

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES WORKBOOK

5

Overview

This booklet has been prepared for the Willington Planning and Zoning Commission to use as part of the formulation of the 2018 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). This booklet takes the strategies from the current POCD, the Natural Resource Inventory, and other local studies and regulations and reorganizes them to create a briefing book for the “Development Strategies” meeting scheduled for February 7 at the Town Office Building.

*“Development is
about trans-
forming the
lives of people.”*

Joseph Stiglitz,
American Economist

Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission should review this booklet before the February 7 meeting so that they can be prepared to receive input from other boards and committees at that meeting.

Feel free to add, delete or edit any of the goals strategies, policies or tasks.

Reinforce Community Structure



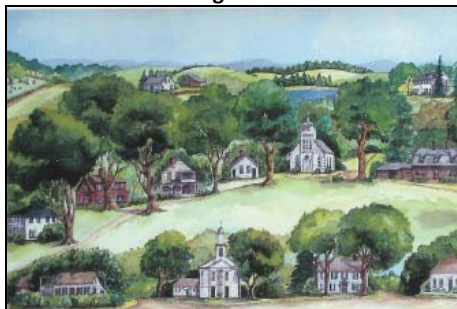
Guide Business / Economic Development



Guide Residential Development



Manage Growth



Development Limitations

In Willington, development on individual sites is supported by on-site wells for water supply and on-site septic systems for sewage effluent. Soil types and land characteristics greatly influence development intensity, lot sizes and development patterns. Sites must be developed in a manner where effluent from the septic system will not contaminate the drinking water supply, of both the on-site well and wells on adjacent sites.

The map on the facing page shows the hydrologic class of different soils in Willington. Hydrologic class is a measure of soil drainage / permeability and has applicability for septic function and/or “low impact development” measures.

As shown on the map (and as discussed in the 2008 POCD), soil considerations can include:

Very Well Draining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessively Drained Soils – Soil drains very rapidly but there is a risk that sewage effluent may not be sufficiently treated by filtration and bacterial action before reaching the water table.
Well-Draining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Till Soils - Soil types generally adequate for satisfactory septic function
Somewhat Restricted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hardpan Soils - Soils with a layer of compact, impervious soil near the surface that reduces water filtration and that can prevent septic systems from operating effectively.
Restricted or Very Restricted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shallow Soils - Soils where bedrock is at or close to the surface and there may not be sufficient soil depth to adequately treat septic waste.• Rocky Soils - Rocky soils where there may not be sufficient soil to adequately treat septic waste.• Steeply Sloping Soils - Steep slopes do not easily allow uniform downward distribution of sewage effluent and may contribute to septic system failure.• Poorly Drained Soils (wetlands) – Soils that do not drain well do not support septic systems.
No Soil Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Areas of soil disturbance or soils with unique characteristics that require more detailed analysis
Some Additional Drainage Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Groundwater - These areas retain water and create many problems for septic systems; in some cases making septic systems ineffective.

Hydrologic Soil Conditions

Wilmington, CT



Union

Stafford

Ellington

Tolland

Ashford

Legend

-  Very Well Draining
-  Well Draining
-  Somewhat Restricted
-  Restricted or Very Restricted
-  No Soil Data
-  Some Additional Drainage Limitations

Coventry

Mansfield

5,000

☐ Feet



REINFORCE COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

Sense of Place

According to Wikipedia, the term “sense of place” refers to the character of a geographic place that makes it special or unique and fosters a sense of human attachment and belonging.

Places said to have a “sense of place” have a strong identity and character that is felt by local inhabitants and by visitors.

Places that lack a “sense of place” tend to have no special relationship to the places in which they are located - they could be anywhere. According to a famous quote from Gertrude Stein, “there is no there there.”

OVERVIEW

Community structure addresses the overall physical organization of Willington. Structure is an important consideration in the Plan since it addresses how people, both residents and visitors, perceive and understand the community. This is often referred to as a “sense of place” (see sidebar).

Willington may wish to create a community with a “sense of place” by creating places with a “sense of place.” Places with a positive “sense of place” have more character and more spirit and can have higher property values.

Structure is also an important guide for land use regulations and decisions. Regulations can be designed and implemented to reinforce the community structure and enhance community character.

Establishing and maintaining a meaningful community structure can be an important legacy of the planning process.

