

CONDITIONS & TRENDS

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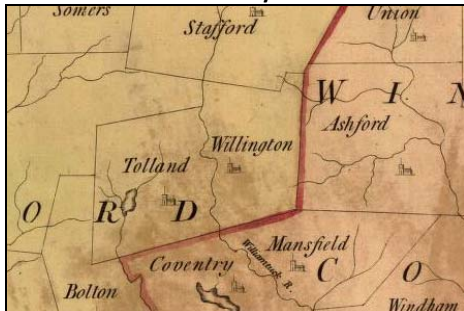
Overview

This booklet provides a general overview of conditions and trends affecting Willington. It has been prepared as part of the process of formulating the 2018 Plan of Conservation and Development.

"If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do and how to do it."

Abraham Lincoln,
American President

History



People



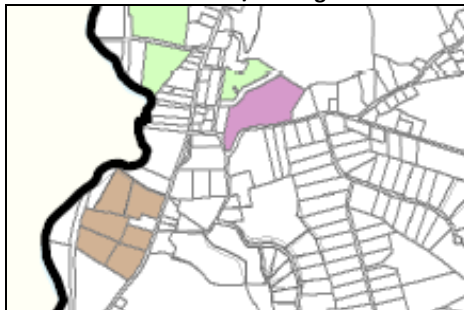
Housing



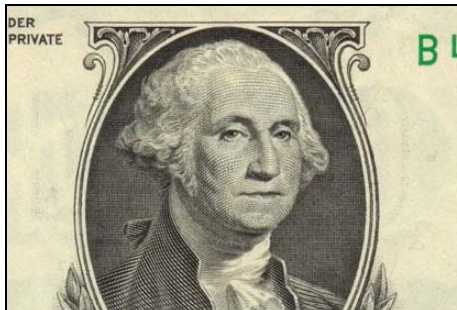
Business



Land Use / Zoning



Fiscal



History of Willington

The landscape of the area we now know as Willington evolved over millions of years as a result of massive geologic forces. While there is no written record, Native Americans are believed to have inhabited this area for about the last 10,000 years.

European Settlement

Europeans are known to have “discovered” this part of the new world in 1614 when Dutch explorer Adriaen Block sailed into what we now call Long Island Sound. There may have been earlier contact by Nordic sailors but no written records exist.

Dutch and European trade with Native Americans eventually led to establishment of trading posts and settlement of inland areas along the Connecticut River after 1633. Following the Pequot War of 1637, European settlement began to extend to other areas.

Agricultural techniques of the time were very different than today and it has been estimated that a settler might have needed about 60-90 acres of land to support a family even though only 10-30 acres might be in use at a given time. The land needed crop rotation and resting in order to remain fertile.

Thus, as new settlers arrived, they were pushed further and further away from already settled areas in order to find enough land. Generational transfers contributed to this outward push as well. It was not really possible for the land to support multiple heirs so it might have gone to the eldest and the other heirs would move to find new land to settle.

Establishment of Willington

This outward expansion contributed to land speculation and Willington was no different. In 1720, land in this area was “granted” to a group of proprietors who owned the land in common and had no intention to settle the area. While the original intention may have been to name this area “Wellington”, records seem to have mixed the names before finally settling on Willington.

Some early settlements occurred (the first house may have been built around 1717), it was not until 1727 that the first divisions of land occurred with ownership being transferred to people who had settled the area, purchased land from the proprietors, and/or made substantial contributions to the evolution of the community.

The municipality of Willington was authorized and recognized by the General Assembly in 1727. Records suggest there were 592 inhabitants at that time.

The lowlands along the Fenton and Willimantic Rivers were the most fertile lands and the most prized. However, settlers also received lands on the hillsides and other areas less arable.

Settlement Patterns

Population grew to about 650 people around 1750 and around 1,200 people by 1790. Applying the information about typical farm size and household size to Willington's land area suggests that the reason the population remained at about 1,200 residents for so many years was that this represented the "holding capacity" of the land based on the agricultural practices of the time.

Communities settled earlier than Willington often had a central village area to provide for security and community. However, Willington was developed later and was extensively settled in a 10-year window based on the efforts and marketing finesse of the proprietors. As a result, Willington Hill became the site of the "meetinghouse" (but little else) because it was a central place for people to meet rather than an inhabited settlement.

Economic Evolution

Over time, some of the settlers diversified from subsistence agriculture to small mills (saw mill, grain mill, etc.) to provide services to the community and trade evolved through local initiatives and itinerant vendors.

Around the mid-1800s, Willington began to experience the "industrial revolution" taking place around the world. Local streams and rivers supported the development water- powered mills and there were soon major enterprises making spools of thread, buttons, glass bottles, and other goods. These were marketed around the region and around the world. Train service came to Willington to support these businesses and allow for the import of materials and labor and the export of finished goods. Even so, population did not grow much in Willington.

