

# PLANNING ISSUES IN WILLINGTON

## Overview

The Planning and Zoning Commission is updating the Plan of Conservation and Development for Willington. A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a document which lays out the long-term vision for the physical, economic, and social development of a community.

This booklet summarizes results from some introductory exercises which were conducted to set the stage for the POCD update. These exercises included:

- A discussion of issues with the Planning and Zoning Commission,
- Responses to a survey of Town department heads,
- Responses to a survey of members of local boards and commissions,
- Field trips around Willington, and
- A public meeting devoted to hearing from Willington residents.

Much of the discussion in this booklet is organized around the three main thematic elements of a Plan of Conservation and Development:

- What Willington may want to protect (conservation strategies),
- How Willington may want to guide future growth and change (development strategies),
- What Willington may want or need to support its overall vision (infrastructure strategies).

*“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”*

Margaret Wheatley  
Writer

Conservation-Related  
Strategies



Development-Related  
Strategies



Infrastructure-Related  
Strategies



## **PZC Kick-Off Meeting (October 2014)**

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In October 2016, the Planning and Zoning Commission met with their consultant to discuss the Plan of Conservation and Development, the anticipated process for updating the POCD, and community issues. That discussion is summarized below:

### **Overall Comments**

#### **Strengths Of Current POCD –**

- Discussion groups involved a lot of people
- Discussion led to identification of conservation areas and development areas

#### **Weaknesses Of Current POCD –**

- 2008 Natural Resource Inventory / Open Space Report was:
  - not well integrated into the POCD (timing of completion dates was off)
  - not reviewed by PZC
  - not always coordinated with other strategies
- Some topics appear in multiple sections so you don't always know if you have all the information needed to inform a decision

#### **Desires For POCD Update -**

- PZC would like short, pithy, well-illustrated POCD
- Would like implementation tables to identify who / what / when
- Would like to have a summary statement for each topic (and then group all of these on the outside back cover for easy reference?)

## Conditions / Trends

1. Crumbling foundations are a problem in Willington and surrounding communities (could be 300-600 foundations affected in town)
  - a. Can zoning do anything about this in terms of making it easier to rebuild (change yard setbacks?)
  - b. Assessor may be considering four gradations of crumbling foundations
  - c. Is our tax base decreasing because of this? Can we recoup this?
  - d. What will be the effect on the local real estate market?
  - e. Will values decline even if a house is not affected by the issue?
2. Population may be stabilizing or contracting – what does this mean for the community?

## Conservation-Related Topics (things we may want to protect)

3. State Police gun range was proposed in town and was widely opposed - Residents did not like State telling them what they would do
4. Should we have “village districts” to help protect character?

## Development-Related Topics (how we may want to guide change)

5. It seems there are constant business vacancies - How can we do a better job to retain and attract businesses?
  - a. Local properties are not always well managed / well maintained
  - b. Tenant mixes do not really reflect what the community wants or needs
6. There is no place locally to buy groceries
  - a. The local markets we used to have were family businesses
  - b. When they sold, new owners had a hard time making it work
7. Maybe Willington could/should seek to accommodate more housing for UConn students to strengthen the tax base
8. Does Willington have what it takes to attract economic development? -
  - a. Enough land? Right zoning? Strategic location?
  - b. We may lack water/sewer but maybe we could compete with bandwidth or other amenities

### **Infrastructure-Related Topics (facilities we may want or need)**

9. School enrollments are decreasing and the community is grappling with options:
  - a. go to one elementary school (have two presently)?
  - b. close both and build a new school?
  - c. outsource to the regional district?
10. If Hall School in South Willington is not used as a school, it reverts to the foundation but they may not want it back - How can the community re-use the school building?
11. Have two fire departments but can have weekday response issue in daytime
12. Will regionalization of services become an issue in the future? - Would this be good or bad for Willington?

### **Implementation-Related Topics (how we may want to make it happen)**

13. POCD should identify what regulations we need to adopt/change to accomplish our vision

## Community Meeting (November 2016)

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A community workshop meeting was held at the Willington Library on November 1 to get input from Willington residents. Approximately 70 people attended the meeting and many participated in the exercises described below.

### Where People Live

People attending the meeting were asked to place a “blue dot” on a map to illustrate where they live.

The distribution of dots seems to indicate that residents came from different parts of Willington and that there did not seem to be a geographic bias which might have skewed the results of the meeting.





## Prouds Map

The “prouds” were tabulated after the meeting and revealed the following “top 3” elements:

### Community Character

- Town Green / Old Town Hall
- Rural / quiet / peaceful
- Scenic aspects

### Open Space

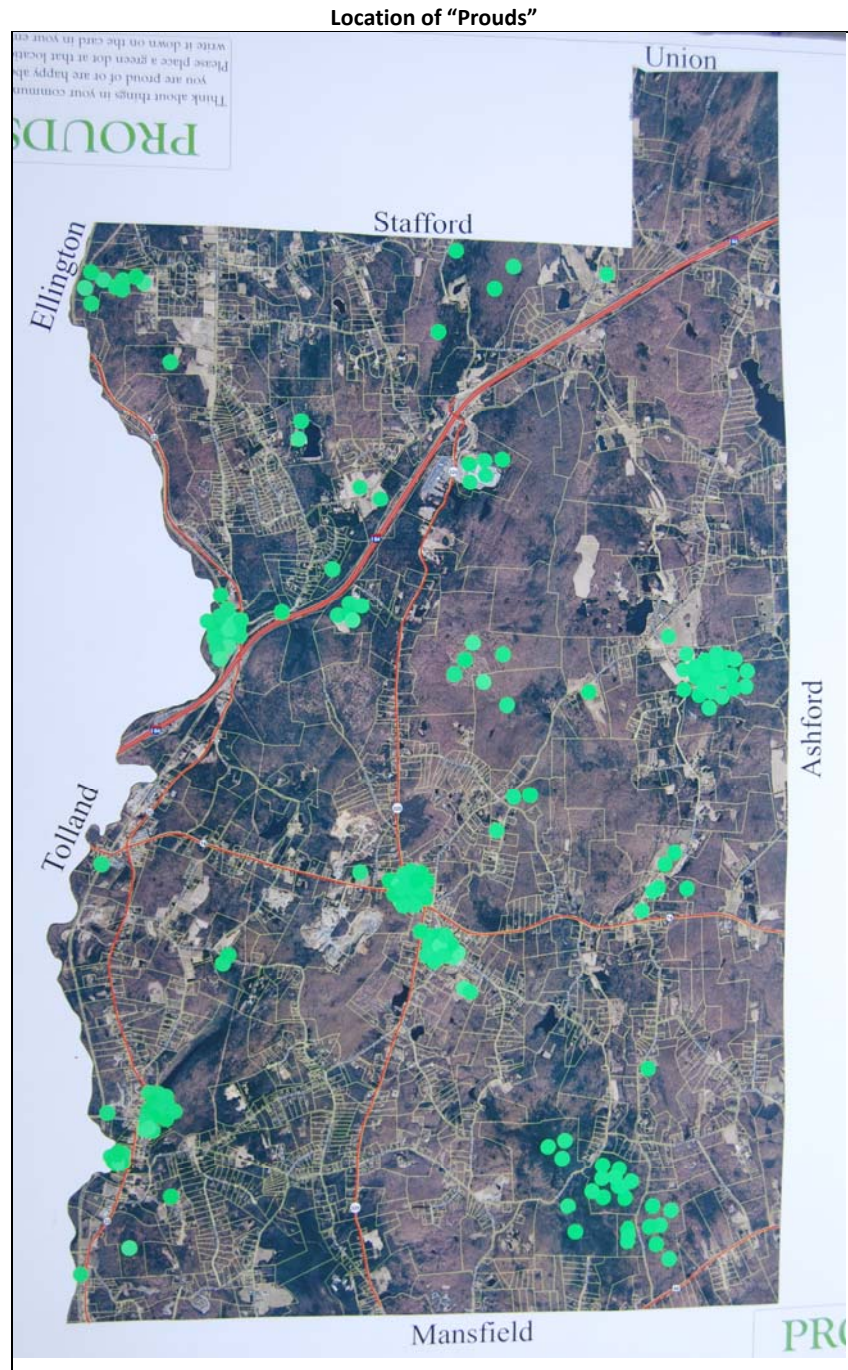
- Open Spaces
- Ruby Fenton Preserve
- Joshua Trust