POSSIBLE GOAL

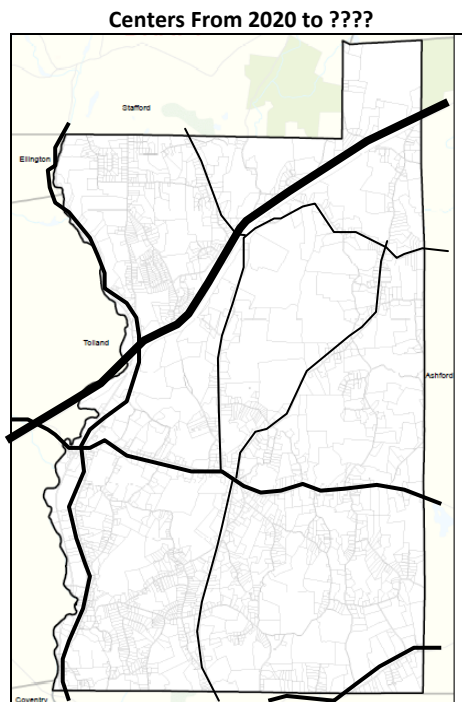
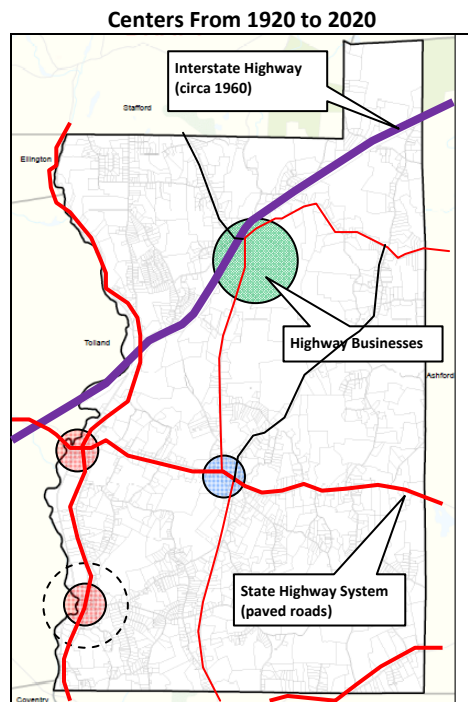
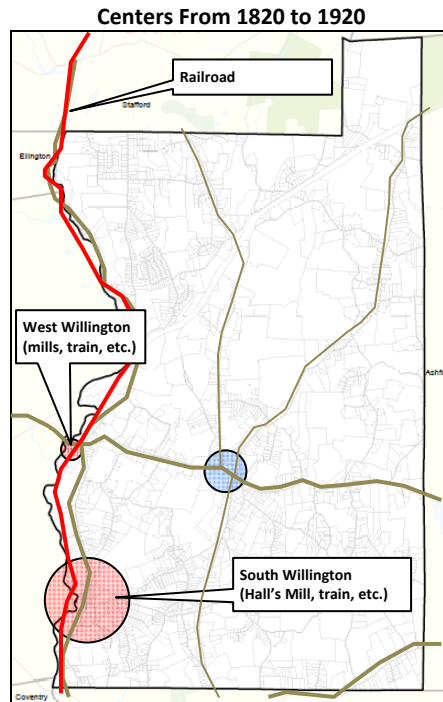
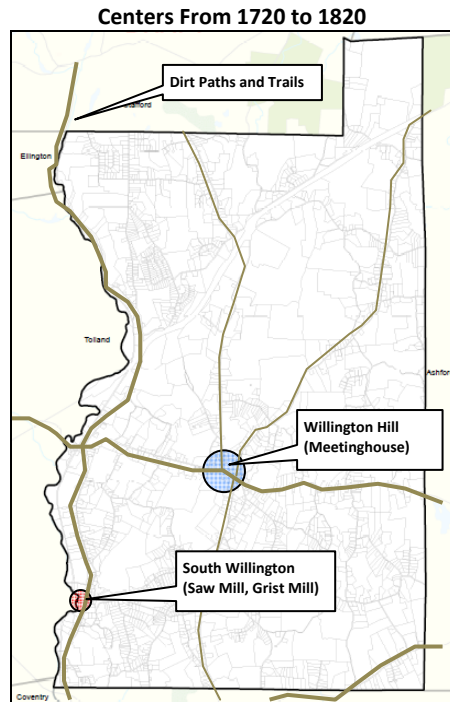
Guide future development in ways that will reinforce and strengthen Willington’s overall community structure and help create places with a “sense of place.”

KEY ISSUES?

1. Where would you go if I said “I will meet you in Willington Center”?
2. Should Willington do more to create a sense of community structure?

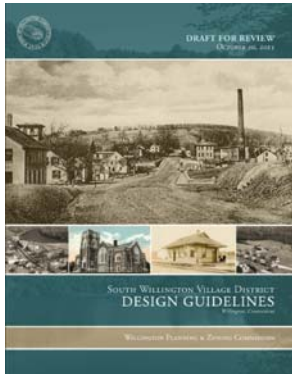
Reinforce Community Structure

POSSIBLE MAPS



South Willington

Many of the recommendations for South Willington come from the Vibrant Communities Initiative ("VCI") study of South Willington prepared by a team led by The Cecil Group from Boston, Massachusetts.



POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

Strategy	Seek to reinforce and strengthen the historic village of South Willington as a community focal point
CS1	

Policies:

A. SOUTH WILLINGTON - Willington will:

- Promote the South Willington village area as the **main village node** in Willington.
- Establish a new zoning district that:
 - recognizes the prevailing lot sizes and setbacks,
 - encourages or requires parking to the side or behind buildings and limits the amount of parking allowed in front of buildings,
 - requires that buildings be situated closer to the road,
 - encourages mixed-use development (e.g. ground floor retail with second story professional offices or residential) to diversify and strengthen the economic and social vitality of the village area,
 - removes impediments to village-type development (such as parking requirements that may be preventing re-use / redevelopment), and
 - establishes protections to maintain the intrinsic village character.
- Use a "village district" zoning approach in order for the Planning and Zoning Commission to be able to have considerable review authority over building and site design (such as building design and features that provide visual interest and create a more traditional or village pattern of development).
- Undertake special studies, as needed, to:
 - prepare concept plans to better understand housing opportunities.
 - configure the streetscape for a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use village more than a state highway.
 - investigate the feasibility of one or more shared (community) septic system(s) in South Willington.
 - consider ways to expand the public water distribution system.
 - improve broadband access and capacity.
- As studies are complete, seek grant funding:
 - to defray the cost of improvements (such as sidewalk replacement, slowing vehicular traffic, and providing safe pedestrian crossings).
 - for historic preservation in order to preserve and enhance the character of the village.
- If Hall Memorial School is ever re-purposed, encourage and promote adaptive reuse of the building into a viable economic enterprise, utilizing available federal and state tax credits, to help provide a solid anchor to the south end of the village.
- Support inclusion of South Willington on the National Register of Historic Places.

Reinforce Community Structure

Strategy

CS2

Seek to reinforce and strengthen the historic patterns of other nodes and villages.

Policies:

A. **WILLINGTON CENTER** - Willington will:

1. Maintain and enhance the historic Willington Center area as a civic hub and focal point in the community.

B. **WEST WILLINGTON** - Willington will:

1. Strive to manage development in West Willington to create a village-type development pattern.
2. Consider undertaking the preparation of a concept plan in order to better understand development opportunities in the West Willington “village area”.
3. Consider encouraging mixed-use development (e.g. ground floor retail with second story professional offices or residential) to diversify and strengthen the economic and social vitality of the West Willington village area.
4. Consider new zoning standards that:
 - encourage or require parking to the side or behind buildings and limit the amount of parking allowed in front of buildings, and
 - encourage or require that buildings be situated closer to the road.

Strategy

CS3

Discourage “strip” commercial development and “sprawl” residential development.

Policies:

A. **STRIP DEVELOPMENT** - Willington will:

1. Discourage commercial development outside of the village areas, especially as “strip development” along roadways, because it can result in traffic hazards (congestion, conflicting traffic movements, pedestrian conflicts) and is visually unattractive (signs, visible parking between street and buildings).
2. Encourage business and industrial development in consolidated areas adequately served by the roadway system and utilities (on-site or other).
3. Discourage strip commercial development outside of the village areas.

B. **SPRAWL DEVELOPMENT** - Willington will:

1. Strive to discourage residential development in a distinctly suburban pattern that does not reflect the unique characteristics of the property or the community.



GUIDE BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Use of Terms

The term “business development” refers to commercial and industrial uses that generally make and or sell things or provide a service.

The term “economic development” refers to any use that produces more in tax revenue than it requires in municipal service costs. This can include residential uses that do not generally result in school enrolment. It might also refer to tax-exempt uses that produce economic activity.

OVERVIEW

Business and economic development are highly valued by communities because they provide goods and services, employment opportunities, and/or net tax revenues (revenues exceed costs).

Overall, commercial and industrial development Willington is fairly limited and is focused in the following locations:

- Exit 71 of I-84 – the truck stop and the FedEx distribution center,
- West Willington (Route 74),
- South Willington (Route 32), and
- isolated development / zoned sites elsewhere.

According to the “Market Study for Willington Business Zones” prepared by Fairweather Consulting (2016), Willington’s economic situation is affected by:

- The 3 interchanges on Interstate 84
- Proximity to the University of Connecticut
- The lack of public water and sewer service in business areas
- Modest number of residents and slower projected population growth

POSSIBLE GOAL

Promote appropriate business and economic development in well-located zoning districts, compatible with the community’s character and vision for the future.

KEY ISSUES?

1. Expand / enlarge business zones?
2. Eliminate / reduce the number of Special Permits?
3. Don’t follow property lines with zone lines?