Spread Of The Automobile

However, following World War II, the desire for a less urban lifestyle and the improvement of the automobile and the road system resulted in new round of growth in Willington. Construction of the interstate highway system in the 1950s and 1960s encouraged the suburban development of residential areas and Willington was no different. Former farms were subdivided and developed and population quadrupled between 1950 and 1990.

By 1990, Willington had grown to be a community of almost 6,000 people and the overall pattern of the community became established.

Willington's Population

1790	1,212	
1800	1,278	
1810	1,161	
1820	1,246	
1830	1,305	
1840	1,268	
1850	1,388	
1860	1,166	
1870	942	
1880	1,086	
1890	906	
1900	885	
1910	1,112	
1920	1,200	
1930	1,213	
1940	1,233	
1950	1,462	
1960	2,005	
1970	3,755	
1980	4,694	
1990	5,979	
2000	5,959	
2010	6,041	
2020	5,895	6,544
2030	5,637	6,984
2040	5,290	7,424

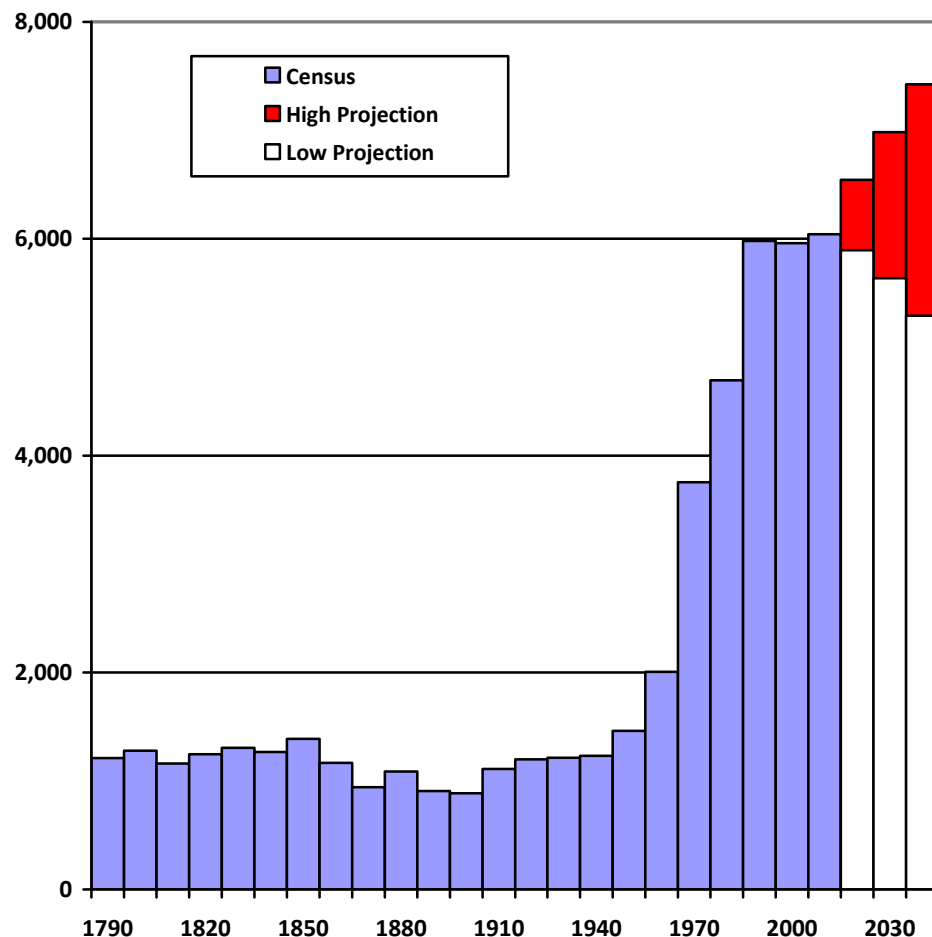
US Census data for 1790 to 2010. Projections are in italics. Low projections are based on Planimetrics cohort survival model. High projections based on Connecticut State Data Center cohort survival model extrapolated to 2040.

People Of Willington

According to the Census, Willington had a year 2010 population of 6,041 persons. This represents an increase of 82 people from the 5,959 persons reported in the 2000 Census.

