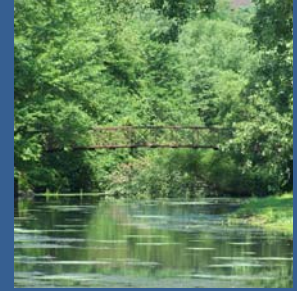


October 23, 2012

SUMMARY OF INPUT



Overview

When updating a Plan of Conservation and Development it is important to first learn which issues and topics are most important to the community and should be addressed in the Plan. A number of techniques helped to solicit input from local officials and residents (see sidebar). This report first provides an overview of key issues that arose and then provides details from all forms of input (see sidebar).



This report highlights key issues that might warrant attention in the updated Plan of Conservation and Development based upon the following community input:

- *Issues Scoping meeting with the Planning & Zoning Commission (July 25, 2012)*
- *Community tour with the Planning and Zoning Commission (August 29, 2012)*
- *Questionnaires sent to local board and commission members and Department Heads (August/September, 2012)*
- *Public Workshop (September 24, 2012)*

Key Issues

A number of themes emerged during the Scoping process. These include:

- **Lack of true “town center”.** This was perhaps the most mentioned issue from all groups who participated in the first phase of this project. There seems to be agreement that the Town Center could become more of a destination and community focal point.
- **Small changes might add up.** Trumbull is fairly built out and most new development will likely be through redevelopment. Residents perceive that the cumulative effect of many smaller changes could impact neighborhoods and overall town character. It might be important to have clear policies about the future uses and expansions of businesses in residential areas.
- **Careful continued business development is desirable in areas already zoned for business uses.** It is important to ensure that such new development does not detract from the Town’s character and does not cause impacts that might affect the quality of life.
- **Mixed opinions about some key land use issues.** Two issues in particular generated very mixed opinions:
 - **Housing opportunities** (in terms of housing type and price). Some are concerned that Trumbull is losing its affordability and that it might be difficult for younger and older people to remain in or move to Trumbull. Others feel that those needs have been met and additional housing development would affect Trumbull’s character.
 - **Long Hill Green.** Some expressed a desire to see small scale mixed uses focused on a green in this area. Others prefer to limit the amount and type of development in this area.
- **Residents are extremely proud of parks and open space system.** The Town has done a good job overall creating an open space system and could do more to ensure residents are aware of park amenities. Continued maintenance is important. There may also be key strategic parcels to target for future acquisition to help complete the “system.”
- **Let’s capitalize on our pathways.** Residents see both conservation and business opportunities due to existing and planned bike paths. It can contribute to the open space system, provide alternative transportation opportunities, help connect business areas and bring customers to businesses.

Details: Public Workshop

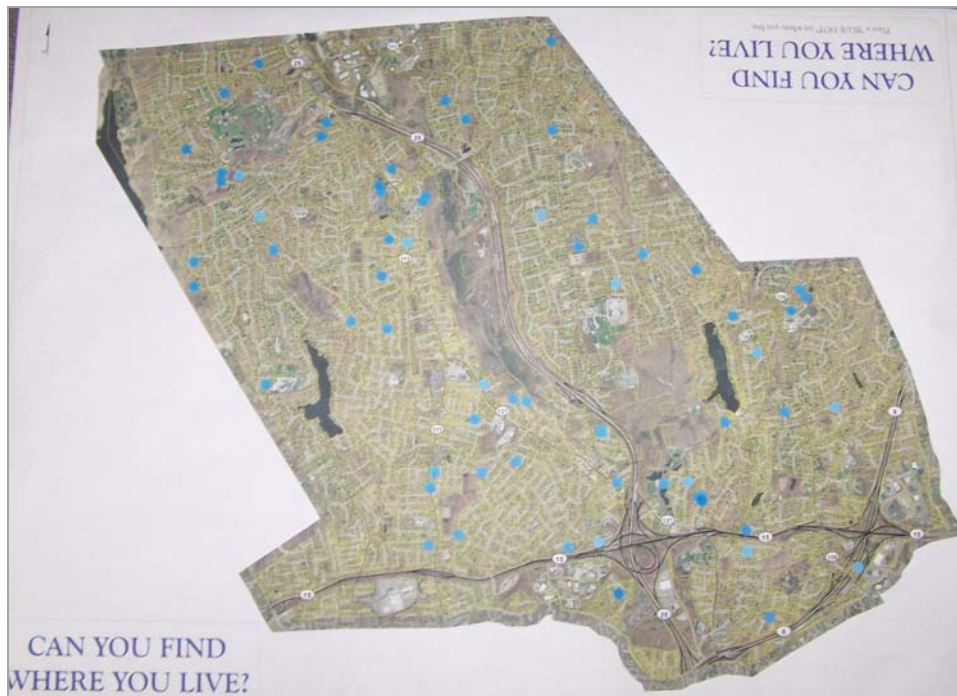
At the public workshop, residents participated in four exercises prior to having a room-wide discussion:

- Attendees placed a blue dot on the map to indicate where they live.
- Attendees placed green dots on things they are “proud” of.
- Attendees placed orange dots on things they are “sorry” about.

Attendees were given 50 “planning points” in different denominations (1 @ 20, 2 @ 10, 2 @ 5) and asked to place their planning points in different ballot boxes based on how important they felt that issue was for Trumbull to address as part of the planning process.

Where do you Live?

It appears that residents from throughout Trumbull attended.



What Are Your Proud Of?

Top "Prouds"

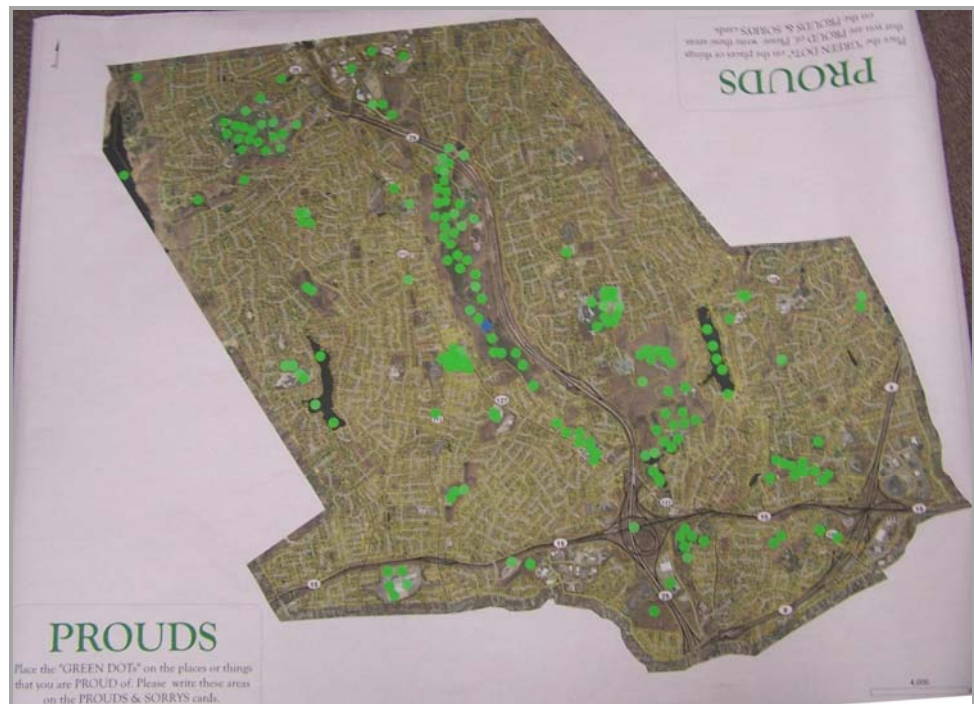
- Parks (34 mentions) including Twin Brooks, Indian Ledge, Old Mine
- Schools (28)
- Paths, trails, bike trail (19)
- Greenways, open space in general (14)
- Tashua (13)
- Library (10)
- Pools (7)
- Character (6) – "residential", "small town", "New England," "rural appearance"
- Nichols (5)
- Trumbull events (5)

Sampling of other "Prouds"

Conservation-Related: specific waterbodies, overall appearance of buildings and grounds, safe community

Development-Related: particular businesses, improvements at Town Center, business parks, a residential Main Street

Infrastructure-Related: Town Hall, emergency services, good roads



What Are You Sorry About?