Business / Economic Development

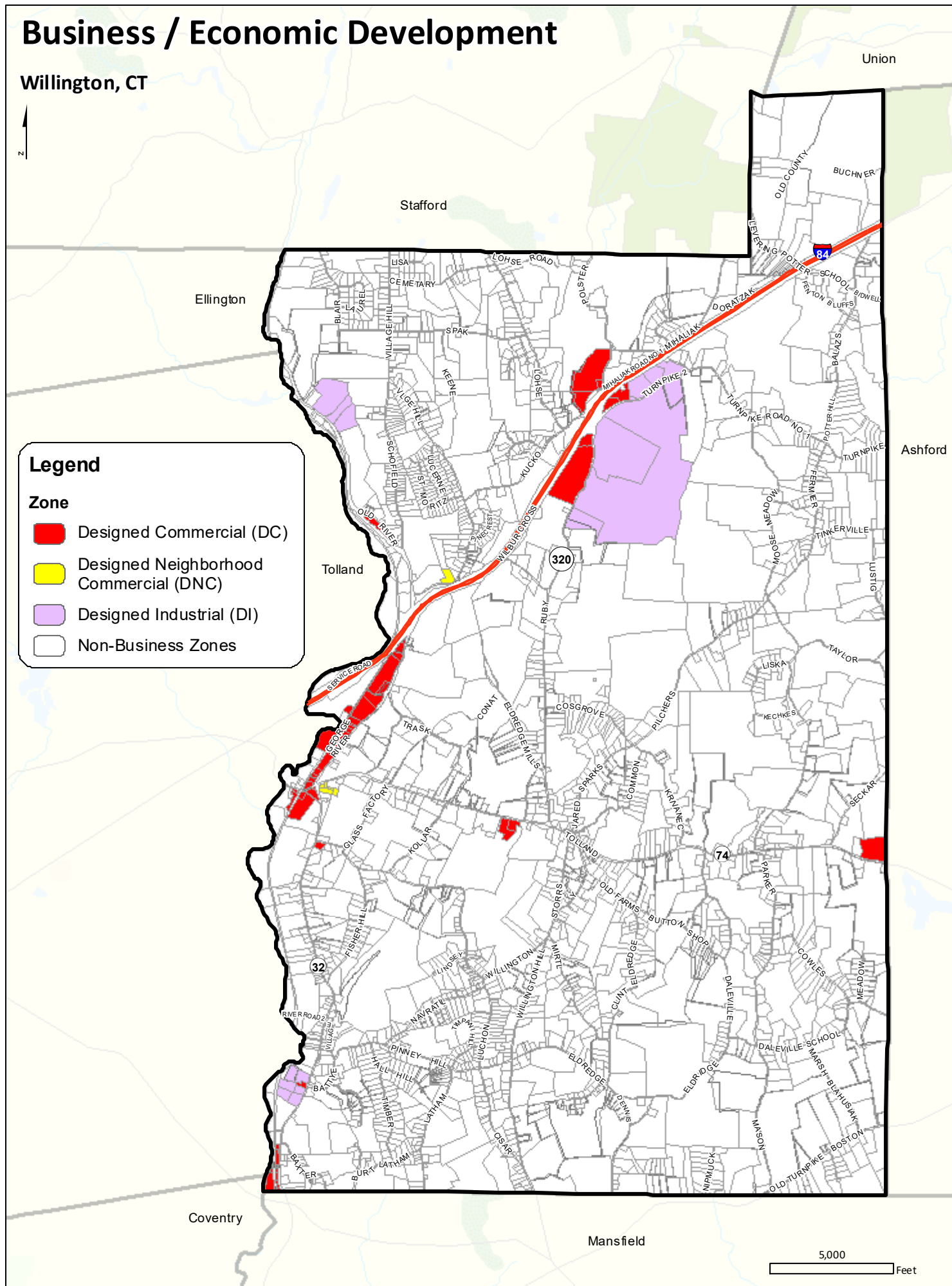
Willington, CT



Legend

Zone

-  Designed Commercial (DC)
-  Designed Neighborhood Commercial (DNC)
-  Designed Industrial (DI)
-  Non-Business Zones



Market Analysis

Some of the recommendations for business and economic development come from the “Market Study for Willington’s Business Zones) prepared by Fairweather Consulting of New Paltz, New York.

*A Market Study
for
Willington, CT’s
Business Zones*



March 7, 2016

Market Study for
Willington’s Business Zones

Fairweather
CONSULTING

Retail Focus

In terms of retail development, Willington may not have a “defensible” location where it has a superior location, superior vendor, and/or enough base population that will not be disrupted by others. For example, the opening of the Big Y Market in Tolland attracted food shoppers that probably shopped in Willington up to that point.

As a result, Willington may be a stronger and more defensible location for smaller niche businesses and services that serve primarily Willington residents.

