

Town of Windsor

Master Plan

Adopted by the Windsor Planning Board, November 29, 2022



Photo credit: Kim Tobin

Acknowledgments

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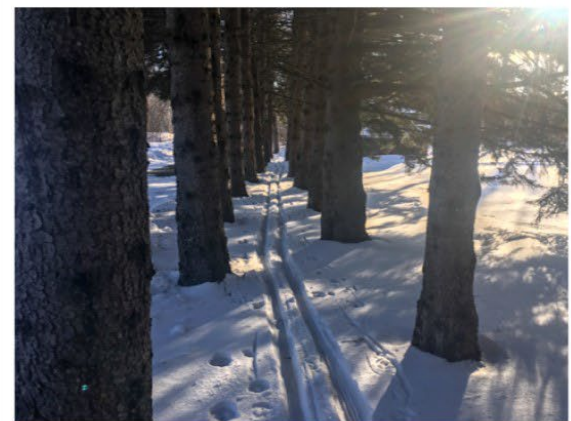


Photo Credit, Clockwise from Top Left: Barb Connors, Kim Tobin, Barbara Connors (x3), Susan Phillips, Barbara Connors

Introduction

This Master Plan was developed in response to growing awareness by Town officials and community residents that Windsor lacked a comprehensive plan outlining priorities for future development, spending, and the community's needs. The Town completed a Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (HMCAP) in 2020 and recognized the value of long-term planning (linked in Appendix). Through analysis of publicly available information and a process to gain a clear understanding of current residents' preferences and priorities in the town, this Master Plan seeks to serve as a guide for the next 5 to 20 years.

This Master Plan will help inform elected town officials in setting policies and funding priorities consistent with residents' wishes, emphasizing infrastructure, housing, community gathering needs, and maintenance of solid financial viability while considering climate vulnerabilities. This Master Plan will also enhance the Town's ability to successfully pursue future state and federal grants and position the Town to more easily respond to undesired and unanticipated proposals like the defeated Kinder Morgan pipeline and compressor station.

In its 2021 town census maintained by the Town Clerk, the Town of Windsor recorded 853 residents and had 487 taxable residential parcels in 2023. It is estimated that 73% of total buildable lots have been utilized in this primarily residential community. The Town is a small, rural community with two general stores, several farms and agricultural operations, a handful of municipal buildings and facilities, and a large percentage (31%) of the Town's land in state or charitable ownership or owned by utilities. Currently, a total of 17% (79 parcels), of Windsor's total area, with properties varying between 0.32 acres to 715 acres, are enrolled in Chapter 61, 61A or 61B - a program that protects open land parcels which also reduces the tax burden for parcel-owners. School-aged children either attend schools within the Central Berkshire Regional School District (CBRSD), or families can exercise school choice and send their children to a surrounding district school with an opening. In addition, high school students have the option to attend a vocational education program at an out-of-district school because CBRSD does not offer such programming.

The Town approved a FY23 budget of \$2,483,254, a 2.8% increase from the previous fiscal year. The tax rate is one of the lowest in the state and has been among the lowest for many years. As of 2022, the Town is in a solid financial position, according to the "Windsor Finance Committee Statement on the FY23 Budget and the FY23-27 Medium-Term Expenditure

Framework.” Windsor has about \$809,000 in reserves, as well as anticipated additional revenues from the federal Connect America Fund (CAF) and the broadband Municipal Light Plant (MLP) operating surplus to arrive within a couple of years. Anticipated expenses that could chip away at this financial comfort zone in future years include increases in capital purchases and projects, education costs for an increasing number of school-aged children, and other mandated operating costs, such as retirement and insurance bills.

The Town has embarked on improving town services and infrastructure and responding to changing needs to ensure climate resilience while containing the growth in the residential tax level to an acceptable level. Through the work of dedicated volunteer committees, the Town has built a town-owned fiber optic broadband network, made structural repairs and added significant energy improvements to town buildings, installed a new playground at the Town Park, and is in the process of replacing decaying culverts on many town roads. Some of these projects align with the priorities outlined in the HMCAP. Much of this work has been funded through grants, Chapter 90 funds, federal funds, and other non-Town monies.

The Master Plan will allow the Town to enhance its eligibility for additional grants. This Master Plan process was funded by a \$32K Community Planning Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2021. It enabled the Town to engage a community planner through the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC).

Appointed by the Planning Board, membership on the Master Plan Steering Committee consists of six town residents who have also served the Town in various capacities (see list at the front of this document). Together with the BRPC planner, the Committee has undertaken this Master Planning process and created this document to present the results to the Town.

Information in the Master Plan will be presented thematically, with a conclusion chapter that describes goals and objectives for the Town to pursue, as well as issues that require further investigation and research.

Windsor Master Plan Survey Process

The Committee began its work by conducting a series of interviews with a broad spectrum of town officials, members of committees and boards, and local organizations with deep involvement in the town. The Committee then identified topic areas through this process to inform the development of a survey for town residents. Some of those topic areas included the importance of Windsor’s rural character, the wish for more community gatherings and event spaces, concerns about lack of transportation and

other services for those aging in place, the sustainability of locally based emergency services, maintaining a low tax rate, and the challenges of recruiting volunteers to serve the town.

The 22-question survey contained a mix of open and closed-ended questions intended to gauge residents' general feelings about Windsor and its future. The survey and closed-ended responses are linked in the Appendix. The survey was launched on April 1, 2022, online, with a hard copy version distributed to those unable to complete the online version. The link to the survey was posted on the Town website, on its Facebook page, and in "Windsor Now and Then," a monthly newsletter. Residents who were 18 years and older were invited to participate. The response period ended on May 15, 2022.

A total of 151 surveys were completed representing 19.5% of the town population over 18. Not all questions received 151 responses, and the data analysis considered this. Takeaways from the survey will be interspersed



Photo Credit: Kim Tobin

throughout this document as we describe various aspects of the Town's operation and its community life. There will be other data from a variety of sources presented as well.

A committee member completed an in-depth statistical analysis to determine if significant differences existed in the different cohorts of respondents. Basic correlation analysis was used to assess significant relationships between preferred outcomes among groups of the population, specifically age cohorts and views on taxes. These results will be referenced throughout the plan. Not all analysis was included in this plan

for various reasons, including lack of significance or concerns about the validity of missing responses.

To be as relevant as possible, survey respondents should generally reflect the population of the Town's residents, and therefore a comparison was made between town age cohorts reported in the town survey and self-reports from the survey. This information is presented in Table 1. Older respondents were overrepresented in responding to the survey; younger residents were underrepresented. This is most apparent in no survey respondents in the 18- to 24-year-old category, despite being about 10% of the population.

Table 1: Age Comparison of Survey Sample to 2020 American Community Survey (ACS)¹

Age Cohort	Percentage of Town Residents	Percentage of Survey Respondents
18-24	10.4%	0%
25-35	6.6%	11.20%
36-49	22.6%	11.90%
50-60	15.6%	23.10%
61-75	24.4%	44%
> 75	3.0%	9.70%
Total	775	134

¹ 2020 ACS 5-year Estimates. This table provides a comparable age category as measured by the survey.

Windsor

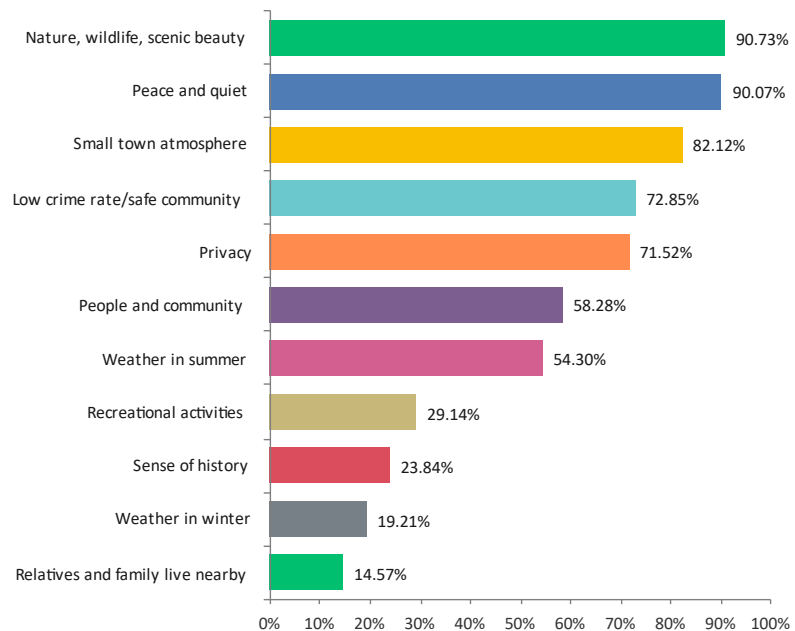
Who We Are

First and foremost, Windsor is a rural community. The survey provided insight into what aspects of Windsor residents liked the most. Respondents stated that they like Windsor for its nature, wildlife, scenic beauty, and peace and quiet. They also highly rate the small-town atmosphere and safe community, privacy, and people in the community. They prefer summer to winter weather, but 20% like Windsor's cold winters. 30% of respondents like recreational activities, and 24% value the sense of history (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Aspects of Windsor Liked Most (Survey)

Q1: What aspects of life in Windsor do you like the most? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 151 Skipped: 0



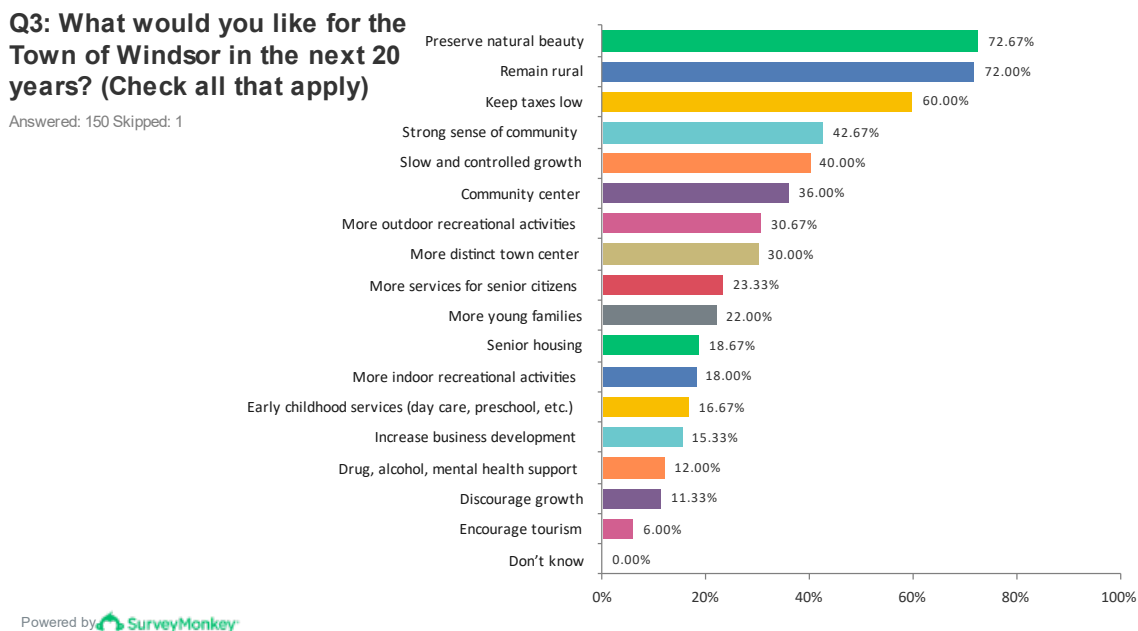
Powered by SurveyMonkey

Survey analysis shows statistically significant relationships between which aspects of Windsor people like and what their age is. Statistical analysis showed that older respondents were more likely to report liking Windsor's sense of history. In comparison, younger respondents were more likely to say they liked Windsor's recreational activities.

The emphasis on our rural nature cannot be overstated. A question was posed to residents about what they would like for Windsor in the next 20 years (Figure 2). The two most reported responses were preserving our natural beauty (73%) and remaining rural (72%). The majority of respondents also reported wanting to keep taxes low (60%). These views are consistent regardless of age. Other priorities for the next 20 years have less support. With few exceptions, there was no difference in priorities based on age and view of keeping taxes low. An important finding is that people who want to keep their taxes low are less likely to support a distinct town center.

At the same time, when priority rankings for younger respondents (aged 25-49) were compared to older residents (over 60), there was a difference in ranking. Younger residents ranked a strong sense of community higher than keeping taxes low. In comparison, older residents preferred keeping taxes low together with slow and controlled growth over a strong sense of community. Older respondents also indicated an interest in a community center, a more distinct town center, and a variety of services for seniors.

Figure 2: Twenty-Year Priority
(Survey)



OUR HISTORY

Long before Europeans arrived what is now known as Windsor, this area was part of a vast region of indigenous land called Muh-he-con-ne-ok. It is estimated that Native people have been in this region for at least 10,000

years, and are still here. Muh-he-con-ne-ok spanned the Hudson, upper Delaware, Housatonic and Connecticut River valleys, from the tidal delta of the Hudson up to Lake Champlain.² It was shared by many bands and tribes, including Mohicans, Munsee (Lenape) and Algonquin. They maintained huge stores of corn, beans and squash in the river valleys, and established year-round settlements throughout the region including the land now known as Windsor. This area provided vital hunting grounds, timber, and other necessary provisions.

The Mohicans befriended the European settlers and some even fought in the Revolutionary War, but land companies and fraudulent deeds forced many Indigenous people out of their settlements. Still others were killed in wars with colonial troops, including Metacom's War (often referred to as King Philip's War) in the 1670's, in which many English settlers also lost their lives. Some of the Indigenous survivors fled to the north, settling for a time in the area of Schaghticoke, north of Albany, N.Y, where the government of the New York colony refused to turn them over to the Connecticut Militia. Over time, most of the tribe members removed to Wisconsin, though many returned to the Berkshires annually and still do.

We are also reminded of the presence of Native peoples and Native history through place names, such as Housatonic, Taghkanic, Catskills, Hoosic, Wahconah and Nessacus, the latter two of which refer to people in a story that took place in 1676.³

It is inherently distorting to look at the history of a seasonally-moving, communal land-sharing society like the indigenous people of our area through the lens of town boundaries and private property. Records indicate that the land now known as Windsor was purchased. Mohican deed here first by Noah Nash on June 2, 1762 from the Massachusetts Bay Province for 1,410 pounds. Part of the requirement of the sale was that "within 5 years, not less than sixty settlers must be established in the township." However, prior to that date, there were deeds showing Mohican ownership of land throughout this area, including Windsor.⁴ Undoubtedly there were and are still Native people living in this area, which is often ignored in mainstream history books.⁵

² Shirley W. Dunn, *The Mohicans and Their Land 1609 to 1730*, 1994, p. 39.

³ Bernard Drew, Ed. *A Bicentennial History of Dalton, Mass. 1784-1984*.

⁴ Information about specific deeds can be found in Harry Andrew Wright, *Indian Deeds of Hampden County*, 1905; Shirley W. Dunn, *The Mohican World, 1680-1750*, 2000, p. 337, Dunn, *Ibid*.

⁵ Much of the material in this section comes from personal communication with Jennifer Lee. For further information, she recommends <https://mohican.com/mt-content/uploads/2015/10/a-brief-history-of-the-mohican-nation-stockbridge-munsee-band-2004.pdf>, which is available online.

By 1771, the township was incorporated, named Gageborough in honor of General Thomas Gage, who served as Commander-in-chief of British forces in the Americas during the French and Indian War and early Governor of Massachusetts. After the Revolutionary War, the town shed its name out of protest against the British and named itself Winsor (functionaries in other places added the “d” in Windsor). The town was incorporated on October 16, 1778.

Townpeople also engaged in agriculture (primarily livestock due to the shallow rocky soils), timber production, and charcoaling. The town’s population grew from 459 in 1776 to 1108 in 1810, with ten district schools and ten sawmills milling the seemingly inexhaustible stands of forest. What had formerly been a heavily forested area became a cleared mountaintop.

By 1850 the forests had been cleared and then the population of the town began to decline, dropping from 897 in 1850 to 375 residents in 1915. Throughout its history, the town has been difficult to reach, with limited



Photo Credit: Susan Phillips

stage services on the line between Northampton and Pittsfield. Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote an account of his travel on a coach from Northampton to Pittsfield, via Windsor. He described the highest point on the road as having “a view for leagues around and being fit for nothing but sheep.”

Demographics

Population

The Town of Windsor has maintained its own yearly census data for several decades. For this Master Plan, we have decided to use these numbers rather than American Community Survey (ACS) or Decennial Census Survey (DCS) numbers because they are more accurate. On average, 98% of households turned in their yearly Windsor census in the five years between 2018 and 2022.

Some information in the master plan comes from the DCS or the ACS when specific Windsor data is unavailable and is referenced as such. As a result, total population figures may differ by small amounts.

According to the 2020 DCS, the Town of Windsor had a total population of 831 (compared to the 2021 Town's census recording of 853 residents). The DCS allows us to look at the population history of Windsor, compared to Berkshire County and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts over a fifty-year time frame. This is presented in Table 2 and shows that while Berkshire County has steadily lost population since 1970 (-13%), Windsor's population increased from 1970 to 2010 (+92%) and then had a slight decrease from 2010 to 2020 (-7%). The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has shown steady and consistent growth since 1970 (+23%).