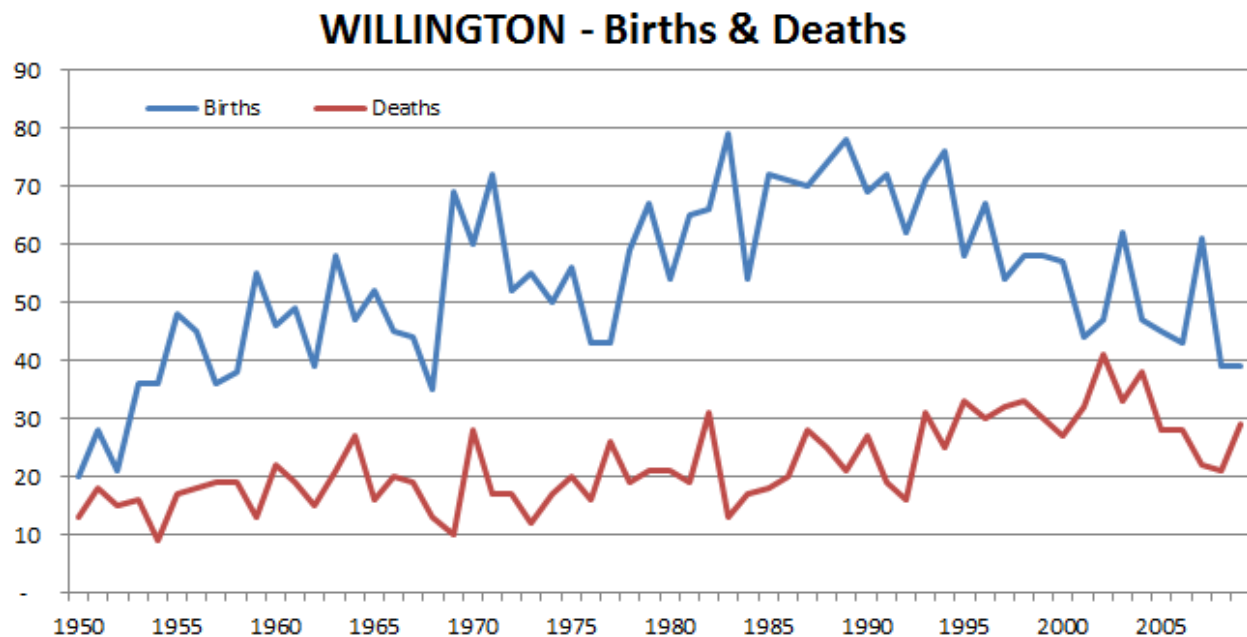
The chart shows Willington population growth since the 1790 Census with a range of population projections to the year 2040. The higher population projections prepared by the Connecticut State Data Center are not considered reliable by Planimetrics since they assume statewide trends of retention/birth as opposed to the unique situation in Willington (described on the following pages). The lower projections prepared by Planimetrics separate the native population from the transient population and reflect the recent patterns in Willington for each of these.

Willington's Population (1790 – 2040)



Dynamics of Population Change

As can be seen from the following chart, the number of births and deaths in Willington has fluctuated over time. Overall, it appears that the number of births peaked in the mid- to late-1980s. In recent years, the number of births has been lower than previously due to demographic changes (an aging population) and economic concerns.



Even though Willington has experienced “natural increase” (more births than deaths) in every decade since 1950, the main driver of population growth has generally been because more people were moving into Willington than were moving out (net migration). However, Willington experienced net out-migration during the 1990s and the 2000s.

Components of Population Change

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
If the Census indicates the population changed this much in this decade ...	+543	+1,750	+939	+1,285	(20)	+82
And this much “natural change” occurred as a result of births and deaths ...	+206	+302	+364	+470	+369	+185
Births	363	484	557	683	645	484
Deaths	157	182	193	213	276	299
Then this many people moved in (or out) of Willington during that decade	+337	+1,448	+575	+815	(389)	(103)