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

Strategy

ED1

Support existing businesses in Willington.

Policies:

A. EXISTING BUSINESSES - Willington will:

1. Support the efforts of local businesses to thrive and grow in Willington.
2. Maintain an inviting business climate in Willington.
3. Encourage residents to support local businesses in Willington.
4. Support the continuation of agriculture as an economic activity in Willington.
5. Support home-based businesses to...expand economic opportunities without compromising neighborhood character.

Strategy

ED2

Attract new business and economic development in Willington.

Policies:

A. BUSINESS GROWTH - Willington will:

1. Work with local, regional, and state organizations to promote economic development generally and in Willington specifically.
2. Strive to be ready, willing and able to help companies or organizations looking to bring business or economic development to Willington.
 - ☐ a. Provide information on available sites.
 - ☐ b. Provide information on economic incentives.
 - ☐ c. Provide information on and assistance with the land use permit and approval process.
3. Focus on target industries (distributions/logistics, business & professional services, advanced light manufacturing, education & knowledge creation, specialty retail).

Strategy ED3	Modify local regulations in order to guide business and economic development in ways that ensure that such development is compatible with the Town's rural character and overall vision.
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Policies:	
A. ZONING DISTRICTS - Willington will:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the business zones (Designed Commercial, Designed Neighborhood Commercial). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a. Revisit the location and extent of <u>business</u> districts to ensure they are appropriate in size and configuration for the area. <input type="checkbox"/> b. Evaluate the West Willington area as a possible location for smaller footprint uses (<u>node or strip? – see Fairweather map</u>).
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the industrial zones (Designed Industrial). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a. Revisit the location and extent of the <u>industrial</u> district to ensure it is appropriate in size and configuration for the area. <input type="checkbox"/> b. Evaluate the Exit 71 area for possible expansion of the industrial (or business) zone as a location for larger footprint uses.
B. ZONING TEXT - Willington will:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider simplifying the list of permitted uses since the detail in the current table may actually result in confusion and the prohibition of uses not clearly permitted. 2. Revisit the Special Permit requirements in the various zoning districts to ensure that such controls are needed or if the permitting process can be simplified in certain areas or for certain uses in order to provide additional “certainty” in the regulations for potential applicants. 3. Prepare architectural / site design guidelines which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are adequate to promote appropriate development. • Inform applicants of what is expected from a design perspective. 4. Consider allowing mixed uses in business zones to accommodate smaller footprint uses (e.g., specialty retail) with housing.

Neighborhood Master Plans

The 2008 POCD suggested the preparation of “neighborhood master plans” for business areas in order to get neighborhood residents and other interested stakeholders to agree on a development program up front that would “enhance the development, minimize development impacts and help the development fit in with the neighborhood.”

Does the PZC wish to encourage neighborhood master plans in this POCD?

Zone Boundaries / Areas

Some of the business zones occupy an entire property and may be larger than can be supported (or is appropriate) in that location.

Does the PZC wish to discuss the extent of business zones?

Perhaps the PZC would like to revisit the language in the Zoning Regulations stating that the “most restrictive” provisions apply on split zone lots. While this language was common in years past when we did not have good aerial photography or mapping, it may no longer be needed.



GUIDE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

While the pace of housing development has slowed in Willington, it is not yet clear whether this is due to demographic factors, changing housing preferences, economic conditions, or other reason(s).

Nevertheless, most land in Willington is zoned for residential development and so residential development needs to be appropriately guided so that, should it happen, it happens in ways that support the community's vision.

SUGGESTED GOAL

Provide for a range of housing opportunities for existing and future residents and a variety of development patterns appropriate for that area of the community.

KEY ISSUES?

1. How address crumbling foundation issue?
2. Review minimum floor area requirement
3. Promote multi-family development in / near village areas?
4. Convert to "buildable land / residential density for subdivisions?
5. Encourage / require conservation development patterns?
6. Are rear lots an issue?