Table 2: Historical Population – Windsor, Berkshire County, Massachusetts⁶

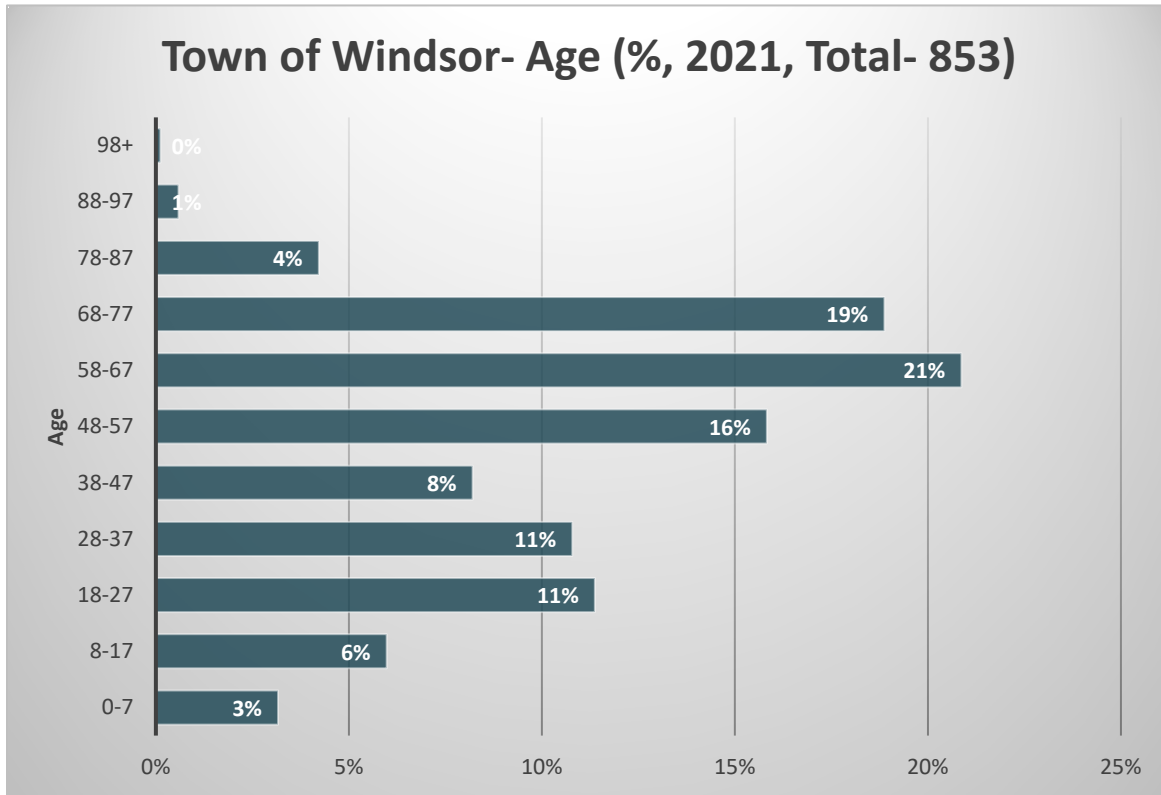
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Windsor	468	598	770	875	899	831
Berkshire County	149,402	145,110	139,352	134,953	131,219	129,926
Massachusetts	5,689,170	5,737,037	6,016,425	6,349,097	6,547,629	7,029,917

The annual town census provides us with a snapshot view of the age distribution of Windsor residents in 2021 (see Figure 3). The population skews older, with close to 50% of the population between the ages of 53 and 77. It is important to note that the number of residents in the four-year age groupings between 18 and 37 years of age are higher than those between 38 and 47. Another related trend is the influx of younger families,

⁶ All data derived from Decennial Census Data, U.S. Census Bureau

showing increases in school-aged children. In 2022, 37 children (4.3% of the total population) between the ages of 0-7 were recorded in the Town census. By comparison, in 2018, only 14 (1.6% of the total population) were recorded.

Figure 3: Windsor Age (2021 Town Census)



It is difficult to project what the population of Windsor will look like in 20 years. The UMass Donahue Institute (which tracks population patterns throughout Massachusetts) forecasts a decrease of 80 residents over the next 20 years. However, the estimates for small towns are less reliable than for communities with larger populations, so this needs to be considered with caution. Increases or decreases in town population will depend upon various factors, although a decreasing and aging population is projected for most of Berkshire County. There is some indication that the overall age distribution has changed since 2000, with the median age of the Windsor population has skewed older (2000 Median Age-40.1, 2019 Median Age-44.7⁷), with decreases in school-aged children in the prior two decades. At the same time, recent town census data indicates an increase in young children, as noted above. Given this uncertainty, the Town should carefully monitor population trends and prepare to mitigate a potential population decrease if the Donahue Institute projection comes to fruition.

⁷ 2000 Decennial Census, 2020 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Sex

Table 3 compares the male-to-female ratio in Windsor based on the 2021 annual census and data from the 2000 DCS. Census records indicate that both in 2000 and 2021, Windsor had more males than females. Males are around 52% of the population, while females are 48% of the population.

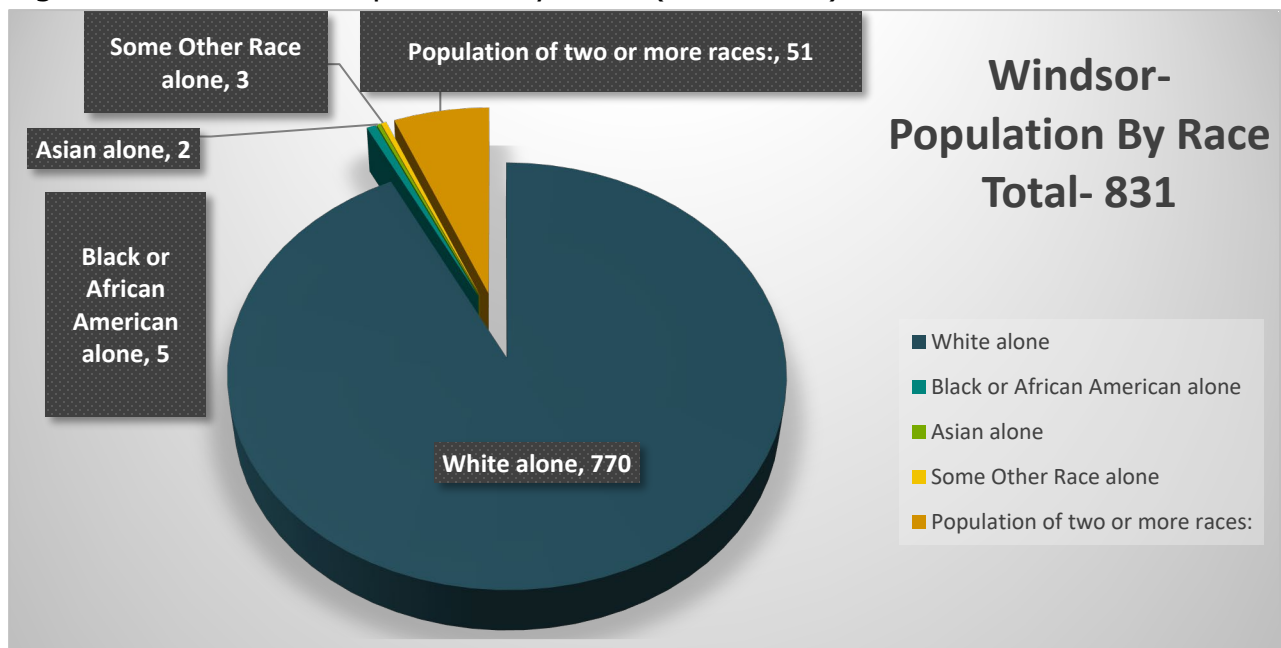
Table 3: Windsor Gender Distribution (2021 Town Census; 2000 DCS)

Gender	Town Census 2021	US Decennial Census 2000
Male	446 (52.2%)	466 (52.1%)
Female	407 (47.7%)	429 (47.9%)
Total	853	895

Racial Composition

The Town's Annual Census does not collect race data, so all race analysis uses 2020 DCS data. Windsor's racial composition echoes the trend seen in most Berkshire County municipalities: the vast majority of the population is white (92.6%). In comparison, a small number of residents identify as some other race or a mix of races (6.4%). This information is presented in Figure 4.

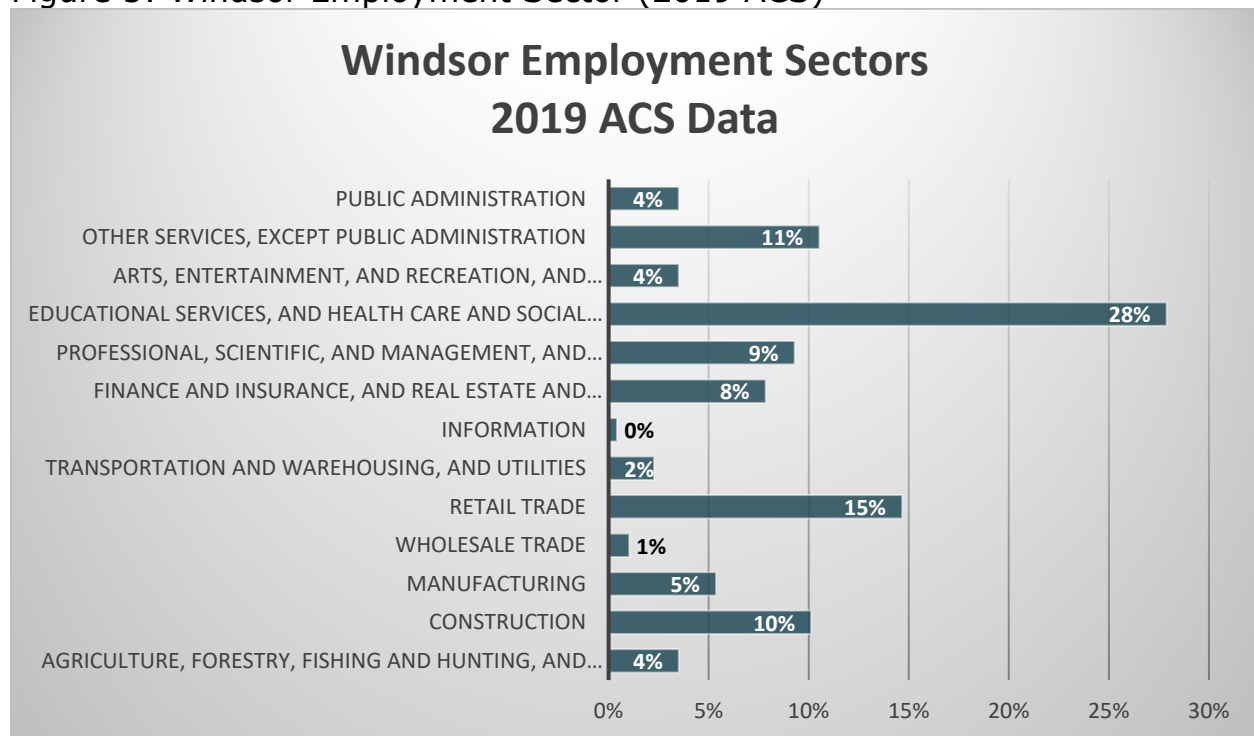
Figure 4: Windsor's Population by Race (2020 DCS)



Employment

According to the 2019 ACS' 5-year estimates, Windsor's residents work in a variety of employment sectors. However, the largest group is currently employed in educational services, health care, and social assistance (estimated at 28%). Other areas of significant employment include retail trade, construction, and other services which are presented in Figure 5. Employment data includes those individuals between 18-65 years of age who are actively employed or seeking employment. Individuals excluded from this data include youth, retirees, disabled individuals, and those ineligible for employment.

Figure 5: Windsor Employment Sector (2019 ACS)



Using a 24-month average of unemployment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to compare Berkshire County towns, Windsor fairs well at 5.0%. This is lower than the unemployment rate in Berkshire County (7.3%), Massachusetts (6.6%), the United States (5.9%), and neighboring towns. This information is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Unemployment Rate, 24-month average (2022 BLS)

Town	Unemployment Rate 24-month average
<u>Windsor</u>	<u>5.0%</u>
Cheshire	6.8%
Dalton	6.7%
Hinsdale	8.5%
Peru	5.5%
Savoy	7.2%
Berkshire County	7.3%
Massachusetts	6.6%
United States	5.9%

Examining recent unemployment data published by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the unemployment rate in Windsor in June of 2022 was 3.7%. For comparison, unemployment rates for Windsor, Berkshire County, neighboring counties, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are presented in Table 5. Unemployment rates in Berkshire County and Hampden County are higher than in Windsor, while all other comparisons show Windsor having higher unemployment.

Table 5: Unemployment Rate: (June 2022 BLS)

Town	June 2022
<u>Windsor</u>	<u>3.7%</u>
Berkshire County	4.1%
Hampshire County	3.2%
Hampden County	4.8%
Franklin County	3.0%
Massachusetts	3.5%

Income

There is very little reliable data about the income of Windsor residents. The Town does not collect this information in its annual survey. Income data is collected as part of ACS data. As previously stated, the margin of error for small towns is significant (over 10%), so the data's reliability is questionable. At the same time, the information is used to calculate the median income of Windsor residents to determine the Town's eligibility to apply for specific income-based grant programs (i.e. HUD funding to build senior housing). The ACS data shows Windsor's 2020 median income to be \$86,840. This income data puts Windsor above the county and state median.

The difficulty in gathering accurate income data was also apparent in the Master Plan survey. One question asked respondents to provide their household income range, but many respondents skipped this question (significantly more than other questions). This is shown in Table 6. It was originally planned to use income in correlation analysis, but this analysis was not conducted due to the high number of missing responses.

Table 6: Income Data (Survey)

Master Plan Survey Responses- Income	Total Number
Respondent Answered Question	114
Respondent skipped Question	37
Less than \$50,000	24
\$51,000-100,000	38
\$101,000-300,000	51
\$300,000-500,000	0
Over \$500,000	1

Given the shifting population, with new permanent residents and younger families, Windsor may want to consider other ways to gather income data to better understand the community's economic base.

Services and Transportation

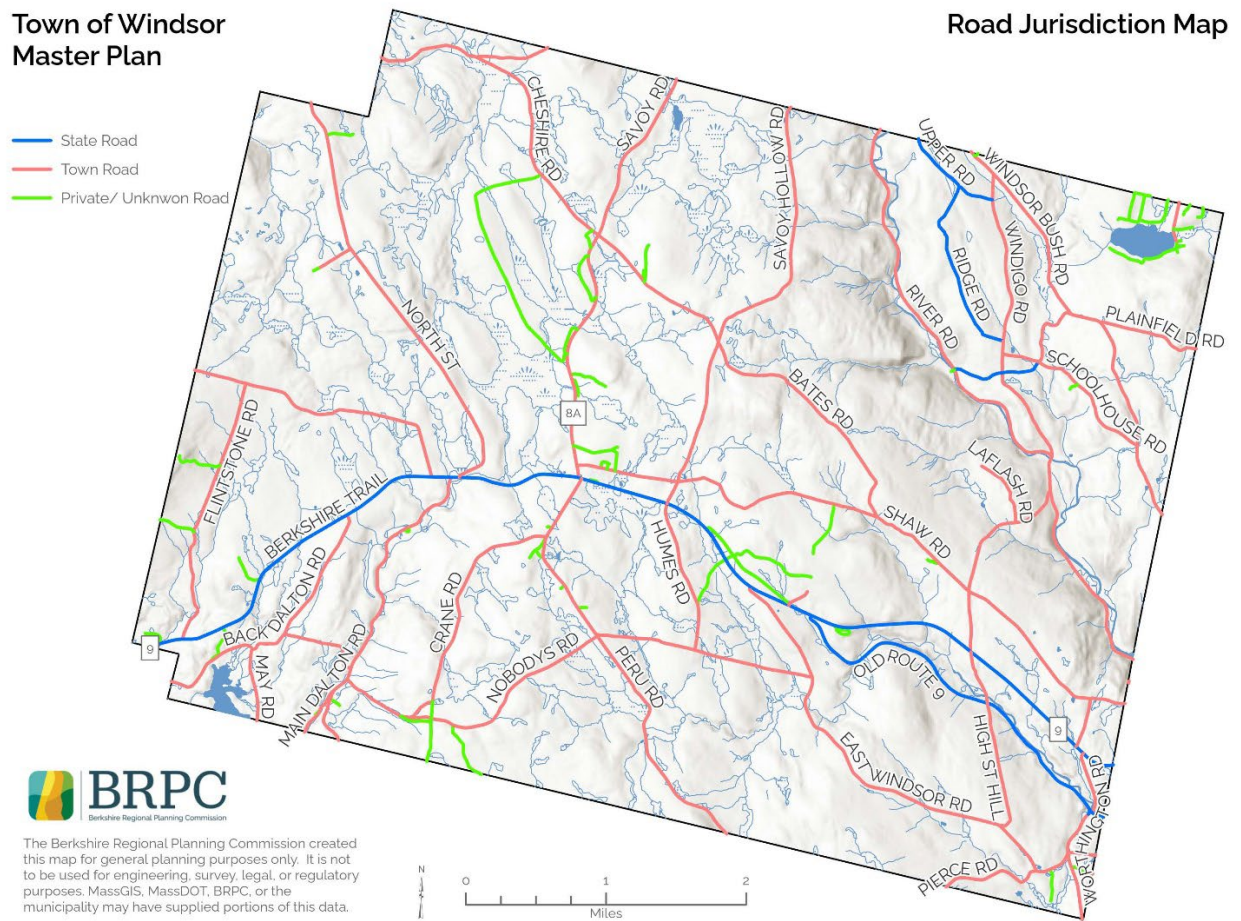
By far, a small town's most significant responsibility is to provide essential services to its residents. This includes maintaining the public roads, providing emergency services, offering trash disposal and recycling services, and addressing public health issues and emergencies.

Windsor's Highway Department comprises the second largest chunk of the annual budget after the regional school assessment and includes the only full-time staff on the Town's payroll. In recent years, the Town has also built and activated the broadband Internet network which it maintains and from which it collects revenue.

Highway Department

The Superintendent and staff operate the Highway Department. As of 2022, the Department is allocated three full-time positions and the Superintendent. The Department maintains approximately 30 miles of paved roads and 30 miles of unpaved roads. Windsor receives \$248,197 in "Chapter 90" funds yearly from the state. The Highway Department is responsible for plowing snow, removing trees, grading dirt roads, mud mitigation, roadside mowing, and drainage and culverts, as well as overseeing significant projects such as repaving and reconstruction of culverts and issuing driveway and trenching permits (Figure 5). Long-term planning for the town also requires an understanding of hazards and climate vulnerabilities, particularly related to road maintenance (see Windsor Hazards Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan).

Figure 5: Windsor Road Jurisdiction Map



The Town Bylaws list all roads, black-topped and unpaved roads. The list of all roads, including unpaved roads, as well as their seasonal open status, is held by the Town Clerk. Currently, there are 76.31 miles of road within Windsor. The most heavily traveled road in the Town is State Route 9, or the Berkshire Trail which is a State Highway. This highway bisects the Town from east to west and provides the Town with connections to Dalton and Pittsfield in the west and Northampton and the Pioneer Valley to the east. The Town maintains its section of Route 8A, which connects the Town to Savoy to the north. There are a variety of state roads and town roads in Windsor. Seasonally closed roads represent a financial uncertainty for the Town, in that if a landowner on one of those roads decides to be a year-round resident, the Town is required to make the road accessible year-round. In some cases, this necessitates some road reconstruction and sometimes dangerous plowing conditions.