### Community Facilities

- Schools
- River Road Complex
- Library
- Transfer Station

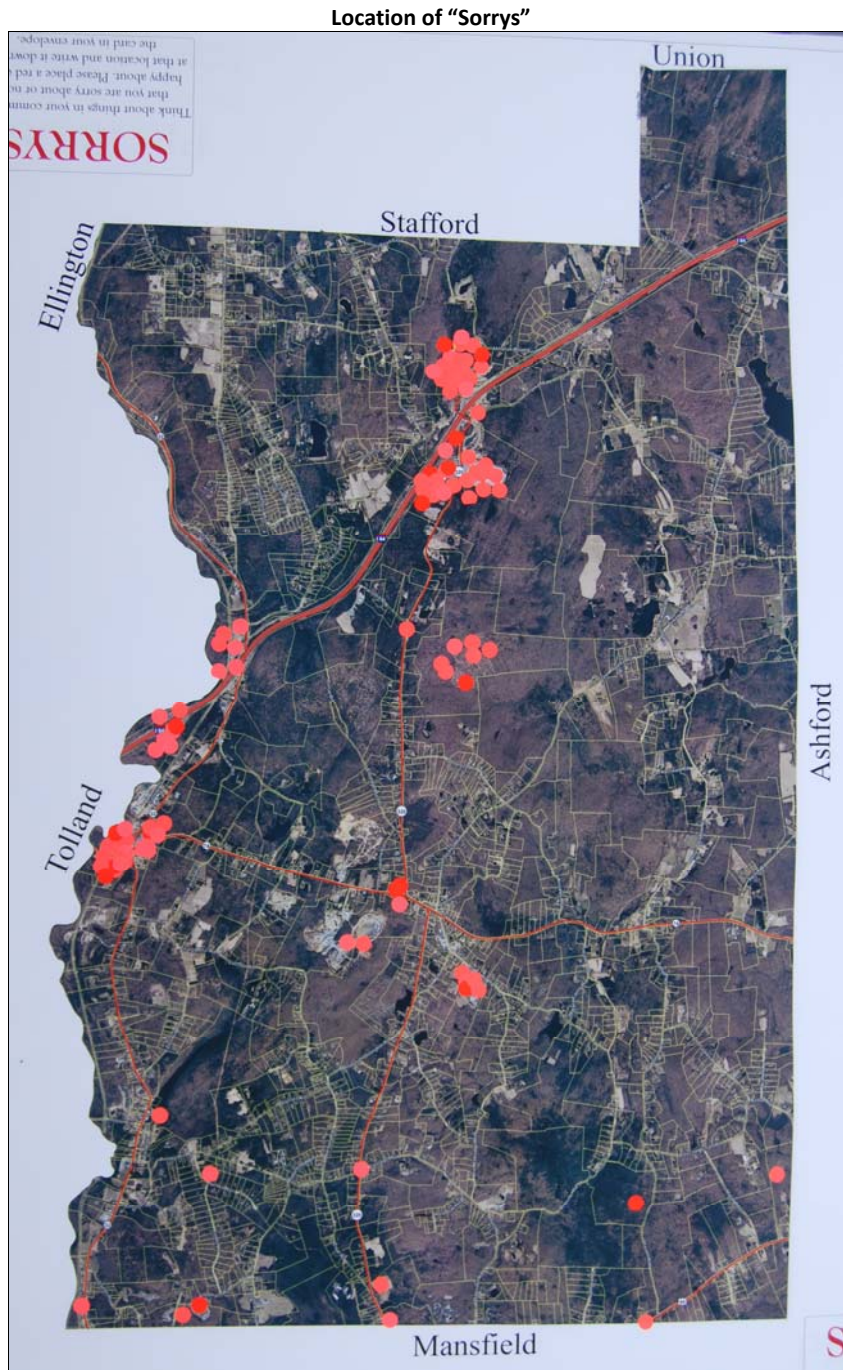
## Prouds

People attending the meeting were asked to place a “green dot” on a map to identify things in Willington they were proud of. They were also asked to write these “prouds” on a card and submit it at the meeting.



## Sorrys

People attending the meeting were then asked to place a “red dot” on a map to identify things in Willington they were sorry about. They were also asked to write these “sorrys” on a card and submit it at the meeting. The themes that received the most mention included:



### Sorrys Map

The “sorrys” were tabulated after the meeting and revealed the following “top 3” elements:

#### Business Development

- Truck stops
- Phelps Plaza
- Abandoned gas station
- Lack of businesses

#### Community Character

- I-84 rest stops
- Gun range proposal

#### Community Facilities

- Town Offices
- School facility planning / enrollment decline
- Library
- Transfer Station

## Planning Points

People attending the meeting were given 50 “planning points” to allocate among 12 boxes representing topics typically addressed as part of a Plan of Conservation and Development. Residents were asked to allocate the planning points (one @ 20 points, two @ 10 points each, and two @ 5 points each) in the boxes to reflect what they felt was important for the community to address as part of the planning process.

Approximately 58 people participated in the planning points exercise. The results are presented below. These results were presented at the meeting and the remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussing the topics that got the most points.

|                            | 20 points | 10 points | 5 points | Total Points |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| <b>Conservation Issues</b> |           |           |          |              |
| Natural Resources          | 160       | 140       | 45       | 345          |
| Open Space                 | 140       | 250       | 70       | 460          |
| Historic Resources         | 40        | 110       | 65       | 215          |
| Community Character        | 200       | 140       | 65       | 405          |

|                           |     |     |    |     |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| <b>Development Issues</b> |     |     |    |     |
| Village Centers / Nodes   | 60  | 70  | 40 | 170 |
| Business Development      | 180 | 110 | 35 | 325 |
| Residential Development   | 0   | 0   | 10 | 10  |
| Housing Diversity         | 40  | 100 | 65 | 205 |

|                                |     |     |    |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| <b>Infrastructure Issues</b>   |     |     |    |     |
| Community Facilities           | 180 | 150 | 75 | 405 |
| Traffic and Circulation        | 60  | 10  | 35 | 105 |
| Walking / Biking / Bus / Train | 60  | 60  | 45 | 165 |
| Water/ Sewer / Utilities       | 0   | 50  | 30 | 80  |

