



Wallingford Plan of Conservation and Development 2015 Update

Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Open Space

Focus Group Discussion

June 2, 2015



Purpose of Today's Meeting

- Supplement data analysis with qualitative understanding of community trends and conditions in agriculture, natural resources, and open space
- Obtain assistance in identifying issues and concerns
- Inform POCD Steering Committee



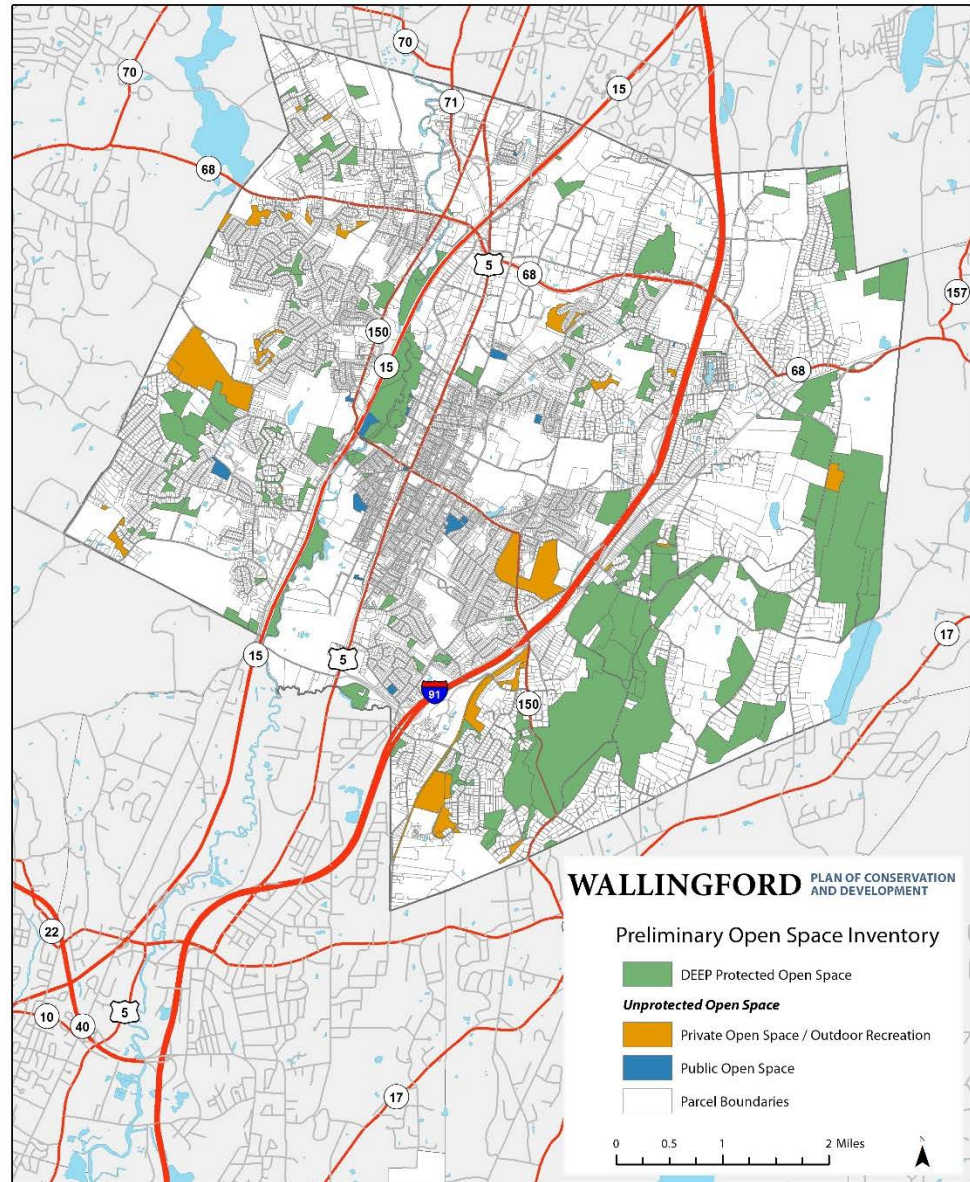
What is a POCD?

