

1. Why does the state need a firing range?

- a. All State Troopers are required to qualify prior to graduation from the Academy and requalify annually. Currently, all sworn CSP personnel receive their firearms training and credentialing at a state owned training facility in Simsbury. Law Enforcement requirements, including those of the CSP, have evolved over time from a strict marksmanship program, where Troopers would shoot at nonmoving paper targets, to a dynamic training program that balances timed qualification on multiple turning targets with combat and confidence courses. These improvements in training teach and reinforce the skills necessary to make critical decisions about when, where, and how to use deadly physical force without placing innocent lives at stake. Firearms qualifications for Troopers include the use of handguns, rifles, and shotguns and are conducted in the same weather environments and light conditions that Troopers perform their duties. This is done in order for them to effectively handle their weapons in all temperatures and weather and light conditions they may face.

2. Why can't you use or expand on the range you use now rather than build a new one?

- a. The present State Police range in Simsbury was constructed in 1947. This site is at the base of Talcott Mountain, just north of the Avon town line and located within the Farmington River flood plain and flood way. In 1962, the state purchased the range, and Firearms Training has been conducted there ever since. The facility consists of a multi-lane pistol range and a separate rifle and shotgun range.

The location of the current range makes it a prime target for the rise and fall of the Farmington River. The proximity of the Farmington River and its continuous encroachment upon the range has created conditions that make its continued use impractical. The site has had issues with flooding for decades. Over the years, minor site improvements have been made to prevent or at least mitigate the impact of annual flooding from the Farmington River, but they have not been sufficient in preventing significant damage.

The flooding in the spring of 2007 caused extensive damage to the entire facility, to both the building and outdoor range areas and resulted in significant costs including clean up, delayed use, and damaged ammunition and equipment. Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 resulted in severe damage or destruction to nearly all the repairs and improvements made after the flooding of 2007.

The direct negative impacts on the training program due to this flooding include costs to the state as high as \$400,000 per event, and last minute cancellations of training events. The training and certification cycles for all Troopers are intricate and involve long term planning and reliable use of a facility. These cancellations result in disruptions to these training cycles and the increasing severity of flooding events has only exacerbated these delays. Also, to compensate for these events, the range staff has been forced to reduce and condense these training programs. These "bare bones" programs adversely affect the training level of Troopers across the state.

3. How will the site be used? What type of structures will you build?

- a. Initial design will occur only after the site is selected. However, the major elements of this relocation project are as follows: The facility will consist of approximately 55,000

square feet of multipurpose training space. Their main uses will include classrooms for up to 100 Troopers, firearms simulators and other open space training rooms; an indoor active-shooter training space; gun cleaning and smithing space; staff offices and file storage; storage vaults; a kitchen and dining area to accommodate staff and Troopers; an ammunition reloading area; locker rooms for staff; and various smaller storage areas. The site will also include two range control buildings. There will be separate pistol, active shooter, rifle and shotgun ranges. This will allow for a more efficient use of training time than is currently possible. There will also be approximately 125 parking spaces as well as appropriate well, septic, telecommunication, and electrical systems.

4. Will other state or federal agencies be allowed to use the facility?

- a. The Training Facility is also shared with other in-state law enforcement agencies. Approximately 80% of the use of the facility is dedicated to the members of the Connecticut State Police. The other 20%, while overseen by CSP range staff, include federal, state and local law enforcement agencies with which we partner. Training together enhances our working relationships with these other agencies.

5. Will the range be open and available to the public?

- a. At this time, there are no plans to make the proposed range available to the public.

6. Will the range be in use 7 days a week and on holidays, both days and nights?

- a. The regular operating hours for the range is Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Every three years all Troopers are required to qualify under low light conditions. This activity is conducted immediately after sunset and typically concludes by 9:00 pm. There is minimal usage of the range on the weekends.

7. The state owns so much land already; why aren't any of these sites used for the range?

- a. In accordance with the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) there are two key factors that affect site selection for a proposed project. They are sites under the control of the sponsoring agency (DESPP, in this case) and sites that are reasonably available to the agency. Existing DESPP property and other state owned land were considered as part of the initial site selection process. Reasonably available sites included non-state owned property where the land owner is a willing seller; thereby making their property reasonably available to the agency. The site selection process also included "unsolicited sites," meaning they were submitted to the state by land owners for consideration for the relocation project. Since they were being offered to the state by willing sellers, they were deemed "reasonably available" and as such, also subject to the same vetting process as state-owned properties. Sites where the state reached out to the land owners were deemed "solicited." There were a number of solicited sites that made it through the vetting process but were not available for sale, as well as a number of unsolicited sites that were considered but did not make it through the vetting process. The three sites, Willington - Ruby Road (unsolicited), Willington - Eldredge Mills Road (solicited), and East Windsor (unsolicited), completed the vetting process, were deemed to be reasonably available, and as a result, were subsequently carried forward to the Early Public Scoping Process under CEPA.