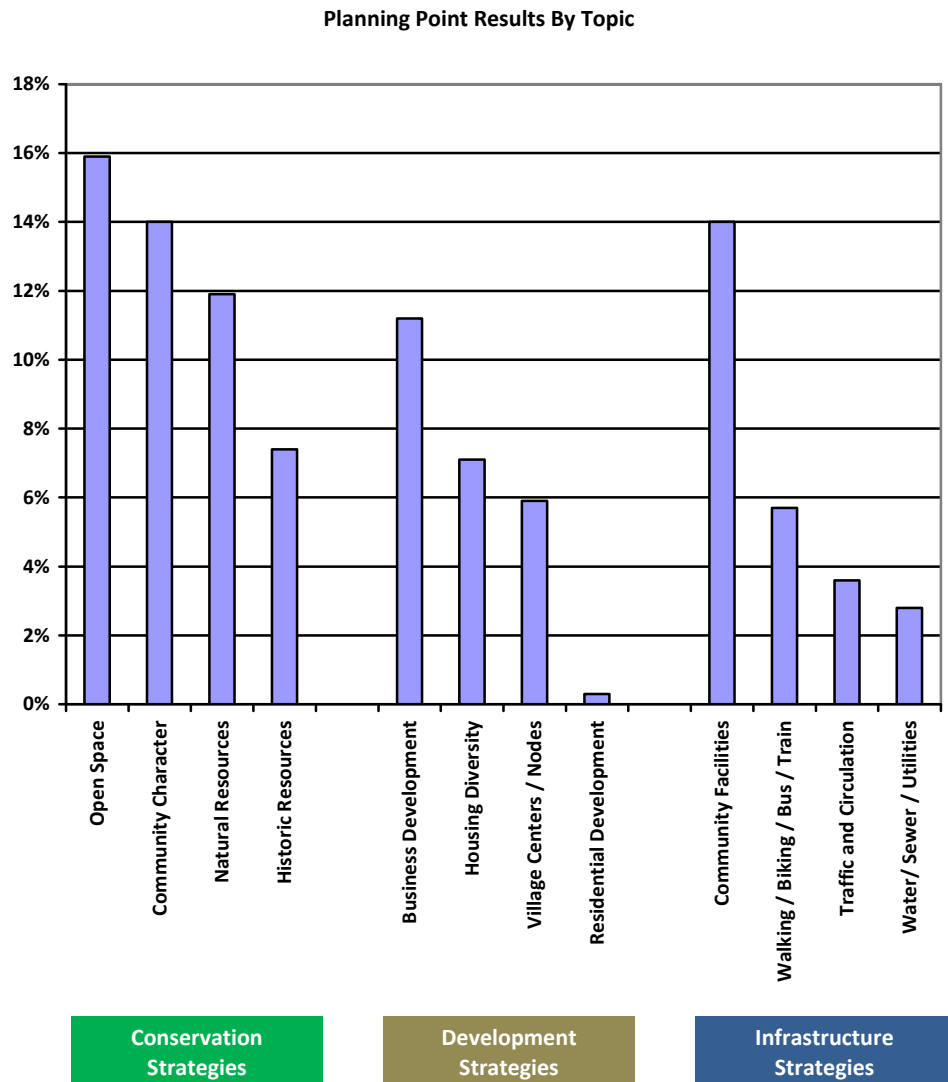
|              |              |            |              |
|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>1,120</b> | <b>1,190</b> | <b>580</b> | <b>2,890</b> |
|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|



On a thematic basis, conservation issues received the most planning points (1,425 points = about 49 percent of all planning points allocated). This was primarily due to the importance placed on community character and on open space.

The infrastructure theme received 755 planning points (about 26 percent of all planning points allocated) and the development theme received 710 planning points about 25 percent of all planning points allocated).

On a topical basis, traffic and circulation received the most planning points (330 points = about 17 percent of all planning points allocated). This was closely followed by open space (325 points = about 17 percent of all planning points allocated). As can be seen from the chart below, these two topics were considered significantly more important than other topics.



## Discussion Questions

In the planning points discussion, people were asked:

- Why did you put your planning points in that box?
- Why is this important for Willington?
- Why is this an important topic to consider as part of the POCD?

## **Planning Points Discussion**

### **COMMUNITY CHARACTER (405 points)**

- We like our character and want to preserve it
  - Like our town, like the people
  - Charm, quiet, fresh air, beauty, landscape
- Have to be vigilant / we need to be pro-active
- We need to find balance. Willington is rural, but accessible. Near UCONN. Keep this balance
- Need to focus within town lines, not be grouped with others. Character doesn't end at borders. Are part of region
- Discourage big box stores / fast food
- Keep 2 acre zoning
- Preserve historical sites
- Dark Skies- keep this.
- Telecommunication towers can be a threat to character
  - Can we put siting principles in the POCD for siting council

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES (405 points)**

- Schools:
  - Declining enrollment is a cause for concern
  - Buildings are not in great condition / need maintenance
  - We need to continue to support/fund quality education
- Library is great
- Transfer station is good
- May need a new school / new Town offices
  - But what do we do with existing buildings?
  - We need to maintain/support the facilities we have
  - Any new buildings need to be scaled to growth
- May want / need other things as well:
  - Outdoor play areas/recreation fields
  - Better internet service
  - Emergency services- buildings are not adequate?
  - Resident state trooper

### **OPEN SPACE (460 points)**

- Preserving open space is often a “catch 22” situation in Willington:
  - Money is requested in operating budget but then gets cut
  - People comment after the fact that not enough being done
  - People need to support the money
- How to encourage property owners to continue to preserve land?
  - There is a generational issue / people are aging out
  - Can be problematic since next generation may have different ideas for the land (can be forced into development)
- We need to stress the value of open space
  - People may be more concerned if they realized the buildout potential
  - Why do we have to scare people to get action?
- Gun range opened our eyes. Was a threat to “open space”
- Education is key / people feel undeveloped land is “open space”
  - But private land is not really protected
  - How categorize open space so we know what we really have?
    - Dedicated OS,
    - Managed OS
    - Perceived OS
- How can we preserve as much as we can?
- If to be developed, how to preserve best for OS?
- Halls Pond underutilized, private property. Wish it was more available to residents.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES (345 points)**

- Farm soils- how to protect these?
- Threats now include solar farms, wind farms in addition to development
- Water quality protection:
  - UCONN studying the water for the state.
  - Truck stops (septic / treatment system, runoff, was a spill, affects Willimantic River)
  - Can we encourage an LID demonstration project at truck stop??
  - Fracking waste- prohibit.

### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (325 points)**

- We want economic development to support the tax base - more for that than for providing goods/services or providing jobs for residents
- Willington can't have all the things we want if we can't pay for it
- Our reputation does not seem business friendly though
  - "Willington doesn't like signs"
  - Process appears convoluted
- Can we fix this?
  - Can process be streamlined?
  - Could we allow businesses in other areas?
  - Support small Mom and Pop businesses rather than national chains?
  - Be a little more business-friendly for what is allowed where
- Willington needs to leverage the locational advantages it does have
  - I-84 is a significant advantage - use this to our advantage.
- What should our strategy be?
  - Keep businesses we have
    - How do people find out about businesses already here?
  - Fill vacancies
    - How do businesses find us?
    - Tax incentive to reuse existing buildings?
    - Be clear about what businesses we want
  - We need to control it / manage it but not discourage it
    - "Village district" in South Willington will allow multiple uses on one lot (i.e. mixed uses) and control appearance
    - Could we allow this elsewhere in Willington?

### **HOUSING DIVERSITY (305 points)**

- Demographics / housing preferences are changing
  - People want to age in place, stay in their communities
  - We should allow smaller single-family, cluster, condos (shared maintenance)
  - What lot sizes/wells are ok? Look at soil types.
- Are getting "creep" from UCONN and surrounding communities.
  - Will UCONN put housing in the region? Is that what we want?
- Housing Diversity
  - How do we avoid problems?
  - % of income that needs to go to housing?

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

- Residential redevelopment has to include crumbling foundations
  - Total neighborhoods could be impacted.
- 2006 POCD did not touch on need for infrastructure before development (i.e. truck stop).
  - Wish we had done this before (ie - traffic flow)
- Historic resources:
  - We should have demolition delay.
  - List homes on state register to get state grants/\$.
  - Historical society.
- Walking/biking:
  - Can we do more on this?
  - Sidewalk/trails/bicycles.
- How can people stay informed on POCD update?
- We have to maintain the facilities / infrastructure we have:
  - -Pavement.
  - -Bridge.
  - -Buildings.
- We should do a “facilities inventory”?
- Do the 2 railroad sidings in Willington have benefit for us in terms of economic development?
- These are on the New London/Montreal rail line
- Infrastructure to support town is needed



## Board/Commission Member Survey

In the fall of 2016, a survey was circulated to members of different boards and commissions in Willington. Some of those responses are summarized below:

### 1. What do you see as the greatest challenges or needs facing Willington in the next 10 to 20 years?

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Managing Growth</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the rural character of our town and yet have room for economic development ...</li> <li>• Balancing economic growth with protection of natural resources and preservation of rural character</li> <li>• Maintaining our rural environment and character while controlling property taxes Continuing to maintain our rural character and growing our Tax base concurrently and understanding that the 2 issues are compatible</li> <li>• Teaching people that open space, agriculture use and growth can be combined</li> <li>• Stimulating 'controlled' growth (community and corporate perspectives)</li> <li>• Water sustainability / water volume requirements to attract businesses</li> <li>• Managing commercial growth associated with UConn</li> </ul> |
| <b>Fiscal</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining tax base, residential and commercial</li> <li>• Increasing tax base in an appropriate way</li> <li>• Tax revenue needed for services</li> <li>• Increasing school budget with decreasing population</li> <li>• Growing town services and keeping residential taxes at reasonable level</li> <li>• Planning and paying for future public education resources</li> <li>• Balancing tax revenue with expansion, decrease expenses to match income</li> <li>• Sustainable growth on a large enough scale to expand the tax base.</li> <li>• Adequate tax base</li> <li>• Impact that UConn may have on the tax base</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Maintaining Character</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greatest challenge is overdevelopment</li> <li>• Conservation of green areas ...</li> <li>• Conservation of ... historic buildings.</li> <li>• Preserve scenic roads ... historic districts</li> <li>• Preserving more open space</li> <li>• Maintaining the rural character</li> <li>•</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Crumbling Foundations</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundation issue</li> <li>• The crumbling foundations are going to decrease home values all around town</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Changing Demographics</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing changing age demographic.</li> <li>• Willington faces a shrinking population (and therefore a shrinking tax base).</li> <li>• We have a school system set up to accommodate a post WW2 "baby boom" population skewing educational cost.</li> </ul>   |

