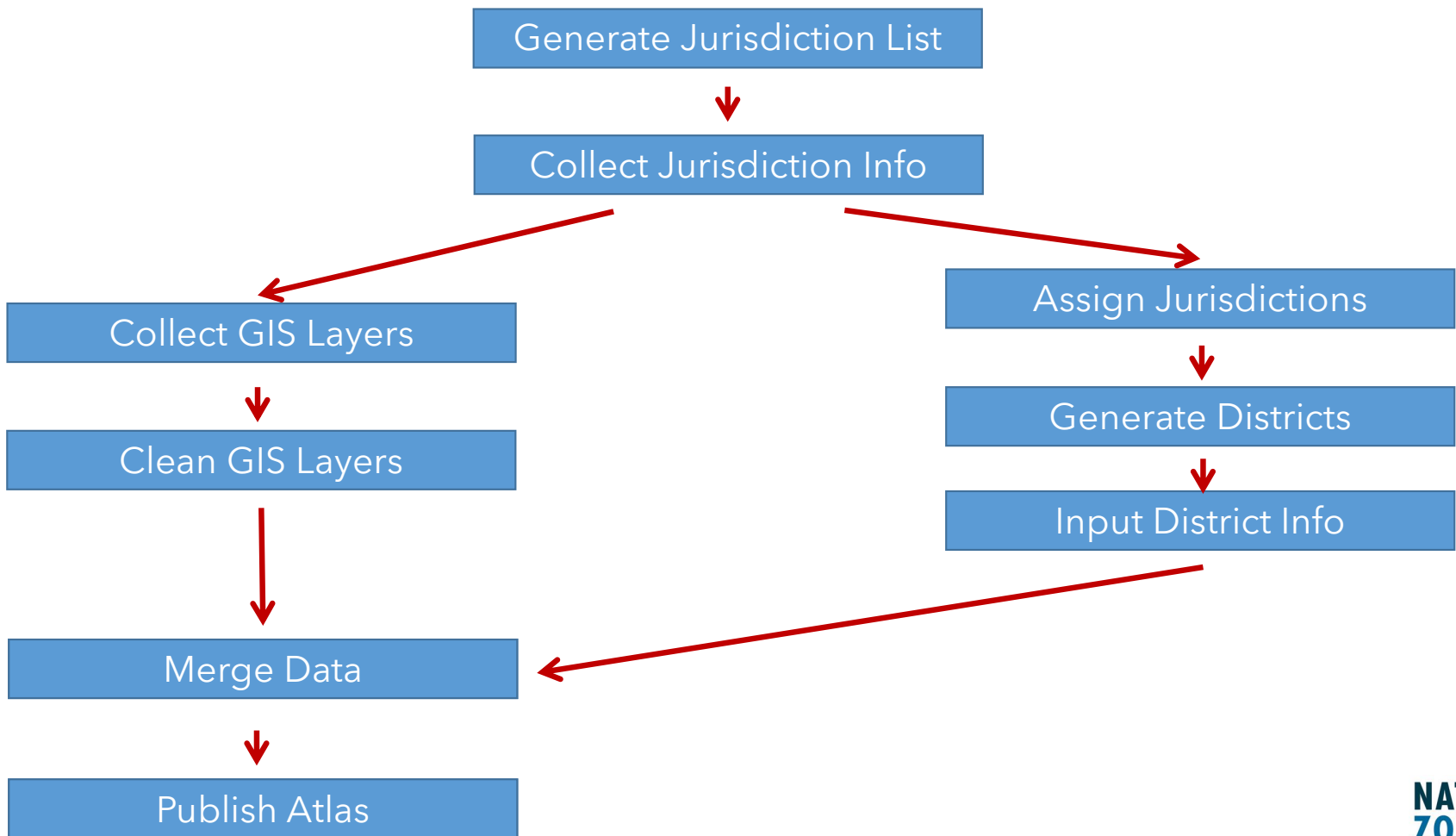
A METHODOLOGY FOR TRANSLATING &
STANDARDIZING DISTRICT-SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

by Sara C. Bronin & Ilya Ilyankou

first published December 2021
revised March 2022
last revised (new author added) April 2022

