

Summary of Community Visioning Forums Update of the Windham Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Review Team held two community forums to collect input from the public to help the team develop an updated community vision to serve as the basis for the updated comprehensive plan. One forum was held on Thursday evening, November 13, 2014 at the Manchester School. The second forum was held on Saturday morning, November 22, 2014 in Haskell Hall and Auditorium, the gymnasium at the Town Hall. The agendas and formats for the two forums were the same (see attached agenda for the November 13th forum). Each forum opened with a presentation by Ben Smith, the Planning Director, on demographic, economic, and development trends. Forum participants then worked in small groups to discuss four topics. A member of the Review Team facilitated each of the small groups. Each forum lasted about three hours.

Approximately 45 people (not including Review Team members, staff, and Town officials) participated in the November 13th forum. Participants worked in seven small groups each with about 6 members plus the facilitator. Approximately 30 people (not including Review Team members, staff, and Town officials) participated in the November 22nd forum. Participants worked in eight small groups each with 3-4 members plus the facilitator.

Each small group completed four exercises as follows:

- **Exercise #1 – What I love about Windham** – Each small group generated a list of things they love about Windham through a brainstorming exercise in which each participant first completed a worksheet to list their ideas followed by a group list making activity. After all the ideas were listed on a flip chart, each person was given 3 or 4 sticky dots and asked to place the dots on the items they thought are most important. A summary of the combined results for Exercise #1 is included in the following sections. Transcriptions of the flip charts from each small group showing all of the items identified and the number of “important votes” each item received are included in the appendix.
- **Exercise #2 – What I would like to see improved or changed about Windham** – Each small group generated a list of things they would like to see improved or changed about Windham through a brainstorming exercise in which each participant first completed a worksheet to list their ideas followed by a group list

making activity. After all the ideas were listed on a flip chart, each person was given 3 or 4 sticky dots and asked to place the dots on the items they thought are most important. Transcriptions of the flip charts from each small group showing all of the items identified and the number of “important votes” each item received are included in the appendix.

- **Exercise #3 – The Windham Cake** – Each participant was asked to consider how Windham should grow in the future regardless of the amount of development that occurs. They were asked to allocate future development among a range of residential and commercial types of development. Participants could add additional categories to the prepared list. The section below summarizes the results of this exercise. A separate Excel file contains a tabulation of the results.
- **Exercise #4 – Critique of the Vision from the 2003 Comprehensive Plan** – Each participant was given a copy of the vision from the 2003 Comprehensive Plan and asked to critique it by identifying the parts they think are still relevant as well as parts that need to be changed or dropped. Participants could also identify topics that need to be addressed in an updated vision for the future of Windham.

Exercise #1: What I love about Windham

Three aspects of Windham stood out when forum participants were asked what they love about Windham, the town’s rural feel and character, the quality of the schools, and the convenience of living in Windham.

To synthesize the results of the 15 small groups from the two forums into a set of key findings, we took each of the ideas that received two or more “dot” votes in any small group and organized those concepts into categories. Since the number of people in the small groups varied considerably, we did not consider the number of votes that the individual ideas received within a small group. Rather we tried to identify the aspects of Windham that appear to be widely loved across the groups.

1. Participants in the forums love that Windham has retained its rural feel and character. Included in this in some groups was the pairing of businesses with this rural environment. The following concepts received two or more “dot” votes in a small group:

- Rural character, within walking distance of amenities
- Rural feel
- Rural feel

- Rural feel/character
- Rural areas
- Town has rural character but close to Portland
- Rural environment but close to Portland
- Farms
- Combination of land and businesses
- Mix of rural and business

2. Participants also love that there is open space in the community including a few special features. This can be considered to be an extension or part of the community's rural feel. The following concepts received two or more votes in a small group:

- Greenspace in North Windham
- Lowell Preserve – special nature preserve
- Land conservation areas
- Scenic vistas along Route 202 rotary – Gray
- Open space and wildlife
- Open spaces

3. Participants love the quality of the Windham school system. This feeling extends to the teaching staff and the administration. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Good schools
- Quality of educators in school system
- Schools
- Strong schools
- Schools – Educational value
- Schools and school committee
- Potential educational opportunities with a large school system
- Good school system
- Quality of schools
- Education, schools, library

4. Forum participants love that Windham is a convenient community within which to live. This convenience includes a number of factors including the convenience of having shopping and services in the community, the proximity of recreational opportunities both within Windham and nearby, and the convenience of being close to Portland but not being in Portland. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Conveniences, location
- Proximity to retail
- Accessibility of services for every day family life
- Convenience of services – most everything I need is here
- Recreational opportunities locally
- Easily accessible recreation areas – White Mountains
- Location to Portland without being Portland
- Proximity to Portland
- Close to Portland/urban
- Proximity to Portland (jobs and transportation, shopping not in Windham, medical facilities) and recreation/lakes?
- Proximity to urban Portland while not living in urban
- Proximity to metropolis/greater outdoor
- Town has rural character but close to Portland
- Rural environment but close to Portland
- Location – urban/rural. Convenient!

