

## SECTION IV. EDUCATION and PERSONAL GROWTH

Windsor Locks strives to provide people of all ages with a community which fosters personal learning, growth and development, starting with early childhood. This chapter will describe the current physical public educational institution and related population demographics which can be helpful tools in planning for the future of education in town. It will discuss the Town's goals and objectives which, if implemented, will help to ensure continued opportunities for generations of learners, inside a classroom, in nature and within the community.

- **Public Schools**
- **Population Demographics**
- **Facility Needs**
- **School Policies and Goals**
- **Kids and the Community**
- **The Five Protective Factors (as they relate to Land Use and Community Planning)**
- **Workforce Development**
- **Community Goals and Objectives**

### Our Public Schools

The public-school system is made up of two elementary schools, a middle school and high school. These schools are located on four separate sites located throughout Town. The following is an inventory of facilities and locations:

- North Street Elementary School 325 North Street
  - 32 Classrooms Pre-K – Grade 2
  - 13.25 acres
- South Elementary School 87 South Street
  - 34 Classrooms Grades 3 – 5



Windsor Locks Elementary School Program

- 24.13 acres
- Windsor Locks Middle School 7 Center Street
  - 38 Classrooms Grades 6 – 8
  - 13.11 acres
- Windsor Locks High School 58 South Elm Street
  - 52 Classrooms Grades 9-12
  - 61.6 acres

This chapter will explore changes in data over the most recent decades in housing units, births, deaths, enrollment, facility needs and policy changes which influence the Windsor Locks school district.

## School Population

As the table below shows, there was a significant decline in the K-12 school population from 1970 through 2015. Since 1970 the public-school population, while it had a modest increase in 2000, has had an overall and steady decline of 2581 students. This translates to a 61% decrease in students.

**Public School Students/Housing Unit**

	<b>Number of Housing Units</b>	<b>Public K- 12 Enrollment</b>	<b>Public K-12 Students/Unit</b>	<b>% Change compared to previous line</b>
<b>1970</b>	4229	4211	1.00	
<b>1980</b>	4232	2328	0.55	-44.8
<b>1990</b>	4929	1589	0.32	-41.4
<b>2000</b>	5101	2050	0.40	+25.0
<b>2005</b>	5332	2043	0.38	-05.0
<b>2010</b>	5429	1785	0.33	-13.2
<b>2015</b>	5521	1630	0.30	-9.09

As indicated in the 2007 plan, demographers look for trends between housing unit growth and the change in school population. In 2017 this is still true. The above chart provides information on these variables. The data shows an increase in the number of housing units during the 1990's of 172 units or only a 3.5% growth. Although the rate of housing unit growth was modest during this decade, and although the overall population change was a net loss (-2.5%), the public-school age population (age 5 – 19) showed a 21% increase. This was attributed to what demographers called the “echo” of the baby boom, which has particularly impacted this range in the Town's population profile as this age group moves through the population profile of the Town. This is a small, but noticeable bulge in the school age population group due to the larger number of baby boomer adults moving through the child bearing age groups. However, this bulge was short-lived as was the impact on the school population. More information on these trends can be seen in the “Population and Housing” chapter.



According to the Windsor Locks Central Office data, the school population since 2007 has been relatively stable with a reported modest decline in school enrollment in the 2017 – 2018 school year of 1565 down from 1630 in 2015. While the number of housing units has steadily increased, the number of students enrolled in the schools has steadily decreased. These community statistics indicate that the number of housing units does not dictate public school enrollment numbers.

The number of persons per household has been decreasing consistently since the post World War II period. According to the Partnership for Strong Communities Housing Data Profile of 2015 the average persons per household held steady, only reduced to 2.4 from 2.43 in 2000. More information can be found about these trends and their relationship to the Windsor Locks community in the Community Livability chapter of the Plan.

The town has rezoned significant land areas from Industrial to Residential zoning in the early 2000's, and some additional properties have been rezoned in more recent years. Still, the impact on school populations has not been significant. This is not to say that this is a permanent relationship. As with all demographic trends and analysis, this relationship needs to be continually monitored and researched.