US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports,

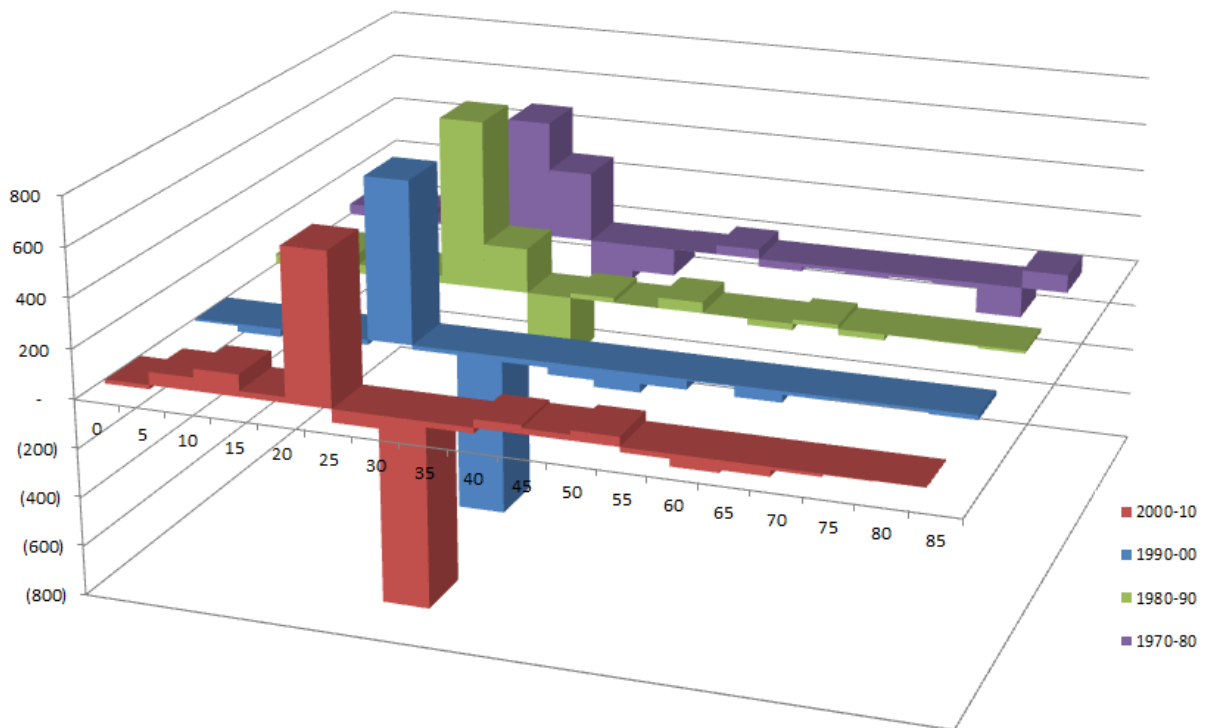
Migration Patterns

By comparing the number of people in one age group in the Census to the number of people 10 years younger in the prior Census (10 years earlier), the dynamics of migration in Willington can be evaluated.

From this analysis, it is interesting to learn that there are really two components to Willington's population – the “native” population and the “transient” population of students at the University of Connecticut. Since 1970, there has been significant in-migration of young adults aged 20-24 (and aged 25-29 to some extent) followed by net out-migration of young adults aged 30-34.

Net migration in other age groups is essentially flat (the number of people in that age group moving in is similar to the number of people moving out).

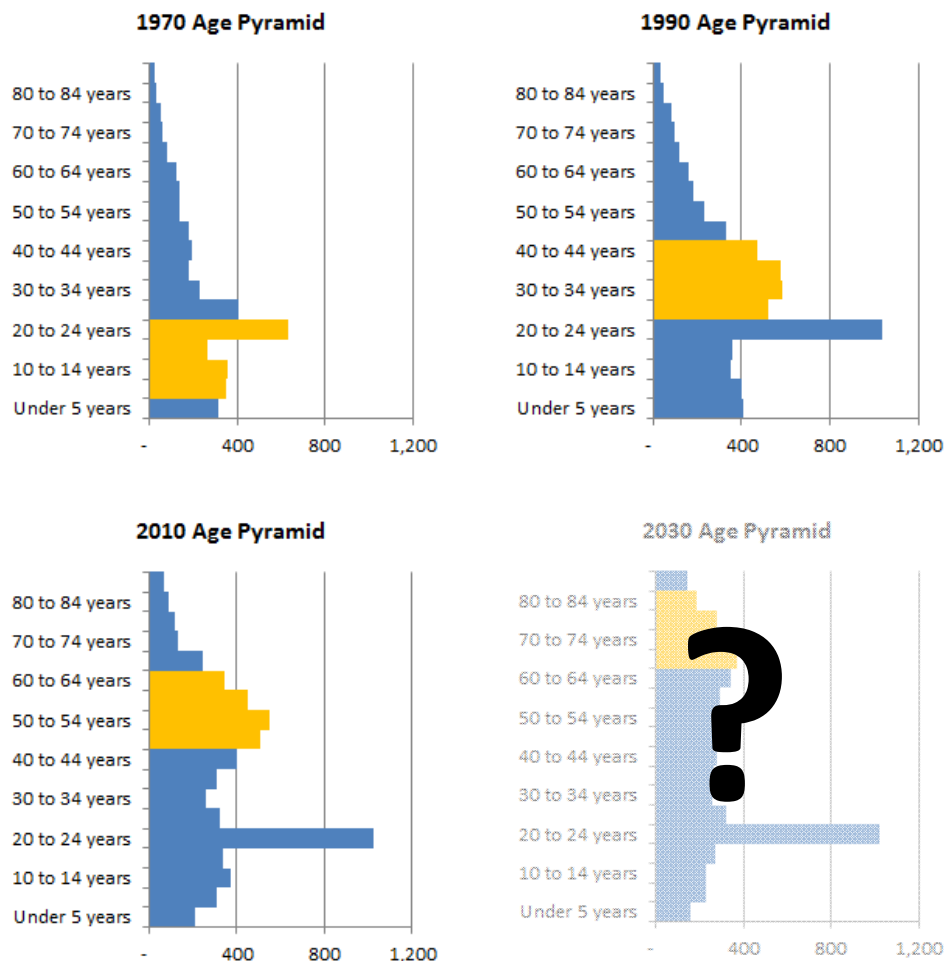
WILLINGTON - Migration Amount By Age Group



Interesting Fact ...

Since 1970 or so, Willington's changing population has essentially been driven by students at the University of Connecticut.

The impact of the University of Connecticut can be seen in the following age composition charts. The number of people in each 5-year age group is represented by the width of the bar in the chart. Note the large number of people in the 20-24 age group clearly un-related to the native population in Willington. People considered part of the “baby boom” (people born between about 1945 and 1965) are shown in orange.