## 2. What types of things should Willington encourage in the future?

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Business Development</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development along Rt. 32 and the I-84 corridor</li> <li>• We should encourage light industry, commerce, and agricultural use of our lands in the appropriate places</li> <li>• Environmentally friendly business growth.</li> <li>• Encourage small businesses / retail development.</li> <li>• Low-environmental impact businesses and industry</li> <li>• Grocery store like an Aldi / Outpatient medical care</li> <li>• Fix up the Phelps Corners area</li> <li>• Light manufacturing, transportation businesses appropriate to the I84 corridor</li> </ul>     |
| <b>Open Space</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the preservation and purchase of large tracts of land to keep the green areas and allow the rural nature and the peace cherished by residents.</li> <li>• Maintain rural and green landscape or else we lose our character</li> <li>• Preserve more open space to meet current goals</li> <li>• Add money to the Open Space fund annually</li> <li>• Having a yearly contribution to an Open Space fund</li> <li>• Collaborate with neighboring Towns to connect Open Space and agricultural areas</li> <li>• Expanding/maintaining open space</li> </ul> |
| <b>Natural Resources</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase protection of public drinking water and vernal pools</li> <li>• Protect available prime agricultural soils and encourage sustainable agriculture use in these areas</li> <li>• Encourage use of “best management practices” concerning storm drain maintenance, street sweeping and winter road salt use.</li> <li>• Acquire land along rivers to mitigate flooding and provide public access</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Community Facilities</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the restoration of the town hall</li> <li>• Athletic park facilities - community center</li> <li>• Increase the funding for the Library.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Residential Development</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderately priced housing options.</li> <li>• Encourage use cluster housing development designs and avoid land fragmentation</li> <li>• Residential housing, apartments, and other similar development may be encouraged.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>infrastructure</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town well(s)?, natural gas line(s)?</li> <li>• High speed bandwidth to attract businesses</li> <li>• Low cost energy (natural gas infrastructure development).</li> </ul>   |
| <b>New Approaches</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with neighboring Towns to share resources</li> <li>• Encourage more resident participation on Town committees and commissions</li> <li>• Install more Sustainable Energy especially at the municipal level</li> </ul>   |

### 3. What types of things should Willington discourage in the future?

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Inappropriate Growth</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uncontrolled growth in multifamily housing, heavy industry, pollution causing uses, and development that changes the character of the town.</li><li>• Live entertainment, big box type stores, etc.</li><li>• Large development that promises employment and tax revenue, but in the end only paves areas that were once green.</li><li>• Discourage big box stores and malls.</li><li>• Avoid wind towers on ridgelines.</li><li>• Avoid solar arrays on prime agricultural soils.</li><li>• Ban fracking and disposal of any fracking waste.</li><li>• Industrial development and large scale apartments due to lack of public water and waste facilities.</li><li>• High-environmental impact businesses and industries</li><li>• Commercial growth especially chain/franchise businesses</li><li>• Anything that detracts from the rural character of the town</li><li>• Truck Stops, Gas Stations or business requiring high volume commercial traffic.</li><li>• Large Outdoor concert venues, large outdoor gun ranges, racing venues, government or non-profits that do not support our tax base, Large factory farms.</li><li>• Strip malls</li><li>• Making our town just a drive by stop off the highway - we have a truck stop (and I second on the way?) and a Dunkin' Donuts.</li></ul> |
| <b>Nuisance Situations</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discourage renting of single family homes to local college students.</li><li>• Make sure that rental properties enforce the rules concerning multifamily zoning regulations. UConn party house style rentals need to be regulated</li></ul>   |
| <b>Fiscal</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spending beyond our means, be more self-reliant by using local people to do more of the work in the town</li></ul>  |

**4. If the Town Plan could make ONE OR TWO THINGS happen for Willington in the next 10 years, what do you feel that should be?**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Manage Growth</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase economic development in appropriate areas of Town, least likely to impact natural resources and rural character.</li> <li>• Define more clearly the areas to focus for development and the types of development that we would encourage.</li> <li>• Revive and encourage our commercial/industrial zones, creating a vital town business district.</li> <li>• Team up with a developer to create managed growth in key areas that capitalize on its access to RT 84 and RT 195 (UCONN).</li> <li>• Build up a good "main street"</li> <li>• Expand the business opportunities in the mill area of Town, encourage growth of the types of businesses currently there</li> <li>• Encourage diverse families to settle in our town</li> <li>• Make regulation changes identified in Section 5, pages 7-13 of the 2006 POCD</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Open Space</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save more land as open space</li> <li>• Increase protected Open Space, especially land that can be used for agricultural use and/or land that protects drinking water resources.</li> <li>• Move toward meeting the protected open space goals of the current PoCD and the Open Space Conservation Plan</li> <li>• Preservation of additional open space for habitat and aquifer protection and recreational use.</li> <li>• Purchase of vast tracts of lands to preserve the wildlife and rural setting.</li> <li>• Connect more properties for wildlife corridors – think regionally with adjoining towns</li> <li>• Develop a fund for land acquisition.</li> <li>• Yearly contributions to an Open Space Fund so the Town can protect our rural character from development.</li> <li>• Building a significant open space purchase account</li> <li>• Line item in the budget to preserve open space</li> </ul> |
| <b>Fiscal</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain or decrease taxes without sacrificing current services.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Schools</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep our schools here - every new person I talk to says they moved here for the schools</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Community Facilities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish the River Road Athletic Complex.</li> </ul>   |