## **Births and Deaths**

The following Table, "Windsor Locks Births and Deaths", provides figures from 1985 through 2017 grouped in five-year increments for live births and deaths. These have been combined in one table to illustrate the trends present in both categories. As indicated in the 2007 Plan, the excess of births over deaths had continually increased during the 1980s until the mid-1990s, but the actual number per year was minuscule in relation to the overall population. Since the mid-1990s a change has occurred. The average number of deaths has remained relatively constant but the average number of births has steadily decreased.

The number of live births in a municipality has always been regarded as an excellent indicator of school age population projections over the next five years. Future enrollment projections beyond this five-year time frame should be used for general forecasting only and not be a basis for predicting future budget or facility needs with any certainty. Therefore, the live-birth-to-death figures of the Town's population are always regarded as a useful short-range town planning, and school planning tool.

The significant drop that occurred toward the late 90's and the early 2000's and the apparent plateau in Town births is a demographic figure that can assist the community with it's planning efforts for educational facilities and programming. Although the birth numbers had historically experienced variations with yearly fluctuations of highs and lows, the decline over the past several decades is demographically significant. The total number of live births had exceeded the number of deaths without fail from 1980 through 1998; however, in 13 out of the last 18 years deaths have exceeded the number of births.

## Windsor Locks Births and Deaths

Live Births to Residents			Deaths to Residents		
Year	Births	Average	Average	Deaths	Year
1985	167	152	113	101	1985
1986	134			111	1986
1987	128			112	1987
1988	165			131	1988
1989	165			108	1989
1990	168	164	119	112	1990
1991	167			130	1991
1992	194			114	1992
1993	165			113	1993
1994	127			125	1994
1995	127	133	114	125	1995
1996	130			97	1996
1997	141			115	1997
1998	146			111	1998
1999	120			123	1999
2000	125	113	118	117	2000
2001	119			136	2001
2002	122			112	2002
2003	107			102	2003
2004	94			121	2004
2005	93	106	120	150	2005
2006	100			116	2006
2007	101			114	2007
2008	127			99	2008
2009	108			119	2009
2010	94	105	120	107	2010
2011	102			115	2011
2012	102			140	2012
2013	104			118	2013
2014	124			118	2014
2015	110			151	2015
2016	94			145	2016
2017	124			132	2017



Windsor Locks is one of the 153 Connecticut municipalities projected to see a drop in school-age population between 2015 and 2025. Many municipalities will see declines over 30%. The projected decrease for Windsor Locks is 8%. Meanwhile the 65+ population for Windsor Locks is projected to increase by 28%.

#### An Aging Population 2015 Housing Data Profile Partnership for Strong Communities

As noted in the population and housing sections of the Plan, the Town population is aging. An important indicator of population profiles and population composition is the percent of population in the childbearing age group, generally thought to be the 20 - 34 year age group. The decline in the number of births in past five years can be explained by the overall aging of the population, a decline in the town's child-bearing age population, and a possible significant out migration of the 25 - 34 year age groups which was and may continue to be an unfortunate trend throughout the region, the