NATIONAL
ZONING
ATLAS

NATIONAL
ZONING
ATLAS



Jurisdiction Information

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
	Jurisdiction	County	Team Assignment (Step 1)	Team Assignment (Step 2)	Does it have zoning?	What type of government is it (per US Census Census of Governments)? (NY townships/villages = municipalities)	# of Pages in the zoning code	Approx. # of Districts, at least the ones on maps - this # could change	Link to Zoning Code (on the General Internet, as opposed to Box)	Link to Zoning Map (on the General Internet, as opposed to Box)	Link to Downloadable GIS Layers (if any) (on the General Internet, as opposed to Box)	Staff Planner Name (fill out if place has zoning)	Staff Planner Email (fill out if place has zoning)
90	Harrison (Town)	Westchester	Ruthao	Adam	Yes	General Purpose Township	120	18	https://code360.com/1102402	https://www.harrisonny.gov/site/wp/files/zoning/1102402/zoning_3-6-12.pdf	(To be provided by NTHCR)	Rosemarie Cusumano	
91	Harrison (Village)	Westchester	Ruthao	Adam	Yes	General Purpose Municipal	120	18	https://code360.com/1102402	https://www.harrisonny.gov/site/wp/files/zoning/1102402/zoning_3-6-12.pdf	(To be provided by NTHCR)	Rosemarie Cusumano	
92	Greenburgh	Westchester	Ruthao	Ruthao	Yes	General Purpose Municipal	306	32	https://code360.com/1102402	https://www.greenburghny.gov/site/wp/files/zoning/1102402/zoning_3-6-12.pdf	(To be provided by NTHCR)		
93	Levittown	Westchester	Ruthao	Ruthao	Yes	General Purpose Township	184	18	https://code360.com/1102402	https://www.levittownny.gov/site/wp/files/zoning/1102402/zoning_3-6-12.pdf	(To be provided by NTHCR)	Janet Anderson	planning@lewtownny.com

A. CLASSIFYING ZONING DISTRICTS

1. Type of Zoning District
2. Affordable Housing District
3. Elderly Housing District

B. CATALOGUING USES

1. Principal Use: 1-Family
2. Principal Use: 2-Family
3. Principal Use: 3-Family
4. Principal Use: 4+-Family
5. Principal Use: Affordable Housing
6. Accessory Dwelling Units
7. Planned Residential Development

C. CATALOGUING LOTS

1. Minimum Lot Size
2. Maximum Density
3. Minimum Setbacks
4. Maximum Lot Coverage
5. Parking Requirements
6. Connectivity Requirements

D. CATALOGUING STRUCTURES

1. Maximum Height
2. Floor-to-Area Ratio
3. Unit Size
4. Maximum Bedrooms
5. Maximum Units

Spreadsheet vs. How-to Guide



	NA.1	NA.2	NA.3
Overlay	Type of Zoning District	Elderly Housing District	Affordable Housing District
Yes	Mixed with Residential	No	No
No	Primarily Residential	No	No
No	Primarily Residential	No	No
No	Primarily Residential	No	No
No	Mixed with Residential	No	No
No	Mixed with Residential	No	No
No	Mixed with Residential	No	No
No	Nonresidential	No	No
No	Nonresidential	No	No

IV. ANALYZING ZONING CODES

In Part III, you completed 7 critical columns in the Spreadsheet. The Jurisdiction and County columns, completed in Part II, involved basic information. The Abbreviated District Name and Full District Name columns, completed in Part III, resulted from the process (likely still ongoing as you read this) of searching the zoning text, map, and shapefiles for district names. In the last three columns – District Mapped, District Mapped but Extinct, and Overlay – you made assessments based on the way districts are depicted graphically.

This Part puts graphic depictions aside and relies solely on the zoning text. Zoning code analysts will be using the zoning text to: classify zoning districts; catalogue uses, lots, and structures; and verify data. All Spreadsheet columns listed in this Part are located in the Zoning Information tab, and not the Jurisdiction Information tab.

A. CLASSIFYING ZONING DISTRICTS

As you delve into the text, locate the definitions section of the zoning code so you have it handy.

In this Section, you will fill out the following Spreadsheet columns for every district:

- **Type of Zoning District:** One of the following three options, each indicating the general nature of the district: Primarily Residential, Mixed with Residential, or Nonresidential.
- **Affordable Housing District:** A binary Yes/No entry indicating whether the entire zoning district requires all of its housing to satisfy an affordable housing definition.
- **Elderly Housing District:** A binary Yes/No entry indicating whether the entire zoning district requires all of its housing to be occupied by elderly persons.

1. Type of Zoning District

Each zoning district allows or prohibits different specific uses – a topic we will delve into in further

Zoning District Map
Town of Washington, CT

Legend:

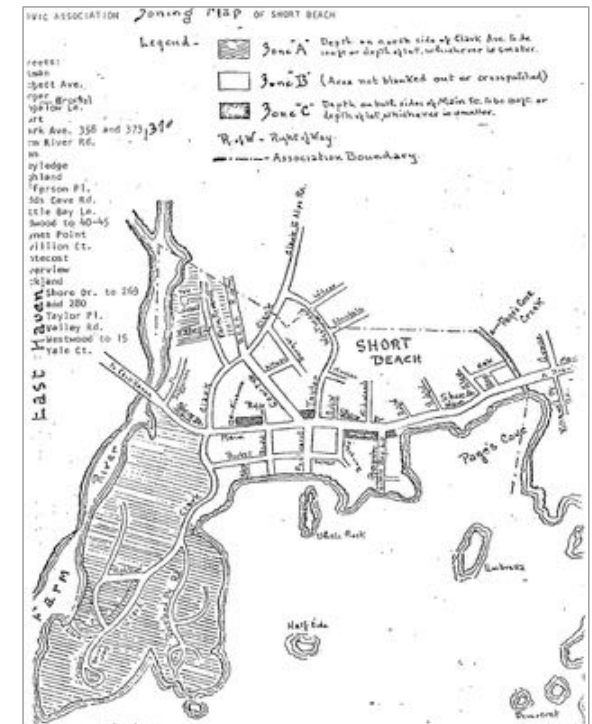
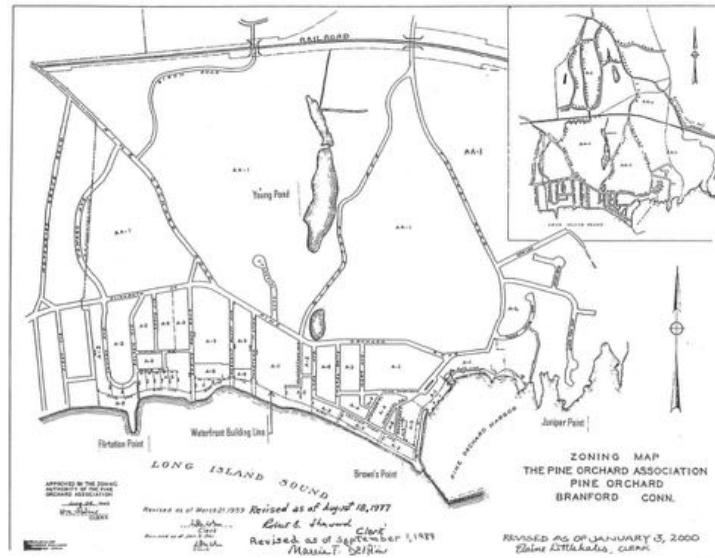
Residential Districts

- B-1 Farming and Residential
- B-2 Washington Center
- B-3 Lake Washington
- B-4 Woodville

Business Districts

- B-1 New Preston
- B-2 Washington Depot
- B-3 Woodville
- B-4 Woodville

Scale: 0 500 Feet



Reconciling Maps

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Jurisdiction	County	GIS_layer	Zoning_map	Zoe/Taylor Note	Solution	Tasked Person	Adams/SCB Comments
Alexander (village)	Genesee		Zoning map missing	Review Updated Map 4/26 In the zoning map insert, the parcel is not colored Industrial but is white.	Reach out to the town to obtain zoning map		
Bethany (town)	Genesee	I	Blank	Zoning Map and GIS layer do not match	Reach out to the town to obtain a zoning map (zoning map from 2006)		
La Roy (village)	Genesee				Ask for updated GIS from La Roy (zoning map 2018)		
Oakfield (village)	Genesee		Zoning map missing	Zoning map missing	Reach out to the town to obtain zoning map		Zoning map has been requested (Follow up?) 4/27
Denning	Ulster	G or R	Rural Residential, or CW	GIS layer missing Rural Residential and CWR (GIS layer missing most zoning)	Reach out to the town to obtain a zoning map (zoning map listed as proposed, was it adopted?)		
Ellenville	Ulster	R-1	I-1	GIS layer middle north R-1, zoned as I-1 in the zoning map	Ask for updated GIS from Ellenville (zoning map 2007)		
Ellenville	Ulster	R-1	R-1A	GIS layer northwest corner R-1A, zoned as R-1A in the zoning map	Ask for updated GIS from Ellenville (zoning map 2007)		
Esopus	Ulster	BC	R-12 (MHI Overlay)	Zoning map insert (listed as R-12), Shapelle's upper northwest listed as BC	Ask for updated GIS from Esopus (zoning map 2018)		
Esopus	Ulster	PUD	R-40	The upper middle of the Shapelle is denoted PUD, zoning map lists R-40	Ask for updated GIS from Esopus (zoning map 2018)		
Esopus	Ulster	RF-1	RF-2	Zoning map RF-2 has GIS layer listed as RF-2	Ask for updated GIS from Esopus (zoning map 2018)		
Hulsey	Ulster		Zoning map missing	Zoning map missing	Reach out to the town to obtain zoning map		Zoning map has been requested (Follow up?) 4/27