5. Participants love that Windham has retained its small town feel while it has grown and offers the amenities of a larger community. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Small town feel, big town opportunities
- Large town with small town feel
- Small town feel with access to retail shops, etc.

6. Forum participants love that Windham is a friendly, caring, and safe community where people are active and involved. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- The neighborhoods
- Families are active in the community
- Healthy mix of community life
- Friendly people willing to help neighbors
- High community spirit and supportive nature of people
- Caring and supportive people in this town
- Opportunities for lifestyle (hunt, hike, swim, movies, dine)
- Safe community
- Safe place/low crime
- Safe community

7. Windham's natural resources and environment are loved by forum participants.

The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Natural resources, recreational
- Lakes and rivers – clean, utilized and protected
- Clean environment. Water/land good standards

8. Forum participants love the community's heritage and value its historic resources.

The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Historic places preserved and unchanged
- Family heritage/history/roots
- History and preserving it
- Land and historic preservation

In addition to these key values, a number of other ideas or concepts were identified as important in a small group and received more than two votes. These range from the various aspects of municipal services, to the diversity of life-styles, and the economic role of the community:

- Youth sports
- Manageable taxes
- Community garden
- Efficiency and friendliness of municipal services
- Road infrastructure – to Turnpike and 302, etc.
- Windham public library
- Diversity of life styles – income, property size, socio-economics
- There are jobs here
- Is a central business district
- Still has ample opportunity for future growth planning

Exercise #2: What should be improved or changed about Windham

When considering what needs to be improved or changed about Windham, participants in the forums identified a wide range of areas. Improvements to the business community and the North Windham business district, improvements to various aspects of the community's infrastructure, and creation of a community center were most often mentioned.

To synthesize the results of the 15 small groups from the two forums into a set of key findings, we took each of the ideas that received two or more “dot” votes in any small group and organized those concepts into categories. Again, since the number of people in the small groups varied considerably we did not consider the number of votes that the individual ideas received within a small group and we tried to identify the aspects of Windham that appear to be widely identified for improvement or change.

1. Forum participants suggested a number of improvements to the business community and the North Windham commercial district. The ideas included concern about business growth (both pro and con), working to fill vacant commercial space and to diversify the business mix, and improving the appearance and functioning of the North Windham commercial area. The following ideas received two or more “dot” votes in a small group:

- More community wide support of business development
- Slow the growth (business) down in North Windham
- Vacant businesses and storefronts
- Find ways to fill up empty store buildings in North Windham i.e. – mixed use
- Increase variety of businesses
- Lack of good quality restaurants and quality nightlife
- Building infrastructure for business district
- Road North Windham – tree lined – appealing – pedestrian friendly –safer – too much traffic
- North Windham Commercial Area
 - Does not support community feel
 - Strip malls
 - History not preserved
 - Sprawling
 - Can’t walk
 - Traffic congestion
 - No walkways
 - No uniformity
 - No trees
- Route 302 – traffic flow - look
- Commercial design standards like Freeport

2. Forum participants raised the need for improvement in the community’s infrastructure. The ideas included improvements to provide water and sewer service, road improvements, and improvements to Town buildings. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Water and sewer improvements
- Infrastructure
- Upgrade/improve water/sewer etc.
- Invest in infrastructure – roads – lateral access roads
- Infrastructure – roads – River Road
- Improve town infrastructure (buildings and streets)

3. The concept of a community center for all ages was identified in a number of small groups. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Community center (teen, senior, food . . .)
- Community center (elderly, children, events)
- Community center – Where?
- We need a community center (building)
- Community center is needed

4. Participants in a number of groups suggested the need for various improvements related to traffic especially on Route 302. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Traffic capacity
- Less curb cuts on Route 302
- Congestion on 302 in summertime
- Route 302 – traffic flow - look

5. A number of small groups gave a priority to the need for improved park and recreational facilities. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- More active outdoor facilities (baseball, basketball, other courts)
- Sports facilities – indoor and outdoor
- Recreation for kids
- Additional money for park and recreational spaces

6. A number of small groups identified proposals relating to improved planning or the overall character of the town. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Lack of plan or planning to protect and/or create open space
- Townscapes blended with open space and historical features
- Town focal point – i.e. Riverbank Park