In this scenario, making population projections is tenuous due to the unknown impact of changes at UConn.

However, in terms of the native population in Willington, the population appears to be aging and households tend to get smaller as they age. With “baby boomers” now entering the older age cohorts, the number of older residents may be a significant factor in Willington in the future if past trends continue. This changing age composition may result in a changing demand for municipal services and housing types. Of course, it must be remembered that these are projections and variations can occur, especially further into the future.

Comparing Projections

The following table compares the projections from the Connecticut State Data Center (CSDC) for 2020 with those prepared by Planimetrics.

Overall, the CSDC projections seem to:

- Predict a new “baby boom” in Willington
- Project that all UConn students will remain in Willington and start families
- Foresee a health crisis affecting 30-40 year olds.

Age	CSDC	POCD	
0	445	178	+267
5	313	255	58
10	248	274	(26)
15	387	333	54
20	565	946	(381)
25	640	288	+352
30	964	261	+703
35	33	298	(265)
40	113	282	(169)
45	339	318	21
50	421	417	4
55	511	468	43
60	512	457	55
65	379	359	20
70	276	272	4
75	192	190	2
80	95	90	5
85	110	99	11

For these reasons, Planimetrics suggests that the Planimetrics projections be given more weight as part of the POCD.

Housing Units

1960	570
1970	1,184
1980	1,740
1990	2,301
2000	2,429
2010	2,637

US Census. Data for 1980 to 2010 reflects number of units. Due to data availability, data for 1960 and 1970 reflects number of households (occupied housing units).

Housing Tenure

	Willing- ton	State
Owner	68%	67%
Renter	32%	33%

CERC, 2016.

Percent Non Single Family

State	41%
Mansfield	39%
Ellington	35%
Willington	34%
Stafford	29%
Ashford	18%
Tolland	7%
Union	4%

CERC, 2016.

Median Sales Price (2013)

State	\$274,500
Tolland	\$277,700
Union	\$267,800
Ellington	\$260,250
Mansfield	\$242,900
Willington	\$238,200
Ashford	\$233,000
Stafford	\$198,500

CERC, 2016

Affordable Housing

State	11.6%
Mansfield	10.8%
Stafford	9.2%
Willington	7.9%
Ellington	5.7%
Ashford	4.2%
Tolland	3.5%
Union	2.6%

CT Department of Housing (2015)

Housing In Willington

Willington had about 2,637 housing units in 2010. From 1990 to 2010, Willington added an average of about 17 housing units per year. This is well below the growth rate in the 1970s and 1980s when Willington was adding about 60 housing units per year.

While the housing stock in Willington consists primarily of single-family detached homes, about one-third of the housing units are other types of housing (two-family, townhouse, apartment, etc.). About two-thirds of the housing units in Willington (68%) are owner-occupied.

It is interesting to note that about 60 percent of all Willington households consist of one or two people. Often, the general impression is that housing units are occupied by more people. However, the aging of the population and other societal changes have resulted in smaller households.

About 208 housing units in Willington are considered "affordable housing" (assisted housing, financed by CHFA mortgages, etc.). In 2015, according to the Connecticut Department of Housing, Willington had:

- 160 governmentally assisted units, and
- 48 households receiving financial/mortgage assistance.

2010 Household Size

1-2 people	60%
3-4 people	33%
5 or more people	6%

2010 US Census

Average Household Size

1960	3.48
1970	3.10
1980	2.77
1990	2.71
2000	2.52
2010	2.48

US Census

Interesting Fact ...

Housing growth in Willington has slowed considerably from earlier decades and housing units tend to be occupied by fewer people these days.

Single-Family House



Multi-Family Building



Economic Conditions in Willington

A local economy is important in terms of:

- providing for jobs for residents,
- ensuring a range of goods and services is available for residents, and
- providing tax revenue to support local services.

About 3,623 Willington residents were in the labor force (working or seeking work) in 2014 and there were about 1,524 jobs in Willington at that time. As a result, it can be seen that Willington is more of a residential community supplying labor to the region than it is an employment center.

With easy access to major travel routes (Interstate 84, Route 32, Route 195), Willington residents can easily connect to employment places in other communities. Journey-to-work data from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) indicates the following:

Top Job Destinations of Workers From Willington	
Mansfield	341
Willington	272
Hartford	223
Manchester	205
Vernon	121
Tolland	112
Stafford	100

CERC, 2016

Top Residence Locations of Workers In Willington	
Willington	272
Stafford	132
Ashford	87
Tolland	86
Vernon	83
Windham	66
Mansfield	64

Median household income is one way to gauge the size or strength of the local economy. According to data from CERC, Willington has a median household income comparable to nearby communities.

Interesting Facts ...

Willington has added a significant number of jobs over the years.

The business component of the tax base in Willington is about 11.4 percent and is higher than any of the surrounding communities.

Jobs In Willington

1960	130
1970	350
1980	350
1990	670
2000	770
2010	1,397

CT Labor Dept.