NATIONAL ZONING ATLAS



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



Charles Koch
CHARLES KOCH FOUNDATION

ZONE CO++



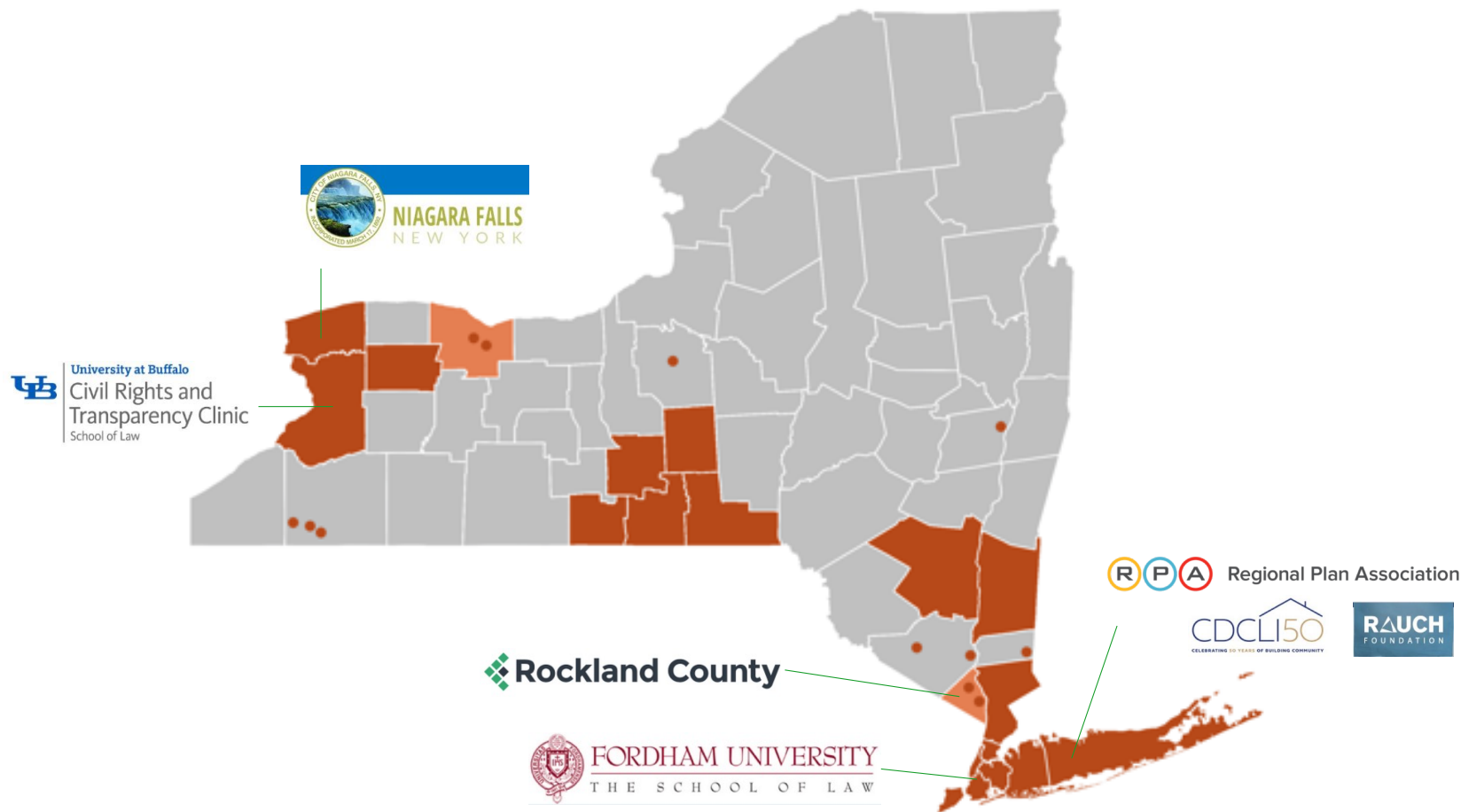
Regional Plan Association



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII
MANOA



NEW YORK ZONING ATLAS





CT Project

- 169 towns → **180** “zoning” jurisdictions
- **2,622** “zoning” districts
- **32,378** pages of zoning text







Connecticut Zoning Atlas

This interactive map shows how outdated zoning laws make it hard to build diverse, affordable housing.

Use checkboxes below to filter zones in the map. Click a town to see what % of its territory satisfies selected criteria.

Type of Zoning District

- ☐ Primarily Residential (*satisfies criteria*)
- ☐ Mixed with Residential (*satisfies criteria*)
- ☐ Nonresidential Zone (*satisfies criteria*)
- ☐ Any Zone Not Satisfying Criteria

Permitted Residential Uses

- ☐ 1-Family Housing
- ☐ 2-Family Housing
- ☐ 3-Family Housing
- ☐ 4+ Family Housing
- ☐ Accessory Dwelling Units