8. How can you justify the expense to taxpayers?

- a. The purpose of this facility is to provide the best training environment possible for the men and women of the Connecticut State Police. The current facility cannot accommodate all of the training that must be provided, its capacity is limited, and the frequently occurring cancellations due to flooding impacts credentialing. For many citizens of the State of Connecticut, CSP is the only police resource available to its communities. It is critical that every Trooper receives all of the training needed, in a facility simulating the situations they may face to ensure that they are ready to respond to your calls, and are also able to protect themselves from harm when they do.
- 9. Does the state plan to use the selected site for any purpose other than a firing range?**
- a. There is no plan to use the selected site for any purpose other than the proposed training facility.
- 10. Will there be 24-hour security monitoring the facility? Is the town expected to pay for the monitoring?**
- a. The town will not be responsible for any monitoring or security. While there is no formal design or plan for the proposed facility at this point, the current facility is continuously monitored by an alarm company.
- 11. Which safety precautions are being taken to protect residents from stray bullets who live nearby?**
- a. Troopers are trained and instructed to shoot at designated targets only. They are not permitted to randomly shoot at anything other than those designated targets. Information from the EIE will inform the design of the proposed range to ensure that all areas where shooting takes place will be secure from any individuals who reside or are in the area.
- 12. How many acres does the state need to build a firing range and what does the state plan to do with the rest of the land it doesn't use for this purpose?**
- a. About 30 acres are needed for the facility itself. This acreage does not include auxiliary infrastructure that may be necessary for the project. For example, unused portions could be utilized as visual and sound buffers between the facility and the neighboring properties. The use of any remaining land will be discussed in the EIE.
- 13. Will the state add additional facilities to the property after the range is completed?**
- a. There are no plans to add additional facilities to the property at this time.
- 14. Why aren't the zoning board/residents of the town able to vote on whether or not this project proceeds?**
- a. The state's process is different than the one that is used by some communities when considering development projects at the local level. Since this is a state action, it is governed by state law, and not local regulations. However, public comments were solicited at the early stages of the project and will again be invited during the EIE public comment and review stage.
- 15. Can CSP use the National Guard facility instead?**
- a. The recently re-developed CT Army National Guard East Haven range was not designed to meet CSP needs and is currently being fully utilized by the National Guard. Stones

Ranch is also being fully utilized by the National Guard. The feasibility of other facilities will be addressed in the EIE.

16. Will CSP be training with automatic firearms?

- a. Most Troopers train with and use semi-automatic firearms. Fewer than 30 Troopers in highly specialized tactical units use automatic firearms and they will train occasionally, though they too predominantly train with semi-automatic firearms.

17. What, if any is the environmental impact on the air, soil, and groundwater in the land used for the firing range and surrounding properties?

- a. Such potential environmental impacts will be evaluated in great detail in the EIE. In addition, the EIE will address potential lead impacts and explore new technologies or systems to mitigate its effect by reclaiming spent lead bullets and other means.

18. What considerations will be taken to protect surrounding residential areas from excessive noise, both at night and during the day?

- a. During the EIE process, we will put forth a substantial effort to study noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods by modeling the expected noise generated from the new facility to the surrounding properties. Based on the assessment of potential impacts, we would explore mitigating factors which may include as examples, but are not limited to, site specific design and layout, use of existing topography, woodland buffers, and noise dampening structures, in addition to potential operational changes.

19. Will building a firing range in our town cause our home values to depreciate? Will homeowners be compensated for loss of value?

- a. Part of the EIE process includes an evaluation of the economic impact on the surrounding areas, which would include potential impact to home value.

20. Will local businesses near the range be impacted?

- a. The degree to which businesses near the site could be negatively or positively impacted will be explored in the EIE.

21. How close will the proposed range be to schools, residences, and places of worship?

- a. Part of the EIE process will further evaluate the proximity to residences, places of worship, cemeteries, hospitals, schools, daycare centers, recreational areas, and historic districts, and the degree to which they may be impacted.

22. Will the influx of Troopers using the firing range cause traffic problems?

- a. As part of the EIE process, a traffic study would be conducted which would look into such things as existing road level of services, the potential trips generated by the use of the facility by Troopers and staff during peak traffic hours, and entrance sightlines.