- Town center area needs improvement
- Better job of controlling growth

7. A few groups identified improvements involving programs and facilities to meet the needs of less well-off members of the community. These included Head Start and affordable housing. The following ideas received two or more votes in a small group:

- Head Start program
- Support for families below the poverty line
- Affordable housing, multifamily residential – apartments or condos – elderly, singles, divorced, widowed

8. The need for housing for the elderly was identified as important in two groups:

- More elderly housing
- Elderly housing

9. Participants in two groups identified the need for pedestrian and bicyclist improvements:

- Pedestrian and bicyclists safety and accessibility
- Improved bike/ped community

10. A number of groups identified improvements to an aspect of municipal government although these were spread across a range of functions:

- Police department needs more resources
- Provide more fire and rescue services
- Transfer station
- Expand library services – audio books – enlarge building

11. A few groups raised the opportunity of improving South Windham or villages in general:

- South Windham Village (revitalize)
- Get rid of Mill – Keddy Mill
- Enhance cluster housing and villages

12. While the Town's history and historical resources were raised in a number of groups, they only rose to a level of importance in two groups:

- Protect history – designate historic areas

- Better job preserving history

13. Participants in three groups suggested ideas or concepts related to the environment and energy:

- Green standards of development – energy efficiency – nature
- Improvement in natural gas infrastructure – all energy and reliability of power – concern is the power outages
- Protect wells and aquifers

14. One group identified the need to “Improve quality for non-sports programs (in school) – Elementary and Middle Schools”

Exercise #3: The Windham Cake

The third exercise at the community visioning forums asked participants to think about how Windham should grow and change. The premise of the exercise was that over the next ten years, Windham is going to continue to grow and change. The question really isn't if it is going to grow – the real question is how it is going to grow and change.

Each participant was asked to think of Windham as a cake, made of several main ingredients or different types of development. They were directed to write the recipe for the 2015-2025 cake – how much of the different ingredients do you think should go into the cake. For the sake of this exercise, the ingredients given to the participants were:

- Rural residential development along existing roads and in small subdivisions in woods and fields
- Residential subdivisions with relatively large lots - 2 to 5 acres per lot
- Residential subdivisions with moderate size lots - 30,000 to 60,000 SF (approximately 3/4 to 1.5 acres)
- Village-type residential development with smaller lots served by public sewers - 10,000 to 20,000 SF (approximately 1/4 to 1/2 an acre)
- Townhouse style residential development such as condominium projects with 4-8 units in a building
- Multifamily housing

- Small, low-intensity commercial uses primarily outside of the established North Windham commercial center
- Higher-intensity commercial uses primarily within the established North Windham commercial center

Participants were also allowed to add other ingredients to their recipe for future development. Participants in a number of groups did just that.

The following table summarizes the results of this exercise based on adding up the individual responses for each participant as recorded on the small group master tabulation sheets. One group provided only an average allocation for the entire group. In this case, each member of the group was assigned the group's average. The first column shows the various ingredients. The second column shows the total of the individual allocations while the third column shows the average allocation for all forum participants who completed the exercise. Columns 4 and 5 show the minimum and maximum percentage allocated to each ingredient. Column 6 reports the number of participants who assigned 0% to that ingredient.

1. Main Ingredients	2. Total	3. Average	4. Low	5. High	6. # of 0s
Rural residential development along existing roads and in small subdivisions in woods and fields	639	10.14	0	50	18
Residential subdivisions with relatively large lots - 2 to 5 acres per lot	713	11.32	0	61	17
Residential subdivisions with moderate size lots - 30,000 to 60,000 SF	732.5	11.63	0	40	12
Village-type residential development with smaller lots served by public sewers - 10,000 to 20,000 SF	903.5	14.34	0	60	11
Townhouse style residential development such as condominium projects with 4-8 units in a building	487.5	7.74	0	20	16
Multifamily housing	548	8.70	0	50	16
Small, low-intensity commercial uses primarily outside of the established North Windham commercial center	699	11.10	0	30	12
Higher-intensity commercial uses primarily within the established North Windham commercial center	1151.5	18.28	0	50	6

Here are a few observations about the results of this exercise:

1. Opinions about the future development of Windham varied widely among forum participants. The range of allocations among the six residential types went from a low of 0 (meaning participants did not allocate any future development to that type) to highs of 20% to 60% for each option.
2. Seventeen percent to twenty-nine percent of forum participants who completed this exercise allocated 0% to each development type.
3. Among the residential development types, the village-type development option received the highest allocation overall with an average of 14.34 percent.
4. The townhouse and multifamily housing options received the lowest allocations with 7.74 percent and 8.70 percent respectively.
5. While scattered low-density development has been the predominate development form over at least the past 15 years, the rural residential development option and large-lot subdivision option were allocated only 10.14% and 11.32% of future development respectively.
6. High-intensity commercial development primarily in North Windham received the highest allocation of any of the development options with 18.28% of future development.
7. The low-intensity commercial development option received a lower allocation than higher intensity commercial uses.