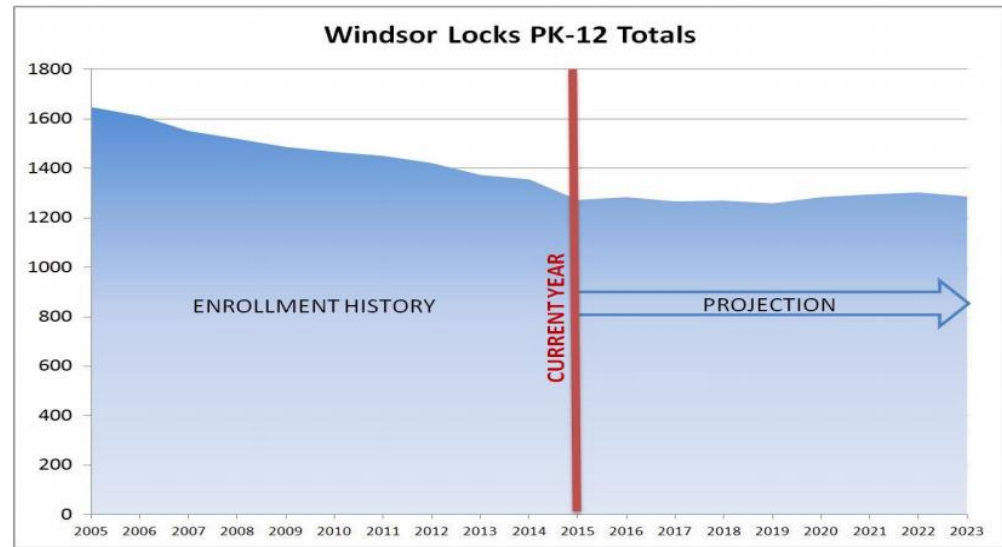
State and New England in general. Windsor Locks has made strong strides in revitalization of the town center including increasing connectivity and transportation opportunities, which in 2017 begun to take physical shape with redevelopment occurring along the Main Street corridor. For example, a building permit was issued for conversion of the long vacant Montgomery Mill to 160 apartments just feet away from what will be a new rail stop. The age group referred to above has shown interest in living nearer to downtown in walkable, bikeable, connected and convenient places with character and "things to do". If the Town can continue to develop along these lines, "Millennials", young families and aging populations alike may stay or newly gravitate to all that the community has to offer.