- **Local Plans of Conservation and Development (POCDs) provide policy guidance for the physical, economic and social future of the community**
- **States goals and visions**
- **Recommends actions to help achieve goals**



Town Open Space

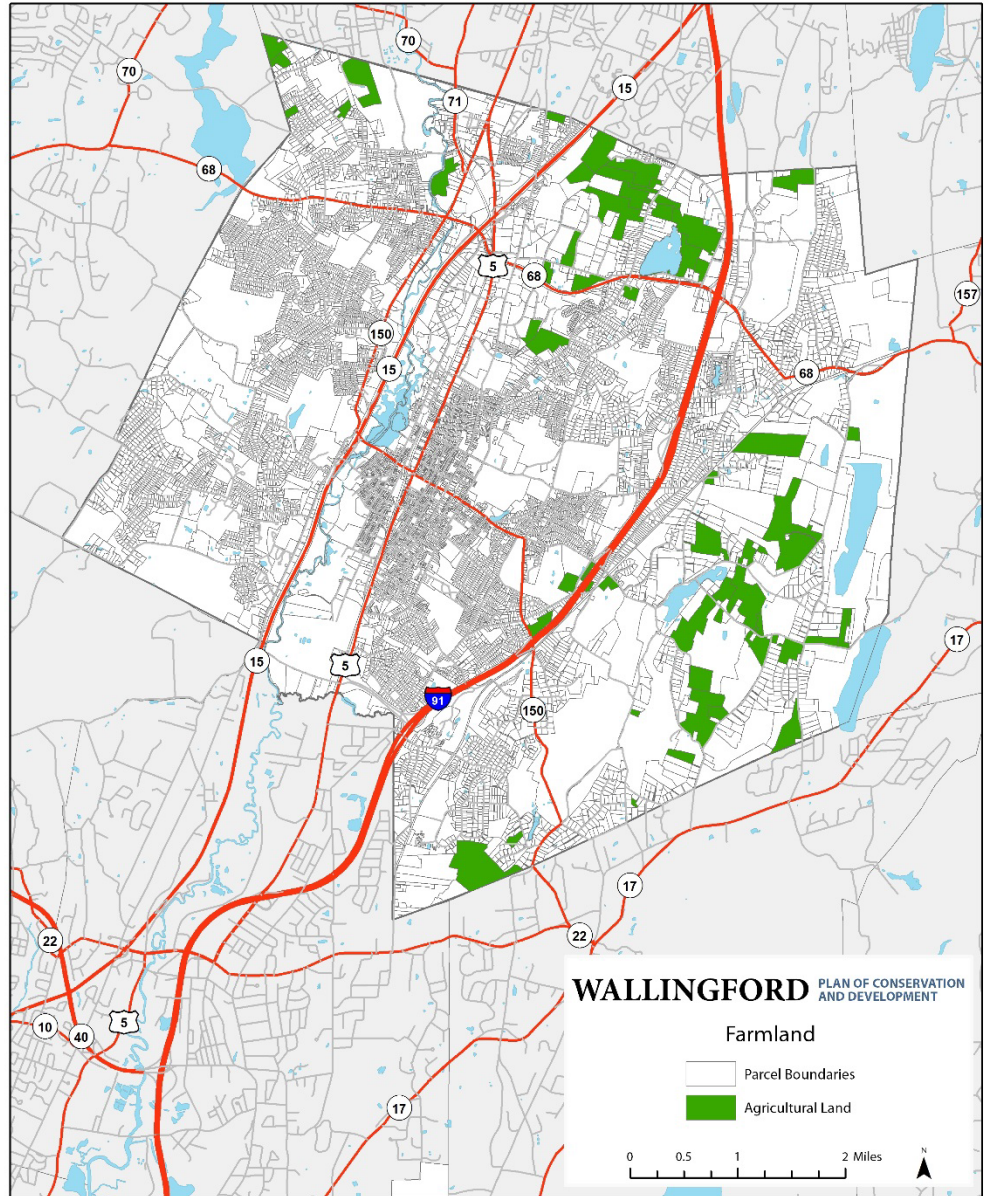
- State goal: 21% protected open space by 2023
- Town adopted same goal in 2005 POCD
- Inventoried locally for 2005 POCD, regionally by SCRCOG in 2008, by DEEP based on local data in 2010
- 4,955 total acres (2005) includes Town, State, WLT, institutional, HOA, and cemetery lands
- DEEP records show 3,668 protected acres (circa 2010) or approx. 15% of Town land area





Agricultural Lands

- Per assessor's data, 63 parcels in farm or pasture use, totaling ~1,440 acres
- Additional parcels in active agricultural use classified as single-family residential, consistent with previous land use classifications