From 2019-2020, the Town obtained several grants⁸ in excess of \$2 million which provided funding to work with the Commonwealth to replace three undersized culverts on River Road near Windsor Jamb's State Forest and to repave that entire road. The Town has been developing a road improvement plan as it engages in long-term hazard mitigation planning. In the short term, the goal is to replace additional culverts on Cheshire Road, High Street Hill Road, and Flintstone Road in the near future. These projects—which will be at least partially grant-funded—will help to reduce the chances of road flooding and provide environmental benefits.

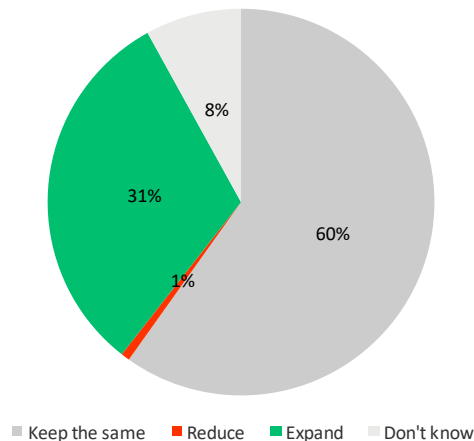
Highway Department Survey Results

One of the public survey goals was to determine town residents' level of satisfaction with road maintenance in the Town. Of the 137 respondents who answered the question "Should the level of road maintenance in Windsor be kept the same, reduced or expanded?" the majority of individuals would like to see roads kept the same (60%). Just over a third of respondents (31%) would like to see services expanded, while 1% would like to see road services reduced, and the remaining 8% didn't know. There is no statistical difference in the view of road maintenance based on age or view on tax.

Figure 6: Road Maintenance (Survey)

Q13: Should the level of road maintenance in Windsor be kept the same, reduced or expanded?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 14



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⁸ MassWorks Infrastructure Program (\$1 million), Westfield Wild and Scenic (\$35,636 and \$88,000), DER (\$165,000; \$150,000), Chapter 90 funds (\$240,000), and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) (\$460,000 with town match of \$131,400)

Residents were also given the opportunity to recommend roads for improvement or provide other comments. Sections of Peru Road, High Street Hill, and Bush Road were referenced by five or more respondents as needing attention, while North Street was highlighted by two respondents. Other comments included wanting dirt roads to be paved, while for others, there was a desire to keep gravel roads to keep the speed down. Some wished for road widening or better road drainage to manage mud and snow season.



Photo Credit: Holly Higinbotham

Emergency Services

Fire Department

Windsor operates a volunteer Fire Department with a station at 2025 Route 9. It is operated by a Fire Chief who is paid a modest stipend and 15 volunteer firefighters - some of whom are also EMTs. The Fire Department is organized as an association with some assets, such as the emergency vehicles and some firefighting gear owned by the Town, while the building is owned by The Association. Through this arrangement, the Association receives rental payments from the Town for the firehouse. The Fire Chief is responsible for staffing and maintaining training and readiness. In addition to responding to fire and medical emergencies, the Department issues burn permits during the early spring and schedules fire inspections for the sale or transfer of property.

One of the department's challenges is finding individuals willing to commit to the constantly increasing extensive training required for the volunteer Fire Department. Recruiting and training additional first responders was also identified as a category of action in the HMCAP. There is a longstanding tradition of using mutual aid agreements with neighboring towns to ensure a rapid shared response. In the future, consolidating fire services with another nearby town may be necessary if the Department cannot maintain adequate staffing. As detailed below, survey responses indicate that although respondents would prefer to maintain Windsor-based emergency services, respondents are open to shared services with another town. This sentiment also applies to police services.

Emergency Management Services

The Town has an emergency manager who is paid a small stipend to assist in other emergencies. The Emergency Manager facilitates town-wide communication in the event of a large-scale disaster or an extended multi-department response. The Emergency Manager also writes grants and coordinates cooperation initiatives with other towns, such as shared resources. This includes operational components for the Regional Emergency Shelter.

Police Department

As of 2022, Windsor has budgeted for a police staff consisting of four part-time officers plus a part-time Police Chief, and the Town maintains a police station in the lower level of Town Offices. When the Police Department offices flooded in 2020, the space received a significant overhaul and

updating of facilities. Surveillance cameras, an evidence room, and interview/questioning room were installed. The Police Department is also working to ensure compliance with the Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission standards for law enforcement training and certification.

While the on-call Windsor Police Department responds to most issues in town, the Massachusetts State Police is utilized during off hours when a local officer is unavailable and for operations requiring significant resources. Additionally, a mutual aid agreement exists between Dalton Police Department and Windsor Police Department to allow for combined response and assistance between the Towns.

Animal Control

The Town has an animal control officer, paid a small stipend, who responds to all types of emergencies involving pets, livestock, and wildlife. In FY21, he reported that he responded to 113 calls.

Emergency Services Survey Results

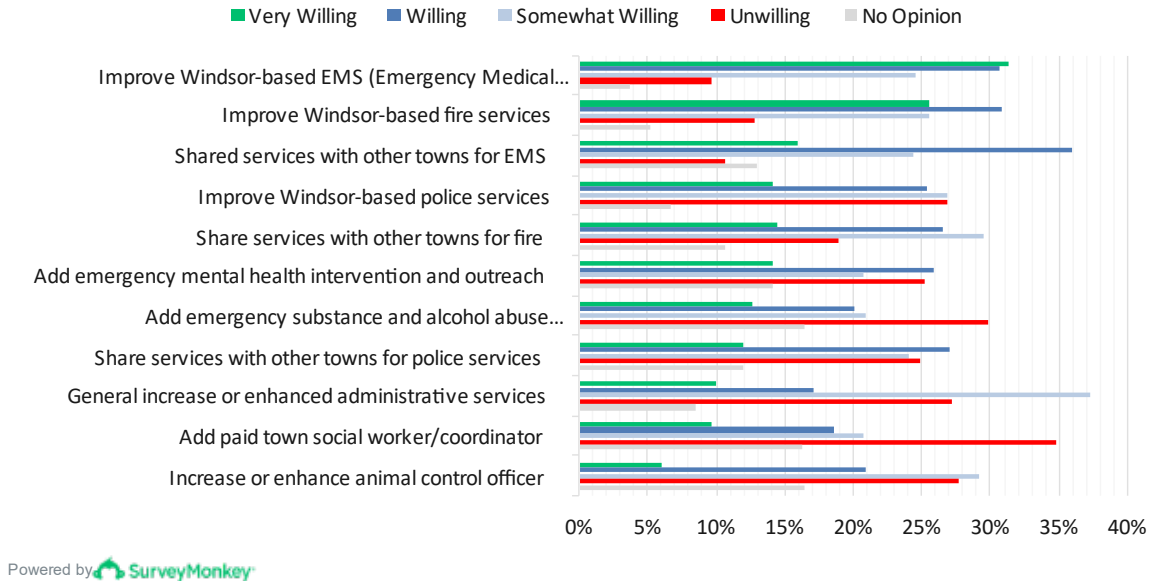
The challenges of maintaining volunteer and/or part-time staffing in the police, fire, and EMS services may present an obstacle to the Town at some point in the future. When asked about preferences for town services, residents were asked how willing they would be to pay more to receive a particular service. This information is presented in Figure 7. Respondents showed a clear preference for Windsor-based emergency services but were willing to consider shared services with other towns.

It is important to note that people who want to keep taxes low are significantly less likely to support paying more for any emergency services.

Figure 7: Preferred Expenditures for Town Services (Survey)

Q12: Changes in state regulations and/or reduced volunteerism may require the town to explore alternate models for services. How willing are you to pay more in taxes to support the following: (Please Choose one answer per row.)

Answered: 135 Skipped: 16



As shown in Figure 7 above, residents were also asked about their view of their willingness to pay more in taxes for other emergency services not currently offered by the Town. There was some support for paying more taxes to add emergency mental health intervention and outreach, with 60% very willing or willing, and adding a paid town social worker, with 50% very willing or willing. There was slightly less support for adding emergency substance and alcohol abuse intervention, with approximately 30% very willing or willing.

Similar to other emergency services, people who want to keep taxes low are significantly less likely to support paying more for any additional services.

Waste Disposal/Transfer Station

The Town operates a transfer station, which handles residents' trash and recycling. The onsite attendant is hired by the Town, who monitors the facility when open. A swap shop on site allows recycling for useful items such as home goods and books. Tire, metal, clothing, battery, and fluorescent/LED light bulb recycling are also available. An annual household fee of \$75 covers the transfer station permit and is available from the Town Clerk. Permitted residents purchase plastic bags from the two general stores

for either 50 cents or \$1, depending on size. Larger items/hazardous items have a disposal fee. These fees cover most of the Town's Transfer Station expenses for the year. Windsor has also received recycling dividends for special projects for the Transfer Station, including sheds for "swap" items or recycling of tires, batteries, lightbulbs, and other hazardous materials. These grants also allow the town to offer home composters at a discounted price.

Broadband

In 2015, the town approved the creation of a town-owned broadband Municipal Light Plant (MLP) under the provisions of MGL Ch 164. Windsor obtained grant funds, appropriated local funds, and issued \$1.35 million in debt to build a town-owned fiber optic broadband network. The network, which went online in early 2021, vastly expanded residents' ability to use the internet to work remotely and access education remotely. In 2022, 77% of households were being served by this network, which is available to all households wishing to join.

Windsor's broadband MLP is a member of Wired West, a non-profit cooperative of broadband MLPs in six towns. The goal of Wired West is to "reduce the administrative burden, cost and risks of owning and operating a fiber network." It shares system-wide costs, such as legal and accounting fees and billing administration, across all six members. At the close of the fiscal year, any surplus income of Wired West, net of retained earnings for reserves, is distributed among its members.

Windsor's MLP is overseen by an elected three-member board. The board has substantial autonomy. It is responsible for setting Windsor's broadband policy objectives and conveying these objectives to Wired West management via its MLP manager, whom it appoints and who represents Windsor on Wired West's Board of Directors. Being a member of a cooperative, Windsor's MLP abides by the decisions of the Board for as long as it is a member. The current policy of the MLP is to utilize its share of Wired West's operating surplus and grants from the Connect America Fund to service the debt the town issued for the project and repay the town for other budget support for the buildout.

As for future planning, the network is not expected to generate surplus revenue for about a decade. At that time, the MLP Board would be planning for network upgrades to meet future standards and considering its responsibility to subscribers and the community.

Windsor Free Public Library

Windsor has a library in the Town Offices building on Peru Road. In 2021, the library had 268 patron visits, although due to COVID-19, it did not maintain open browsing hours. In previous years, the number of patron visits annually averaged 1506. The library has traditionally been open approximately eight hours weekly, with a dedicated staff of 8-10 volunteer librarians. It is financially supported by an operating budget, a state grant, and donations. At the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, the Town voted to pay a stipend to the Library Director. The library has recently joined the CWMARS consortium, making Windsor's collection available to other libraries in the consortium. While Windsor residents have always had the ability to request consortium materials through the Dalton library or the Director, it is expected that the localized CWMARS system will increase library usage. Throughout 2021, the library loaned 773 books, DVDs, and audiobooks to patrons.



Photo credit: Barbara Connors

Public Transportation: Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA)

Windsor is a member of the consortium of communities that make up the BRTA which provides, for a fee, paratransit and on-demand services for residents who are able to schedule their trips in advance. However, this is a rarely utilized service, likely due to the cost per ride, which was \$12.50 each way to Dalton from Windsor in 2022 and \$18 each way to Pittsfield. Currently, no fixed route bus services or circulation routes serve Windsor. The 2020 HMCAP did include working with adjacent communities on transportation options.

Council on Aging

The Council on Aging (COA) is comprised of volunteers who meet monthly to discuss the needs of elderly residents, manage the spending of an annual state grant intended to address services for elders, supervise the activities of the town's outreach worker (who is paid a very modest stipend), and coordinate events such as socials, community luncheons (which were suspended during the pandemic), and other activities. Other activities include a Brown Bag program in collaboration with the Food Bank, delivering monthly supplies to elders, exploring ways to offer volunteer transportation to those in need, and coordinating with other senior programs in the community. The Outreach Worker will also increase communication in the winter to ensure the connectedness and safety of elderly residents.

In 2018, the COA administered a survey to better understand the needs of elders in the community. That survey, linked in the Appendix, received 255 responses, confirmed that Windsor residents want to age in their own homes and suggested modest support for additional services, including housing, for elders. The Master Plan survey asked residents about services for the elderly. In a question about the Town's priority in the next 20 years, 19% reported senior housing as a priority, while 23% prioritized more services for seniors. There was no difference based on age or view of taxes.

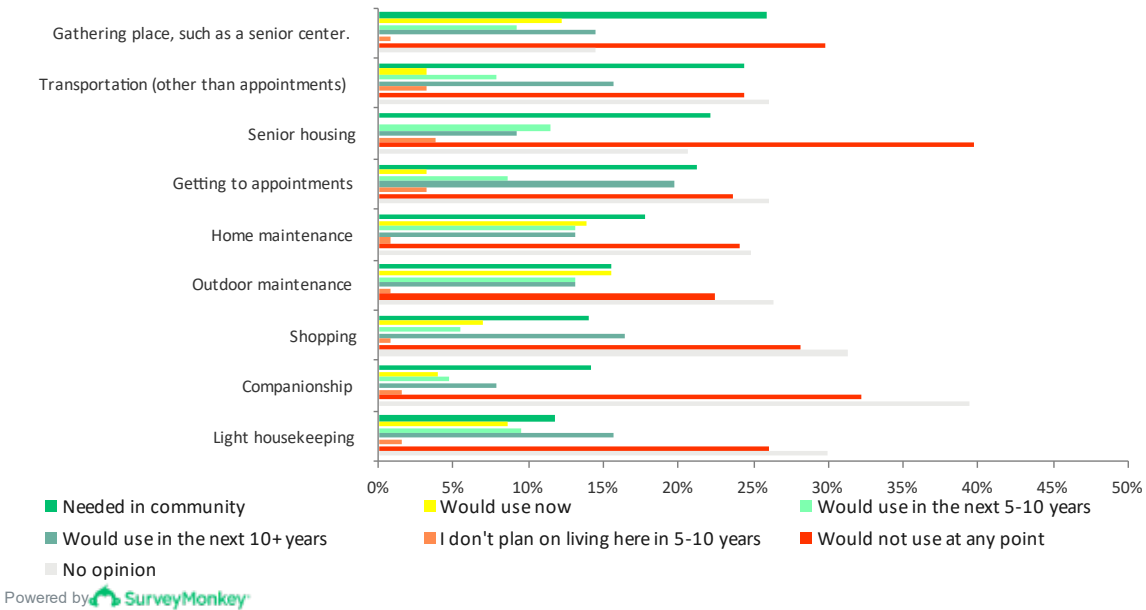
A specific question about elderly services provided more insight into resident priorities. Figure 8 shows how respondents prioritized the needs of elderly residents. Between 20-25% of residents felt that a gathering place (such as a senior center) was needed in the community. Transportation services, getting to appointments, and senior housing, were needed in the community, with over 20% saying it is needed. Home maintenance, light housekeeping, companionship, and other categories were viewed as less

necessary, with under 10% identifying these as a need (Figure 8). There were no differences in these priorities based on age or view of taxes.

Figure 8: Preferred Elder Services (Survey)

Q15: Prior surveys have indicated that more services are needed for elderly residents to age in place. Some of these services are not specific to senior residents. From the list below, what do you think is needed and what do you think you would use now or at any point in the future.

Answered: 135 Skipped: 16



Veterans Service Office

Windsor does not provide specific services for Veterans, but the Town contracts with Pittsfield to ensure compliance with MGL Ch 115. The Pittsfield Veteran's Officer (VSO) is contracted to connect veterans to local services and health care. The flat rate contract includes additional charges for each case handled by the VSO. An analysis of the contract and expenditures suggests that the VSO does not have active Windsor cases. Contact information for the VSO is found on the Town's website.

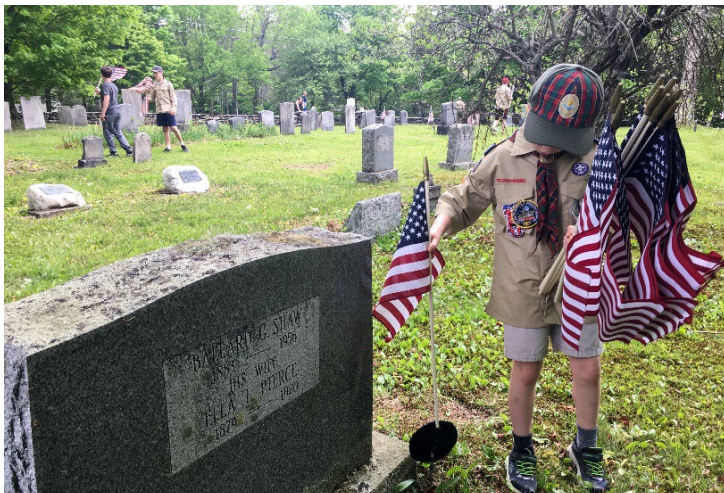


Photo credit: Barbara Connors

Facilities

The Town maintains five buildings, plus the Town Park, the transfer station (discussed in the Services chapter), and the land containing the old landfill.

Town Building Improvements

Improvements to several town buildings and the park, between 2015 and 2022 have been made with the goal of improving energy conservation, addressing structural issues, and reducing the costs of maintaining the buildings. The total cost of these projects was \$479,856, of which Town funds paid \$75,743, or 15.8% of the total costs. Some non-town funds came from donations (\$12,376) and the rest (\$391,737) came from rebates, grants, and state and federal funding sources. Several but not all projects were intended to reduce the Town's energy consumption and energy costs, in alignment with the Town's commitment in 2014 to be a Green Community according to state guidelines. These projects included installation of a photovoltaic grid (i.e.. solar panels) at the Town Office, as well as improvements in both the Town Hall and Town Office where significant insulation measures have been undertaken, energy-efficient air-source heat pumps have been installed, replacing old and less efficient oil-fired boilers, and energy-efficient tankless water heaters have replaced water heater tanks. During the summer of 2022, the Select Board voted to spend \$126,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money to replace the roof of the highway garage with insulated roofing panels. This will undoubtedly reduce heating costs for that building.