The Town has very little developable land left for residential use. The Town has rezoned new areas for residential use over the past few years and is considering ways to accommodate infill and accessory dwelling units that do not detract from neighborhood character. It is unlikely that new subdivisions or large numbers of new homes will be built. Therefore, to have an increase in the school age population other than through substantial increases in the birth rate, it will be necessary to have an exodus of older people (empty nesters) with replacement by younger families with school-age children. These demographic shifts usually occur slowly over a long period of time.

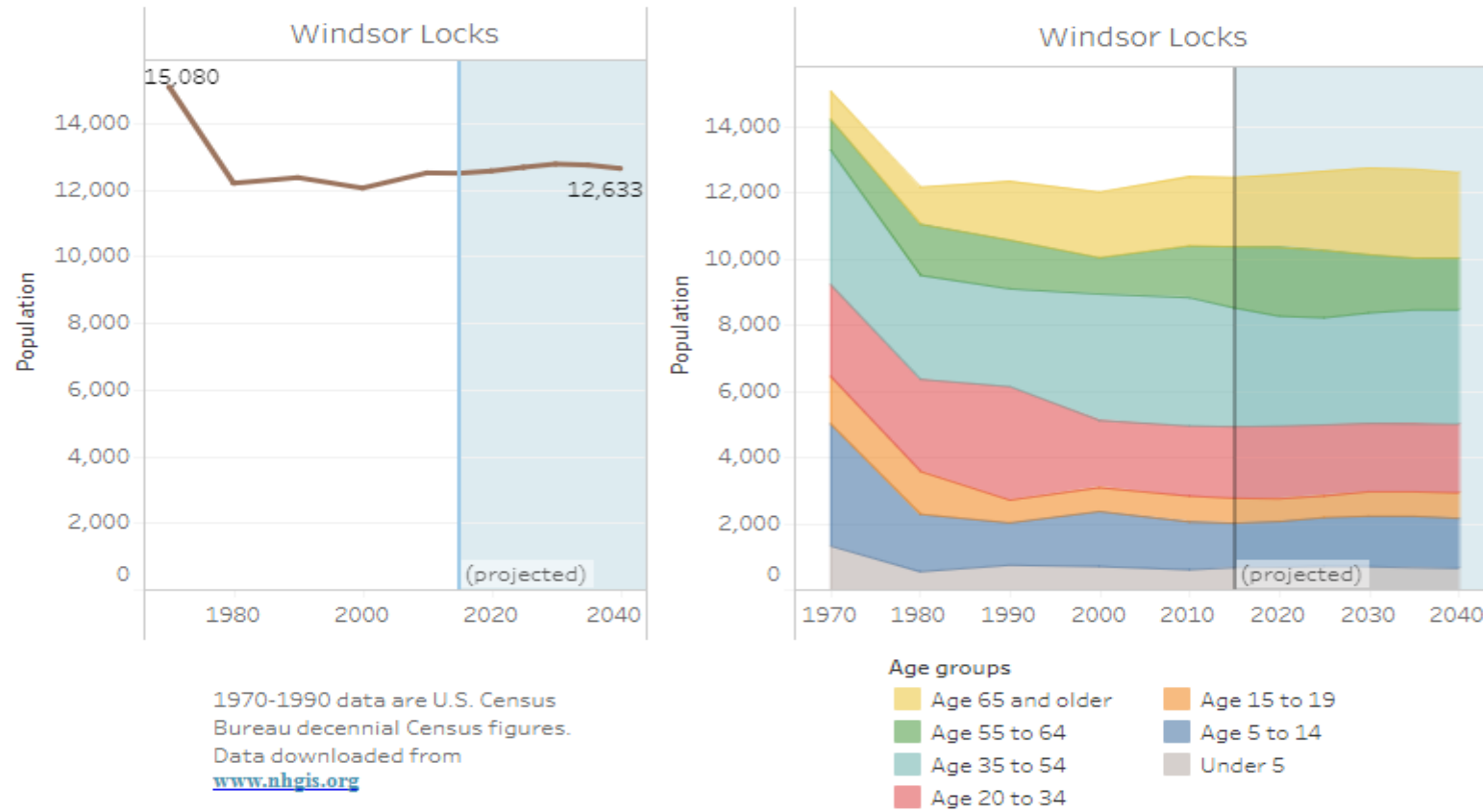
## Future School-Age Population Projections

