

**Minutes
Special Meeting
Meeting of the
Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Steering Committee
Thursday, April 2, 2026
6:00 p.m.
Wallingford Public Library
Charlotte Collins Meeting Room**

Call to Order

Jacob Robinson, POCD Project Manager, Colliers Engineering & Design, called the meeting to order and led the introductions. In attendance were: Jacklyn Fernandez, Planner, Colliers Engineering & Design; Thomas Laffin, Town Council; Mike Voto, Board of Education; James Fitzsimmons, Planning & Zoning Commission; Jesse Reynolds, Town Council; Liz Davis, Wallingford Center, Inc; Jeff Borne, Wallingford Conservation Commission; Amy Torre, Planning & Zoning, and Kevin Pagine, Town Planner.

Progress updates, preliminary existing conditions findings, feedback, and visioning discussion

Mr. Robinson used a PowerPoint presentation to update the Committee on the project timeline. He will be meeting with Planning & Zoning on April 13th, and there are several more stakeholder meetings scheduled in May. The survey has already had over 1200 responses. The majority of responses are from single-family homeowners, and 80% of responses are from people between the ages of 35 and 74. The major priorities from the surveys match those found in the analysis of the first 400 surveys. Preliminary takeaways are also the same. People value proximity to goods, services, dining, entertainment, affordability, and walking and biking opportunities. The top three priorities for future land use are protection of natural resources, more walkable, mixed-use areas, and strengthening residential neighborhoods. The top development priorities are to attract and support local industry, to have more events and entertainment, and to expand recreational opportunities.

Mr. Robinson reviewed the preliminary thematic recommendations, goals, and strategies. These have also been reviewed by multiple Town departments and the Mayor. He welcomed feedback. (These notes record only the goals of the themes.)

Housing Goals are:

- Centralize and enhance housing support services
- Engage and assist housing production in strategic locations
- Improve community awareness regarding housing development

Development Goals are:

- Pursue development and programs to enhance visitor friendliness in Town Center
- Improve the vibrancy of the built environment in Town Center
- Encourage tourism
- Preserve and promote historic assets
- Support and protect the agricultural economy and farming community
- Foster business practices that better support and promote businesses
- Promote and expand community events

- Update the town zoning code to meet future development needs, increase ease of use, and for consistence with the POCD.
- Take steps to minimize community risk reduction
- Revitalize the Tracy neighborhood
- Revisit the relationship with Meriden Markham airport

Transportation Goals are:

- Undertake a variety of feasibility studies to identify opportunities that expand access to alternative transportation modes
- Initiate, complete, or update the intersection and area studies and designs
- Initiate, continue, or facilitate implementation of listed projects
- Adopt transportation design policies to incorporate accessibility
- Improve and increase accessibility using Geographic Information Services (GIS) and mapping services

Municipal Facilities and Services Goals:

- Continue to enhance Town communications and digital services
- Provide resources to maintain recreation and open spaces
- Expand and maintain municipal buildings to meet service needs
- Balance maintenance and expansion of utilities between development and conservation
- Continue partnering with the Board of Education
- Continue to support, enhance, and increase access to community programming

Environmental Goals:

- Conduct environmental infrastructure projects to benefit natural resources and improve resiliency.
- Increase public access to parks and Town-owned open spaces
- Actively monitor and manage the Town’s ecosystem and wildlife
- Protect the Town's water resources
- Pursue policies and projects to increase the sustainability and resiliency of the community.

A question was asked about the weight of the strategies being presented. Mr. Robinson replied that the suggestions came from committee members and stakeholders. Every suggestion was not included. Most were weighted to be included.

A question was asked about who would be responsible for accomplishing these things, specifically the trail connectivity. Mr. Robinson replied that as part of the implementation plan, they will look at funding possibilities. It was noted that SCROG is also doing a number of studies, and State funding is also being sought for the trail connectivity project. It will be a municipal function to secure grants from the State.

A question was asked about open space acquisition. It was suggested that “and purchase key open space properties as they become available” be added to the strategy.

A question was asked about the strategy to change one-way streets back to two-way. It was clarified that this refers to Meadow Street and Wallace Street. How does the availability of parking in these

areas play in? The response was that the nearby commuter lots will be upgraded. Businesses have been asking for this. The study will dig deeper.

A question was asked about the recommendation for education on facility and programming needs. This is vague and needs to be more specific. We would like to attract people to Town because of the education system. It was noted that these are recommendations for the Town. The BOE has its own planning process. It was agreed to look into expanding those recommendations and look at the needs.

Mr. Robinson then reviewed the Land Use/Zoning Subarea Recommendations. The preliminary recommendations are organized in seven subareas. He noted that many of the comments are the same as those presented at the last meeting.