**5. As you think about all Town departments, what do you feel is the major community facility need in Willington during the next 10 years?**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Schools</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade our schools and use space as efficiently as possible</li> <li>• Hall Memorial consolidated school (K-8).</li> <li>• ... revaluation of our school buildings</li> <li>• Due to the declining student population something should be done to consolidate student population to one facility. That will require either a new building or renovation of one of the existing buildings.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Town Offices</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New appropriately designed town office building.</li> <li>• A decent town office building with functional space for all departments and for public meetings. Current one is terrible!</li> <li>• A new Town Hall</li> <li>• Improved Town Hall</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Library</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund the Library at a much higher level, so it can function as a community resource. The current levels are inadequate.</li> <li>• Fund the Library at a higher level.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>River Road</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ... we should continue developing our River Road complex</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Maintenance</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining existing structures with the goal of increasing sustainable energy use and decreasing energy use</li> <li>• ... maintaining the facilities and infrastructure we already have (including the Old Town Hall/Town Green, schools, and public buildings).</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Other</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do not accept the premise that a new community facility of any kind is needed, given the little economic growth in our town.</li> <li>• Not really sure - I'm pretty impressed by what this small town provides already</li> </ul>  |



**6. Are there other comments you would like to make about topics which should be considered in the Plan?**

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Land Use / Zoning</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning needs to encourage economic growth in/along appropriate areas in town.</li> <li>• Spot zoning should be discouraged.</li> <li>• Planning, land use, enforcement of regulations, and other aspects need to be enforced uniformly and fairly.</li> <li>• Enforce existing regulations</li> <li>• The major community need is the strengthening of preservation, wetlands preservation, and strong zoning and planning regulations that are in place.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Natural Resource Inventory</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently our POCD also has a “Natural Resource Inventory and Open Space Conservation Plan” appended to it with more detailed information and mapping about Natural Resources than the POCD</li> <li>• Important to keep this level of detail in updated POCD, since these maps and info are important for planning and also have been used during public hearings and grant applications.</li> <li>• Natural resource inventory and conservation plan.</li> <li>• Post all Town plans on the web (ie – hazard mitigation)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Open Space</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open space needs to be addressed and the plan should encourage residents to set aside open space and for the Town to support expansion of existing open space already owned.</li> <li>• Town should re-think its open space policy. Purchasing acreage only to tie it up indefinitely for any economic use is unwise.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Implementation</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the land use office into a real Planning office, in its current configuration it is forced into a reactive stance.</li> <li>• Need increase space and staff resources in the Land Use Office</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Community Health</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote opportunities for active living and healthy eating</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Other</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update all Town job descriptions</li> <li>• Promulgate and adopt forest practice regulations</li> <li>• Fix our infrastructure to make it more attractive to meaningful development.</li> </ul>  |

## Department Head Survey

In the fall of 2016, a survey was circulated to Town of Willington department heads. Some of those responses are summarized below:

### 1. What do you see as the greatest challenges or needs facing Willington in the next 10 to 20 years?

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Fiscal</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining ... the many programs and services we have will be difficult.</li> <li>• Keeping taxes affordable while providing services</li> <li>• The crumbling foundation crisis is going to be a fiscal issue for the town.</li> <li>• Major tax increases due to crumbling foundations</li> <li>• Unfunded State Mandates</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Schools</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining quality schools ... will be difficult.</li> <li>• There are high per-student costs at our schools.</li> <li>• We need to figure out how to reduce per-student costs without reducing our students' quality of education.</li> <li>• We don't need 2 facilities for 400+ students. Both facilities are aging, would be costly to renovate and could better service youngsters if there was one facility. A facilities study is a necessary.</li> <li>• Preserving a quality academic experience with a facility that enhances programs for students should be integral to the decision of the community.</li> <li>• ... need for a new school.</li> <li>• ... the school system with enrollment continuing to decrease.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Crumbling Foundation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crumbling foundations / The crumbling foundation crisis</li> <li>• Repair of crumbling foundations / Crumbling foundations</li> <li>• Dealing with the Crumbling Foundations</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Business Development</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with projects approved without enough forethought in an effort to "encourage business" and be "business friendly".</li> <li>• Lack of infrastructure to draw tech and larger companies.</li> <li>• A number of people need jobs or more gainful employment than they already have.</li> <li>• Trying to attract new businesses or even manufacturing to our town.</li> <li>• Attract businesses</li> <li>• If/how the FedEx facility in Middletown will impact the Willington facility.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Infrastructure</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding the inspection / documentation / repair of all catch basins as required by new MS4 requirements</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Community Facilities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of existing municipal facilities and buildings.</li> <li>• Transportation for residents is a challenge, particularly the elderly or disabled.</li> <li>• Our services and facilities have not kept pace with progress and the growth of the town. They need to.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Character</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ... the ability to keep land in Willington from becoming developed, both as commercial space and residential.</li> </ul>  |