At the time that this Plan was drafted, town by town enrollment projections were no longer provided by the State Department of Education. Instead, the WLPS conducted a facility needs study in 2015. The graph depicted on this page shows that enrollment dropped from over 1500 students in 2007, to over 1200 in 2015. The projection graph shows only a very slight increase beginning in 2019, with a plateau into the 2020s. This is useful data, in addition to the birth and death trend data, for school planning purposes. School systems would be wise to analyze demographic data every five years, well in advance of planning for facility and faculty need in order to monitor for unexpected changes to currently perceived trends. While such needs may change due to student age, learning space design considerations or program need, increased enrollment is not likely to be a significant factor in Windsor Locks over the next decade. The graphs below provide a visualization of the decline in the community population over time, as well as a projected population that is not much different than it is now, even twenty years from now. In the comparative map, towns like Ellington and East Windsor are shown to expect moderate growth with more developable land, while others plateau or even decline.

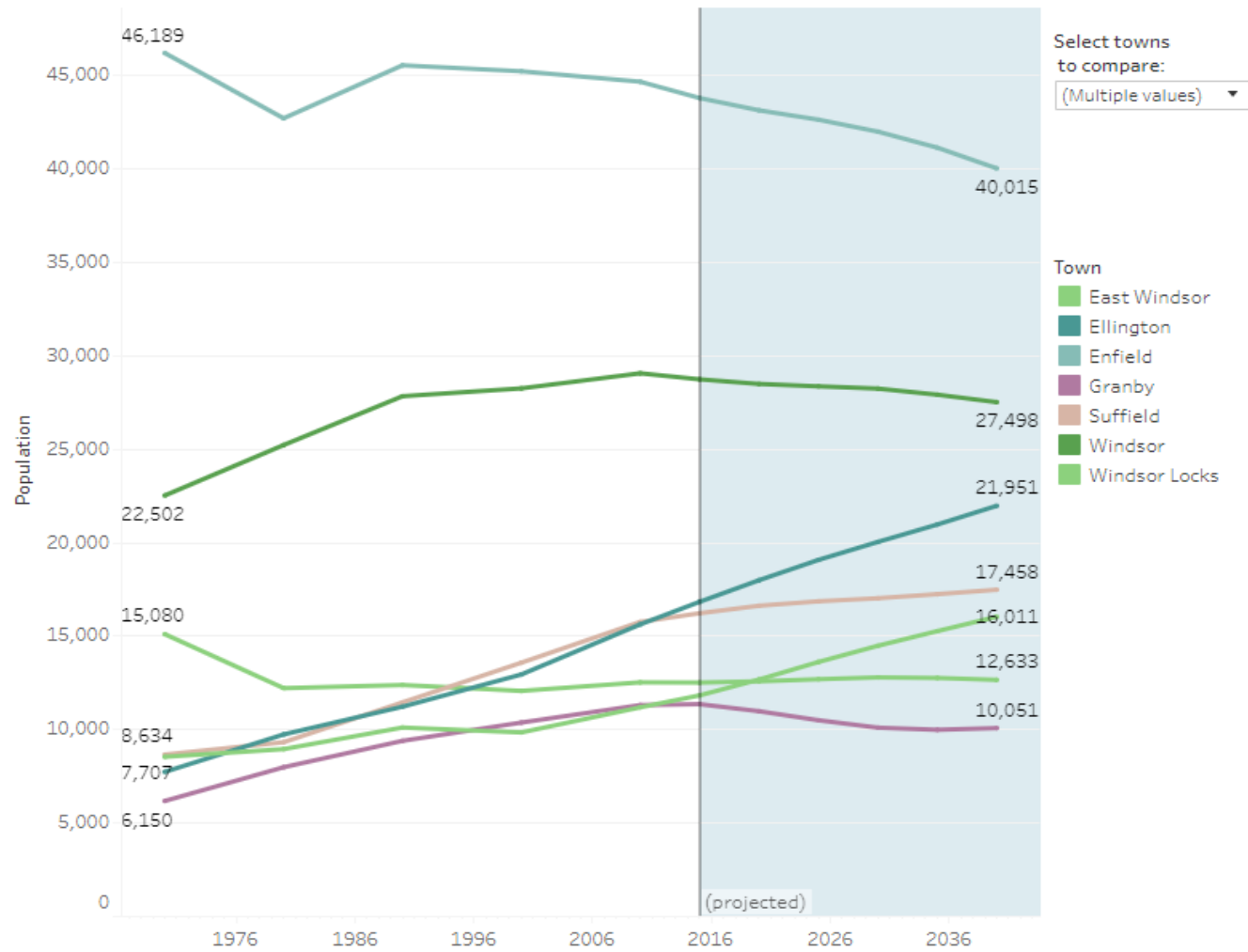
### Enrollment History / Projection



Prepared by DRUMMEY ROSANE ANDERSON, INC. 2015



Projected population in East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield and 4 more





## School Facility Needs

The district wishes to continue to make improvements to facilities that will preserve structures and foster excellent programming in a smart and responsible way. The following projects were listed in the previous Plan and have been completed:

1. Middle school window replacement program
2. High School window replacement program and upgrade to the original heating system
3. High School Professional Library and Distance Learning Center

Needed upgrades include reconfiguration of space or renovations to the interior of existing buildings to accommodate the growing need for Pre – Kindergarten classes as the Town has a continuing commitment to early education. Upgrades at the district's building entrances are needed to meet current accessibility and safety codes. The district will also be assessing various facilities for roof replacement (either partial or full) as the thirty-year anniversaries will be coming up within the next ten-year period. Lastly, the district will assess the need for upgrades to athletic fields to meet both competitive standards and present-day usage expectations, such as rubberized tracks and proper irrigation. Further facility needs will continue to be reviewed annually by the Windsor Locks Public Schools Central Office.