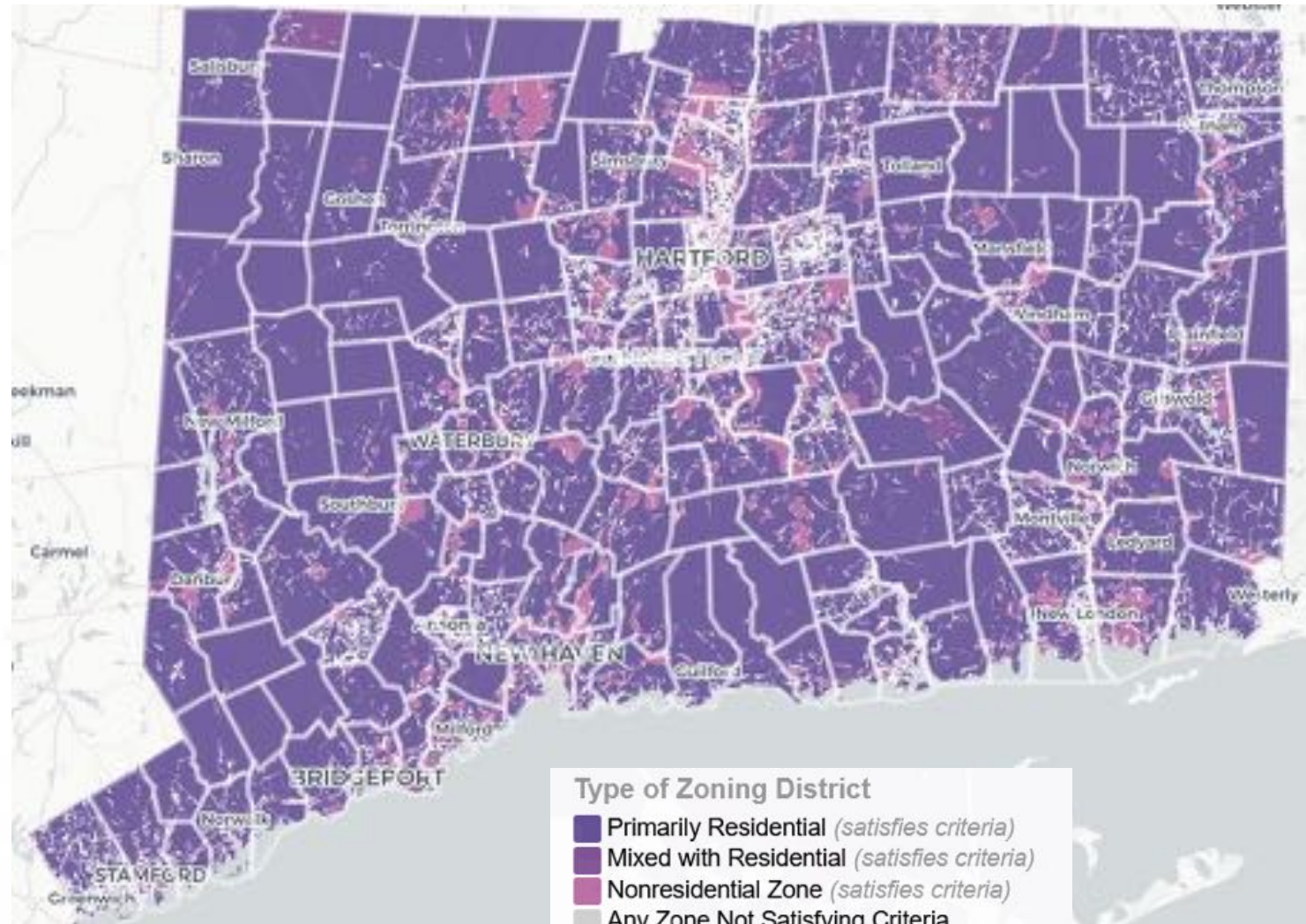
Overlays

- ☐ Waterways
- ☒ Federal/State Public Lands
- ☐ Sewer Service Areas
- ☐ Transit Stations (Rail & CTfastrak)