Top "Sorries"

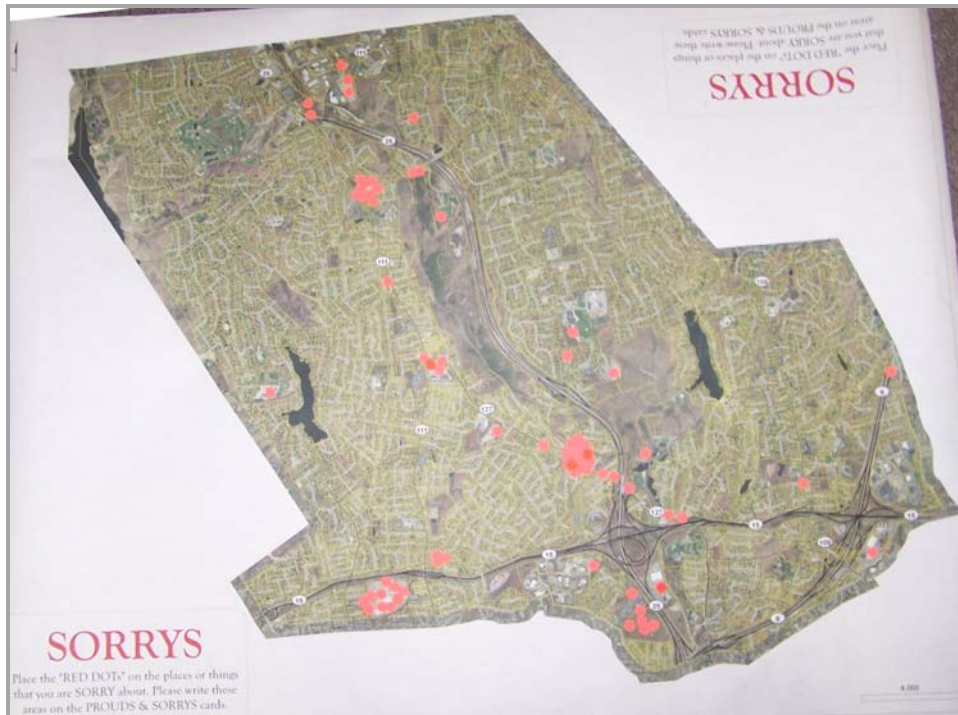
- Lack of Town Center / look of Town Center (23 mentions)
- Lack of restaurants (12)
- Mall / Mall area (7)
- Politics / government (6)
- Community events – loss of, changes to (6)
- Lack of walkways, sidewalks (5)

Sampling of other "Sorries"

Conservation-Related: Appearance of buildings and some road corridors, signs, removal of trees, lack of town identity/theme

Development-Related: Lack of business overall, Long Hill Green developments, specific businesses, magnet school

Infrastructure-Related: roads, certain intersections need lights, sewer project, taxes, lack of safe road crossings for bicyclists, library outdated, cell tower at Police Station



Planning Points Summary

It is unusual to see the total points for Conservation, Development and Infrastructure be so close.

	Points	Rank
Conservation Topics	1,115	
Natural Resources	265	6
Open Space	345	4
Historic Resources	165	11
Community Character	340	5

Development Topics	1,230	
Community Structure	420	3
Residential Development	45	12
Housing Needs	170	10
Business Development	595	1

Infrastructure Topics	1,130	
Community Facilities	475	2
Traffic and Circulation	245	7
Walking, Biking, Bus, Train	225	8
Water, Sewers, Utilities	185	9

Reasons for Points in High Ranking Topics

1. Business Development

- Even though Trumbull Center is successful, we lack of a true town center:
 - desire for more opportunities for shopping, eating, gathering
 - could expand and improve the Town Center
 - benefit – bring people into town, keep people in town
 - could incorporate smart growth, sustainability
 - can we work with ConnDOT to improve the road here?
- Lack of Business Variety - many banks, few restaurants, no night life, no bike shop. Feel we have the land to provide more business opportunities
- Grow the tax base
- Other business considerations:
 - accessibility to commercial areas important for seniors
 - businesses are moving back from overseas - need plans on how to attract them. Do we have the services and amenities that these businesses look for?
- Capitalize on what we have already

2. Community Facilities

- Maintain what we have and use efficiently:
 - pools well used but need maintenance
 - schools have great facilities – need to use them for more activities, maximize their use
- Things lacking in town:
 - Community Center
 - WiFi
- Planning for new or expanded facilities:
 - Questions about planning, designing and managing construction of new facilities
 - Can town partner with non-profits to meet community facility needs / do more?
 - Senior Center and Library need to be improved
- Should connect community facilities with trails