**Prepared by DRUMMEY ROSANE ANDERSON, INC. 2015**

## Personalized, Mastery-Based Learning: Windsor Locks Public Schools

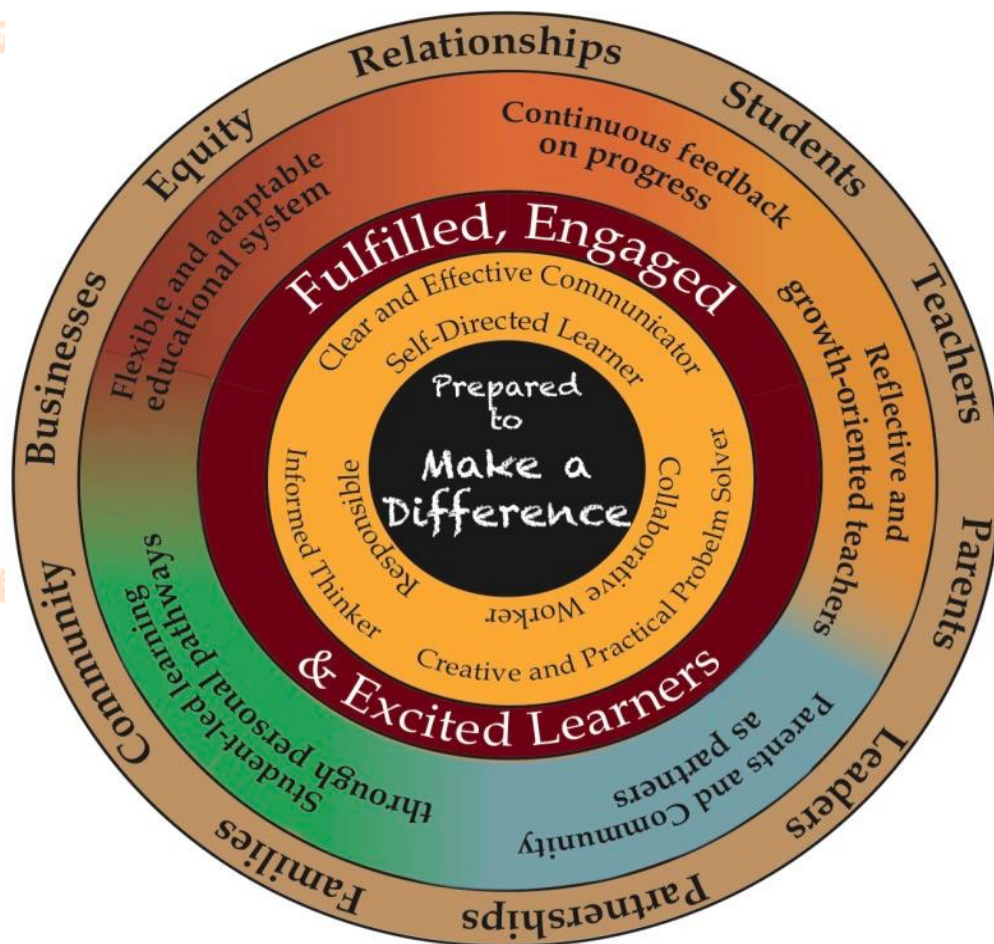
Windsor Locks Public Schools, in 2013, began to engage the public regarding the district plan to ensure that the first class to receive a diploma based on demonstrating mastery of academic standards, and not seat time, would be the class of 2020.

From 2011-present, the district has been undergoing a complete transformation based on one clear and common focus: to improve the **quality of instruction**, thereby improving student achievement, by changing adult behaviors. Through this transformation, the district shaped the collective beliefs and values that still serve to drive schools toward realizing the promise of **personalized/student-centered learning**:

- Learning MUST be the constant; therefore, time MUST become the variable. All learners learn at different rates.
- All students can learn and all teachers CAN teach all students.
- A "D" average and 24 credits of seat time is no longer good enough for the students of Windsor Locks Public Schools.
- All students will graduate from Windsor Locks Public Schools college, career, and life ready.

As school staff began to live and breathe these beliefs, they quickly realized that, for students to be **college, career, and life ready**, they need to be

## Windsor Locks Public Schools



*How did you make a difference today?*

educated in an environment that engages and challenges them beyond the traditional forms of schooling. Students can learn more and at deeper levels when the instruction is centered on who they are as individuals; **where they were, where they are, and where they are going** in the learning process, and their demonstration of mastery against a set of robust academic standards.

We believe that when **students lead, own and develop their own learning and are a co-designing in the process** – in other words, when they “**Design, Apply, Document and Defend**” their learning – they develop the capacity to truly contribute to their society as 21<sup>st</sup> century learners and workers.” Shawn L Parkhurst – **Superintendent of Windsor Locks Public Schools**

Earlier chapters of this Plan refer to trends such as increasing cost of housing, the increased desire of young adults to use public transportation and not purchase a car right away, job loss in the region, the need for a young professional workforce that is ready to be innovative. The type of instruction being implemented by the district must prepare the young adults of Windsor Locks to face these challenges, seek and find opportunities to shine as community members.