Farming: Economic Impacts

- **Agricultural businesses**
 - Beaumont Farm, Geremia Farms, Farmer Joe's Gardens, Blue Hills Orchard
 - Wallingford Garden Market
 - Gouveia Vineyards, Paradise Hills Vineyard, Rosablanca Winery
 - Interest in ability to host events but currently prohibited by zoning
- ACS estimates 113 residents (0.5% of labor force) employed in agriculture
- Approximate land value of current agricultural lands (before P.A. 490 assessment) of \$15.8m



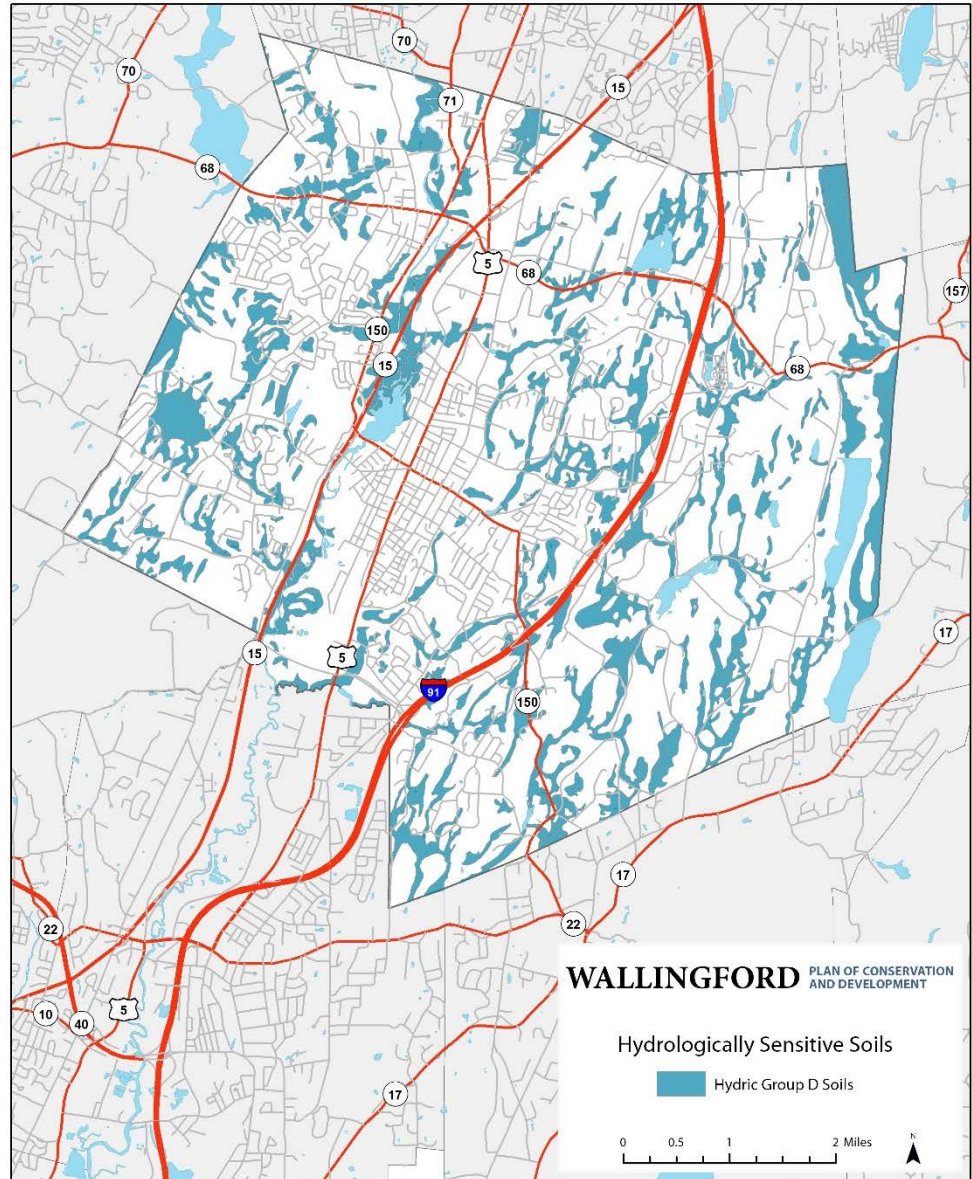
**Beaumont
Farm**





Hydrologically Sensitive Soils

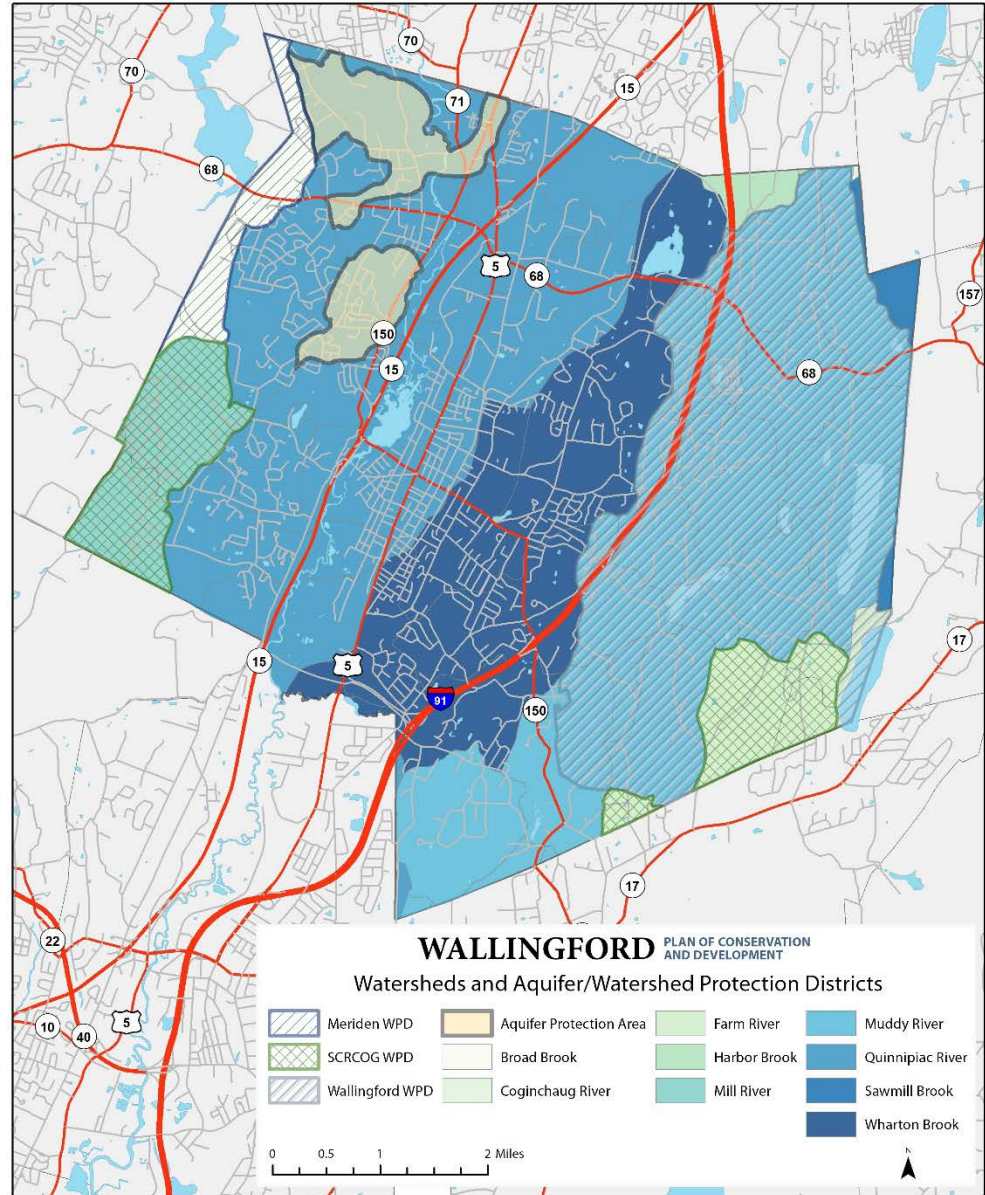
- Hydrologically sensitive soils: high runoff potential, greater vulnerability to development