Jobs In The Community

Mansfield	11,460
Tolland	3,763
Stafford	3,504
Ellington	3,486
Willington	1,524
Ashford	570
Union	120
State	n/a

CERC, 2016

Median HH Income

Tolland	\$107,290
Union	\$84,405
Ellington	\$84,339
Ashford	\$77,250
Willington	\$73,384
State	\$69,899
Mansfield	\$66,404
Stafford	\$62,859

CERC, 2016

Percent Business Tax Base

Willington	11.4%
Mansfield	11.3%
Stafford	7.9%
Ellington	7.2%
Tolland	6.4%
Ashford	4.3%
Union	2.9%
State	n/a

CERC, 2016.

Land Use In Willington

According to digital mapping of the community, Willington contains approximately 21,500 acres of land.

The table below reports **preliminary information** on the use of land in Willington. This information will continue to be refined during the planning process since:

- it **understates the amount of vacant land** since it treats even very large parcels with a house on it as being entirely devoted to residential use when some of the land could be subdivided or developed in the future,
- it **overstates the amount of developed property** in residential or other uses (a 20 acre property in a residential zone could be considered 2-acres of residential use and 18 acres of vacant land)

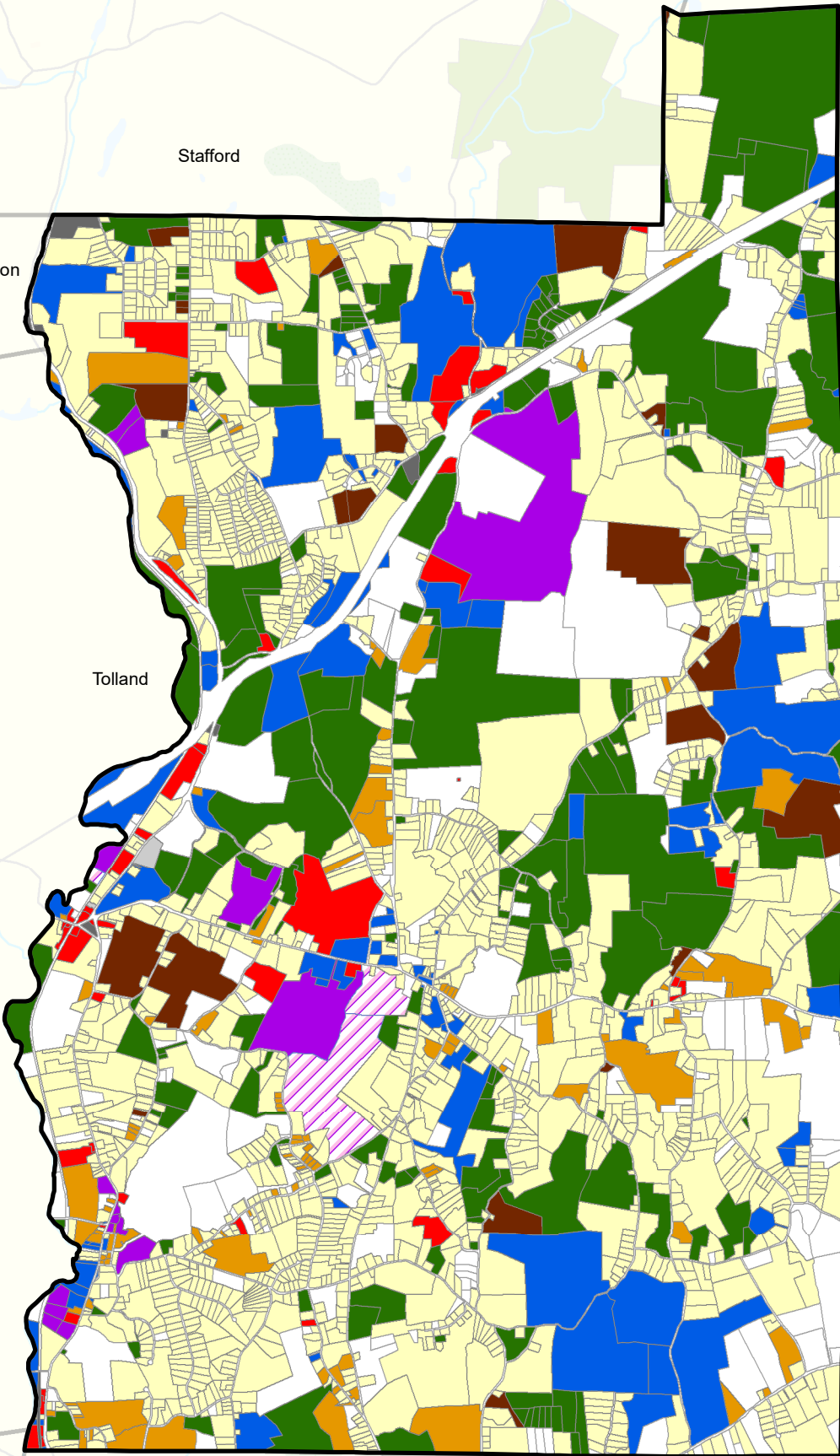
			Percent of Developed / Commit- ted	Percent of Total Area
Residential Uses		9,199	50%	43%
Single-Family Residential	8,355			
Multi-Family Residential	844			
Business Uses		1,301	7%	6%
Business	445			
Industrial	641			
Earth Extraction	215			
Open Space		4,253	23%	20%
Community Facility / Institutional		2,126	11%	10%
Other		1,635	9%	8%
Tillable Land	664			
Utility	42			
Transportation / Parking / Roads	929			
Developed / Committed		18,514	100%	86%
Vacant	2,978			14%
Total		21,492		100%