A number of participants took advantage of the option of adding categories to the exercise. Two types of development accounted for most of the added options:

- Assisted living/elderly, senior housing, and elderly housing we added in a number of groups. The total allocation was 179. Comparing this to the 487.5 aggregate for townhouse style development suggests that this development type was quite strong within the groups that added it as a separate category.
- A number of participants added a non-development option including green space in North Windham, open space, parks, land trusts, agricultural incentives for farmers, and recreation. The aggregate for this option was 220 but this was influenced somewhat by a small number of participants who allocated a significant percentage to this category.

In addition to these two categories, participants added the following additional options although these were typically considered only by one group:

- Different subdivision ordinances in different zones
- Focus on existing structures

- Residential over commercial in the same building
- Professional offices, medical, other
- Innovative business outside of North Windham

Exercise 4: Critique of the Vision from the 2003 Comprehensive Plan

The fourth and final exercise at the community forums involved having participants critique the vision statement that was part of the Town's 2003 Comprehensive Plan. Each participant received a copy of the vision statement and was asked to mark-it-up to show which areas or phrases are still relevant to the future of Windham and which things in the vision need to be changed or dropped. In addition, participants were able to identify any important things that they felt should be included in the updated vision for the community.

In general, there was broad agreement among forum participants that most or all of the language in the 2003 Vision was still relevant in thinking about the future of the community. In the critiques by the small groups, a few areas of emphasis with concepts in the 2003 vision were noted. These areas are shown in bold and highlighted in yellow in the following copy of the 2003 Vision. Even though there was general agreement with the 2003 Vision, there were a number of areas where the small groups raised questions or concerns about various concepts or phrasing in the vision statement. In the following copy of the vision, these areas are underlined, shown in italics, and highlighted in blue. In one case, a particular concept was both emphasized as being positive and questioned and is highlighted in green.

2003 Vision for the Future of Windham

Retain and protect our rural character, scenic vistas, natural features and environment by maintaining **a critical balance between preservation and development** through managing and directing growth in a manner that accommodates all segments of our community and provides affordable, high-quality living conditions."

“Managing and Directing Development Policy Guidance

- **Recognize that times have changed** and that densely developed portions of Windham, including some existing village areas, may require **municipal water and sewer**.
- Not every land parcel in Windham is suitable for every type of possible development. In addition, some land parcels should not be developed at all, but instead **preserved as open space**.
- Retain and enhance the different village land use patterns that now exist in Windham.
- Diversity in land development patterns should be encouraged in the future growth of Windham.
- The property tax implications of development activities should be considered in managing the growth of Windham.”

“Retain Rural Character Policy Guidance

- **Maintain a low density of development** in major portions of Windham (see map 1-1)
- Woodlands, open space and farmlands should be regarded as key elements of the town’s rural landscape.
- Parts of Windham should retain the characteristics commonly associated with a New England village, including **the preservation of historic and older structures**.
- Land areas adjacent to Route 202 (except for existing areas in South Windham Village, Windham Center and Foster’s Corner) should not be developed for commercial purposes.
- Wildlife habitats are an important element of the town’s rural character.”

“Sense of Community Policy Guidance

- Every town resident should have an opportunity to participate in local government *decision making*.
- Encourage the participation of **citizen/volunteers** in a wide range of municipal and community activities.
- Provide various **places in Windham for all residents to meet, interact and recreate.**
- Provide opportunities for a wide range of individuals and families, of all ages *and income levels*, to live in Windham.”

A few areas of concern emerged with respect to the review of the 2003 Vision:

1. There were a number of comments and questions about the use of the term “villages” in the vision especially when referring to existing conditions and the existing pattern of development.
2. There were conflicting sentiments about the concept of considering the property tax implications of development with some participants/groups emphasizing this idea while others questioned it.
3. There were some concerns about an over-emphasis on “rural” with comments such as only in some areas and strike outs of the phrase “rural character” in different areas of the vision. There was a suggestion that Windham is not a rural community but it does have some rural aspects and character.

In addition to critiquing the 2003 Vision, participants were asked to identify other ideas or concepts that they feel should be included in an updated vision for the future of Windham. The following is a summary of the major concepts that emerged from these suggestions:

- **The Economy** – There were a number of comments that the 2003 Vision did not address the economy, the commercial aspects of the community, jobs, or the desire for future economic development and the creation of good quality jobs. These included ideas for promoting manufacturing, creating an industrial park, and having incentives for job creation.