When average annual energy costs in FY20, FY21, and FY22 were compared to FY15, there was a \$24,606 or 35% reduction in costs. FY22 saw a 32% reduction in energy usage compared to FY15. In addition, the town takes in revenues through the SREC program for the energy produced by the photovoltaic panels, which over four years has earned \$20,585 for the town's general fund.

Town Hall

Windsor's Town Hall has an interesting history and generates particular concern among some Town residents. Some residents express worry that the building is constructed on land that is not owned by the Town, and they have concern for the age and condition of the building. The current Town Hall was constructed in the late 1800's on land owned by the church next door, after a previous structure that had been built in the mid-1800's burned down. It was common practice in the mid-1800's for town buildings to be

constructed on church land, when municipal buildings needed the blessing of the Town's church. The Town has a 50-year \$1 lease, renewable every 50 years at the Town's discretion as long as the building is used as a town building, it is fully within the Town's domain. Historically the Town Hall was used for local government, with the first meeting held in the facility on November 4, 1856. Through much of Windsor's history, the space has also been used for community gatherings, like dances and dinners. Currently, the Town Hall is used for special events, such as senior luncheons, plays, fundraisers, and town meetings. The facility has a commercial kitchen for small events (Figure 9) and it is available to rent. During the Pandemic in 2020, grant funding allowed volunteers to use the facility to prepare three meals/week for town residents.

Figure 9: Town Hall Building



Photo Credit: Seth Jenkins

Town Hall improvements to date have included an addition in 1908, electrical wiring in 1929, and a kitchen in 1930. In more recent years, the accessible ramp and accessible bathrooms were installed. Structural improvements in 2021 included replacing foundation sills, clapboards, and a new paint job. In 2021 and 2022, insulation, a tankless water heater, and air source heat pumps were installed to ensure energy efficiency. These

improvements to the facility move the Town closer to designating the building as a regional emergency shelter, in accordance with the 2020 HMCAP.

Town Office Building



Crane
School, 1955



Photo Credits: Top: Windsor Historical Commission, Bottom Susan Phillips

The Town Offices are in the former Crane School. The Town built the school in 1919 and opened in September 1920. The school initially served 60 students up through 7th grade after the Town agreed to close all of its one-room schoolhouses except the Bush School. It remained open until the early 1990's, after which the building became the Town Offices. Housed in this structure are the offices of administrative personnel, including the Select Board, the Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Assessor, Tax Collector/Treasurer, Building Inspector, as well as the Police Department and Library.

A combination of town investment and grants have enabled the Town to make major improvements to this building, including a chimney repair, repainting, installing gutters around the building, structural improvements, on-demand water heaters, insulation, air source heat pumps, accessible entrances and bathrooms on both the first

and second floors, and a grid-tied photovoltaic energy array that covers the bulk of the electricity usage in the building.

Historic Commission Building

The Historic Commission maintains a building that hosts a collection of historical archives. The museum is located on the north side of Route 9, across from the Highway Department. The building itself is historic, having been built prior to 1876. It was moved to its current location from Savoy Hollow Road in 1975. The building houses historical artifacts, but due to the lack of temperature controls, any sensitive documents are stored in the Town Hall. This is leading to the deterioration of the collection. The Historical Commission has used its annual budget, which included a Town investment of \$25,500 distributed over three years, and volunteer labor to make improvements to the building including painting, and exterior repairs, with future plans for additional structural repairs.

As noted below in the “Views on Investment” section, there is community support to invest resources in the historic museum collection, either with climate-controlled space or improving display space.

East Windsor Chapel

The Town owns the East Windsor Chapel, a historic church located on Old Route 9 near Worthington Road in the southeastern corner of the Town (Figure 10). It was built in 1911. This facility lacks basic infrastructure (electrical, water, sewage treatment) and is used for a limited number of events annually. Respondents to the Master Plan survey did not express a clear intention for the building. Some residents wanted to improve the building, others to demolish it, and others wished to do nothing with the building. Currently, the Town has no plans for improvements to the facility, however, with sufficient town support it could be updated and used for town functions. One major limitation is that there is no way to install septic at that location due to the size of the lot and its proximity to the river. In the past there have been discussions about moving the chapel to the lot on Route 9 where the Historical Museum is located.

Figure 10: East Windsor Chapel



Photo Credits: Susan Phillips

Highway Department Buildings

The Highway Department has two buildings, a salt shed and a garage that includes an office, a break room, and a large workspace where vehicle maintenance and other indoor work occurs. The garage, built in the early 1970s, has needed a new roof for several years (due to significant leaks) and replenished insulation. In 2022, the Select Board agreed to set aside American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to pay for a new roof. A bid was accepted for \$126,000 for a roof with insulated panels that will bring the level of insulation from an R-value of near 0 to an R-value of 38. The building will still require wall insulation to complete the weatherization needs of the building.

Old Landfill

The Town previously operated a landfill which closed in 1996. This landfill is adjacent to the current transfer station. A state regulation (310 CMR 16.0 and 19.00) requires that uncapped landfills be tested regularly by the state and may have to be capped at the state's direction. This landfill was first tested in 1999, which resulted in the State requiring the Town to remove an old vehicle and some concrete Jersey barriers. There has been random testing to discern if there is seepage from the land, which is part of the determination about whether the landfill will need to be capped. The development of a capping plan was also included as a category of action in the 2020 HMCAP. There has also been some discussion of whether traditional capping is the best option due to costs and environmental disruption, as well whether there are innovative solutions that can be utilized for cost avoidance or revenue generation (for example, a solar farm).

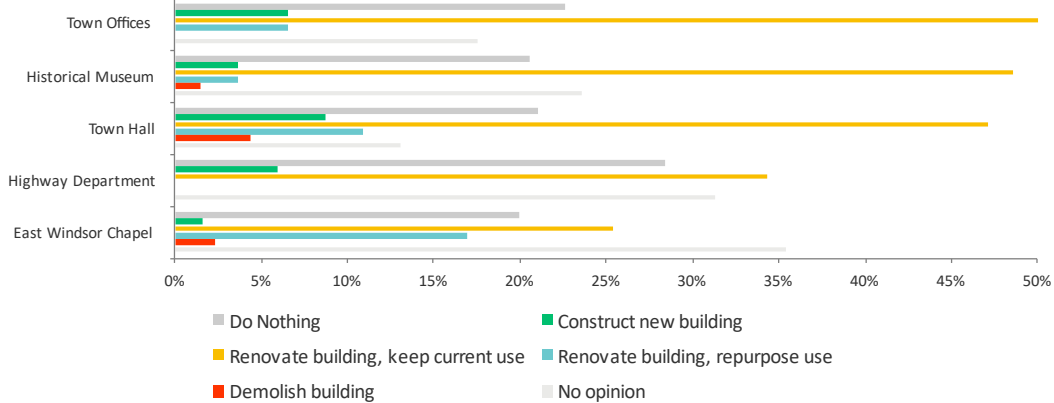
Town Building Survey Results

The survey sought to understand respondents' opinions about maintaining existing buildings, investment in new buildings and park amenities, and desired uses. When asked which town buildings should be invested in, respondents felt that the Town Offices warranted renovation (50%), followed by the Town Hall (47%), Historical Museum (48%), Highway Department (34%), and lastly East Windsor Chapel (25%). This information is presented in Figure 11. There was no clear preference from respondents for East Windsor Chapel.

Figure 11: Preferred Outcomes for Town Buildings (Survey)

Q9: The Town owns five buildings: Town Hall (Rt 9 next to Church), Town Offices (corner of Rt 9 and Peru Rd), Highway Department Building (Rt 9), Historical Museum (Rt 9), and the East Windsor Chapel (Old Rt 9). As we plan for Windsor's future, we would like to know your preference on what to do with current town-owned buildings. (Please Choose one answer per row.)

Answered: 138 Skipped: 13



Powered by SurveyMonkey

Opinions on Facility Investment

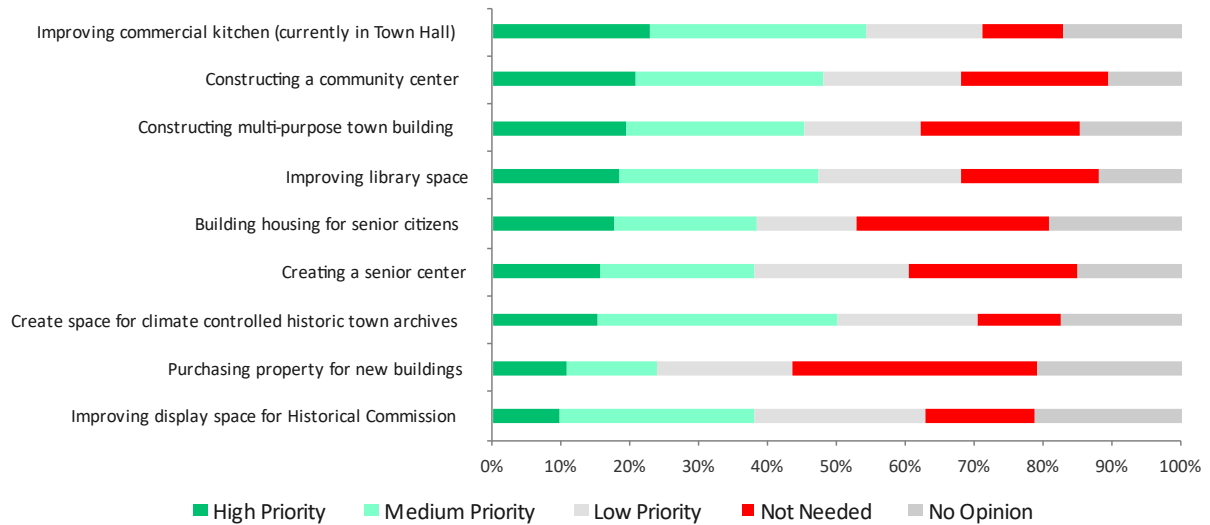
Residents were asked about investments in town facilities and which items should be a priority for the Town (Figure 12). Among the lowest priority for respondents was purchasing property for new buildings, with a majority stating it was not needed (35%) or a low priority (20%). Similarly, about 40% of respondents said that senior housing and a senior center were either not needed or a low priority for the Town. –

By contrast, improvements to the commercial kitchen was the most supported investment, with 23% of respondents endorsing this as a high priority and 31% stating this is a medium priority. 20% said constructing a community center or multi-purpose building was a high priority and 27% was a medium priority, and 19% said that improving library space was a high priority and 29% a medium priority. An outcome for the survey requires further exploration, in that 20% want to construct a community/multipurpose center, but 35% do not want to devote town resources to buying land for new buildings.

Figure 12: Preferred Investments in Town Facilities (Survey)

Q10: Within the next 20 years, Windsor will need to invest in or replace our physical infrastructure. In addition to current buildings, we would like to know how much of a priority the following should be for investment? (Please Choose one answer per row.)

Answered: 138 Skipped: 13



Powered by SurveyMonkey

Analysis of those respondents who stated that taxes should be kept low (90 respondents constituting 60% of those responding to that question) was completed to determine what those individuals were willing to invest in. Almost 50% of these respondents were willing to invest in the renovation of the Town Hall, the Town Office building, and the Historical Museum, but they were more reluctant to invest in the East Windsor Chapel and the Highway Department facilities. Those who would like to keep taxes low are less likely to support climate control in the historical archives and investment in the Historical Society.

Town Park

Windsor has a five-acre community park located on Peru Road, south of the Town Hall building. The park has a parking lot, a baseball field and backstop, a playground, a cement chess/checkers table, a covered pavilion, and a fire pit. Community events are held at the park at various times during the year. From 2021-2022, the Parks & Rec Committee raised money and used ARPA funding to replace playground equipment on the site, at a total cost of \$81,000. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on July 9, 2022. Since the new playground was constructed, it has increased usage of the

park and has become a community gathering place, especially for families with young children.

Town Park Survey Results

Priorities for the Windsor Town Park are shown for all respondents in Figure 13. A majority of respondents are supportive of adding a bathroom (76%) and running water (64%) to the site. A majority of residents (50%) would like to see a walking/running track.

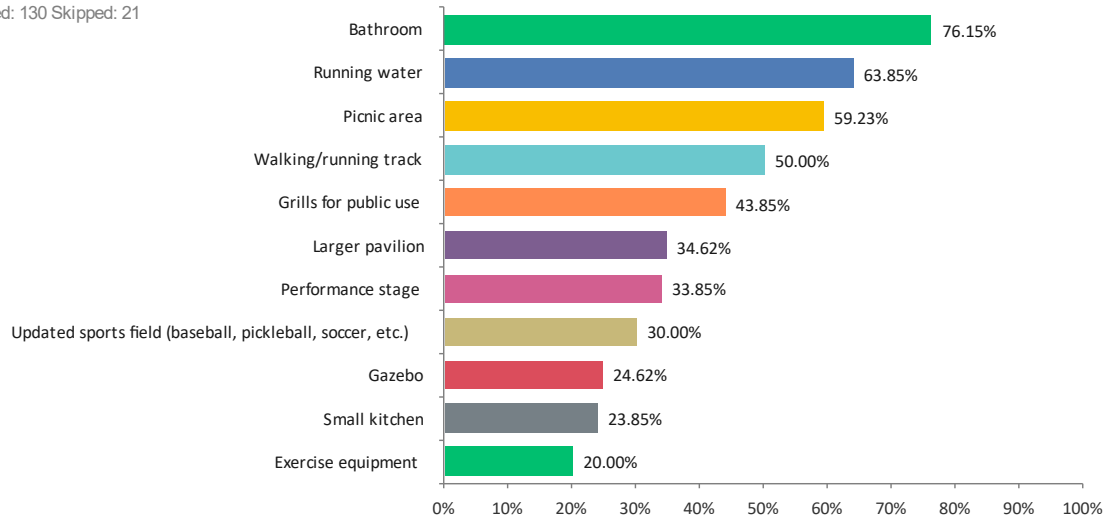


Photo credit: Barbara Connors

Figure 13: Preferred Investment Windsor Town Park (Survey)

Q8: The Windsor Town Park is a 5acre open space on Peru Road. It currently has a baseball diamond, small shed, fire pit, pavilion, and vintage playground with a memorial bench. A new playground is scheduled to break ground in Spring 2022. What amenities would you support adding to the park? Check all that apply:

Answered: 130 Skipped: 21



Powered by SurveyMonkey

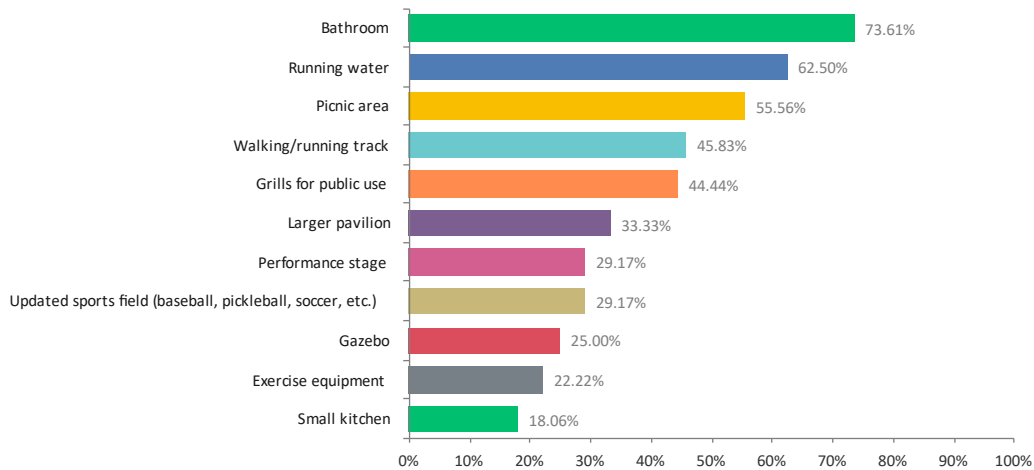
When results were examined more closely, taking into consideration the age of respondents, there were interesting patterns that emerged. A close third priority, especially among younger residents, were a picnic area and public grills. Many younger residents mentioned wanting more recreational activities and a community gathering space to serve as a meeting location.

Relative to keeping taxes low, the same pattern of priorities emerged. However, among those who preferred to keep taxes low, there was slightly less support across most categories (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Preferred Investment Windsor Town Park for Those Who Wish to Keep Taxes Low (Survey)

Q8: The Windsor Town Park is a 5-acre open space on Peru Road. It currently has a baseball diamond, small shed, fire pit, pavilion, and vintage playground with a memorial bench. A new playground is scheduled to break ground in Spring 2022. What amenities would you support adding to the park? (Taxes Low)

Answered: 72 Skipped: 18



Powered by SurveyMonkey



Photo Credit: Barbara Connors

Housing

Windsor is a primarily residential town consisting of single-family homes on multi-acre lots. New home construction requires a 3-acre minimum lot size without a variance. There are no cluster developments, condominium developments, or subsidized elderly, disabled, or low-income housing. The majority of homes are occupied year-round, although those on Windsor Pond are mainly seasonal cottages occupied only in the summer months.

The following figures represent data from a variety of sources about a variety of property types, over the course of several years. This is the reason for the discrepancy in housing numbers.

Most of the homes in Windsor are owner-occupied as shown in Figure 15. The 2021 Town Assessor records show 74% of single-family homes in Windsor are owner-occupied. According to Windsor Town Assessor records⁹ from 2023, there were 487 taxable residential parcels, with 451 coded as single-family residence (the 451 does not include Chapter 61 properties). According to the assessor, 98% of Windsor homes are single-family detached dwellings, 0.5% are single-family attached dwellings, and 1.8% are 2-unit dwellings. The Census Bureau does not have records of any other type of housing within Windsor such as multi-family units, boat home, RV, van, etc. It is also reported that approximately 80 of those homes are located on Windsor Pond and are occupied only seasonally. There are approximately 30 additional second homes spread throughout the Town. The Assessor also reported that approximately 5 units are vacant and possibly abandoned. The average single-family residential tax bill was \$2873 in 2022. Only a few properties are rented.