Watersheds

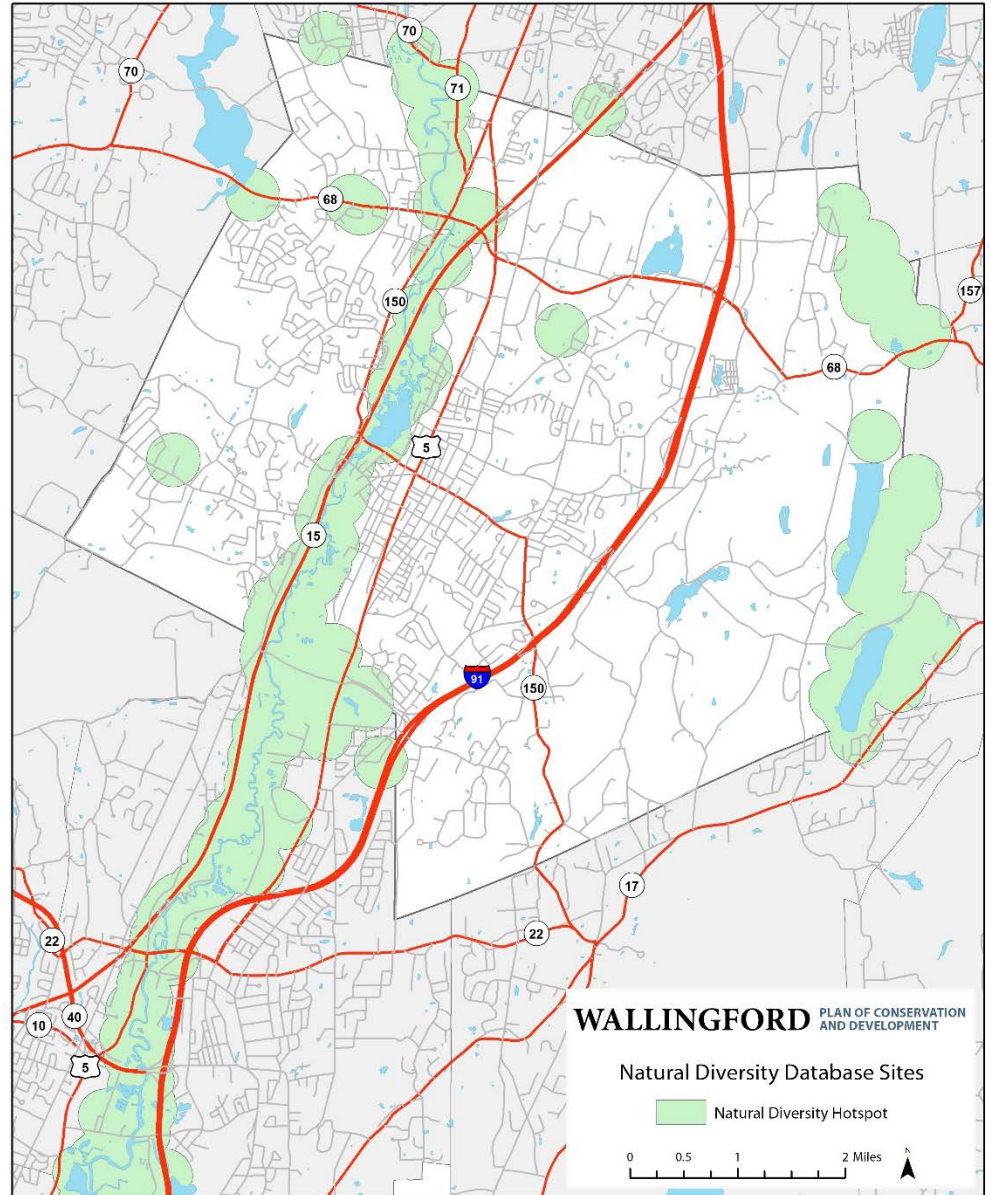
- Wallingford's ground water supplied by nine different watersheds (predominately Quinnipiac River, Muddy River, Wharton Brook watersheds)
- Aquifer Protection Areas in northwest corner of town