- **Community Center** – There were a number of suggestions that the updated vision should address the need for a community/senior center including space for meetings.
- **North Windham Commercial Center** – There were a number of suggestions that the updated vision needs to incorporate the concepts of the 21st Century Downtown Plan and improvements to North Windham including improvements to the visual environment to create more of a “Main Street” and commercial design standards.
- **Water and Sewer Infrastructure** – There were a number of ideas put forth to incorporate the provision of improved infrastructure in the updated vision including looking at alternative technologies and addressing the funding of infrastructure improvements including the use of “creative” financing techniques.
- **Environmental Considerations** – Some participants suggested that the vision needs more focus on environmental considerations including protection of the lakes, “green building” codes, and assuring that development protects the environment and natural resources.
- **Open Land** – There were a number of ideas raised about preserving open space and farming/farmland including working with the land trust to purchase land, allowing the transfer of development rights, including public access, creating “agricultural growth areas” for food processing and value added services, and integrating natural resources and open space into development. The idea of creating a Land for Windham’s Future program was suggested.
- **Community Identity** – One group suggested that we don’t want Windham to look like “away.” Another said we don’t want Windham to be a bedroom community. Another called for creating an “inspiring sense of place”, a learning (progressive) environment. The issue of the Route 302 gateway at the Westbrook line was raised.

Flip Chart Notes - Small Group Exercises Windham Community Visioning Forums

Exercise #1 – What do you love about Windham?

Each small group generated a list of things they love about Windham through a brainstorming exercise in which each participant first completed a worksheet to list their ideas followed by a group list making activity. After all the ideas were listed on a flip chart, each person was given 3 or 4 sticky dots and asked to place the dots on the items they thought are most important. The following tables are transcriptions of the flip charts from each small group showing all of the items identified and the number of “important votes” each item received.

11-13-14 Forum Table 1	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Small town feel, big town opportunities	4
Swimming	0
Manageable taxes	2
Dynamic people that impact region	0
Greenspace in North Windham	2
Being aware of neighborhoods that already exist	0
Community garden	2
Rural character, within walking distance of amenities	2
Windham public library	2
Open spaces around the town to recreate in	1
Comprehensive police and fire	1
Mountain Division Trail	1
Openness to innovation within schools	0
Recognize historical value	1
Proximity to retail	2
Good schools	1

Rotary circle	0
Windham Hill United Church of Christ	1
Beautiful farmland	1
Open vistas	1
Progressive growth	0
Close to mountains and ocean	0

11-13-14 Forum Table 2	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Little Sebago Lake	1
Easily accessible recreation areas – White Mountains	2
Rural/farming character?/open space	1
Close to Portland/urban	4
Shopping area – concentrated and convenient	0
Concentration in North Windham	0
Not too many “box stores”	0
Efficiency and friendliness of municipal services	2
Good schools	3
Mountain Division Trail	0
Housing is affordable	1
Great library	1

11-13-14 Forum Table 3	
What I love about Windham	Votes
The neighborhoods	2
History – historic homes and powder mill	0
Close community – houses, businesses, and farmers	1
Cooperation amongst people	1

Lowell Preserve – special nature preserve	2
Conveniences, location	3
Abundance of open space	0
Combination of land and businesses	3
Natural resources, recreational	4
Youth sports	3
Convenience of everything being here	0
Mountain Division Trail	0
People, neighbors	0
Families are active in the community	3
Law enforcement response	1
Pace – general sense of familiarity – not hussle, bussle	0
Lake	1
Lippman Park	0
Still enough space for what can happen	1
Education, schools, library	3

11-13-14 Forum Table 4	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Healthy mix of community life	3
Feeling safe	1
Friendly people willing to help neighbors	4
Opportunities for lifestyle (hunt, hike, swim, movies, dine)	4
Improvement in schools	0
Quality of educators in school system	3
Well defined commercial zone – people live and work here	1
Location to Portland without being Portland	4
Large town with small town feel	2

Accessibility and quality of Town Council and other elected officials	0
Concentration of commercial use	1

11-13-14 Forum Table 5	
What I love about Windham	Votes
People – neighbors, kind, come together, pull together	1
Love dirt part of Swett Road	0
Proximity to Portland, Mountains, Ocean	1
Our community	1
Accessibility of services for every day family life	2
Diversity of life styles – income, property size, socio-economics	2
Responsive town government/town hall	1
Schools	2
Rural feel	2
Sports – youth and adult rec	1
Recreational opportunities locally	2
Farms	2
Diversity of Geography	1
Town services	0
Regional gateway	1