The 2020 ACS 5-Year average householders' movement is displayed in Figure 16. Approximately 100 moved into their home before the year 1990 (see Figure 16). There has been some migration to, or within, Windsor in more recent decades – specifically between 1990 and 1999 when 81 households moved to a home in town (21%)¹⁰ – but overall migration to Windsor or even moving from one home to another within town has been infrequent compared to prior to 1989. This suggests there is relative stability in the population. According to ACS data, 28% of homes were built between 1980-1989, with the next most frequent age of home, 18%, built before 1939 (Figure 17).

⁹ Town records are not in complete parity with the U.S. Census records. For example, the 2020 DCS shows 473 housing units in 2020. It is outside the scope of this report to explain this difference in housing units between the two surveys.

¹⁰ 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profile, Table DP04

Figure 15: Windsor Single Family Housing Status (Town Records)

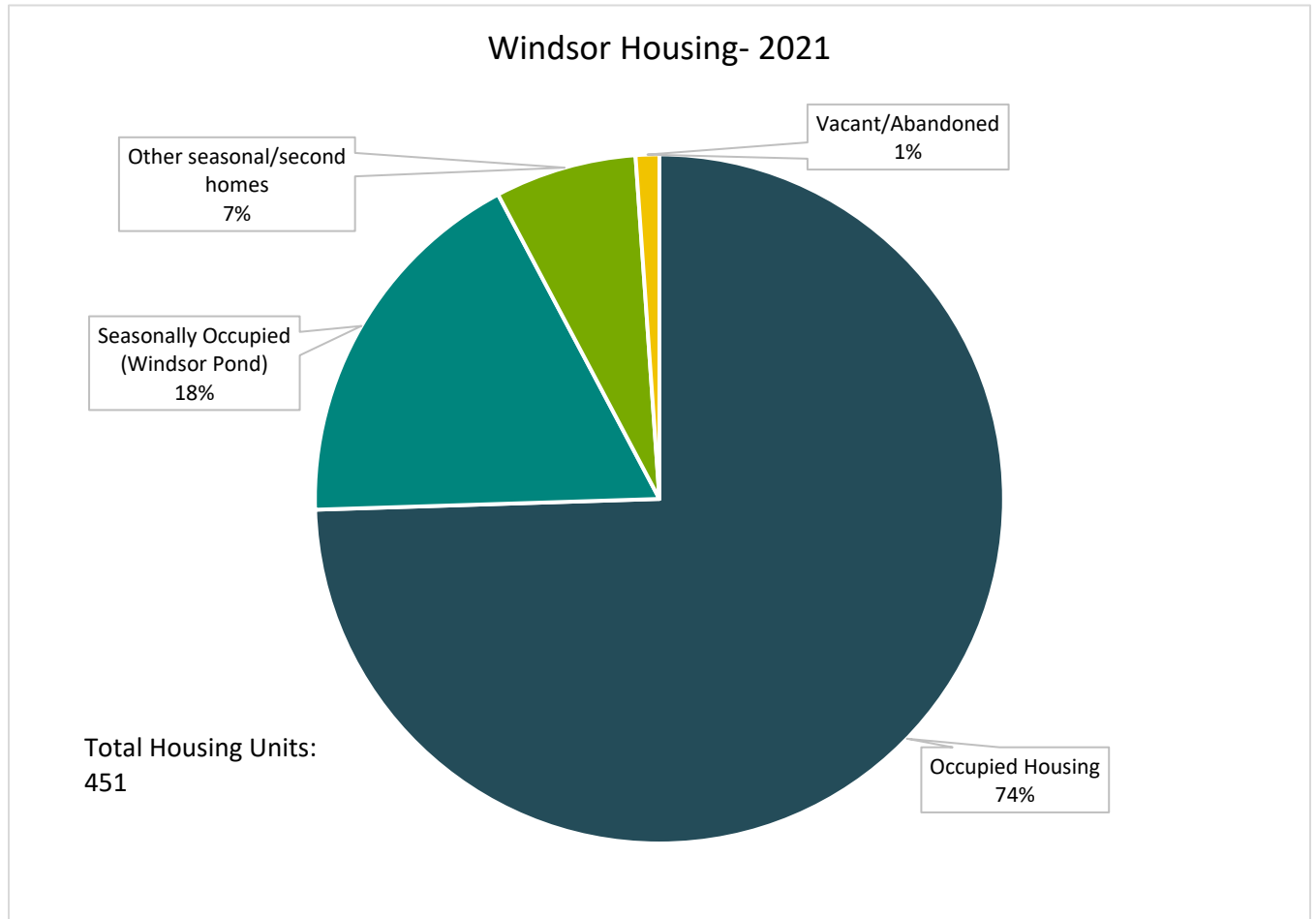


Figure 16: Windsor Housing, Year of Occupancy (2020 ACS)

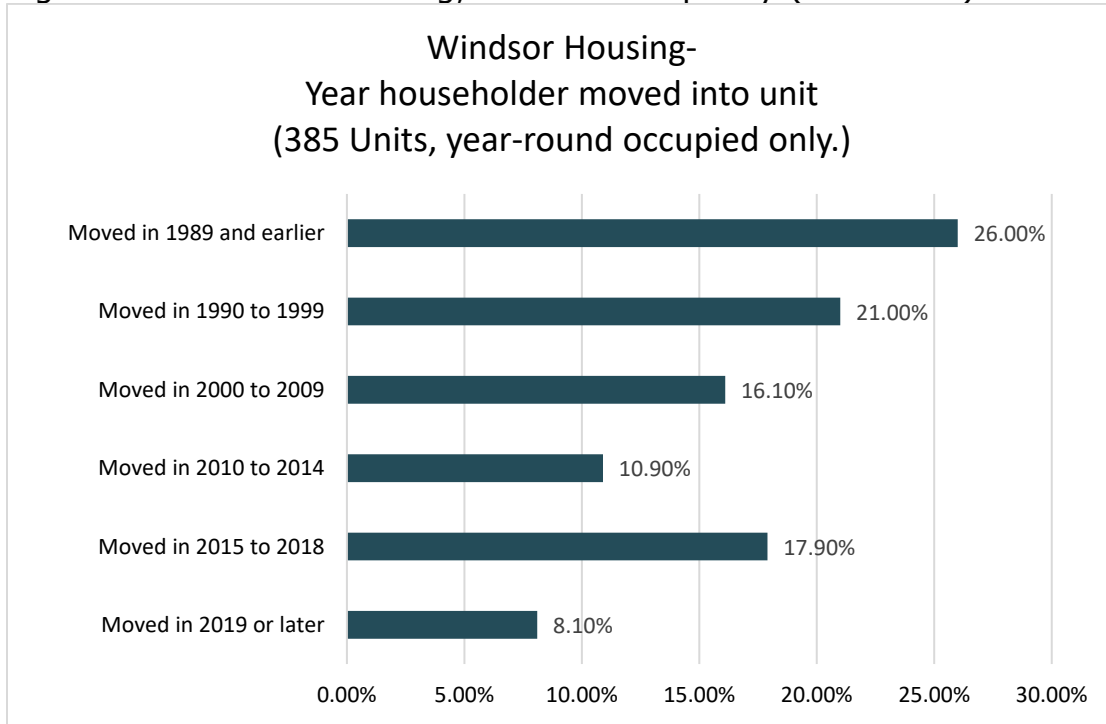
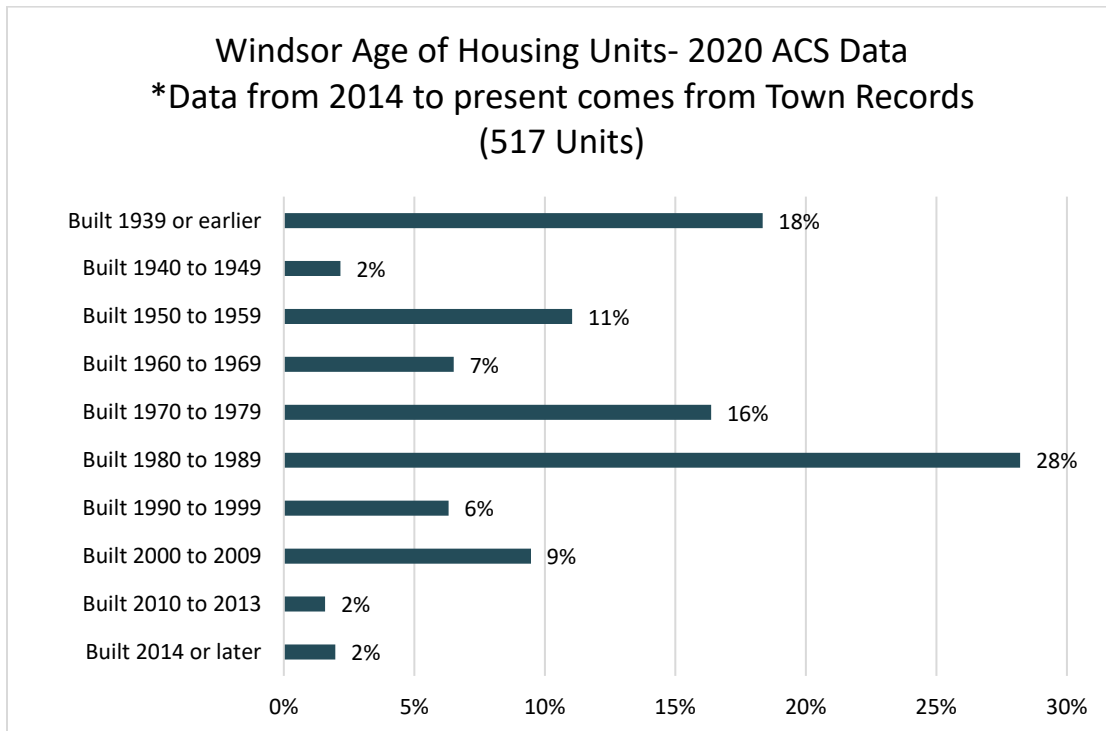
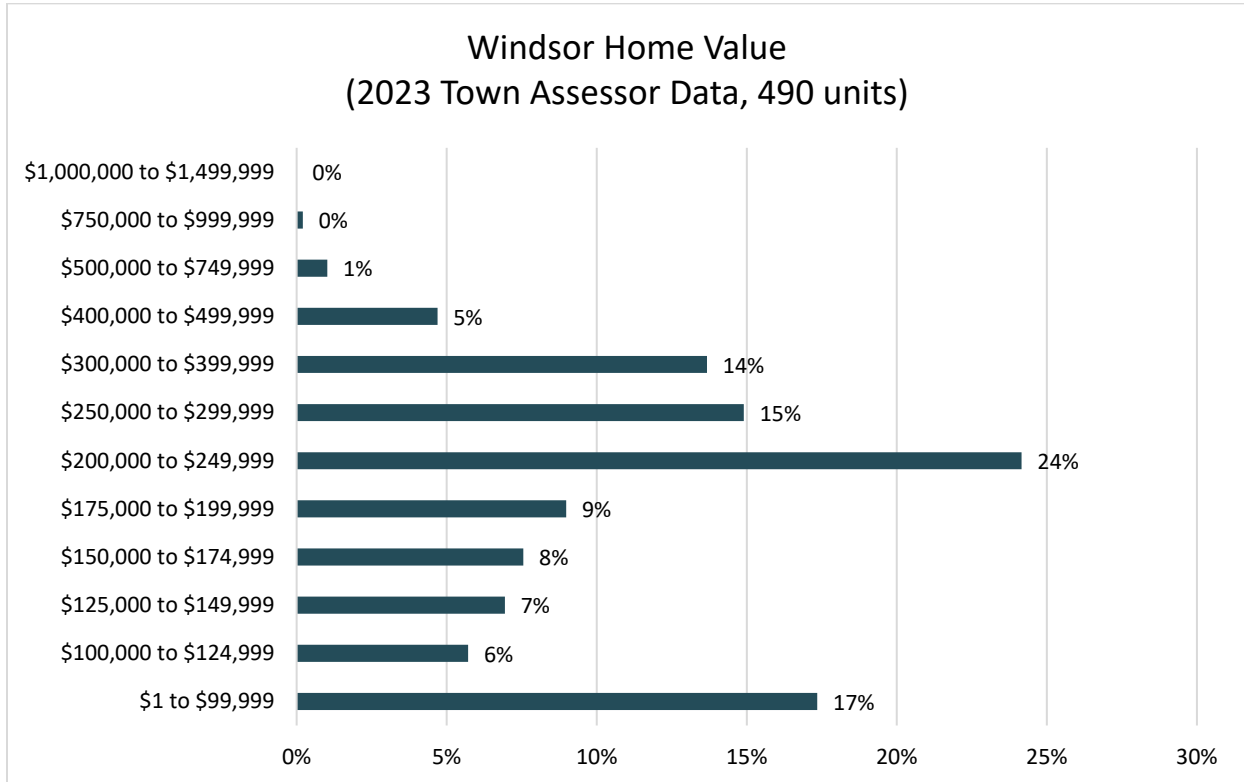


Figure 17: Windsor Age of Housing (2020 ACS)



Shown in Figure 18 below, Town Assessor records show the assessed value of homes in Windsor. The highest frequency assessed value is between \$200,000 and \$250,000 and the second most frequent is below \$100,000.

Figure 18: Windsor Housing Value (2023 Assessor)



Housing Survey Results

Aging in place is a potential area of consideration in Windsor's Master Plan. One aspect of this is senior housing. As seen in the discussion about Question 10 above (Figure 12), survey respondents did not heavily endorse the idea of building housing for seniors. Less than 20% saw it as a high priority, and about 20% stated it was a medium priority for the Town. By contrast, 60% of respondents said it was low priority or not needed or offered no opinion.

When respondents were asked about services they would use, 20% said they would use senior housing if it were available in town.

Land Use and Open Space



Photo credit: Barbara Connors

Windsor is a largely rural town. Its total land area is 35.26 square miles, and it lies at the point of Latitude 42 31' North and Longitude 73 02' West. The most prominent land use in Windsor is forested land, which constitutes 82% of the land cover. This is followed by wetlands that constitute another 7.5%. Grass and shrubland, and agricultural land each make up 4.5% and 3.7% respectively. (Grass and shrubland include residential lawns as well as utility easements.) Open lands also include roads (both paved and unpaved), parking areas, and empty lots. Water, residential, mixed-use, and commercial land all make up less than 1% of each of the available land in the town.

Of the Town's total land area, 48% is owned by the state, utility companies, and non-profit organizations, or has been placed in conservation designation. None of this land is available for development. 31% of the land area is owned by the state or a qualifying nonprofit organization such as the Trustees of Reservations, and it is exempt from taxation. The state offers "Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for its land but the Trustees do not.



Photo credit: Barbara Connors

PILOT payments are lower than the tax rate and payment is reflected on the annual cherry sheets¹¹. Private land that is enrolled with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Chapter 61 Tax Abatement program, which prevents the land from being developed, makes up 16.8% of the Town's open land and reduces the landowner's tax liability so that the landowner pays a lower tax. If the land is sold, the Chapter 61 status may be eliminated if the new owner chooses to develop it, in which case the back taxes must be paid. This program offers some opportunity for the community to remain rural and agriculturally based, at least temporarily. It can also help to reduce farm expenses and make farms more profitable. One other conservation option, requiring an act of the Legislature via Act 97, is to place a permanent conservation restriction on a parcel of private land, after which it becomes state land for which PILOT applies. This type of restriction requires that there be public access to the land. There is at least one parcel of unknown size conserved in this manner in Windsor.

¹¹ A cherry sheet is the official notification from the Commissioner of Revenue of the upcoming fiscal year's state aid and assessments to cities, towns, and regional school districts.

Survey respondents showed a strong preference for keeping Windsor rural and encouraging farming in the community (Windsor is also a “right-to-farm” community”), which suggests that conservation actions may benefit the Town if additional landowners take advantage of them.

Without specifically detailing land restrictions, general land use categories in Windsor are shown in Figure 19 and presented in Table 7.

Figure 19: Windsor Land Use (Mass GIS Data, 2016)

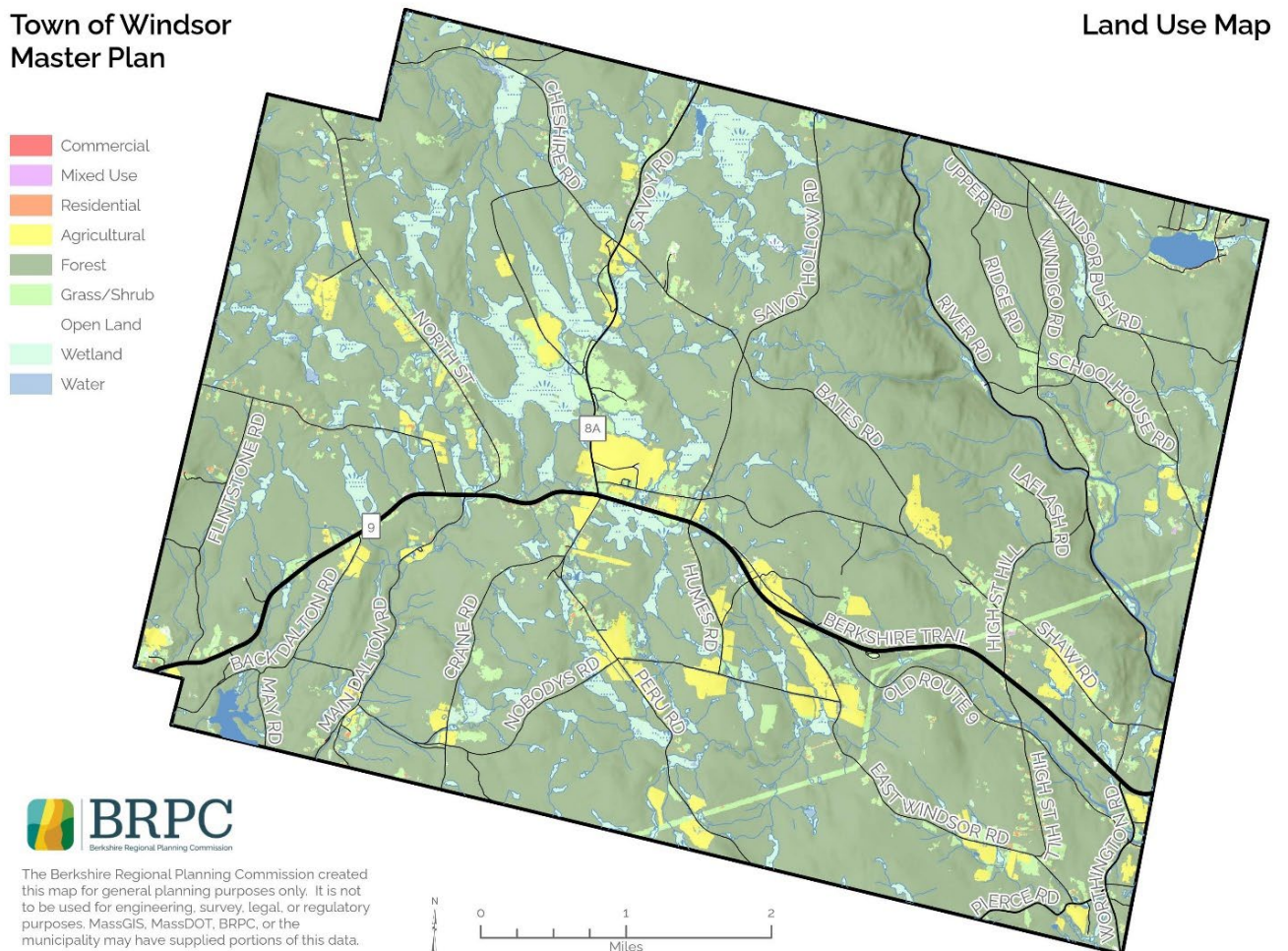


Table 7: Windsor Land Use (MassGIS Data, 2016)

Land Use	Acres	Percentage
Commercial	2.0	0.01%
Mixed Use	7.6	0.03%
Residential	72.8	0.32%
Agricultural	827.0	3.67%
Forest	18469.4	82.07%
Grass/Shrub	1026.4	4.56%
Open Land	263.4	1.17%
Wetland	1693.4	7.52%
Water	141.7	0.63%
Total	22503.70 ¹²	

Currently, the Town has a single, by-right residential-agricultural zoning district throughout the Town. This allows for single-family residences and accessory structures, agricultural uses and structures, customary home occupations, professions, crafts or arts, based in a residence with appropriate parking and signage; as well as religious or educational institutions. Parcels must have a minimum of 250' of frontage on a town road and buildings must be constructed in accordance with all front, side, and rear setback requirements.