Zone Opacity

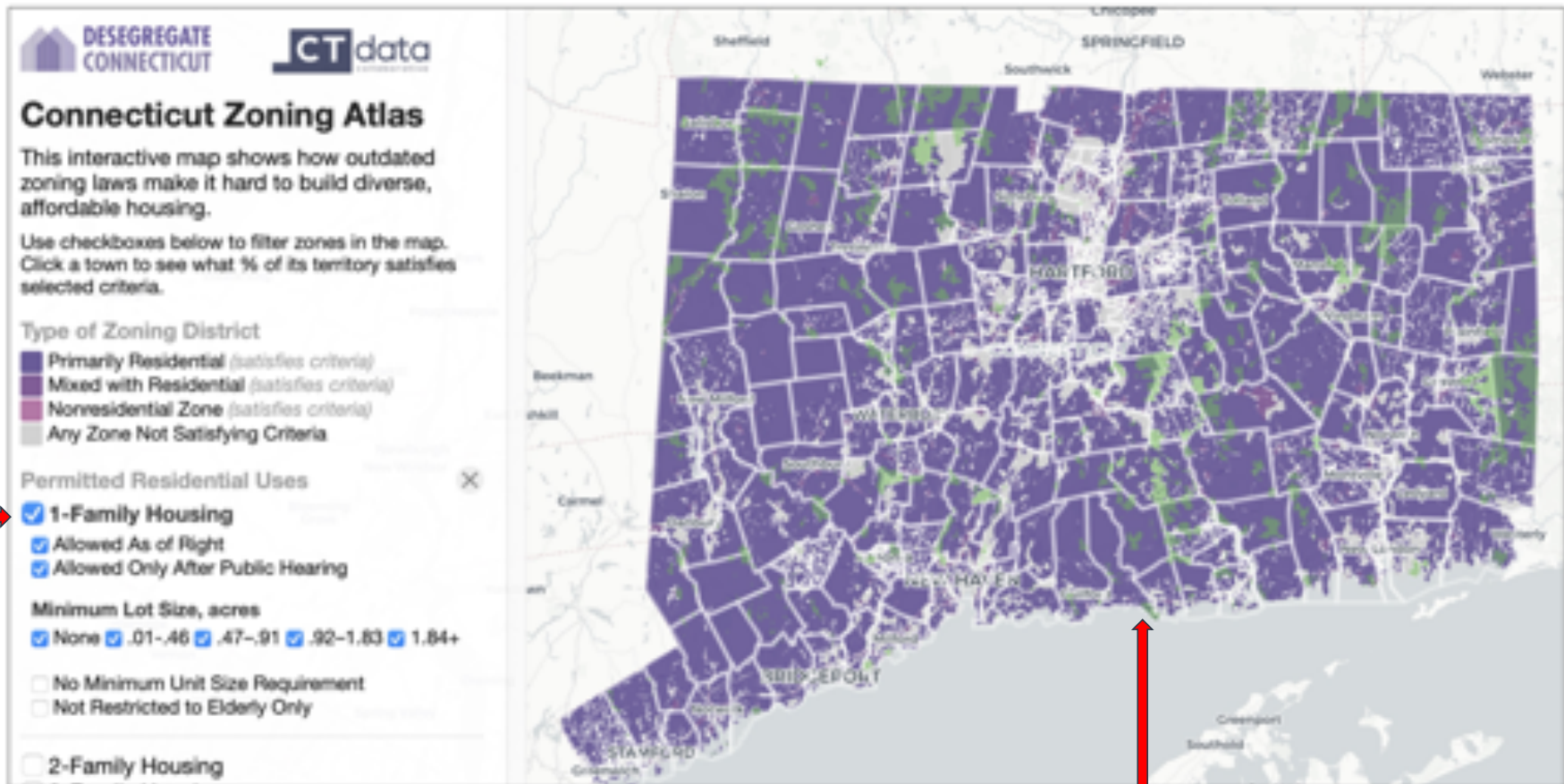


[Learn more](#) about this map. We can reform zoning laws to help Connecticut grow economically and equitably. Text ZONING to 313131 or visit www.desegregatect.org to learn more.



Type of Zoning District

- ☐ Primarily Residential (*satisfies criteria*)
- ☐ Mixed with Residential (*satisfies criteria*)
- ☐ Nonresidential Zone (*satisfies criteria*)
- ☐ Any Zone Not Satisfying Criteria



First you
select
options:

Here,
we've
chosen 1-
family
housing.

Then land meeting the criteria shows up in purple.

The Atlas Shows if a CT Town:

DESEGREGATE CONNECTICUT **CT data**

Connecticut Zoning Atlas

This interactive map shows how outdated zoning laws make it hard to build diverse, affordable housing.

Use checkboxes below to filter zones in the map. Click a town to see what % of its territory satisfies selected criteria.

Type of Zoning District

- ☒ **Primarily Residential** (satisfies criteria)
- ☒ **Mixed with Residential** (satisfies criteria)
- ☒ **Nonresidential Zone** (satisfies criteria)
- ☐ Any Zone Not Satisfying Criteria

Permitted Residential Uses

- ★ ☐ 1-Family Housing
- ☐ 2-Family Housing
- ☐ 3-Family Housing
- ★ ☒ **4+ Family Housing**
 - ☒ Allowed As of Right
 - ☒ Allowed Only After Public Hearing

Minimum Lot Size, acres

- ★ ☒ None ☒ .01-.46 ☒ .47-.91 ☒ .92-1.83 ☒ 1.84+
- ☐ No Minimum Unit Size Requirement
- ☐ Not Restricted to Elderly Only