11-13-14 Forum Table 6	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Rural areas	4
Library	1
Strong schools	2
Road infrastructure – to Turnpike and 302, etc.	2
Dundee Park and recreational opportunities	0

Community garden	1
Proximity to Portland	2
Historic places preserved and unchanged	2
Conserved areas and trails	0
High community spirit and supportive nature of people	5
School and all other sports	1
Lakes and rivers – clean, utilized and protected	3
Shopping options	0
Fiscal discipline	0

11-13-14 Forum Table 7	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Schools – Educational value	3
Safe community	2
Mix of rural and business	2
Proximity to metropolis	1
Tax rate is favorable	1
Rural feel	4
Sebago Lake/recreation	0
Open space	1
Youth sports	1
Community and school arts	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 1	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Family heritage/history/roots	2
Regional center/hub	0
Shopping area	0

Proximity to Portland (jobs and transportation, shopping not in Windham, medical facilities) and recreation/lakes?	4
Safe place/low crime	2
Rural character	0
Strong educational aspect	1
Growth and optimism of community and commercial/jobs	1

11-22-14 Forum Table 2	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Schools and school committee	2
There are jobs here	2
Town has rural character but close to Portland	3
Caring and supportive people in this town	2
There are varied recreational opportunities	1
Convenience of services – most everything I need is here	3
Still has ample opportunity for future growth planning	2
Reasonable real estate taxes compared to other Cumberland County towns	0
Land and housing are still relatively affordable	1
Good natural resources (lakes, trails, fields, etc.)	0
Good mix of generations	0
Small enough to still have an identity	0
Still land for future growth	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 3	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Proximity to urban Portland while not living in urban	4
Farmland	1
Town services are centralized	1

Is a central business district	2
Good schools	0
Peaceful – not over developed	0
Website/tech infrastructure	0
Public works	1
Land conservation areas	3

11-22-14 Forum Table 4	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Scenic vistas along Route 202 rotary - Gray	2
Proximity to metropolis/greater outdoor	3
School campus at high school	0
Rural feel/character	3
Villages	0
Community spirit/involvement	0
Convenience of local retail and services	0
Library	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 5	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Historical preservation is working to save what is left	0
It's my hometown	1
Open space and wildlife	3
Low taxes, comparatively	1
Close proximity to Portland, etc.	1
Easy access to services and retail	1
Safe community	2
Excellent school system	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 6	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Services close	0
Controlled areas of growth	1
Sebago Lake	1
Rural environment but close to Portland	2
Sense of community	0
Small town feel of looking out for each other even as we grow bigger	1
History and preserving it	3
Affordable	0
Room for expansion	0
Potential educational opportunities with a large school system	2
Open spaces	2
My neighborhood	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 7	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Good school system	2
Location – urban/rural. Convenient!	2
Inclusive/down-to-earth	0
Middle-class	1
Recreational opportunities (parks and playgrounds)	1
Clean environment. Water/land good standards	2
Preserved areas (farms, rolling hills)	1
Employment opportunities	0
Traffic noncongested (except North Windham)	0
Trash recycling	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 8	
What I love about Windham	Votes
Access to recreation areas	0
Town employees	0
Rural aspect	0
Quality of schools	2
Generosity of citizens	0
Small town feel with access to retail shops, etc.	2
Values reinforcement of schools i.e. volunteering, etc.	1
Access to large communities i.e. Portland, Brunswick, etc.	0
Town Council that really cares about the community	0
Land and historic preservation	3
Town services – police, fire, volunteerism – best food pantry in the state	1

Exercise #2 – What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?

Each small group generated a list of things they would like to see improved or changed about Windham through a brainstorming exercise in which each participant first completed a worksheet to list their ideas followed by a group list making activity. After all the ideas were listed on a flip chart, each person was given 3 or 4 sticky dots and asked to place the dots on the items they thought are most important. The following tables are transcriptions of the flip charts from each small group showing all of the items identified and the number of “important votes” each item received.

11-13-14 Forum Table 1	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Department Public Works communications	1
Traffic capacity	2
Less curb cuts on Route 302	2

Northbound Route 302 traffic	1
Add to Portland Metro Route	0
Town service hours	1
The ability to move from one commercial area to another without travel on 302	1
More green manufacturing	0
Pedestrian and bicyclists safety and accessibility	2
More meeting rooms - space	1
More playing fields	1
Police department needs more resources	3
Fund library so it can be open on Saturdays	1
Traffic connectivity	1
115/202 traffic pattern returned to original	1
Create opportunities for kids to walk to school	0
Protect wells and aquifers	2
Potential commercial development pushing in on residential areas	0
Vacant businesses and storefronts	3
Utilize resources we have in town (i.e. Vet Center)	0
Businesses work together symbiotically	0