## **Kids and Community Planning in Windsor Locks**

The students of Windsor Locks and staff at the Town Hall have begun to develop a stronger relationship, especially through involvement in community planning, where students can help shape local solutions and participate in placemaking. One example of this interdepartmental coordination is the monthly “Meetings on Main”. At these meetings, business people, residents, local community leaders and students review and seek opportunities to make positive community change, often by implementing recommendations from previous professional planning studies. These efforts are made part of the academic learning experience. The district encourages students to be engaged, responsible and vocal citizens. The airport, aerospace, innovation and precision manufacturing companies that tend to define local industry have potential to be natural local partners, as do all the community’s businesses. The Town’s proximity to the CT River and the associated tributaries, wetlands and greenways can provide inspiration for continued learning opportunities for outdoor classrooms. The Town should seek ways to formalize early learning opportunities at Town Hall and at local businesses of all types. The Town should also seek ways to increase the amount of student participation in the everyday planning process and build on recent successes. The youth perspective is important to community participation efforts. In ten years many of the community’s students will be adults, contributing to the area where they live, work or participate.



**Early Development Instrument** Through a grant from The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Windsor Locks was able to conduct a study in the Spring of 2018 using the EDI (Early Development Instrument). The EDI helps towns to determine how ready its little ones are when they enter kindergarten. In 2019, community partners, together with the schools, will analyze this data in order to develop and implement specific strategies for improving readiness. For more information:

<https://edi.offordcentre.com/about/what-is-the-edi/>



### **Personal Growth**

Babies, school age children, teens and adults alike are learners. Community members of all ages need opportunities to learn new skills, whether one is seeking a first job, or facing a job loss or simply looking for socialization and fulfillment. The following paragraphs will discuss how as a town, Windsor Locks can help young children succeed in school, help strengthen families, create a skilled workforce and provide continued opportunities for personal growth.

### **Protective Factors**

There is a research-based and highly effective framework for supporting strong families known as the "5 Protective Factors and 5 Promotive Factors", various forms of which have been explored internationally. The above referenced approach was developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). If present, these factors provide a pathway to increase family strength, enhance child development and educational outcomes, reduce childhood abuse and neglect, support substance abuse prevention and increase the overall well-being of children and families.

The approach focuses on five factors:

1. Resilience
2. Opportunities for Social Connection
3. Support in times of Need
4. Knowledge and Information
5. Social and Emotional Competence

While every person (and every family) is different and will have varied challenges, **there are ways that our land use and conservation and development policies can positively impact the citizens' overall well-being, including families and learners of all ages.** When people have convenient access to fresh air, green space, transportation, healthful groceries, jobs, quality homes and places to be active and socialize, they have many of the resources that can foster a healthier, happier and more successful life. For example, studies show that children who live in an environment that has the above resources and qualities are less likely to be asthmatic and are often ill less frequently, they have learned necessary gross motor skills, and may be more socially and emotionally competent, all which can lead to better educational outcomes.

Communities can provide the above for all citizens through thoughtful community planning and involvement of all Town Departments. Results are known to be best when the 5 factors are supported on a local level, through implementation of policies made for that community and objectives made for particular neighborhoods. The factors could be supported through zoning regulations, community outreach, public and private design of spaces, economic development and conservation planning. Efforts should be made to consider this approach in future planning endeavors. Specific recommendations will be made in the Goals and Objectives section of this chapter based on local data and the results of Windsor Locks Public School early learning indicator study findings.





## Workforce Development, Adult and Higher Education

Windsor Locks lies within the Knowledge Corridor, an interstate partnership of community members in Massachusetts and Connecticut who create a partnership in economic development, planning, tourism, business and higher educational institutions in order to advance the region's economic progress.