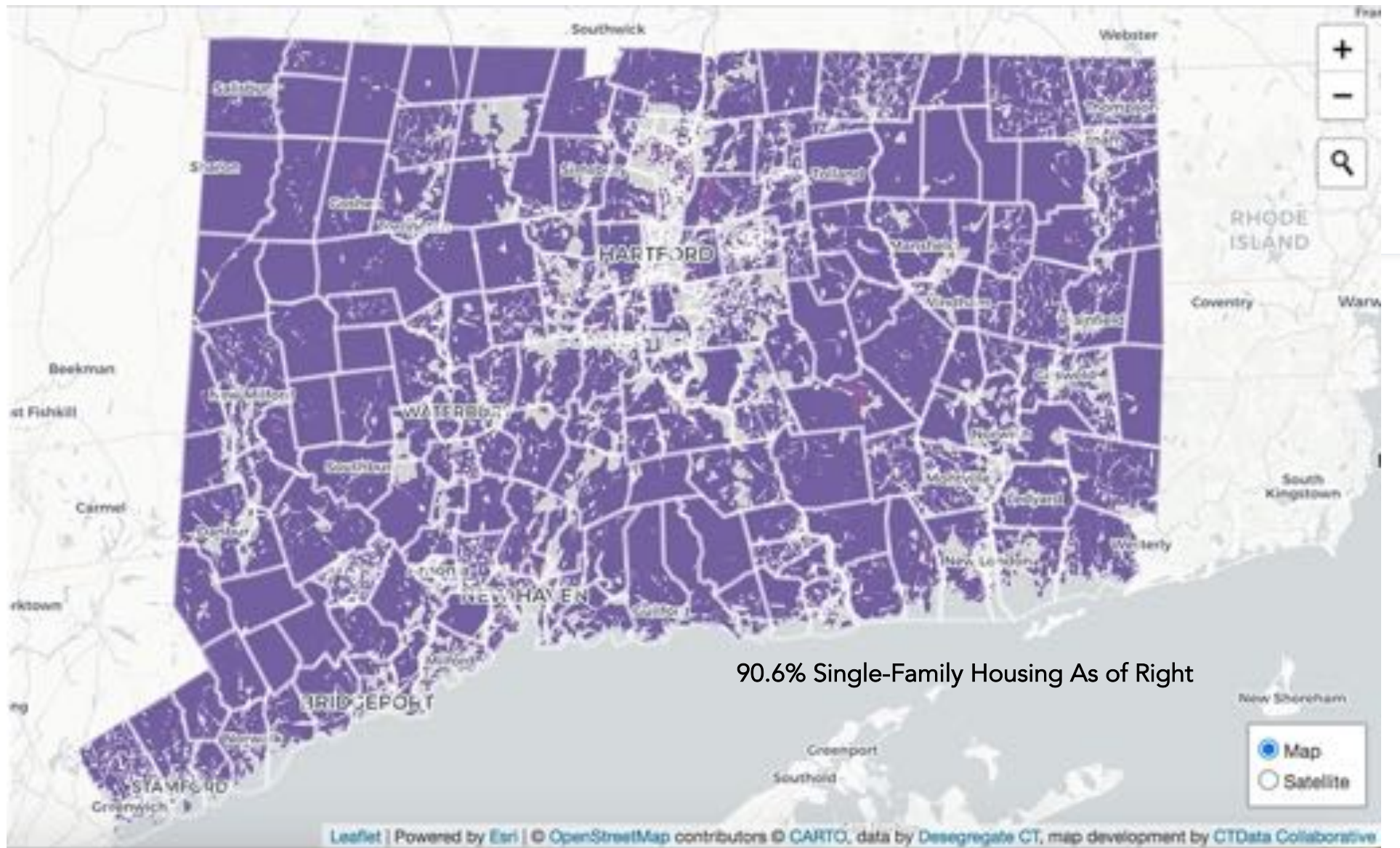
★ ☐ Accessory Dwelling Units

Overlays

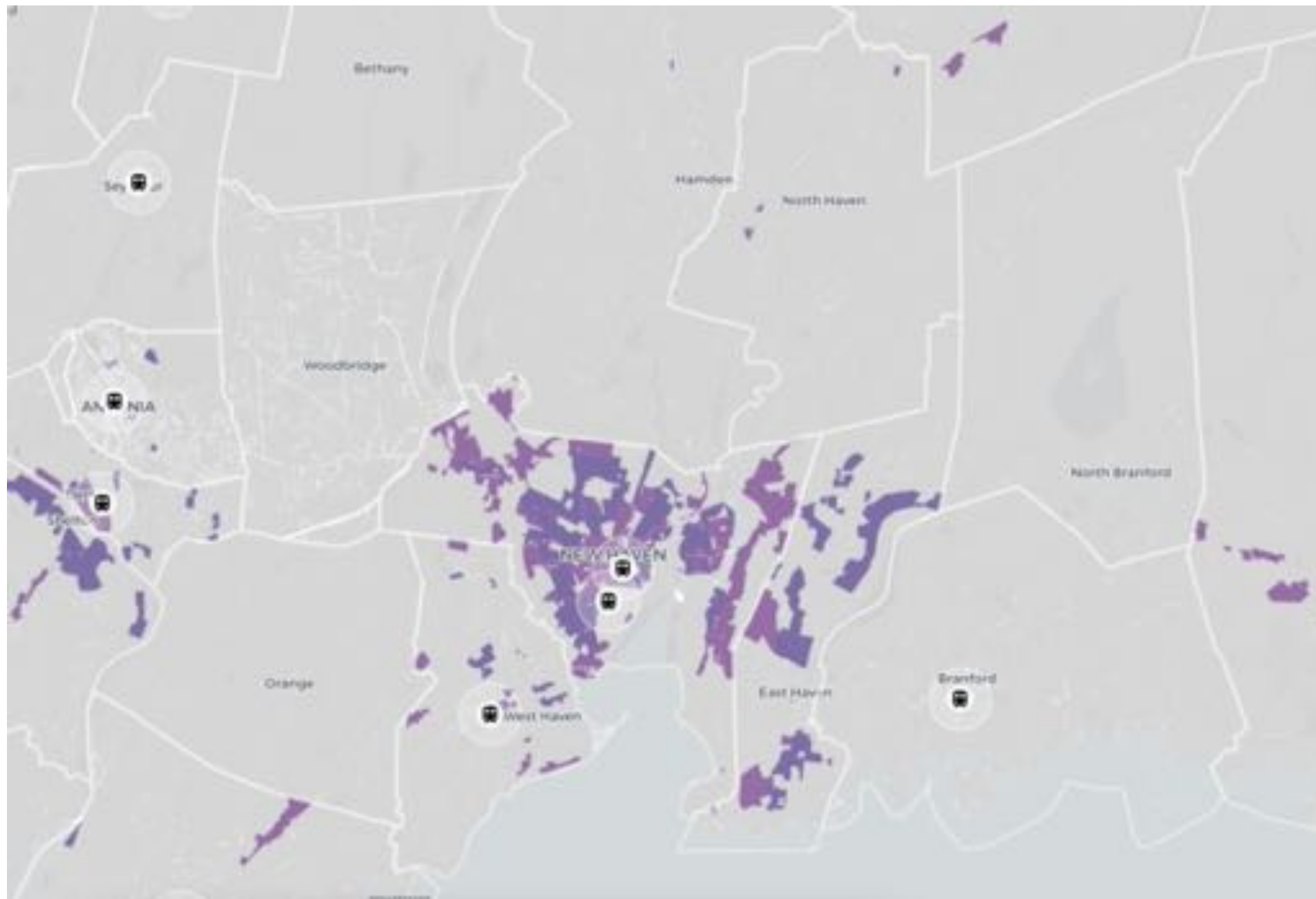
- ☐ Waterways
- ☒ Federal/State Public Lands
- ★ ☒ Rail, CTfastrak, and Ferries