11-13-14 Forum Table 2	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Need either a municipal sewer system or protect wetlands	0
Community center	1
Preservation open space, farmland, and wooded areas	1
Lack of plan or planning to protect and/or create open space	2
Make improvement of the educational system more important	1
Promote more educational activities than sports, maintain low student teacher ratio, and more small schools than consolidated schools	1

More rental housing	0
Need commercial design standards	0
Extreme lack of ball fields	1
Town dump/improve curbside for bulky items	1
Safe walk/bikeways – paved shoulders	1
Improvement and repair of municipal facilities – Public Works	1
More senior or adult-only neighborhoods	1
Council process – two year turnover is bad – not enough time	0
Increase minimum size of residential lots	0
Improved fiscal responsibility	0
Westbrook/Windham 302 cleanup/ nicer development	1
Improve North Windham commercial district – fill empty stores, nicer restaurants and stores	1

11-13-14 Forum Table 3	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
More proactive government	1
Improved bike/ped community	2
More openness, communication economic and infrastructure development	0
Fire protection program, educational	0
Building infrastructure for business district	6
More localness – largely chain or big box	1
Community center (teen, senior, food . . .)	6
Commitment to community amenities	0
Solution to private road problem (maintenance done by individuals but still pay same taxes)	1
More active outdoor facilities (baseball, basketball, other courts)	4
More combustibility – places for people to meet	1
Headstart program	2

Community Services keeping up with needs and expectations	0
More personality and flavor of the town – too bland	0
Congestion on 302 in summertime	4

11-13-14 Forum Table 4	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Be more business friendly	1
Water and sewer improvements	4
More efficient spending on schools and other buildings	1
More job opportunities for citizens	0
More elderly housing	3
Expansion of commercial space (books, men's clothes)	0
Hold down taxes (taxes increase faster than value)	1
Replace aging schools	1
Road bypass of North Windham for non-commercial travel	1
Community center (elderly, children, events)	4
Add large manufacturer to add jobs and benefits (expand tax base)	1
Provide more fire and rescue services	3
Increase field space and outdoor access (bikes)	1
Transfer station	3
Fill empty space in North Windham before building new	0
Better road maintenance	0
Better transportation for seniors	0
Outlaw fireworks	0

11-13-14 Forum Table 5	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Route 302 change – no trees, no buffers, too much traffic	0

Better bike lanes and sidewalks -	1
Expand the Mountain Division Trail – in to Westbrook and in to mountains	
Mange seasonal influx of tourism - traffic	1
Plowing, sanding major roads	1
Bad lighting – lose stars at night	1
Green standards of development – energy efficiency - nature	2
Bigger, better playgrounds – more please	1
Lack of water related amenities, life	1
Community center – Where?	2
Protect environment and public awareness and education about pesticides	1
Improve and expand library	1
Fear of bedroom community identity	0
2003 Comp Plan Implementation – Task Force was disbanded. Why?	0
Promote alternative energy	1
Technology growing pains – cable and internet hookup on all roads	1
Public lake access	0

11-13-14 Forum Table 6	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Better city wide notices of closings in accurate terms – i.e. Little Sebago boat landing	1
Slow the growth (business) down in North Windham	3
Protect agricultural areas and open space	4
Improve middle school building	1
Improve traffic flow in North Windham	1
Expand library services – audio books – enlarge building	2
Find ways to fill up empty store buildings in North Windham i.e. – mixed use	2

More athletic fields	0
Too fiscally conservative at times	1
Townscapes blended with open space and historical features	3
Slow housing growth/new developments – less emphasis on development	1
Better planning accommodations to preserve our historical and cultural institutions/buildings i.e. – different ordinances to support this	1
Save the covered bridge	1
A senior center	1
More affordable senior housing	1

11-13-14 Forum Table 7	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
More community interest and participation	0
Sports facilities – indoor and outdoor	2
Town focal point – i.e. Riverbank Park	2
Infrastructure	3
Build bypass	0
Public transportation	0
Fewer business vacancies	0
Increase variety of businesses	4
Increase public and government support for small businesses	0
Monitor growth and type of growth	0
Grow industrial/manufacturing	0
Support for families below the poverty line	2

11-22-14 Forum Table 1	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Commuter/public transportation	0

Recreational opportunities for senior citizens	1
Upgrade/improve water/sewer etc.	2
Route 302 – traffic flow - look	2
Job growth	1
River Road - traffic	0
Making town services more user friendly/efficient especially code enforcement	1
Recreation for kids	4
Utilities in North Windham underground - looks	0
School overcrowding	0
Turnpike access	0
Streetscaping (landscaping)	0
North Windham – pedestrian friendly	1

