1. Planning Commission Agenda

    Documents:

        PC AGENDA 9-8-26.PDF

2. ZC 26-24 FEMA Flood Zone Text Amendment

    Documents:

        ZC 26-24 FEMA FLOOD ZONE MAP UPDATES STAFF REPORT FOR PC.PDF
        ZC 26-24 FEMA FLOOD ZONE MAP DEEP LETTER TO TOWN 5-19-26.PDF

AGENDA

PLANNING COMMISSION – REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 7:00 pm
Simsbury Town Hall
933 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070

I. CALL TO ORDER

Seating of Alternates

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 25, 2026

III. GENERAL COMMISSION BUSINESS

Referral from Zoning Commission

ZC #26-24, Town of Simsbury Zoning Commission, Applicant, Brittany MacGilpin, Agent, for a text amendment to Simsbury Zoning Regulations pursuant to Section 6 (Floodplain Zone) and Section 17 (Definitions) related to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Map Update Study

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

FY 27/28 Budget Discussion: Projects

V. ADJOURNMENT

Marc S. Nelson, MPA
Town Manager

George K. McGregor, AICP
Director

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT MEMORANDUM

TO: Simsbury Planning Commission

FROM: Brittany MacGilpin, Assistant Town Planner

DATE: September 8, 2026

SUBJECT: FEMA Flood Map Text Amendments

REQUEST

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) commenced a Flood Risk Study in 2018 of the Farmington River Watershed, which includes the Town of Simsbury and 18 other Hartford County communities. The detailed study reviewed flood prone areas with improved hydrologic and hydraulic analyses; new topographic and aerial imagery, revised modeling, re-delineation, and other changes to the floodplain characteristics such as development. Simsbury has approximately 1019 parcels in the flood zone.

From these studies FEMA presented the Town of Simsbury with new preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) based on the Farmington River watershed study and these maps are currently scheduled to become effective on November 13, 2026.

To assist the community in this map revision process, the CTDEEP reviewed the Town's existing floodplain management regulations for compliance with federal standards for development in designated FEMA floodplains to ensure the local regulations meet or exceed the minimum federal flood standards of 44 CFR 60.3. The review indicated that revisions to the Town's existing floodplain regulations are needed to maintain this minimum compliance. Therefore, for the Town of Simsbury to remain eligible in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), these zoning regulation revisions must be adopted prior to the effective date of the community's new FIRM.

The following section shows the Zoning Regulation section and text changes to be made for minimum compliance with FEMA regulations and recently adopted state floodplain management requirements.

SPECIFIC TEXT AMENDMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Section 6.4 Identification of the Special Flood Hazard Area
*Updates to the FIRM dates are shown in the **bold** text below.*

The Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for Hartford County, **Connecticut,** dated **November 13, 2026**, **and** accompanying Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), dated **November 13, 2026 (Panels 09003C0 167G, 169G, 188G, 189G, 190G, 191G, 192G, 193G, 194G, 307G, 326G, 327G, 328G, 329G, 331G, 332G, 333G)**, and other supporting data applicable to the Town of Simsbury, and any subsequent revisions thereto, are adopted by reference into this regulation. Since mapping is legally adopted by reference into this regulation it must take precedence when more restrictive until such time as a map amendment or map revision is obtained from FEMA.

Section 17.4 Definitions – Flood Definitions
The definitions below will be updated by adding or updating with the bold text provided or remove strikethrough text. The missing definition for "Variance" will also be added.

Improvement, Substantial: Any combination of repairs, reconstruction, . . . that alteration affects the external dimensions of the structure. The term does not, however, include either: (1) Any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations of state or local health, sanitary, or safety **code** specifications which have been **previously** identified by the local code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary to assume safe living conditions; or . . .

Lowest Floor: The lowest floor of the lowest enclosed area (including basement). ~~An unfinished or flood resistant enclosure . . . of this regulation.~~

Variance: A grant of relief by a community from the terms of the floodplain management regulation that allows construction in a manner otherwise prohibited and where specific enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship.

Once these revisions are made to the Town of Simsbury's Floodplain Zone Regulations and the community formally adopts these revisions and the new effective FIRM and FIS, the municipality will be fully compliant with program standards.

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (POCD) CONSISTENCY

When considering zoning text amendments, it is recommended that the amendments be reviewed for policy consistency with the Town of Simsbury's POCD. Chapter 4 of the document, Protect Natural Resources & Enhance Ecological Health, includes Policy D., "Preserve and protect watercourses, wetlands, and floodplains and their functions." Staff finds that the proposed text amendments to be consistent with this policy goal.