Circles represent 0.5-mile radius

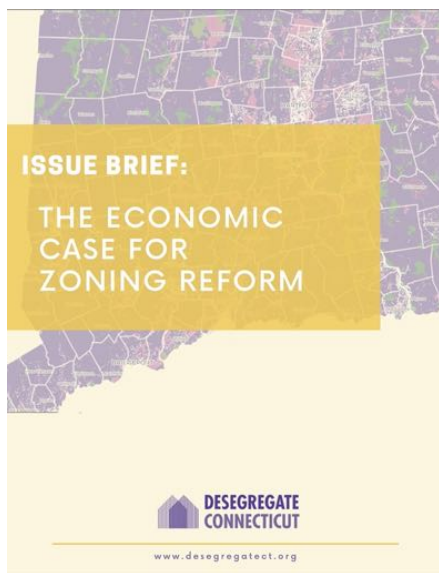
- Zones primarily for single-family housing
- Allows accessory apartments
- Zones for multi-family housing around shops, or any train/CTfastrak station
 - Walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods are good for the environment, health, and economic growth.
- Requires large minimum lot sizes








4 family housing





Standardized information can also tell us what factors matter. [Urban Institute]



BRIEFING ROOM

President Biden Announces New Actions to Ease the Burden of Housing Costs

MAY 16, 2022 • STATEMENTS AND RELEASES

- *Reward jurisdictions that have reformed zoning and land-use policies* with higher scores in certain federal grant processes, for the first time at scale.



Fair housing. Transportation.
Food supply. Economic Opportunity.
Nature access. School segregation.



So you want to create a zoning atlas?

WANT TO MAKE YOUR OWN ATLAS?

Great. Start here! The first thing you'll need to do is [assemble your team](#) - both the folks who will be putting the atlas together, and those who will fund their efforts. Then you'll need to develop a game plan by scoping out the project as part of our [how-to guide](#). Once you officially launch your atlas research effort, [let us know](#), and we'll welcome you to our growing [research collaborative](#), offer you advice and support, and provide you with a brand package. As we grow project teams, we're also rapidly developing processes to make data collection and harmonization easier. Join us to keep up with the latest.

ASSEMBLING YOUR TEAM

HOW-TO GUIDE

JOIN THE COLLABORATIVE

Assembling Your Team

- Patient, detail-oriented, and has a sense of humor
- Roles:
 - Project Manager
 - Zoning Code Analyst(s)
 - Geospatial Lead
 - Geospatial Analyst(s)

Project Manager

- Planner, Researcher, Government Official, or Lawyer?
- Responsibilities:
 - Team management
 - Coordinate outreach to studied jurisdictions
 - Organize, organize, organize

Zoning Code Analyst(s)

- Professional planners/attorneys, college students, grad students, law students?
- Responsibilities:
 - Read zoning codes
 - Translate them into Spreadsheet



Geospatial Team

- GIS specialists, preferably ones well-connected to fellow GIS professionals
- Responsibilities:
 - Manage, clean, and merge GIS files
 - Match zoning districts from Spreadsheet
 - Hand draw missing zoning districts

HOW TO MAKE A ZONING ATLAS:

A METHODOLOGY FOR TRANSLATING &
STANDARDIZING DISTRICT-SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

by Sara C. Bronin & Ilya Ilyankou

first published December 2021
revised March 2022
last revised (new author added) April 2022


NATIONAL
ZONING
ATLAS

NATIONAL
ZONING
ATLAS



Join the Collaborative!

- Pursuing knowledge for the public good
- Committing to data accuracy
- Seeing data to completion
- Working efficiently
- Openness to collaboration
- Communicating



Contact me at sara.bronin@cornell.edu
once you have a team together!



www.zoningatlas.org/jobs

JOBS

NATIONAL ZONING ATLAS

NATIONAL ZONING ATLAS: PROJECT COORDINATOR POSITION AVAILABLE

The Legal Constructs Lab invites applications for a senior research associate position beginning as soon as August 15, 2022, or until the position is filled. The successful candidate will be serving for up to two years as the project coordinator for the National Zoning Atlas, working under the supervision of Professor Sara Bronin, and will be responsible for independently designing and implementing the research project which entails graphically depicting information about zoning codes across possibly tens of thousands of jurisdictions in the United States.



Thank you. @sarabronin