Workforce Development is an interconnected set of solutions to meet employment needs: It prepares workers with needed skills, emphasizes the value of workplace learning and addresses the hiring demands of employers from the outset. The goal is to place workers in jobs where there are career development opportunities. Workforce development enables individuals to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes for gainful employment or improved work performance; and provides employers with an effective means to meet their demand for skills.

Windsor Locks boasts a number of large employers and job opportunities particularly in the manufacturing and aerospace industries. Windsor Locks residents also find opportunities in nearby towns and cities such as Windsor and Hartford. Many

residents from other towns commute into Windsor Locks, as noted in the data set below.

Connecticut in general worries about companies closing or moving out of state, threatening job security and a secure economy. Organizations such as the MetroHartford Alliance and more locally the Bradley Development League, look to market the region and all it has to offer. More about this topic will be discussed in the Economic Development section of this Plan. While some residents will travel or even move away after high school, it is ideal to have local opportunities for varied types of education and skill training within the community and in the region. In choosing a location, businesses need to know that they will have a strong employee base. A sustainable region will retain and attract skilled workers, making our towns more attractive for new businesses to locate, making jobs continually available to the people of the community.

Education and training opportunities include but are not limited to:

University of Massachusetts

Porter and Chester Institute

Holyoke Community College  
 Springfield College  
 Asnuntuck Community College  
 University of Connecticut  
 Trinity College  
 University of Hartford  
 Capital Community College  
 Goodwin College

Lincoln Tech Training  
 A. I. Prince  
 Springfield Technical Community College  
 Connecticut Fire Academy (Windsor Locks)  
 Stone Academy  
 N.E. Tractor Trailer  
 Windsor Locks Adult Education

### **Public School and Town Wide Goals and Objectives**

**Goal: To continue to provide quality education and varied learning and personal growth opportunities for all Town residents at any age.**

#### **Objectives:**

#### **Public School Community and Facility Goals**

- To continue to implement school policies and curriculum which supports every student
- To reconfigure space or perform renovations to the interior of existing buildings to accommodate the growing need for Pre – Kindergarten classes as the Town has a continuing commitment to early education.
- To upgrade the district's building entrances to meet current accessibility and safety codes.
- To assess various facilities for roof replacement (either partial or full).
- To assess the need for upgrades to athletic fields to meet both competitive standards and present-day usage expectations, such as rubberized tracks and proper irrigation.

#### **Town Wide Goals which can Support the Academic / Lifelong Learner Experience and Provide a Sustainable Community**

- To generally assess Windsor Locks neighborhoods for new opportunities to strengthen families and foster growth and development for young people
- To inventory current housing units, making particular note of sustainable redevelopment and infill opportunities near nodes of activity, near schools, parklets, places of worship, grocery/markets, coffee shops and transit.

- To introduce sustainable pocket neighborhoods and infill regulations at appropriate nodes throughout town to incentivize redevelopment, improve community health and character and provide connectivity for residents.
- To allow and encourage community/hobby gardens and front yard produce stands
- To support and when possible construct / install multiple modes of transportation including bicycle accommodations, sidewalks, increased shuttle services
- To develop an arts and culture program inspired by both the historical and current demographics of the town
- To seek vibrant uses of public spaces; include games, music, theater, sculpture
- To create story walks and educational wayfinding throughout town
- To preserve natural resources, expand greenways, add street trees and enhanced public spaces
- To maintain parks and play spaces in proximity to all neighborhoods
- To initiate beautification and community policing programs, enforcing blight laws
- To think “outside the box” when it comes to community outreach, go into the schools, bring the schools out into the community, think beyond the public notice in the newspaper
- To bring in new more diverse groups of people to be participants in planning projects or members of Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission, including student liaisons. Building on the current Meeting on Main student/local government relationship.
- To encourage adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings for educational purposes, training centers and higher education facilities
- To generally assess Windsor Locks neighborhoods for new opportunities to strengthen families and foster growth and development for young people

Resources:

<http://www.wlps.org/>  
<https://www.cssp.org/>  
<http://knowledgecorridor.org/>  
<https://www.planning.org/kidsandcommunity/>  
<https://windsorlocksadulted.org>  
[www.metrohartford.com](http://www.metrohartford.com)  
<http://www.bradleydevelopment.com/>