Residential Development

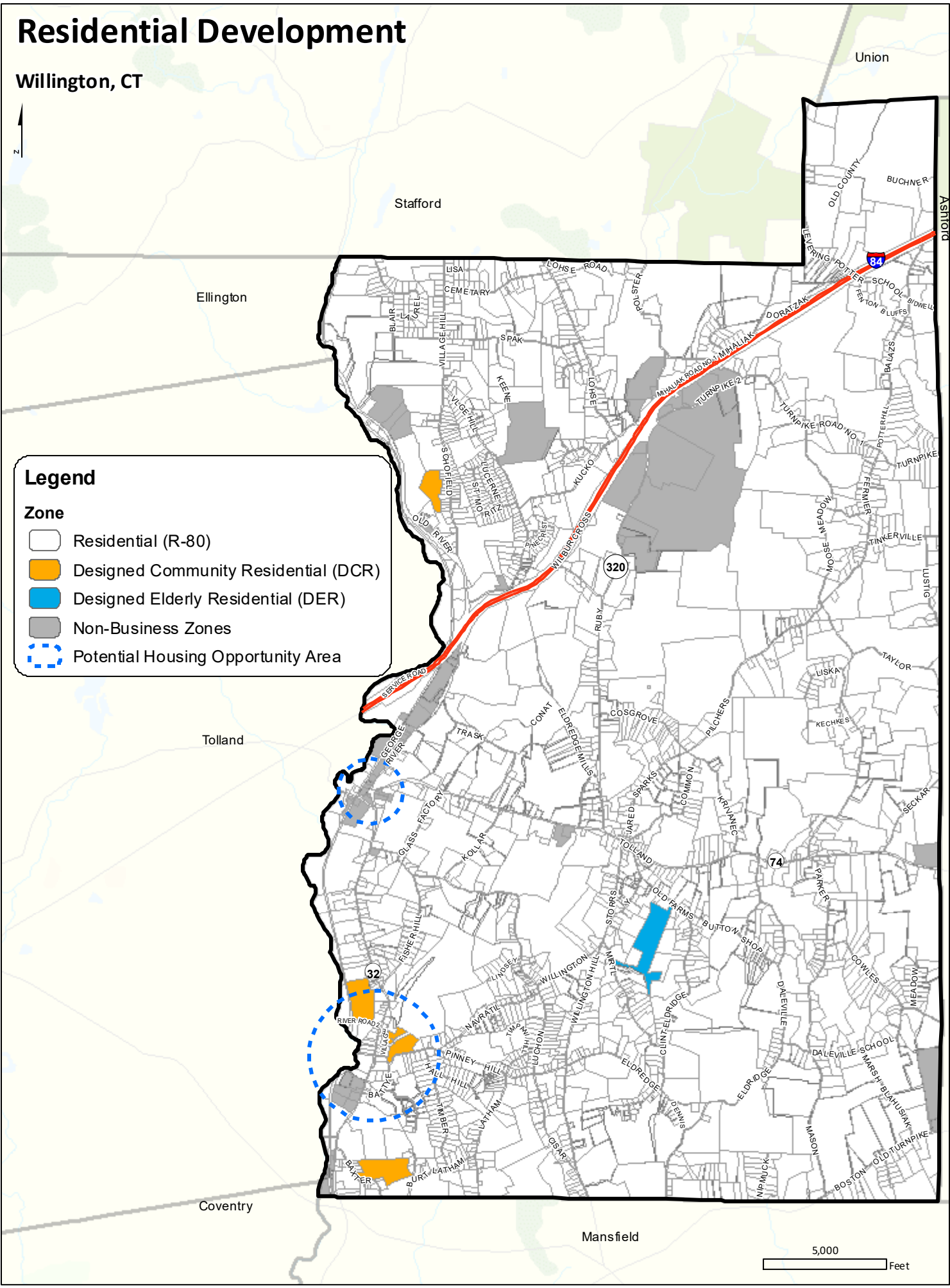
Willington, CT



Legend

Zone

- Residential (R-80)
- Designed Community Residential (DCR)
- Designed Elderly Residential (DER)
- Non-Business Zones
- Potential Housing Opportunity Area



POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

Strategy RD1	Protect the integrity of residential neighborhoods.
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Policies:

A. NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRITY – Willington will:

1. Protect existing and future residential developments from the impacts of incompatible uses.
2. Review regulations on setbacks, landscape buffering, noise pollution, light pollution in order to preserve the integrity of residential neighborhoods to the extent feasible and reasonable.

Strategy RD2	Support solutions to the “crumbling foundations” issue.
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Policies:

A. CRUMBLING FOUNDATIONS – Willington will:

1. Support efforts at the state and national level to address the issue of “crumbling foundations.”
2. Consider changes to the Zoning Regulations to simplify the process of reconstructing / replacing a “crumbling foundation” or relocating the residence elsewhere on the property.
 - ☐ 1. Modify the Zoning Regulations to allow reduced setbacks by a “special exception” when reconstruction is in response to a “crumbling foundation (a variance without the need to demonstrate hardship).
 - ☐ 2. Allow other “reasonable accommodations” to ease the challenge of rebuilding a house in place.
3. Continue to monitor the “crumbling foundation” issue so that additional strategies can be implemented as appropriate.

Strategy	
RD3	Provide for a diverse range of housing types to meet present and future needs provided that such housing is consistent with soil types, terrain, infrastructure capacity, and the community's vision for the future.