¹² Land Use information derived from a combination of 2016 aerial imagery and standardized parcel information for Massachusetts.

Westfield Wild & Scenic



Photo credit: Barbara Connors

The Wild and Scenic Westfield River Committee is an organization composed of representatives from each of the towns in the watershed, including Becket, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Huntington, Middlefield, Savoy, Washington, Windsor and Worthington. The mission of the organization is to focus on protecting the watershed of the Westfield River, which is designated as a National Wild and Scenic River and runs through many towns in multiple states. In Windsor, this includes Drowned Land Brook from its headwaters in Windsor to the confluence with the East Branch of the Westfield River in

Savoy, and Windsor Jambs Brook from the junction of Phelps Brook and Clear Brook to its confluence with the East Branch in Windsor, which joins the main body of the Westfield in East Windsor.

In 2021, the organization released a Stewardship Plan for all parts of the watershed spanning several hilltowns and neighboring communities. It emphasized the importance of protecting the water quality of the river and its tributary streams, particularly the temperature of those water bodies in order to protect fish and plants that rely on those habitats. It also highlighted the importance of protecting land that abuts the watershed and stream, limiting overuse of land that abuts the watershed or stream, and addressing the intrusion of invasive plants in those areas. The goals and highlights of the Stewardship Plan are linked in the Appendix of this report and should be referenced as new bylaws are developed, as the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) considers applications, and as the Highway Department considers future road repairs and remediation.

Zoning Ordinance

The original Zoning Bylaws for the Town were enacted at a Town Meeting in April 1965. There have been nine amendments over time, most recently in January 2020. The stated purpose of the zoning bylaw—consistent with the Zoning Enabling Act, Chapter 40A of Massachusetts General Laws—is “the promotion of the health, safety, convenience and general welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Windsor; protection of property values; increase the beauty and amenities of the Town; conserve natural conditions and secure from fire, congestion, and confusion by encouraging the most appropriate uses of the land within the Town.”

The town’s most recent bylaw amendments concern wind power (2005), solar field installations (2015), cell towers for wireless communications (2018), accessory dwelling units (2018), marijuana establishments (2018, amended 2019), and Large Scale Industrial and Commercial Facilities (2020). These bylaws were developed in response to proposals or projects that came to the Town’s attention, or because these issues had arisen in neighboring communities. According to these bylaws, such uses are allowed by a special permit which is issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals, which considers the impact of a variance on the Town’s resources. Prohibited uses that are specified in the bylaws include junkyards and heavy industrial uses, pipelines of 6” or larger, signs that make noise, flash or move or that are painted directly on a building, collection, storage or disposal of radioactive waste, and landfills.

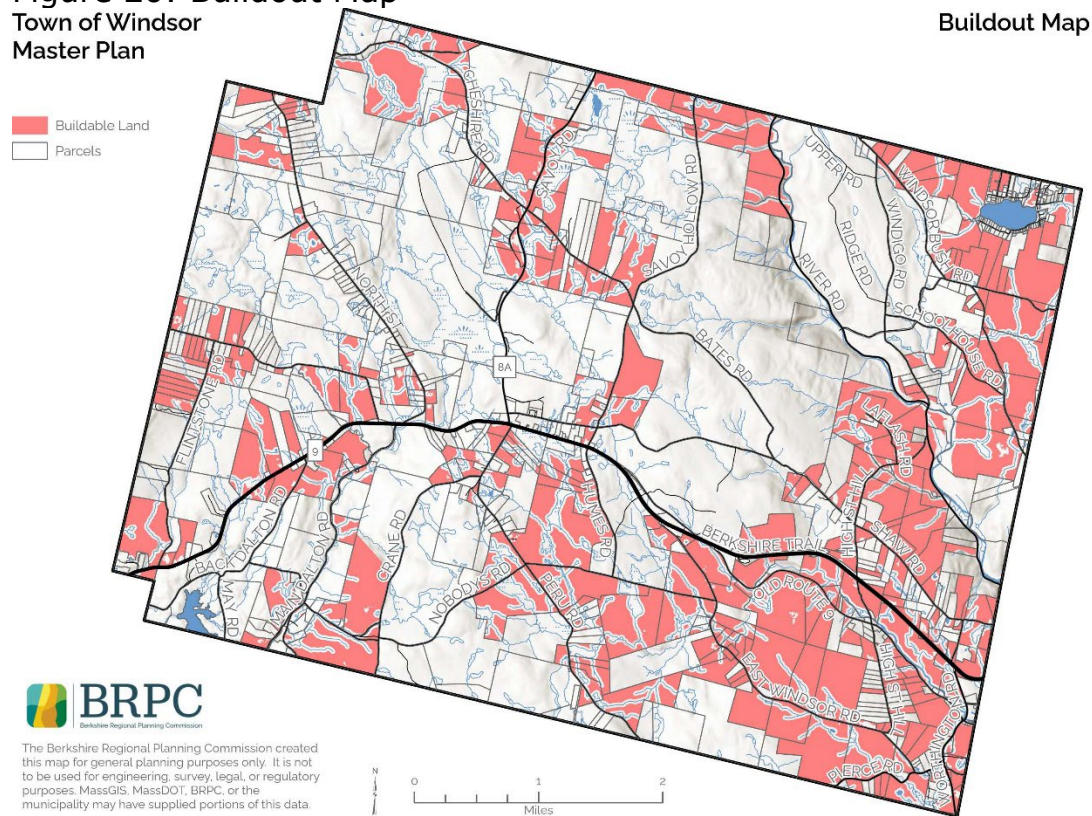
Potential for Build Out

As Windsor considers its future, projecting the potential impact of new homes is important. Between 2014 and 2022, ten new homes were built.

There are buildable lots available in Windsor that currently meet zoning requirements on existing roads.

A more detailed buildout analysis was completed by BRPC to determine the maximum number of developable lots. The developable lots, presented in Figure 20, exclude those already developed, parcels too small to subdivide, parcels within floodplains, and parcels that do not meet acreage or frontage requirements. This assumes such lots would be six acres, perc, and be eligible for development according to wetlands protection regulations. The buildout projections are hypothetical but worth noting as Windsor considers its future.

Figure 20: Buildout Map
Town of Windsor
Master Plan



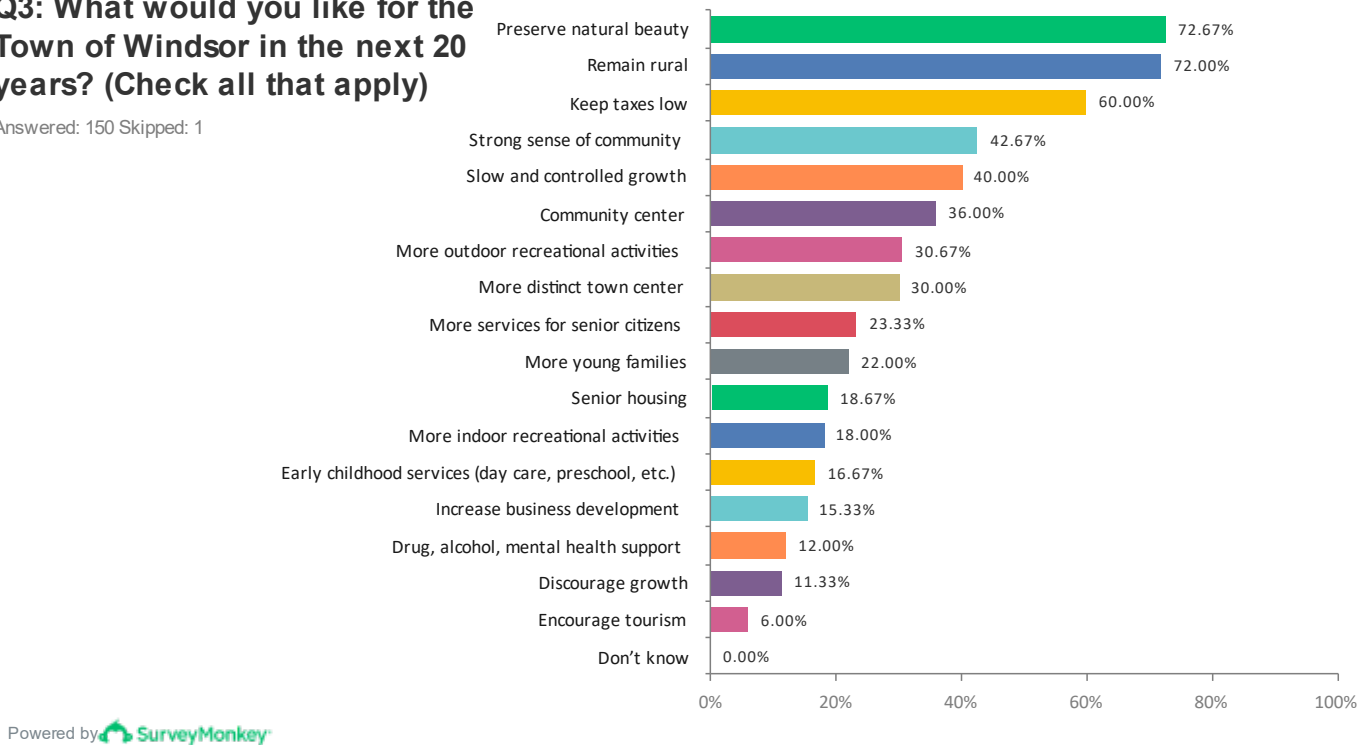
Land Use Survey Results

The overwhelming conclusion of the Master Plan Survey was that respondents want this town to remain rural in character. All residents prioritized remaining rural and preserving natural beauty. Almost all respondents want to limit growth, regardless of how they feel about taxation, as shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Windsor in 20 Years (Survey)

Q3: What would you like for the Town of Windsor in the next 20 years? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 150 Skipped: 1



There have been no major subdivisions of land in Windsor in the past 20+ years. The Town's Zoning By-Laws require a minimum lot size of 3 acres, with minimum road frontage on an approved public way of 250 feet, minimum front yard setback of 35 feet and minimum side and rear setbacks of 50 feet. New separate legal lots of 3 or more acres can be created on existing approved public ways, pursuant to Chapter 41 M.G.L. Section 81P, by application to the Planning Board with a survey reflecting that the new lot meets the size, frontage and setback requirements listed above.

The subdivision of land within the Town is subject to the Commonwealth's Subdivision Control Law (Chapter 41 M.G.L. Sections 81A – 81G), however, the Town lacks a set of subdivision control regulations, which could be adopted by the Planning Board pursuant to Section 81Q, to establish requirements with respect to the location, construction, width and grades of new proposed subdivision roads and the installation of municipal services (electrical, telephone, broadband, drainage, etc.) and rules and regulations to encourage the use of solar energy systems to protect access to direct sunlight.

As a rural community with large parcels of land, to the extent that there is concern about the potential for medium to large-scale development in

Windsor which might unsettle its rural nature, the Planning Board could consider controls on such growth by amending the existing zoning by-laws to increase minimum lot size and set back dimensions and/or by adopting subdivision control regulations which increase the requirements for establishing new subdivision roads, be they private or ultimately accepted public ways. More specific details are included in the “Final Chapter”.



Photo credit: Barbara Connors

Recreation, Historical, and Cultural Resources

Windsor is home to many artists and musicians as well as outdoor enthusiasts. The beauty of this Hilltown can be enjoyed by driving through the back roads, hiking or skiing its many trails, or stopping at the local general store to get the latest news and pick up locally made goods. It's a community where neighbors will help when needed yet they also appreciate their privacy.

Cultural Council

The Cultural Council is a volunteer-led committee that allocates state funds to support local groups and artists with grants for programming that enhances cultural and artistic endeavors in the community. Some recent grant recipients include: The Berkshire Drum Fest, the Friends of Windsor Phonebook, and the 250th anniversary History Book. The Council has also sponsored activities such as the Jazz-Blues Workshop (held many weekends in the summer at the Town Park), local artist workshops, and music classes at the Dalton CRA summer camp. Residents are encouraged to apply for grants, for which applications are due in the Fall (September/October).

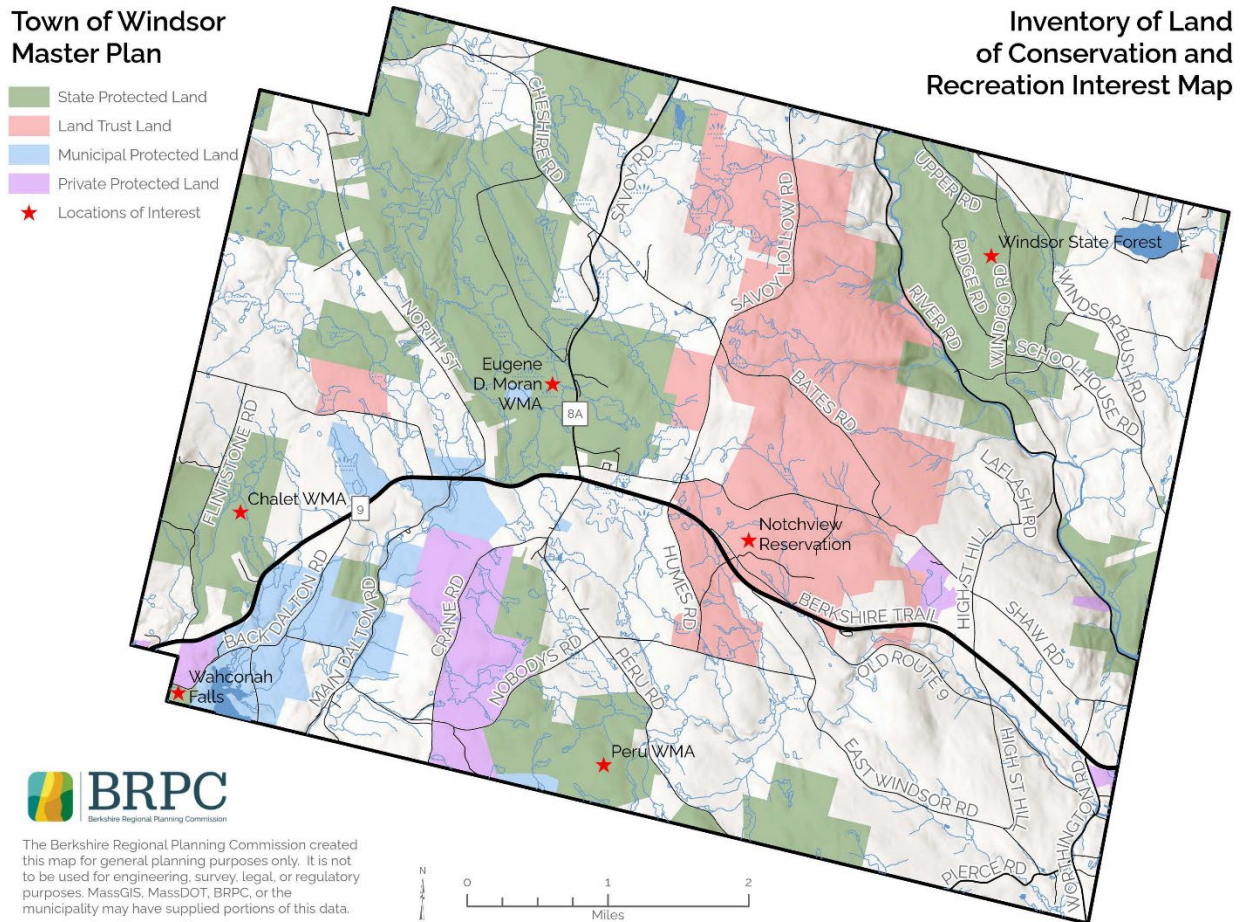
General Stores as Community Gathering Hub

The Town has two general stores that serve not only as retail establishments but are gathering spots for residents to interact with each other and share local news. The stores also have community message boards for private and municipal notices. These establishments are located on both the snowmobile trail network and on Route 9, so people from other communities also frequent them. Both stores offer food and locally made products. One of the stores has gas pumps and is therefore a stop for commuters and tourists.