11-22-14 Forum Table 2	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Invest in infrastructure – roads – lateral access roads	2
Cultural piece that would draw people to Windham	1
A well planned conversion of South Village and River area into a tourist mecca	1
We need a community center (building)	3
Develop more active recreational fields	1
More diverse businesses in town	1
More community wide support of business development	2
Our municipal buildings need serious upgrade or improvement	1
We need to borrow for things we need	1
Filling gaps in services you can't get here	0
More clustered residential development to maximize return of tax dollars	1
Services or personnel (municipal) has not kept pace with demands of the town	0

Sewer treatment solutions for North Windham	0
Public access to Sebago for residents and visitors	0
More manufacturing jobs	1
Need transfer site or dump	0
More 2 family homes	0
We need to improve our look	1

11-22-14 Forum Table 3	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Library	0
Infrastructure – roads – River Road	4
Elderly housing	2
Sewer and water	1
Hospital	0
Get rid of Mill – Keddy Mill	2
Public Works facilities	1
Program/center for agricultural education	1
Improve urban sprawl with smart growth	1
More small bits(?) in growth areas - ????	1
Town center area need improvement	2
More pedestrian access – encourage walking	0
Turnpike access	1
Arts and music center	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 4	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Main Street look and feel – underground utilities/vegetation	1
Protect history – designate historic areas	3

Enhance cluster housing and villages	2
Designated/hidden industrial zones	1
Protect and enhance scenic areas – enforce comprehensive plan	0
Create more parks and rec. opportunities and areas – i.e. Windham Hill – access to water	0
Access to public water supply Build a sewer system	1
Book store	0
Update town infrastructure	0
Severely curb housing development	1
Clean up junkyards and have a transfer station	0
Enhance town gateway on 302/Westbrook line	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 5	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Traffic flow on Route 302 needs severe change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merging at River and 302 • Light at Pope Road • Widening at stores • Remove barriers between stores so you don't have to use 302 	1
Improvement in natural gas infrastructure – all energy and reliability of power – concern is the power outages	2
Increased opportunities for teens (Outside of school) – YMCA pools –rec center	1
Limit growth to preserve open space	1
Telecommunications infrastructure – to improve for business!	0
Improve quality for non-sports programs (in school) – Elementary and Middle Schools	2
Affordable housing , multifamily residential – apartments or condos – elderly, singles, divorced, widowed	2
Limiting the town budget	0
Attracting a diverse set of businesses. A good business climate	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 6	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
North Windham Commercial Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not support community feel • Strip malls • History not preserved • Sprawling • Can't walk • Traffic congestion • No walkways • No uniformity • No trees 	3
Better job preserving history	2
Lack of good <u>quality</u> restaurants and <u>quality</u> nightlife	2
Better job of attracting clean industry	1
School system that rivals the quality of Cumberland and Falmouth	1
Better job of controlling growth	3

11-22-14 Forum Table 7	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Sidewalks (schools, commercial)	1
Road North Windham – tree lined – appealing – pedestrian friendly – safer – too much traffic	2
North Windham park/gazebo	0
Too many empty neglected buildings	0
Improve town infrastructure (buildings and streets)	2
Preserving historical buildings and sites	1
Too much litter	0
Buying key pieces of land now	0
South Windham Village (revitalize)	2
More public transportation	1

Create community events (outdoor/indoor concerts)	0
Windham historical – village green	0
Support/not hassle	0

11-22-14 Forum Table 8	
What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?	Votes
Traffic flow in commercial districts	0
Teenage activities and facilities	0
Additional money for park and recreational spaces	2
Commercial design standards like Freeport	2
Streamline development process	1
Sidewalks around schools especially	0
Proactive road repairs	0
Concentrate on small local businesses rather than big chain type businesses	0
Municipal building improvements	1
Community center is needed	2
South Windham Village left out of the loop	0
Waste water/sewer system	1

Agenda
Community Vision Forum
Thursday, November 13, 2014 starting at 6:00 PM
Manchester School

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Overview of the Comprehensive Plan and a Community Vision
3. Purpose and Overview of the Forum
4. Windham – How have we been growing and changing
5. Small Group Exercise #1 – What do you like about Windham?
6. Small Group Exercise #2 – What would you like to see improved or changed about Windham?

* * * * * BREAK (Work on Post-It Boards) * * * * *

7. Small Group Exercise #3 – The Windham Cake
8. Summary of Small Group Exercises 1 and 2
9. Small Group Exercise #4 – Critique of the Vision from the 2003 Comprehensive Plan
10. Wrap Up and Next Steps