Policies:

B. AGING POPULATION – Willington will:

4. Encourage housing choices for the growing number of older households who want to stay in Willington (or move here) and who seek housing with lower maintenance demands or which offer other amenities.
5. Address the housing needs of senior citizens on limited incomes.
6. Consider allowing “accessory apartments” to be occupied by caregivers and/or caretakers in addition to family members.
7. Consider the need to expand municipal services for residents that choose to “age in place” in their residence in Willington (tax abatement, social services, nutrition, etc.).

C. MODEST INCOME – Willington will:

1. Encourage housing choices for first-time home buyers.
2. Consider other housing choices appropriate for modest income persons and households.
3. Consider allowing “accessory apartments” to be occupied by caregivers and/or caretakers in addition to family members.
4. Review the minimum floor area requirements for a residential dwelling and consider alternative approaches.

Strategy	
RD4	Promote higher density housing and/or mixed use development in village areas to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, infrastructure capacity, and the community's vision for the future.

Policies:

A. OVERALL –Willington will:

1. Promote higher density housing and/or mixed use development in village areas consistent with soil types, terrain, infrastructure capacity, and the community's vision for the future.
2. Discourage or prohibit higher density housing and/or mixed use development outside of village areas.
3. Consider undertaking the preparation of concept plans for each of the “village areas” in order to better understand housing opportunities.

Open Space Development

Open space development is an approach that allows development to occur while protecting a site's important features.

A key element of open space development is that areas to be protected are typically identified first and then development occurs around the protected areas. This contrasts with a conventional approach where development is often laid out first and conservation areas are defined by what is left over.

The information on the facing page suggests how a site analysis might be conducted as part of a conservation design process.

Residential Density

A residential density regulation works as follows:

1. Willington adopts a buildable land definition (ZR) that excludes:
 - Wetlands
 - Watercourses
 - Steep Slopes
 - Floodplain
2. Willington adopts a regulation that indicates that the number of lots that can be created in a subdivision is **0.3 lots per acre of buildable land** (or some other number).
3. Willington maintains the minimum lot size regulation of 2.0 acres.
4. The buildable area requirement for each lot is eliminated.

Strategy

RD5

Encourage or require "conservation development" patterns in outlying areas.

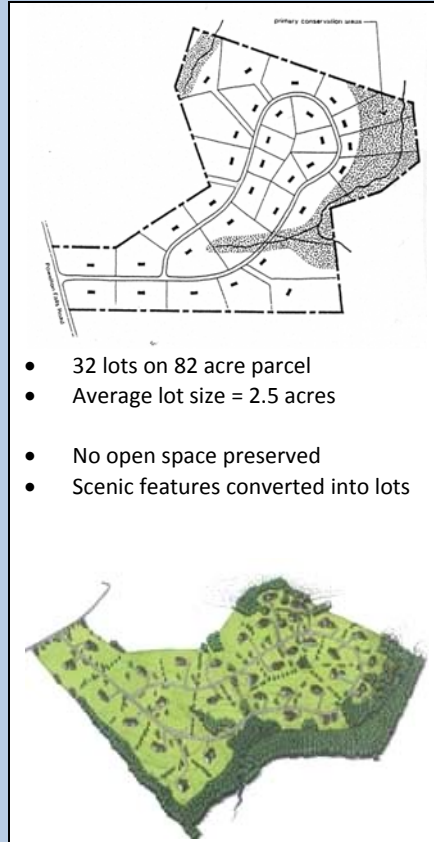
Policies:

A. **OVERALL** –Willington will:

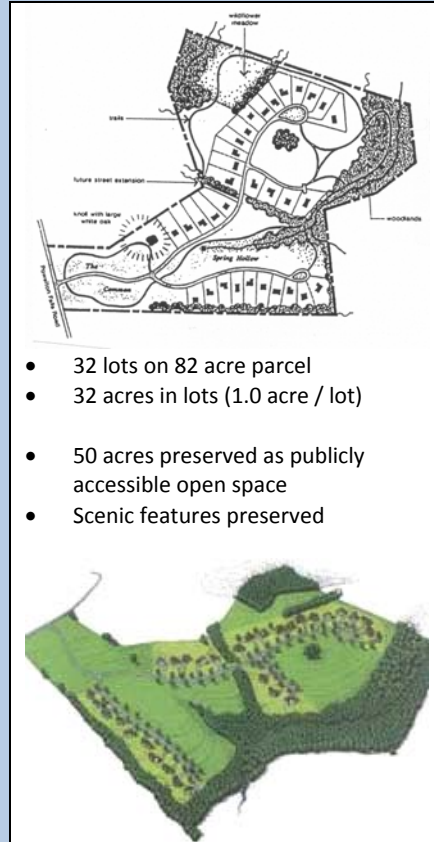
1. Consider adopting a "residential density regulation" to limit the number of residential lots in proportion to the amount of buildable land, regardless of the development design.
2. Encourage or require conservation development design as part of a new subdivision.
3. Discourage conventional development design as part of a new subdivision.