## 2. What types of things should Willington encourage in the future?

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Compatible Business Development</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Willington should encourage business growth to bring additional revenue to town that can be balanced with an appreciation for town history, conservation and open space.</li> <li>Willington should encourage small businesses. There are very few businesses in town. Local businesses ...</li> <li>Reuse of existing buildings.</li> <li>Businesses around the 84 corridor</li> <li>Sustainable companies with employment for residents.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Spirit</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We should also encourage any program or service that brings the community together and allows us to celebrate the good things about Willington.</li> <li>... opportunities for local events should be encouraged.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Character</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserving its trees, stone walls, historic features, natural resources and the like.</li> <li>Design review for projects and/or requirement for a landscape architect to be involved in Commercial/Industrial Projects.</li> <li>I think we should consider protecting the land with well thought out spaces that would accommodate healthy business and residential growth while still keeping the majority of land undeveloped.</li> <li>... focus on the beauty of the town to attract new people to the town and keep it rural.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Transportation</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transportation (for the elderly or disabled)</li> <li>Biking and walking paths.</li> </ul>  |

## 3. What types of things should Willington discourage in the future?

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Character</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development that goes against our core values as a community</li> <li>Development projects that are not environmentally friendly.</li> <li>Isolated regulation changes that are not in character with the neighborhood it is planned in.</li> <li>We should not become too big (like Tolland); it is nice to stay rural.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Residential Development</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apartment buildings.</li> <li>Apartments that would serve University students near the southern end of town, as they create traffic, and other problems.</li> <li>Housing (such as low income housing) that brings people with issues that the Town does not have the resources to assist with.</li> <li>We should discourage "cookie cutter" neighborhoods and businesses that do not support environmental protection.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Not Using Technology</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourage <u>not</u> utilizing technology for future savings and efficiency.</li> </ul>  |

**4. If the Town Plan could make ONE OR TWO THINGS happen for Willington in the next 10 years, what do you feel that should be?**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Schools</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate (or build) one school</li> <li>• Consolidation of the two schools if an expansion of one of the schools is feasible.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Town Offices</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New space for Town Offices / New Town Office Building ...</li> <li>• New Town Hall</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Community Center</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the plan to build a recreational community building at the recreation field area.</li> <li>• A youth center of some sort to provide a central place for such activities</li> <li>• More programs for youth, adults and seniors.</li> <li>• Community wide, town sponsored events.</li> <li>• A Community Center would benefit all residents.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Fire Consolidation</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidation of the fire departments.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Business Development</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be business friendly.</li> <li>• Discourage the commercial growth along the interstate corridor that runs through Willington.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Infrastructure</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement to the infrastructure</li> <li>• Simple things like adequate lighting in municipal parking lots</li> </ul>   |

**5. As you think about all Town departments, what do you feel is the major community facility need in Willington during the next 10 years?**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Schools</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New school with additional gymnasium space and auditorium space with ample parking</li> <li>• Either a major renovation of a school to educate K-8 or a new school to complete this.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Town Offices</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either a major renovation to the existing Town Office Building or a move to better suited building.</li> <li>• Town Office Building</li> <li>• Possibility of renovating the smaller school to have a smoother layout for a Town Hall.</li> <li>• We are in dire need of a town office building that would sufficiently house all departments and have space for town meetings.</li> <li>• Absolutely need a new Town Office building – or EXTENSIVE renovations to the existing building. An idea would be to build a new school and turn center school into the Town offices, where Rec would then have a gym. The cafeteria could also be used as a multipurpose room; (for voting and meetings, etc) the kitchen could be modified and kept as a break room for all employees.</li> <li>• We need a new Town Office Building with an efficient layout that functions for staff and public. All departments need adequate storage for retention requirements. Upgrade electrical/Computers</li> <li>• The Town needs a new Town Hall. It also needs to utilize technology for cost savings and efficiency</li> </ul> |

**6. What are the major issues facing your department that should be considered in the Plan?**

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|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Inadequate Resources</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT related issues (hardware, software, maintenance and upgrades) We are way behind.</li> <li>• A lack of personnel has resulted in an inability of our department to be as productive as we could be as well as the end resulting in reduced quality.</li> <li>• ... increasing demand for services, yet limited funding to add staff or augment training.</li> <li>• Not everyone knows how great the need is in our community for ... services.</li> <li>• Instability in funding to maintain, improve and expand ... facilities ... and programs.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Transportation</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue of transportation for residents, particularly elderly and disabled, should be considered in the plan.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Fiscal</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget cuts ... unfunded State mandates</li> </ul>  |

**7. Are there other comments you would like to make about topics which should be considered in the Plan?**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Volunteers</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of volunteers for many of the functions of the town is very concerning.</li> <li>• What can we do to get more people involved?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Implementation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rewrite of both the Zoning and Subdivision regulations, simplifying language, eliminating conflicts and including design review.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Approach</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willington has suffered from its reputation of being uncooperative and non-supportive of its residents. This has discouraged many small businesses from considering a move to this town. Instead, we get the large corporations that have the perseverance and funds to repeatedly return with new plans that meet the needs of a picky and unfriendly board.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Overall</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willington is a great town. Let's keep it that way.</li> </ul>   |