3. Community Structure

- Positive characteristics of Trumbull's community structure:
 - Have neighborhoods with distinct identities. They give residents identity, sense of location and point of reference.
 - Have kept main roads residential
 - Different scale of areas – e.g., Long Hill is smaller scale the Town Center. Structure reflects history and sense of the area.
- Perceived threats to Trumbull's community structure:
 - Some business “creep” / zone changes in residential areas
 - Design or scale that does not reflect character
- Opportunities to enhance Trumbull's community structure:
 - Series of “nodes” e.g., Town Center, Town Hall area and Long Hill tied together with bike lanes / pathways
 - Design and building patterns are very important
- Mixed views for Long Hill – some like idea of apartments over retail. Some do not want to see that type of housing. Others wonder what makes economic sense: commercial? residential? mixed uses? Some believe parking is an issue here. Should connect Long Hill to the trail system.

4. Open Space

- Highest priority is to maintain what we have, but also focus on acquiring key parcels that will help to complete the open space system.
- Additional Open Space?
 - Remarkable river corridor running through the town – need to preserve land along it
 - Like idea of having town greens opposite mixed use buildings (Branford as an example)
- How to improve / expand upon what we have:
 - Provide more information about what we have to offer. Would be useful to have a guide
 - Interconnect parks
 - Should we allow non-residents paid access to parks? Mixed opinions on this

5. Character

- What is Trumbull's character in 1 or 3 words? proud, disorganized, residential, patriotic, lack of cohesiveness, best kept secret, residential flavor of Main Street.
- Other towns require design review, maybe we should have some sort of review to protect our character
- Concerned that piecemeal zoning changes can have cumulative effect
- Mostly developed – not much left in terms of future development
- People really care about and maintain their property
- Concern with loss of trees

Other Topics

- Looking at the region, how can Trumbull distinguish itself from the other communities?
- 1960 plan called for industry at periphery of town with residential and rural in the interior
- Some do not want to see more multi-family development or rentals
- Would like more opportunities for getting around without a car
- Who are we planning for?
- Need to master plan for village nodes on a close scale so that people know what we want and we can prevent things that are inconsistent with the vision
- Village areas have been there for years – don't meet today's regulations
- We have lost some things that make Trumbull special, such as community events and old-time / small-town businesses
- Last 10 years are not indicative of next 10 due to economy
- Although development has slowed, need to consider hillside protection and address rear lots
- Why are there so many vacant businesses? False advertising that the signs are still there.
- Fate of waste water treatment – do we go it alone? Should we be proactive?
- Need to protect natural resources – habitat, stream corridors, vegetation
- Need more volunteers
- Capitalize on the ethnic population in town

Details: Questionnaire for Department Heads and Board and Commission Members

- 12 Department Heads filled out the questionnaire
- 36 Board and Commission members, representing 15 boards and commissions (including the Town Council) filled out the questionnaire

The following summarized their input.

Things We Like about Trumbull

- That our commercial areas are on our borders
- Our parks and open space
- Character and overall quality of life (character described as quiet residential, small town, bucolic, peaceful, New England)
- The people
- Schools
- Sample of other mentions: lack of strip retail, improvements at the Town Center, landscaping, reasonably low traffic

Things to Encourage

- Specific types of businesses (e.g., retail, boutiques, family oriented businesses, low impact businesses, home offices, mixed use)
- Town Center
- Conserving land and resources including natural stream buffers
- Community center, teen center, more outdoor amenities
- Become the biking and hiking capital of Fairfield County
- Green buildings, renewable energy
- Sidewalks, bike trails, pathways

Things We Don't Care For

- Lack of true town center
- Density or scale of new residential developments
- Lack of restaurants
- Sample of other mentions: commercial development occurring in residential neighborhoods, traffic, lack of business diversity, taxes, sewer issue

Things to Discourage

- Things that affect our natural environment
- Certain businesses (e.g., banks, big box retail)
- Locating commercial areas in residential areas, in areas where it will create traffic
- Politics
- Tax increases

Greatest Challenges Overall

- How to continue business development to grow the tax base while respecting character
- Trumbull Center
- Maintaining an excellent school system
- Meeting the needs of seniors and reducing their tax burden
- Politics
- More events that build community spirit
- Addressing flood mitigation
- Aging infrastructure