Planimetrics and New England GeoSystems based on Assessor database. Totals may not add due to rounding

Land Use

Information Being Tabulated and Processed
Willington, CT

DRAFT



Legend

- Vacant
- Single Family
- Multi-Family
- Business
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Open Space
- Utility
- Transportation
- Tillable Land
- Earth Extraction

Zoning In Willington

According to digital mapping of the community, about 91 percent of the land area in Willington is zoned for residential development. Another eight percent of the land area will permit two-family and multi-family residential development.

Approximately seven percent of the community is zoned for business development and about 10 percent is zoned for industrial development.

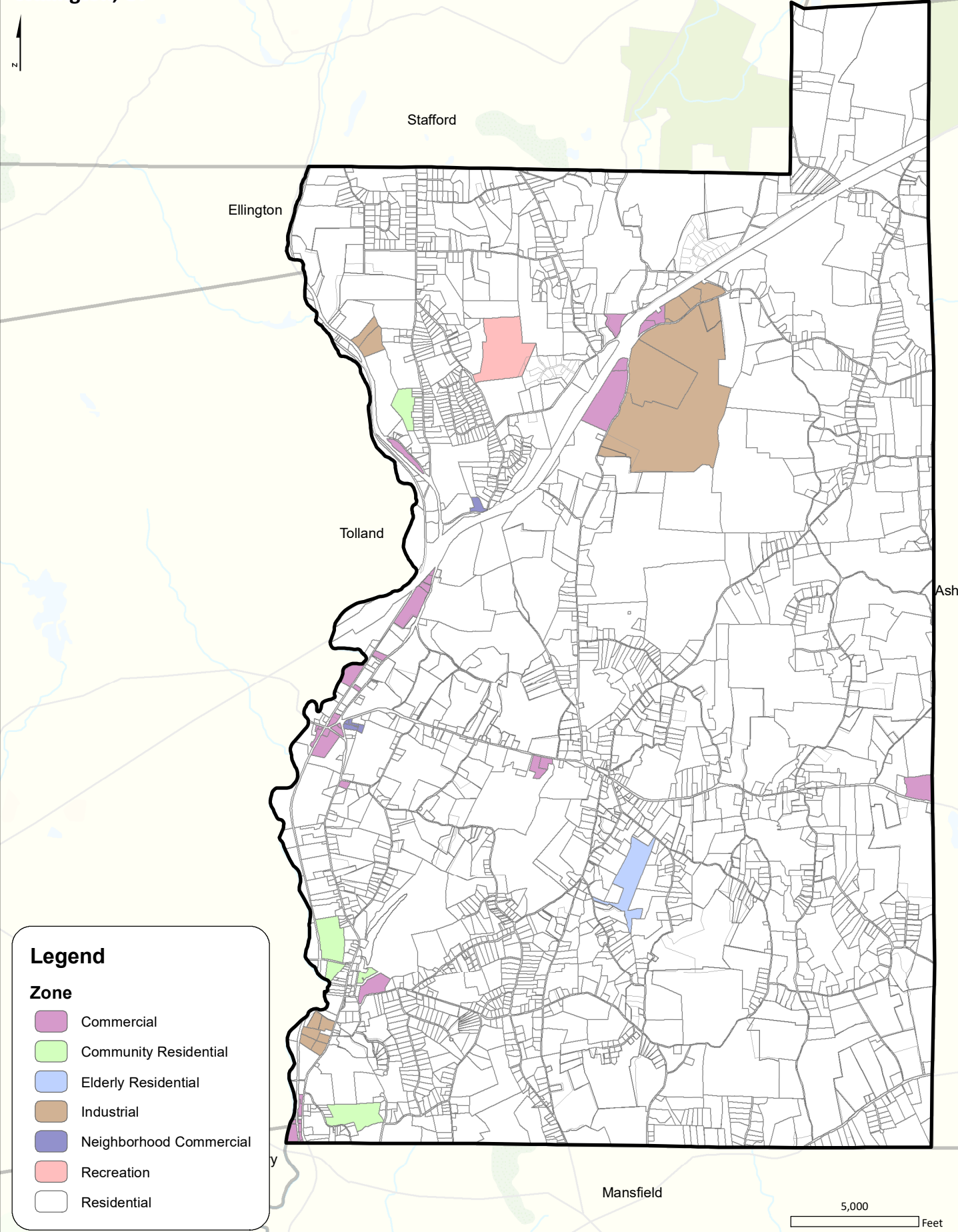
		Percent of Total Land Area
Residential Zones	19,634	91%
R-80 - (80,000 SF minimum lot size)	19,463	
DCR - Designated Community Residential	112	
DER - Designated Elderly Residential	59	
Business / Industrial / Recreational Zones	941	4%
DI - Designated industrial	619	
DC - Designated Commercial	218	
DNC - Designated Neighborhood Commercial	11	
DR - Designated Recreation	93	
Other	920	4%
Road Right-Of-Way	920	
Total	21,492	100%