Staff would also like to note to the Planning Commission that further amendments to the Simsbury Floodplain Regulations are expected to be proposed as part of the full zoning regulation re-write project that is underway. Any revisions will be reviewed with CTDEEP to ensure it meets the federal flood standards.

May 19, 2026

George McGregor
Director of Planning & Community Development
Town of Simsbury
Town Hall
933 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, CT 06070

RE: Comprehensive Review of the Town of Simsbury Zoning Regulations, Section 6 Floodplain Zone

Dear Mr. McGregor:

On June 29, 2023, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) presented your community with new preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) as part of the Farmington River watershed study in Hartford County. **These maps are currently scheduled to become effective on November 13, 2026.** In order for your community to remain eligible to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the Town of Simsbury must adopt revised regulations for development in designated FEMA floodplains that meet or exceed the minimum federal standards of 44 CFR 60.3 prior to the effective date of the community's new FIRM. FEMA issued its Letter of Final Determination (LFD) dated **May 13, 2026** to the Town of Simsbury outlining these requirements and providing the new effective map date.

In order to assist the community in this map revision process, the CTDEEP has reviewed your community's existing floodplain management regulations for compliance with 44 CFR 60.3. The review indicated that revisions to the community's existing floodplain regulations are needed in order to maintain minimum compliance with the NFIP minimum standards.

The following comments were generated as a result of the recent review and are presented in the order of your current regulations. Comments or words written in bold or strike-through text indicate the definition, section, or wording is required for minimum compliance with FEMA regulations and recently adopted state floodplain management requirements. Text in italics is for explanation purposes.

Section 6.4 Identification of the Special Flood Hazard Area
Please update the dates as shown in the bold text below.

The Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for Hartford County, **Connecticut,** dated **November 13, 2026**, **and** accompanying Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), dated **November 13, 2026 (Panels 09003C0 167G, 169G, 188G, 189G, 190G, 191G, 192G, 193G, 194G, 307G, 326G, 327G, 328G, 329G, 331G, 332G, 333G)**, and other supporting data applicable to the Town of Simsbury, and any subsequent revisions thereto, are adopted by reference into this regulation. Since mapping is legally adopted by reference into this regulation it must take precedence when more restrictive until such time as a map amendment or map revision is obtained from FEMA.

Section 17.4 Definitions – Flood Definitions
Please update the definitions below by adding or updating with the bold text provided, or remove strikethrough text. Please add the missing definition for "Variance".

Improvement, Substantial: Any combination of repairs, reconstruction, . . . that alteration affects the external dimensions of the structure. The term does not, however, include either: (1) Any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations of state or local health, sanitary, or safety **code** specifications which have been **previously** identified by the local code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary to assume safe living conditions; or . . .

Lowest Floor: The lowest floor of the lowest enclosed area (including basement). ~~An unfinished or flood-resistant enclosure . . . of this regulation.~~

Variance: A grant of relief by a community from the terms of the floodplain management regulation that allows construction in a manner otherwise prohibited and where specific enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship.

Once these revisions are made to the Town of Simsbury's Floodplain Zone Regulations and the community formally adopts these revisions and the new effective FIRM and FIS, the municipality will be fully compliant with program standards. **Please provide this office with a draft copy of the revised regulations at least one month prior to formal adoption by the Town in order to check that all required revisions have been made.** With those revisions, please provide a schedule for public hearing and adoption. Once the revised regulations are adopted, this office will need a certified copy to forward to FEMA Region I.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions regarding this review or the specific requirements discussed in this letter, or would like an electronic version of our model floodplain regulations from where the language for the above stated comments had been cited or a copy of our higher regulatory standards developed for use with the model floodplain regulations, please contact me by telephone at (860) 424-3537, or by email at diane.ifkovic@ct.gov.

Sincerely,

Diane Ifkovic

Diane Ifkovic
State NFIP Coordinator
Land & Water Resources Division

cc: Wendy Mackstutis, First Selectman
Marc S. Nelson, Town Manager
Brittany MacGilpin, Assistant Town Planner
Joseph Hollis, Code Compliance Officer
Ryan Ziemnicki, Land Use Specialist
Christopher Markesich, FEMA Region I
File: Town of Simsbury Community File: Ordinance/Regulation