Recreational and Open Space Areas

The Town has several tracts of land that are available for recreational activities. There are three state wildlife management areas, The Trustees of Reservations, and Windsor State Forest. (Figure 22)

Figure 22: Inventory of Recreational and Open Space



Notchview

The Trustees of Reservations, a private not-for-profit statewide organization, operates Notchview, which includes a ski area that includes 3,108 acres with groomed cross-country ski and snowshoe trails. This property is the largest landholding in the Town, and although the Trustees do not pay taxes, the organization does send in a PILOT payment each year. Because the area gets and keeps more snow than the surrounding region, it is able to offer more than 25 miles of trails for classic Nordic skiing, skate skiing, snowshoeing and a dog trail for those who want to ski with their dog! The area is open December to March, weather-dependent, and provides a snow report on its website throughout the season. Although a user fee is charged with both day use and season passes available, Windsor residents are not required to pay. Rental equipment and lessons are available. During the

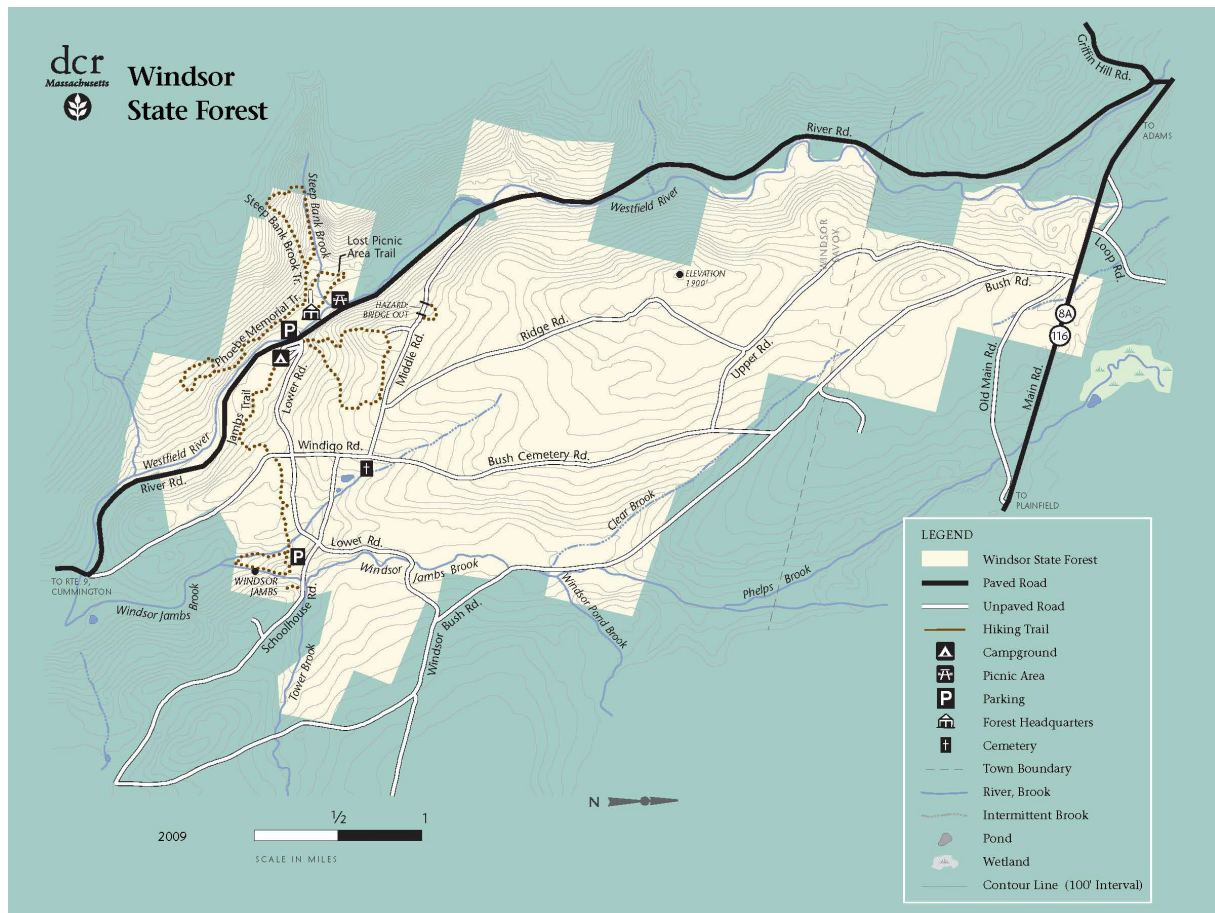
summer, trails are open to hikers and birdwatchers. Mountain biking is available during the spring and early summer depending upon trail conditions. The facility is also available for events of up to 400 people, primarily weddings and receptions. The property was bequeathed to the Trustees of the Reservation in 1965 by Lt. Col. Arthur Budd, who maintained a farm on the property beginning in the early 1900's.

State Parks

There are two state park areas within the Town boundaries, Wahconah Falls State Park and Windsor State Forest.

Wahconah Falls State Park sits on the border of Dalton and Windsor and attracts visitors from around the area to hike on the trails surrounding the waterfall. Though the parking area for the falls is in Dalton, the falls are in Windsor and town emergency services are responsible for responding to any onsite emergencies.

Figure 23: Windsor State Forest Map



Windsor State Forest, Located on River Road between Route 8A/116 and Route 9, features 10 miles of trails, a branch of the Westfield River, a series of waterfalls at Windsor Jambs, and the remaining foundation of a former mill. The Windsor Jambs Brook passes through a gorge with 80-foot granite walls. Comprising 1,825 acres and created in 1924 as a source of timber, the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC, built the Steep Bank Brook Picnic Area along River Road. This area, which included a campground and popular swimming area, was closed for approximately a decade, but reopened in 2022 to activities that include an accessible pavilion that accommodates 50 guests and is available for reservations. The area also features handicap accessible bathrooms, picnic tables, dishwashing station, and grills that are available on a first come basis. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has indicated that it plans to reopen the swimming area and the campground. Activities on site include swimming, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, hunting, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. The Steep Bank Brook Trail near the picnic area connects the property to the nearby Notchview Reservation, west of the State Forest (Figure 23).

Wildlife Management Areas

The Town has all or parts of three state-owned and state-maintained Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) within its borders, comprising a total of 4,779 acres and 21% of the total town land. These properties are available to the public for hunting, birdwatching, hiking, and winter activities such as snowshoeing and skiing.

The Eugene D. Moran Wildlife Management Area—owned and managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife is a 1,462-acre conservation area used for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation such as picnicking, birdwatching, hiking, and snowshoeing/skiing. In the fall, the “Moran” is stocked with ring-necked pheasant, and, in addition, hunters use the property year-round for a variety of open seasons.

The Peru Wildlife Management Area consists of multiple parcels which are spread across 4,800 acres of the Towns of Peru and Windsor, with 1,500 acres in Windsor. The area is open for hunting and fishing and is stocked with ring-necked pheasant and trout.

Spread between the Towns of Windsor, Dalton, Cheshire and Lanesborough, the Chalet WMA includes more than 7,000 acres of state-owned land. In

Windsor, there are 850 acres used primarily for hunting, hiking, and wildlife viewing. (To the west, the Appalachian Trail goes through part of this WMA



Photo Credit: Holly Higinbotham

in Dalton/Cheshire.) Dalton Fire District WCE and Windsor Brook WCE are owned by the Town of Dalton but are open to the public. The Dalton Fire District WCE comprises 830 acres. The Windsor Brook WCE is just under 50 acres.

Westfield River

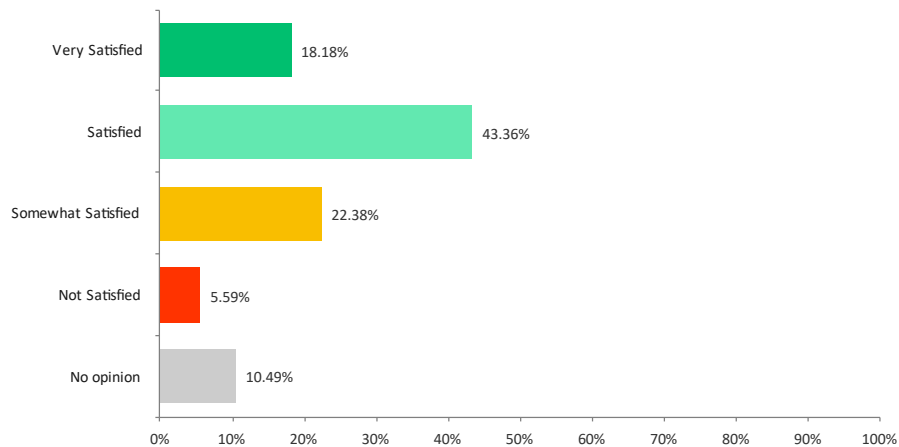
As mentioned above, the Westfield River, or branches that act as tributaries, runs through Windsor. Public access points and locally known access points allow for fishing and swimming. The “Goals and Actions” section of the 2021 Westfield Wild and Scenic Stewardship Plan is linked in the Appendix.

Recreation Survey Results

Figure 24: Survey Respondents Satisfaction with Windsor Recreation.

Q5: How satisfied are you with existing recreation areas and activities in Windsor?

Answered: 143 Skipped: 8



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Overall, 61% of respondents to the Master Plan Survey indicated that they



Photo Credit: Holly Higinbotham

are satisfied or very satisfied with the level of recreational activities in Windsor (see figure 24.) As stated elsewhere in this report, there is an age difference in this perception with younger residents wanting more activities.

Town Finances

Windsor is currently in a stable financial position, having been able to respond to the operational and capital expenditures of the Town without an undue tax burden on residents. The primary sources of revenue for the Town are collected through property taxes, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) payments, state aid, and grants obtained for specific projects. The Town budget is constructed each year with the goal of ensuring that the increase in the tax levy is no more than three percent.

Taxes

Windsor has the lowest tax rate of all the communities that surround it. At an assessed rate of \$13.05 per \$1,000, Windsor is more than \$1.00 less than Savoy at \$14.05 and more than \$8.00 less than Dalton. Though the tax rate is only one element that determines tax liability, (overall assessed value of the residence, services offered by the Town, school district assessment are other important factors) it is an important consideration for town residents and those considering relocating to a town. Table 8 shows the 2021 tax rates for Windsor and surrounding communities.

Currently, Windsor has the same tax rate for residential properties as it does for commercial properties. The number of commercial businesses in Windsor is limited and increased revenue from a higher commercial tax rate would be limited. Although a commercial tax rate is one mechanism to increase municipal revenues, it may act as a deterrent to current businesses or new business formation or relocation, as surrounding communities do not have a differential tax rate.

Table 8: Property Tax Rates, per \$1,000 of Assessed Value (2021)

Town	Residential	Commercial	Other-CPA, Fire District
Windsor	\$13.05	\$13.05	None
Savoy	\$14.07	\$14.07	None
Dalton	\$21.51	\$21.51	Fire-\$0.91
Hinsdale	\$14.33	\$14.33	None
Peru	\$19.21	\$19.21	None

Tax Sales of Delinquent Property

In November 2021, after a significant period of inactivity, the Town was able to sell 5 parcels in significant tax delinquency, recouping \$47,500 in back taxes. These parcels are now back on the Town's tax rolls. With the sale of delinquent properties, the Town can recoup lost tax revenue, improve neighborhood character, and collect future tax income. The Town has a planned approach for continuing to move properties back on the tax rolls. Currently, 15 remaining properties are in significant tax arrears, however 3 of those properties are working with the town to make up delinquent tax amounts. In 2022, town officials report that approximately 5 homes are currently vacant and that several additional properties are currently in tax arrears. The Town is working with individuals in tax arrears to help them to remain in their homes. In extreme circumstances, the Town may sell tax-delinquent homes.

Marijuana Cultivation

The recent legalization of retail and wholesale sales of marijuana in Massachusetts has opened up a new opportunity for agricultural endeavors, especially insofar as current state regulations require that retail sales products be grown in the Commonwealth. As a result, in 2018, the Town passed a zoning bylaw to regulate the placement and operations of Marijuana Establishments (MEs) and Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers in town, with revision in 2019.

In 2021, the Zoning Board of Appeals granted its first special permit for a marijuana establishment, in this case an outdoor cultivation facility. By the terms of the Host Community Agreement, the Town will receive 3% of the wholesale sales for three years, with an option to extend the agreement for two more years after that. Although the facility will not be in production until 2023, the owners state that they expect the business will produce \$8 million in annual gross revenue. This, like any other agricultural endeavor, is subject to several variables (weather, pests, etc) which may impact these projections. This business has also volunteered to make donations to and support both the Town and Windsor-based businesses. The Town has negotiated a three-year window to determine if any mitigation measures may be reasonably required to address odor or visual impacts. After five years the Host Community Agreement is terminated, subject to the negotiation of a new agreement.

Additional marijuana businesses have approached the Town regarding outdoor cultivation, and it is possible that there may be additional such facilities in town. It is anticipated that the Town will benefit financially if this

occurs. Although the market will eventually reach a saturation point, investment in marijuana production continues countywide as of this writing.

Financial Planning

Each year at the Annual Town Meeting, the Finance Committee issues a statement about the next year's budget as well as anticipated expenditures over the next five years. According to the 2022 statement, the Town is in a good financial position, but the FY23 budget was impacted by the need to respond to inflation, particularly as it affects employee wages and salaries but also other expenses, notably energy. Despite these challenges, the total tax levy did not increase more than 3 percent, which is the Finance Committee goal each year.

As for future planning, anticipated revenues from the Broadband network will significantly enhance the Town's capacity to increase spending without increasing the tax levy. In 2021, the Town took out a 10-year, \$1.35 million bond to pay for the Town's share of construction expenses for broadband (the other share will be paid by the Connect America Fund). Revenues from Wired West (the broadband administrator) began to arrive in FY21 and will be a source of revenue as long as subscriptions cover the costs of operating and maintaining the system. According to the chair of the Finance Committee who is also a member of the MLP Board that oversees the broadband network, "Assuming a steady-state transfer from WW of \$93,000/yr. and all the CAF money, it would take the MLP about 10 years to repay the debt and the other money it received from the budget during the buildout." He added, "Putting all this in the framework implies that the Town could spend a cumulative \$2.5 million over the next ten years with a 3% levy growth and keeping financial reserves at about \$800,000."

The Finance Committee said in its May 2022 statement, "This would allow us to pursue a strategy of enhanced public services, a more ambitious capital improvement program, and/or lower taxes.

Energy Conservation

As mentioned in the Facilities Chapter, the Green Committee has undertaken several primarily grant-funded projects in recent years to decrease energy usage, and hopefully energy costs, in Town buildings. This has been successful insofar as both energy usage and costs have been reduced. In FY20, FY21, and FY22 the Town had an average annual decrease of \$24,606 in energy expenditures as compared to FY15. The total savings over those three years was \$73,817. In addition, the Town brings in revenue from the photovoltaic array that goes directly into the general fund. Solar Renewable

Energy Certificate (SREC) credits from FY19 through FY22 totaled \$20,585. As noted above, a new insulated roof to be installed in 2022 on the Town Highway Department garage is projected to contain and reduce the cost of heating that building. In the future, installation of additional insulation in that building would further reduce costs.



Insulated curtains at the Town Hall conserve energy.

Photo Credit: Michele Kenney

Financial Planning Survey Results

A significant take-away from the survey was that the majority (60%) of respondents want to keep their taxes low (see Figure 21, p.48). This would suggest that capital expenditures should be planned in such a way that the tax levy does not have to rise more than 3% each year.

Local Economy

Windsor is primarily a residential community with commercial and business activity limited to agricultural operations, two general stores, a cross-country ski area at Notchview, and a wide variety of businesses that don't necessarily have a "storefront", such as photography, graphic design, artists, and service professions. The arrival of broadband, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, has afforded many people the opportunity to work from home. Industrial development is prohibited by zoning bylaws.

Lodging and Hospitality

As of 2022, there are no exclusive lodging establishments located in the Town. There may be properties available for short-term rental in this and neighboring communities.

Marijuana Businesses

As discussed above, another opportunity for agricultural endeavors includes outdoor cultivation of marijuana, cannabis product production, or a retail establishment in the overlay district. The Town recently passed a zoning bylaw that outlined the parameters for establishing such businesses. The market for this agricultural crop is growing as a result of the recent legalization of retail marijuana in the Commonwealth and until that market is saturated, there are opportunities.

Economic Development Survey Results

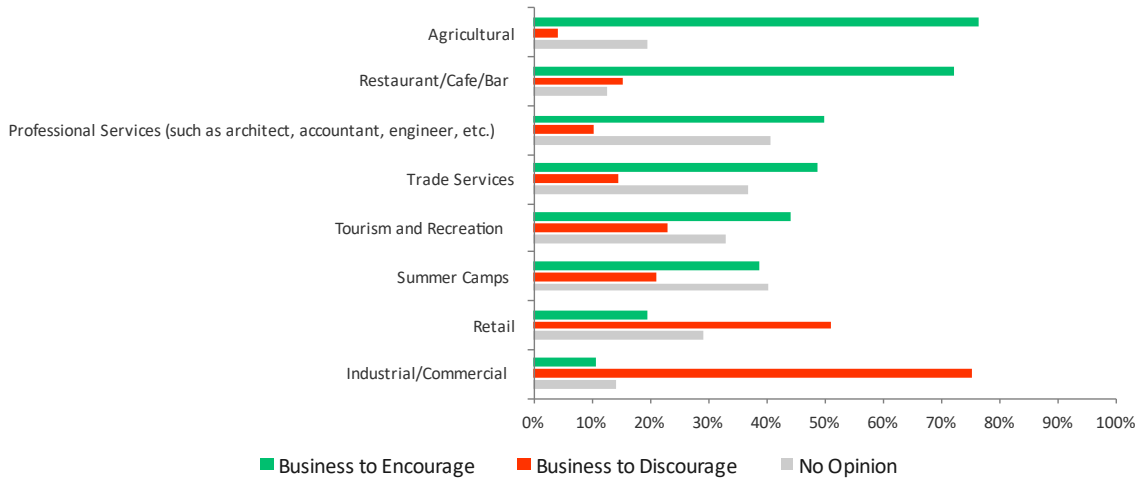
Results of the Master Plan survey indicate that residents are not looking for large-scale economic development in town but would be receptive to small-scale businesses such as a cafe, restaurant, or a bar (see Figure 25.) Residents also expressed an interest in supporting agricultural businesses.