Greatest Challenges for Specific Departments, Boards and Commissions

- Board of Education – downsizing of students, finding revenue without raising taxes
- Board of Finance – maintain level of services without raising taxes, reviving schools
- Business Education Initiative – funding, develop partnerships, taxes, working with Board of Education on career development
- Cable – adequate funding, staffing, equipment, improve coordination with school staff, gaining traction that this is a town resource, engaging youth
- Conservation Commission – play role in managing town resources while leaving regulatory role to appropriate boards and staff; maintaining expertise of the board; improve grant writing ability; remain advisory. Ensure conservation issues are in POCD.
- Economic and Community Development Commission – increasing grand list without losing character of town
- Land Acquisition – protect character of town

- Library – new and larger building, financial sustainability, how to better deliver services within existing constraints, increasing digital capacity
- Nature Commission – support and sustain the Center, find location for it.
- Parks and Recreation – funds for maintenance
- Planning and Zoning Commission – relationship of character of town with zoning regulations.
- Police Commission – staffing and funding
- Senior Citizen Commission – providing affordable programs and services for seniors, funding
- Town Council – providing quality services while keeping taxes under control, implementing CIP, complete sewer project, plan for future waste removal, finish cell tower project, conflict between education funding and tax burden, affordability, proper budgeting
- Zoning Board of Appeals – more requests for variances, need to update regulations to address this

Greatest Departmental Challenges

- Need for more space at Town Hall and upgrades of equipment, technology, and security
- Renovations or expansions of other buildings, e.g., schools, police, library
- Desire for a community center and growing demand for more indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and programs
- Increased emergency calls
- Staffing mentioned by many departments

Details: Discussion with Planning and Zoning Commission

Natural Resources

- Flood zone along the Pequonnock River.
- Some issues enforcing wetlands regulations / permits.
- Light pollution is of concern.

Open Space

- Town is fortunate to have extensive parks and open space. It was noted that it is difficult to walk to them – best reached by car.
- Don't have a true town green that residents can walk to, stroll, sit down. Monroe town green mentioned as an example.
- Might be some issues managing open space – addressing maintenance and handling impacts from bikers.
- Look at potential greenway and bikeway connections, including a river-walk.

Community Character

- What is Trumbull's character? Small town; old world Trumbull; stable; solid; wholesome; bedroom community; colonial elements; separation of commercial and residential areas; residential main roads; all-American; open space; family community.
- Threats – Preserve character that is left. Lack of design guidelines. A design review board might be a good idea, but need information on how to establish and how they would operate. Lighting – addresses new lighting and enforcing regulations. Size and look of signs are a concern.

Community Structure

- No real town center / downtown. Trumbull Center shopping area functions as a "town center" where residents go.
- Vision for Trumbull Center? Ideas included: connecting the developments that are on both sides of the street; more village style with pedestrian amenities, buildings closer to street and parking behind; riverwalk; possibly mixed use. Recognize that limited land area poses a challenge.
- Adopted regulations to encourage village style development at Long Hill Green. Because of economy have not seen much yet.
- Town Hall area – vision? Walkable with small shops. Community events are held here, but lack of things to do before or after events.
- Other areas with distinct sense of place include Nichols, Lake area.

Housing and Residential Areas

- Protecting residential areas – buffers / transitions between business development and residences.
- Feeling that there are smaller housing units available in town (accessory apartments, multi-family developments, over 55 developments, etc.). Discussion and debate about housing costs and its implications.

Business and Economic Development

- Why economic development? Tax base. Also provides services and jobs.
- Where? Look at land already zoned for business uses. Can more be done in those zones? Debate about whether taller buildings should be allowed in some locations. New areas for business development could possible include residential areas mixed in / abutting commercial areas. Sensitive issue. What opportunities might there be?
- Discussion of industrial parks. Based on access challenges for some areas, would other uses be more appropriate? Are there opportunities to work with neighboring communities? May have allowed some sub-optimal uses in industrial zones in past.
- Need a vision for certain areas, including Routes 111/25 area, Main Street south of the Merritt; and other areas.
- Additional desirable businesses? Restaurants. In past had wanted bookstore also. Entertainment for all ages.

Community Services and Facilities

- Playing fields only available to organized teams – lack of options for “pick-up” games by residents.
- Should look at senior center and teen center.