CASE STUDY – Conservation Development

Conventional Subdivision Development



Conservation Subdivision Development



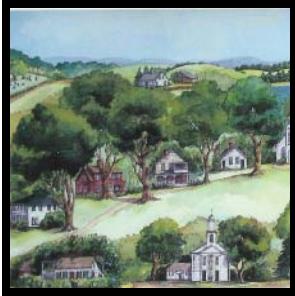
CASE STUDY - Site Analysis Approach

Unfortunately, many subdivisions are laid out as a “geometric resolution of dimensional constraints” and are then placed on the land almost regardless of *environmental constraints*.

Developments that are laid out in response to the character of the land are usually better visually and environmentally.

To help promote this approach, one Connecticut town adopted the regulation shown in the case study as a way to guide the site planning process. Rather than lay out lots first and then mitigate environmental impacts, it requires that important resources be identified first and then lots laid out.

1. Unless waived by the Commission, any application for a residential subdivision ... shall include the following materials **prepared by a landscape architect, civil engineer, or surveyor** licensed to practice in Connecticut:
 - a. a site inventory / analysis map as described below, and
 - b. an overall ... layout plan which responds to the site inventory / analysis map.
2. A pre-application meeting with Town Staff and the Commission is strongly encouraged.
3. If the Commission is not satisfied with the quality of the analysis submitted with the application, it may hire another landscape architect, civil engineer, or surveyor licensed to practice in Connecticut to **prepare such analysis and charge the applicant** for the cost of such services.
4. The site inventory / analysis map shall identify:
 - a. **Primary Conservation Areas**:
 - Wetlands, watercourses, and vernal pools,
 - steep slopes (15 percent or more), and
 - 100-year floodplain.
 - b. **Secondary Conservation Areas**:
 - areas within 50 feet of a wetland,
 - areas within 100 feet of a watercourse or a vernal pool,
 - 500-year floodplain,
 - Natural Diversity Database sites,
 - wildlife corridors, mature woodlands, notable individual trees (>18" DBH),
 - ridgelines, scenic views and vistas,
 - stone walls and /or farm hedgerows,
 - key resources identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development ...,
 - proposed open space areas, and
 - soils with moderate to high infiltrative capacities.
5. Areas of the site that are considered Primary Conservation Areas or Secondary Conservation Areas shall be **considered for permanent protection**, which may include preservation as open space, deeded to the Town, the ... Land Trust, or another conservation organization acceptable to the Commission.
6. Areas of the site that are not considered Primary Conservation Areas or Secondary Conservation Areas shall be **considered potential development areas** and lots, streets, trails, and other improvements may be sited in these areas.



MANAGE GROWTH

OVERVIEW

Willington's 2008 POCD ***did not*** include a Future Land Use Plan.

Instead, the POCD recommended a "resource-based approach" where future land use changes would be determined based on the merit of the change (such as jobs, tax revenue, etc.) as measured against potential impacts that could result by the change. Presumably, a zone change would be more likely to be granted where the applicant could demonstrate that the proposed use would not negatively affect adjacent lands.

Important resources were mapped and then "scored" in terms of their relevance for determining the appropriate intensity of development of land:

Resource	Relative Resource Value (RV)
Aquifers (A)	3.0
Inland Wetlands (IW)	3.0
Unique Natural Habitats (UH)	3.0
Streambelts or Riverways (SR)	2.0
Steep Slopes (SS)	2.0
Floodplains (FP)	1.0
Prime or Important Farmland Soils (PF)	1.0

The area of a resource on a property was multiplied by its resource value and the products were then summed up and divided by the parcel acreage to get a "Land Conservation Ratio"(LCR) value.

According to the 2008 POCD, the higher the LCR, the more environmentally sensitive it is or the less developable it is for intensive uses. Conversely, the lower the LCR, the less environmentally sensitive the land and the more developable it is for more intensive residential or commercial/industrial uses.

The POCD went on to indicate that, the LCR could be used to increase development on land that does not contain high concentrations of valuable natural resources and decrease development on lands that contain high concentrations of valuable natural resources.

SUGGESTED GOAL

Maintain and enhance the overall character of Willington by preserving and protecting the characteristics that contribute to its overall ambience and quality of life.

KEY ISSUES?

1. Is the “resource-based approach” without a map still relevant or would the Commission like to consider:
 - a. The “resource-based approach” with a map of LCR values,
 - b. A “policy area” map, or
 - c. A “future land use plan.”
2. Does the “resource-based approach” mean that most any property in Willington is potentially subject to a zone change? (spot zoning?)
3. Does the “resource-based approach” help guide business and industry to locations where they will support each other and enhance community structure and character?
4. Does Willington really need 317 pages of Zoning Regulations?

[illegible]