When asked what businesses to encourage or discourage in the community, 76% of survey respondents positively endorsed agricultural enterprises, and 73% endorsed encouraging restaurants, cafés and bars, and relatively few respondents wanted to discourage these types of endeavors. Respondents overwhelmingly did not want to see industrial or commercial businesses (74% opposed) or retail operations (50% opposed). Feelings about summer camps and tourism/recreation were divided, while the response to professional services and tourism was fairly neutral. The chart below illustrates the responses to this question.

Figure 25: Economic Development Preferences (Survey)

Q4: The following questions pertain to the local economy and economic development in Windsor. Which types of business would you like to see encouraged or discouraged in Windsor?

Answered: 147 Skipped: 4



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Economic Development Recommendations

The results of our assessment regarding economic development are fairly consistent with the findings of the 2020 HMCAP. The 2020 plan recommended an economic development plan to attract new businesses and residents. The Master Plan allows further insight into important factors to consider in this plan within the context of a rural community.

Recreational

A snowmobile trail network connecting the Town to other nearby towns, primarily Savoy and Peru, is maintained by the Berkshire Snow Seekers, a club of over 600 members.

These trails bring people to town throughout the winter, where they ride trails through woods and fields. Business opportunities catering to snowmobilers that come to the area could be expanded and the Town could market itself as a snowmobiler destination.

In addition, the Notchview Reservation cross-country ski, snowshoe, and mountain bike trails invite people from other areas to come to Windsor.

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership

This 21-town partnership is made up of the towns of northwestern Massachusetts that lie within Berkshire and Franklin County. This region of the state has the lowest population density and is primarily forested, with 83% of the land area forested. The Partnership offers technical assistance for landowners, conservation priorities, assistance to municipalities, and economic development projects. Recent projects funded through the Partnership include projects in Adams, Cheshire, North Adams, Savoy, and Williamstown. The Partnership offers grants of up to \$20,000 in funding each year. As a member of this partnership, Windsor could identify and solicit funding during a future round of grant awards.

Village (Town Center)

Recent investment in town buildings congregated around the intersection of 8A Savoy Road and Route 9 has improved efficiencies and facilities for the Town residents. These improvements to Town Offices, Town Hall, the Highway Department, and the Historical Society will enable greater use of communal town resources and bring residents for both business and social occasions. Respondents to the Master Plan survey overwhelmingly support encouraging restaurants, bars, and cafés (73% said this was a business to encourage as opposed to 15% who did not support this type of business). This response was second only to town support of agricultural enterprises at 76% approval.

Improvements to the kitchen facilities in the Town Hall building enabled the Town to supply town residents with 3 meals/per week during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was made possible by the Board of Health inspecting and certifying this kitchen as a commercial kitchen, with some limitations. This designation will enable community residents to rent the facility for their own functions but could also be marketed to possible food trucks, small farmers, or other small businesses which need an approved kitchen facility as an anchor kitchen.

Restaurants/Bars

Currently, takeaway food is available from both Sangar's General Store and Friendly Fred's, but no full-service restaurant is located within the Town. Town residents have expressed an interest in additional dining options and attracting new food service businesses could provide the Town with both increased employment opportunities and opportunities for community gathering. They also have suggested a need for additional gathering spaces, which could be served by for-profit establishments.

Windsor's Future: Implementing Our Master Plan

This Master Planning process has illuminated the importance that town residents place on the rural character of our community and our low taxes, which reflects our conservatism in spending and the way in which volunteers contribute so much expertise and sweat equity to the Town's operation.

This planning process has also outlined some demographic shifts within the Town, insofar as younger families are moving into the town which has impacted the number of school-aged children as well as an interest in activities and facilities that older residents do not indicate they want. In order to be inclusive of younger residents and ensure that the Town continues to serve them in the years to come, attention should be given to those needs and preferences. At the same time, the needs of older and aging residents must be considered especially insofar as there is a strong preference for aging in place.

From a financial point of view, the increase in school-aged children may have a significant impact on the Town budget, which needs to be considered. In addition, the details in this report about survey respondents' preferences regarding facilities and buildings suggest the importance of an ongoing and comprehensive capital planning process that can anticipate financial expenditures for those needs.

The importance of the town remaining rural cannot be overstated, according to the feedback received in this planning process. It is the core characteristic of the Town that a large majority of the residents agree on and is what seems to draw people to move into Town. The challenge of remaining rural in the face of the recent exodus from cities, improved Internet access, and the search for a more meaningful connected community means the Town will need to review its zoning bylaws and other regulations to ensure that development does not overtake the rural landscape and the sense of community that currently exists.

What follows are the Committee's recommendations for actions to be taken by the Town in response to this planning process. Table 9 indicates what the actions are and who might be best suited to undertake these action steps, and is organized by the committee, board or department responsible for the actions. It is recommended that oversight of this implementation process sit with the Town Administrator, in collaboration with the various boards and departments responsible for the actions. The Town Administrator is the

person who has the best overview of what is happening in the Town's governance and community activities, and maintains regular communication with all departments, and as such is best suited to oversee implementation steps. It is also recommended that this implementation table be updated on an annual basis, with the status of each item noted, and adjustments made as needed. A Master Plan chapter in the Town's Annual Report could include the updated table as well.

Table 9: Implementation Table

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIME FRAME	CHAPTER	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Preserve Rural Character					
1.1 Assess available lots and impact on town services	Use buildout map and resources from the Assessors to assess available lots, then estimate impact	High	Short	Land Use	Planning Board
1.2 Revise Zoning Bylaws to address subdivisions	Research subdivision bylaws, draft amendment	High	Short	Land Use	Planning Board
1.3 Consider Scenic Mountain Act	Conduct research on other towns, review the text of Act, and determine the benefit to the town	Med	Short	Land Use	Planning Board

2. Community Building					
2.1 Assess the need for short-term rental bylaw	Review other bylaws and regulations, and state regs, and determine if it is necessary here.	Med	Short	Economic Development	Planning Board
2.2 Research needs and wants for a community center	Generate a report addressing the need for a community center	Med	Short	Facilities	New Committee with reps from other committees
2.3 Explore commercial kitchen in Town Hall	Research needs get estimates to renovate/update the kitchen. Consider grant funding	Med/High	Med	Facilities	New Committee with reps from other committees
3. Address Community Needs					
3.1 Assess staffing demands and capacity	Assess staffing demands and capacity to meet needs; determine costs of additional staffing; research shared services as appropriate	High	Short	Services	Town Administrator, with department heads
3.2 Assess volunteer staffing for emergency services	Assess volunteer staffing; research shared services options; assess incentives to recruit and support volunteers	High	Med	Services	Fire Chief, Emergency Manager
3.3 Conduct further assessment of seniors' needs for services	Assess services and recommend additional services and costs	Med	Med/Long	Services	COA

4. Long-Term Planning					
4.1 Develop School Funding Projections	Develop long-term school plan based on future population, consider Preferred Vocational School Policy, consult with CBSD about future costs	High	Short/Med	Financial	Finance Committee/Select Board/School Board Rep
4.2 Assess need to open seasonally closed roads	Develop plan to address road needs	High	Med	Services	Highway Department
4.3 Develop Broadband Maintenance Plan	Assess future maintenance and expansion needs, review projections for revenues from broadband	High	Medium	Financial	MLP Board
4.4 Develop Comprehensive Town Capital Plan	Conduct an Assessment of Town Buildings and undeveloped town-owned land	High	Med	Facilities	
4.5 Develop Capital Expenditures Plan	Develop a system to assess future equipment needs and estimated costs	High	Short	Facilities	Finance Committee and Department Heads
4.6 Develop Historic Archive Preservation Plan	Assess needs and multiple solutions with associated costs	High	Short	Services	Historical Commission

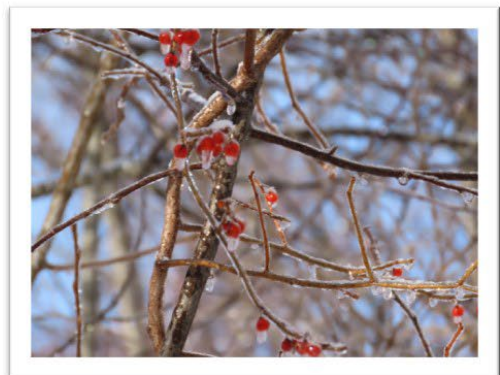
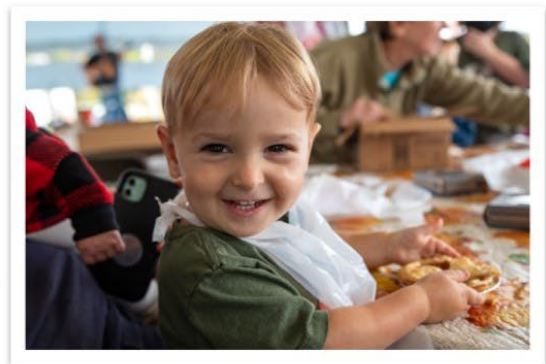
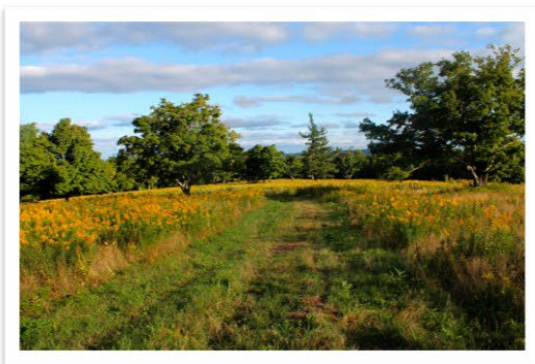
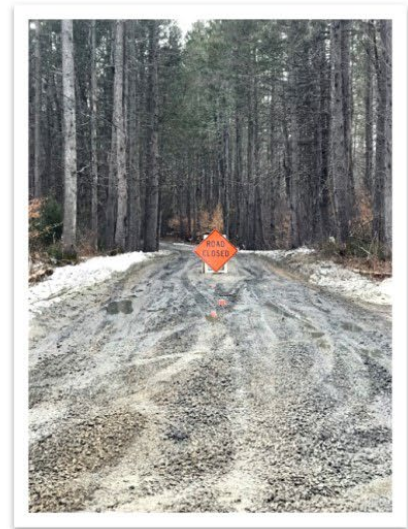


Photo Credit: Clockwise from Top Left. Barbara Connors, Kim Tobin, Barbara Connors, Holly Higinbotham, Barbara Connors (x2)

Appendix

Relevant Studies

1. Windsor Master Plan Survey (See below)
2. Windsor Master Plan Survey Results ([Master Plan Survey Results](#))
3. Chapter 40B Fact Sheet | Citizens' Housing And Planning Association (chapa.org)
4. Windsor Hazard Mitigation & Climate Adaptation Plan (windsormass.com)
5. State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) | Mass.gov
6. MassGIS: BioMap2 | Mass.gov
7. Microsoft Word - Aging Survey Corrected.docx (usrfiles.com)
8. Windsor Finances FY23-27 (windsormass.com)
9. CBRSDStrategicPlan2018-21.pdf (finalsite.net)
10. [Goals and Actions Westfield Wild and Scenic Plan](#)

Windsor Master Plan Survey

Windsor Master Plan Survey

The Town of Windsor is developing its Master Plan and we need your help! Your input and opinions will help to set future priorities for the town.

This survey is intended to gain information and opinions from Windsor residents about the town, its priorities, initiatives, services, and resources, and how they can be improved in the future. Information from this survey will be incorporated into the Windsor Master Plan. The Master Plan is a document that will help to guide policy, investment, and growth decisions for the town over the next 10-20 years. We prefer that each adult in the household complete the survey. All respondents should be over the age of 18.

This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you need paper copies, they will be available at the Town Offices or by contacting Holly Higinbotham at higinbo@hotmail.com. It is also available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WindsorMPSurvey> or on the Town of Windsor website. We are requesting responses by May 15th to allow for timely analysis.

The committee will be hosting additional focus groups, including an under-18 group, later this spring so please look for forthcoming details.

I. General Opinion

The following questions are intended to gather general opinion about the Town of Windsor.

1. What aspects of life in Windsor do you like the most? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Low crime rate/safe community
- ☐ Small town atmosphere
- ☐ Peace and quiet
- ☐ People and community
- ☐ Nature, wildlife, scenic beauty
- ☐ Relatives and family live nearby
- ☐ Recreational activities
- ☐ Privacy
- ☐ Sense of history
- ☐ Weather in summer
- ☐ Weather in winter

2. What is the single greatest aspect of living in Windsor? (List only one)

3. What would you like for the Town of Windsor in the next 20 years? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More distinct town center | <input type="checkbox"/> Discourage growth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slow and controlled growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep taxes low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase business development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remain rural | <input type="checkbox"/> More outdoor recreational activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preserve natural beauty | <input type="checkbox"/> More indoor recreational activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strong sense of community | <input type="checkbox"/> More young families |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community center | <input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood services (day care, preschool, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug, alcohol, mental health support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More services for senior citizens | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

4. The following questions pertain to the local economy and economic development in Windsor. Which types of business would you like to see encouraged or discouraged in Windsor?

	Business to Encourage	Business to Discourage	No Opinion
Restaurant/Cafe/Bar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summer Camps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism and Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial/Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Services (such as architect, accountant, engineer, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Windsor Master Plan Survey

II. Recreation and Cultural Activities

The next set of questions are intended to gather your input on recreation and cultural activities in Windsor.

5. How satisfied are you with existing recreation areas and activities in Windsor?

☐ Very Satisfied

☐ Not Satisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ No opinion

☐ Somewhat Satisfied

6. What additional indoor recreation and/or cultural opportunities would you like to see, if any? (Examples: movie nights, community gatherings, classes.) If none, please state "none."

7. What additional outdoor recreation and/or cultural opportunities would you like to see, if any? (Examples: ziplining, summer camps, trails connected to other towns). If none, please state "none."

8. The Windsor Town Park is a 5-acre open space on Peru Road. It currently has a baseball diamond, small shed, fire pit, pavilion, and vintage playground with a memorial bench. A new playground is scheduled to break ground in Spring 2022. What amenities would you support adding to the park? Check all that apply:

☐ Running water

☐ Grills for public use

☐ Bathroom

☐ Picnic area

☐ Small kitchen

☐ Gazebo

☐ Walking/running track

☐ Exercise equipment

☐ Larger pavilion

☐ Updated sports field (baseball, pickleball, soccer, etc.)

☐ Performance stage

Other (please specify)

Windsor Master Plan Survey

III. Town Buildings and Services

The following questions are related to Town of Windsor Buildings and Town Services

9. The Town owns five buildings: Town Hall (Rt 9 next to Church), Town Offices (corner of Rt 9 and Peru Rd), Highway Department Building (Rt 9), Historical Museum (Rt 9), and the East Windsor Chapel (Old Rt 9). As we plan for Windsor's future, we would like to know your preference on what to do with current town-owned buildings. (Please Choose one answer per row.)

	Do Nothing	Construct new building	Renovate building, keep current use	Renovate building, repurpose use	Demolish building	No opinion
Town Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Town Offices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highway Department	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historical Museum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
East Windsor Chapel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

10. Within the next 20 years, Windsor will need to invest in or replace our physical infrastructure. In addition to current buildings, we would like to know how much of a priority the following should be for investment?

(Please Choose one answer per row.)

	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	Not Needed	No Opinion
Constructing multi-purpose town building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constructing a community center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building housing for senior citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating a senior center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchasing property for new buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving library space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create space for climate controlled historic town archives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving display space for Historical Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving commercial kitchen (currently in Town Hall)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. If you have other thoughts related to current or future buildings, please comment here. If none, please state "none."

12. Changes in state regulations and/or reduced volunteerism may require the town to explore alternate models for services. How willing are you to pay more in taxes to support the following: (Please Choose one answer per row.)

	Very Willing	Willing	Somewhat Willing	Unwilling	No Opinion
General increase or enhanced administrative services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve Windsor-based police services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve Windsor-based fire services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve Windsor-based EMS (Emergency Medical Services)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shared services with other towns for EMS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Share services with other towns for police services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Share services with other towns for fire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase or enhance animal control officer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Add emergency substance and alcohol abuse intervention and outreach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Add emergency mental health intervention and outreach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Add paid town social worker/coordinator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

13. Should the level of road maintenance in Windsor be kept the same, reduced or expanded?

- ☐ Keep the same
☐ Reduce
☐ Expand
☐ Don't know

14. If you support road improvements, what road, or section of road, would be most important to improve?
(List only one) If none, please state "none."

15. Prior surveys have indicated that more services are needed for elderly residents to age in place. Some of these services are not specific to senior residents. From the list below, what do you think is needed and what do you think you would use now or at any point in the future.

	Needed in community	Would use now	Would use in the next 5-10 years	Would use in the next 10+ years	I don't plan on living here in 5-10 years	Would not use at any point	No opinion
Senior housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gathering place, such as a senior center.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outdoor maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Light housekeeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Companionship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting to appointments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation (other than appointments)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

16. Are there other town services you believe need to be reduced or expanded? If none, please state "none".
Explain below:

Windsor Master Plan Survey

IV. Demographic Information

This series of questions is intended to obtain general information about survey respondents.

17. What is your age?

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-35

☐ 36-49

☐ 50-60

☐ 61-75

☐ Over 75 years old

18. What is your annual household income?

☐ Under \$50,000

☐ \$51,000-\$100,000

☐ \$101,000-\$300,000

☐ \$301,000-\$500,000

☐ Over \$500,000

19. Please identify the housing/property type that best describes your household. If you own multiple properties, please combine total land acreage in your response.

☐ Rent home

☐ Year-round resident, own home, under 10 acres of land

☐ Year-round resident, own home, between 10-50 acres of land

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Year-round resident, own home, over 50 acres of land

☐ Part-time resident/second homeowner

☐ Own land only, there is no home on the property

20. In addition to you, who else lives in your home? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No one else lives in my house | <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative(s) under 18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse or partner | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend or roommate 18 or older |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child/children under 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Live in caretaker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child/children between 11-18 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child/children 18 or older | <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative(s) 18 or older | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

21. How many people, including yourself, are 65 years or older?

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 4 |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 0 |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 | |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify) | |

22. Thank you for your time and effort! ! Please return this survey to the Town Offices, or if you need it to be picked up, please call Jess at 413-329-4364.

The results of this survey will be posted at Town Office and on the Town of Windsor website.

If you are interested in participating in a focus group, provide your email or phone number below. If not, leave blank! Alternatively, contact Holly Higinbotham at higinbo@hotmail.com or at 413-212-4352.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>