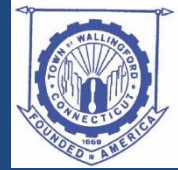




Sensitive Habitats

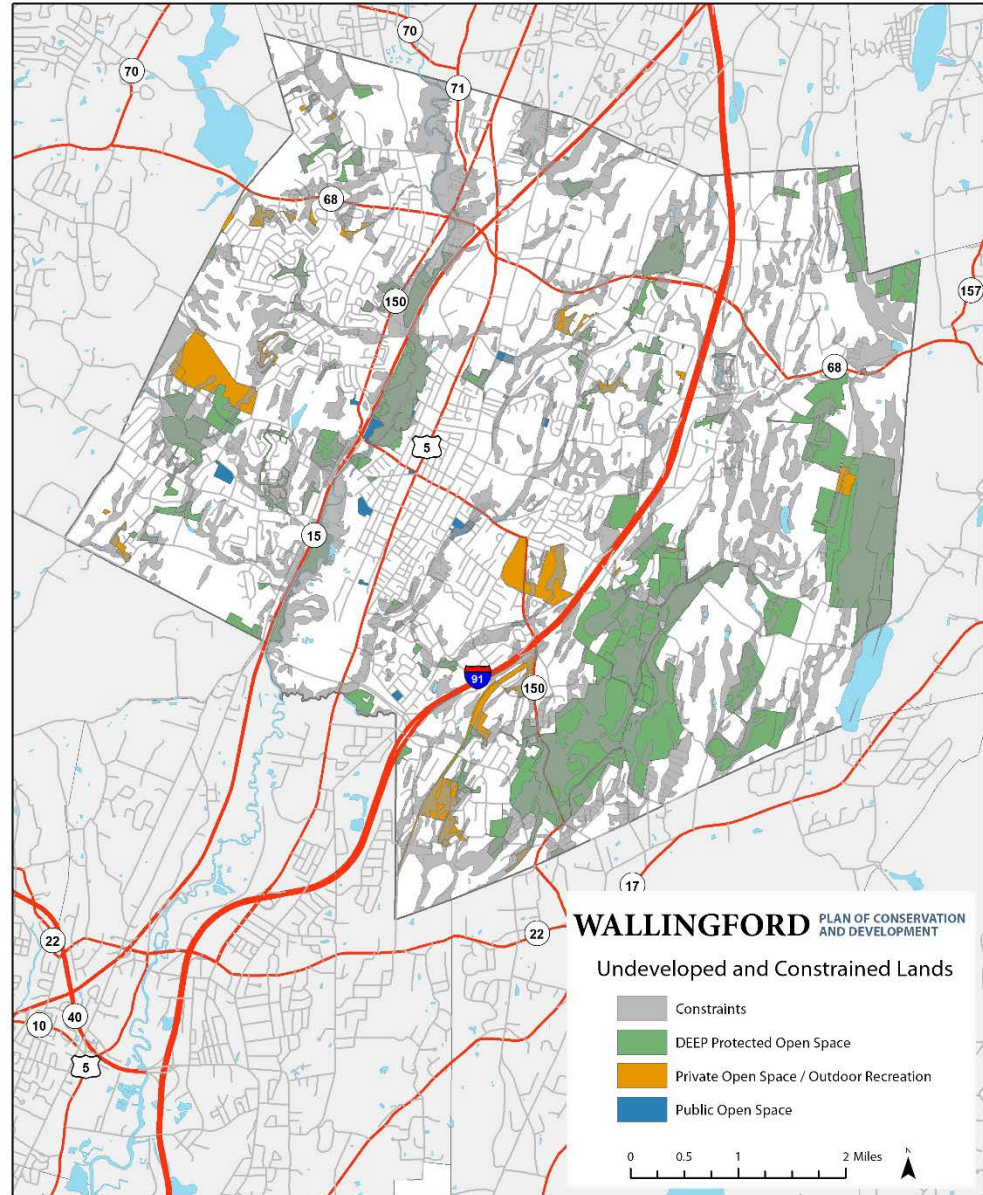
- DEEP inventory of 25 “rare and specialized wildlife habitats”
- Intended to “target areas of species diversity for land conservation and protect”
- Aligns with locations identified as natural diversity hotspots





Vacant & Constrained Land

- Development constraints include steep slopes and shallow and wetland soils
- Unconstrained vacant land may warrant consideration in future conservation efforts





General Discussion

- Do any of these trends/ data points surprise you?
- If so, why?
- Do you think the general perception of Wallingford's resources and agriculture among local and regional residents reflects reality?
- If not, how does it differ?



Agriculture Discussion

- **What changes have you noticed in Wallingford's agricultural sector?**
 - **New demands or markets? Interest in local ag?**
 - **Type and intensity of agricultural businesses?**
- **Concerns/issues with Town's agricultural businesses, employment, land use?**
- **Visions and goals for farming and agriculture?**



Open Space Discussion

- **New acquisitions of protected open space?**
 - **Town-owned, purchase of development rights, land trust?**
- **Concerns/issues with use management of Town open space?**
- **Visions and goals for open space preservation?**
 - **Connecting open space via greenways?**
 - **Priorities for acquisition/protection?**



Environmental Conservation Discussion

- Does mapping match local sense of conservation priorities?
- Are habitats, biodiversity, soils being considered in land preservation?