Area 1 recommendations included:

- Modify regulations to allow for small-scale commercial uses
- Reuse institutional sites

Area 2 recommendations included:

- Variety of housing options in commercial zones
- Evaluate zoning districts to prioritize the highest and best use

Area 3 recommendations included:

- Variety of housing options in commercial zones
- Evaluate zoning districts to prioritize the highest and best use

Area 4 recommendations included:

- Options for diversifying allowed activities
- Review zoning regulations on corridors
- Options for simplifying overlay districts
- Support transit-oriented development

Area 5 recommendations included:

- Implement development review and regulatory tools to preserve historic assets through Historic designations

Area 6 recommendations included:

- Regulate new development in watershed and conservation areas

Area 7 recommendations included:

- Redevelopment plan for more compatible land uses
- Apply Town Center District regulations
- Regulate new development in watershed and conservation areas

Town-Wide Recommendations included:

- Revisit Incentive Housing Zone
- Options for adapting farm and farm winery regulations
- Options streamline mobile food vendor regulations

- Allow as-of-right ADUs
- Streamline regulations for commercial zones

A question was asked about District 7 and the suggestion of a walkable Route 68. Where did that come from? This is related to incorporating more mixed-use, residential, and retail corridors. The Planning & Zoning Commission has discussed this. Something similar was built in Cheshire.

A question was asked about repealing the incentive housing zone. The Town spent a lot of time setting up that zone, but the new Housing Bill requires revisiting it. There have been no applications in that zone. It was mentioned that there are over two dozen projects approved by Planning and Zoning that have not been built yet.

A comment was made that Wallingford is unique due to having its own utilities. We need a map showing where services are available. This limits housing opportunities in certain areas. It was suggested that we need to encourage Water & Sewer to share their map with developers.

A question was asked about open space. We don't have a comprehensive map of available open space. This was in the last POCD, but was not done. We need to identify protected and possible open spaces as well. Is there a conflict with ownership over all the different groups? Is there an unwillingness to work together? Currently, the roles are very separated: Park & Recreation, Land Trust, Conservation Commission, Wetlands, etc. Water & Sewer holds a lot of land that's not open to the public. Do we need a consultant to inventory and classify this land?

It was noted that this is a big, long to-do list for the Town. Will the plan identify who is responsible? Mr. Robinson replied that the Town knows who the responsible parties are, and not calling them out allows champions to undertake projects. This allows for dynamic implementation.

It was noted that this presentation was very comprehensive. The individual commended those involved for all the work done. A great deal of a lot of input from stakeholders and the community was collected.

Next Steps include the next Steering Committee Meeting and Public Meeting in May. Mr. Robinson and his team will be finalizing recommendations, completing the implementation plan, and finalizing the plan document.

Public Comment

Celina Rome, resident, asked about design guidelines or standards. She suggested guidelines for signage for businesses to provide consistency. This is an opportunity to update zoning regulations. Ms. Davis stated that Wallingford Center Inc has sign standards for the downtown area. They are discussing a possible recommended color scheme as well. The problem is that new businesses don't ask, so they don't know about the standards. They are trying to work with landlords. These are recommendations or guidelines.

Dottie Roody, resident, asked where on Rt 68 they are recommending changes. Is it by the hotels? Mr. Robinson explained that they are not likely to encourage new development in the watershed, but that the POCD isn't specific about locations. Commissioner Fitzsimmons stated that it is probably around where Anthem is, and if there are concerns, they can be directed to Planning & Zoning. Mr. Pagini noted that they are looking for less intensive uses than allowed right now. Warehouses are currently allowed. There is no plan for rezoning there. Ms. Roody stated that senior housing is needed. A senior

community would be great. She asked about the development at Grieb and Durham Roads and was informed that it was approved by court order.

Jim Seichter, a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, asked where the Wallace Pond Dam is located. Mr. Pagini noted that the DEEP has a plan for it. Mr. Seichter noted that the Toelles Road bridge was mentioned, but the John Street bridge is in more need and should be on the list. He also noted that bus shelters are needed on Rt. 5, particularly at Walmart and Wharton Brook. He added that there are lots of recommendations here, and it will be important to assign responsibility and set timelines. When no one is responsible, things won't happen.

Joe Sanders, a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, agreed that it will be important to have stakeholders. He noted that the top three concerns in the survey were too vague. For example, the term affordability has different meanings to different people. We need to define things when we talk to people. Affordability came out as the most important, but what does that mean?

Casey Camire, a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, agreed that there are a lot of recommendations in so many directions. We need to find the sweet middle ground and define specific measurable goals. The 2016 plan was also vague. We need to get a few modest, specific goals that will be more achievable.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl-Ann Tubby
Recording Secretary