Planimetrics and New England GeoSystems based on Assessor database. Totals may not add due to rounding

Zoning

Willington, CT

DRAFT



Legend

Zone

- Commercial
- Community Residential
- Elderly Residential
- Industrial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Recreation
- Residential

Buildout Analyses

A build-out analysis estimates what might be physically possible given physical and regulatory constraints.

However, it does evaluate whether such potential is economically feasible or whether the market will support such development potential. This is especially true when it comes to commercial or industrial development.

The 2006 POCD also noted:

- The projections should be used as a point of reference and not as an expected scenario.
- The likelihood of the full build-out scenario occurring within the foreseeable future was slim.
- The build-out assumptions may be reasonable when applied on a broad scale, but tend to be less reliable when applied to an individual tract of land or building site.

Buildout Potential

A build-out analysis conducted as part of the 2006 POCD provides some information for consideration. The build-out analysis considered:

- the total amount of vacant land;
- the physical constraints of the land; and
- the zoning restrictions imposed on that land.

The 2006 residential build-out analysis revealed the following:

- There was about 11,900 acres of vacant residential land in town.
- After deducting physical constraints (wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, floodplain), there was about 6,500 acres which was potentially developable for housing.
- This land area might be capable of accommodating 3,049 additional dwelling units under current zoning and, if the average occupancy was of 2.45 persons per household, this might result in about 7,470 additional residents.
- When the potential build-out was added to existing development, it was estimated that Willington had the potential to be a community of about 5,500 housing units and about 13,500 people.

The commercial/industrial build-out analysis revealed the following:

- There was about 632 acres of vacant commercial or industrial zoned land in town.
- After deducting physical constraints (wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, floodplain), there was about 290 acres which was potentially developable for commercial or industrial uses.
- Applying a floor-area-ratio factor of 35% (SF of building per SF of site area) resulted in the conclusion that this land area might be able to accommodate approximately 4.4 million square feet of additional commercial and industrial development.

The purpose of the build-out analysis was to estimate the potential development under existing zoning in order to compare it to existing levels of development and to anticipate future impacts.

The 2006 POCD suggested that a ratio existed at that time of about 580 SF of commercial/industrial floor space per dwelling unit and that this ratio was desirable moving forward. If the buildout estimates came to fruition, the POCD observed that the ratio would be about 1,068 SF of commercial/industrial floor space per dwelling unit. Based on this analysis, the 2006 POCD concluded there was no need for the town to proactively rezone land from residential uses to commercial/ industrial solely to provide a more stable or diversified tax base.

Fiscal Overview

Key fiscal indicators which reflect the circumstances affecting Willington and surrounding communities are presented below.

Willington has the lowest equalized mill rate (taxes as a percent of market value) among nearby communities. On a per capita basis, Willington has the second lowest tax levy among surrounding communities. Compared to surrounding communities, Willington has a fairly strong tax base on a per capita basis.

$$\boxed{\text{Per Capita Equalized Net Grand List}} \times \boxed{\text{Equalized Mill Rate}} = \boxed{\text{Per Capita Tax Levy}}$$

	Per Capita Equalized Net Grand List (2014)	Equalized Mill Rate	Per Capita Tax Levy (2014)
Union	\$148,823	19.02	\$2,831
Tolland	\$119,688	22.01	\$2,634
Ellington	\$113,306	20.29	\$2,299
Ashford	\$94,748	23.30	\$2,208
Stafford	\$88,074	24.14	\$2,126
WILLINGTON	\$106,053	18.67	\$1,980
Mansfield	\$52,722	20.52	\$1,082

CERC, 2016

About 80 percent of Willington's budget goes to education. This is higher than most nearby communities. Debt per capita is lower than most nearby communities.

	Education Share of Budget (2014)	Per Capita Debt (2014)
Ashford	81.3%	\$947
WILLINGTON	79.6%	\$743
Tolland	72.7%	\$3,070
Mansfield	72.2%	\$278
Stafford	71.5%	\$1,891
Ellington	71.0%	\$839
Union	62.8%	\$3,469

CERC, 2016

Equalized Net Grand List

Equalized net grand lists are the estimated full market value of all taxable property in a municipality and are developed by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management from sales / assessment ratio information.

Actual sales are compared to assessed values. For example, a home that sells for \$140,000 and has a sales assessed value of \$70,000 has a sales/assessment ratio of 50%.

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