
 **TOWN OF LITCHFIELD**  
Plan of Conservation and Development




**Town of Litchfield**  
Plan of Conservation  
and Development  
Update

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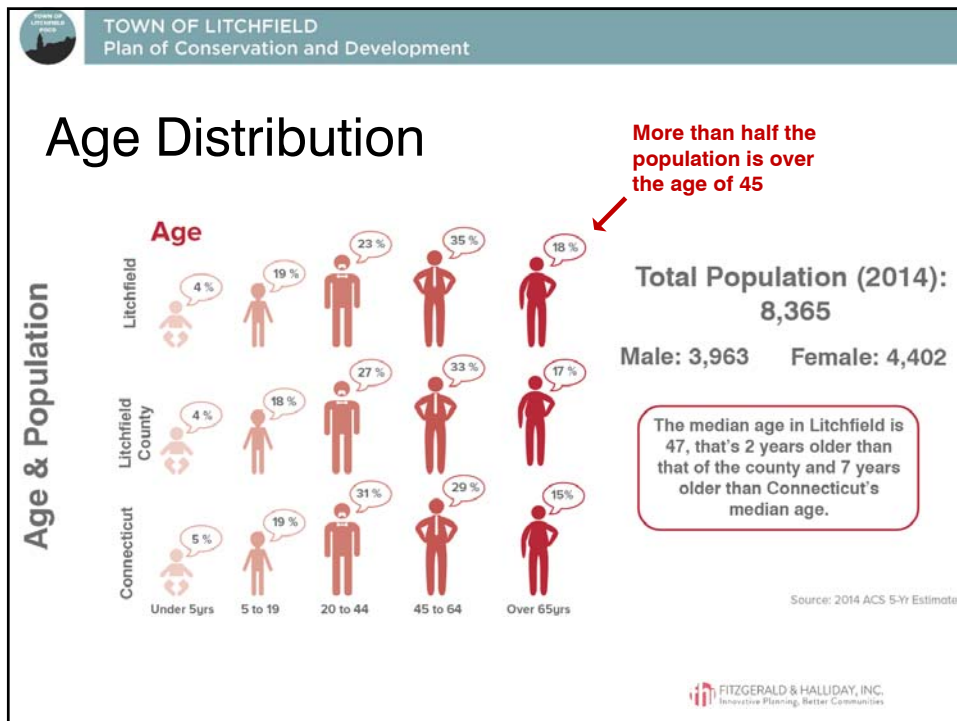
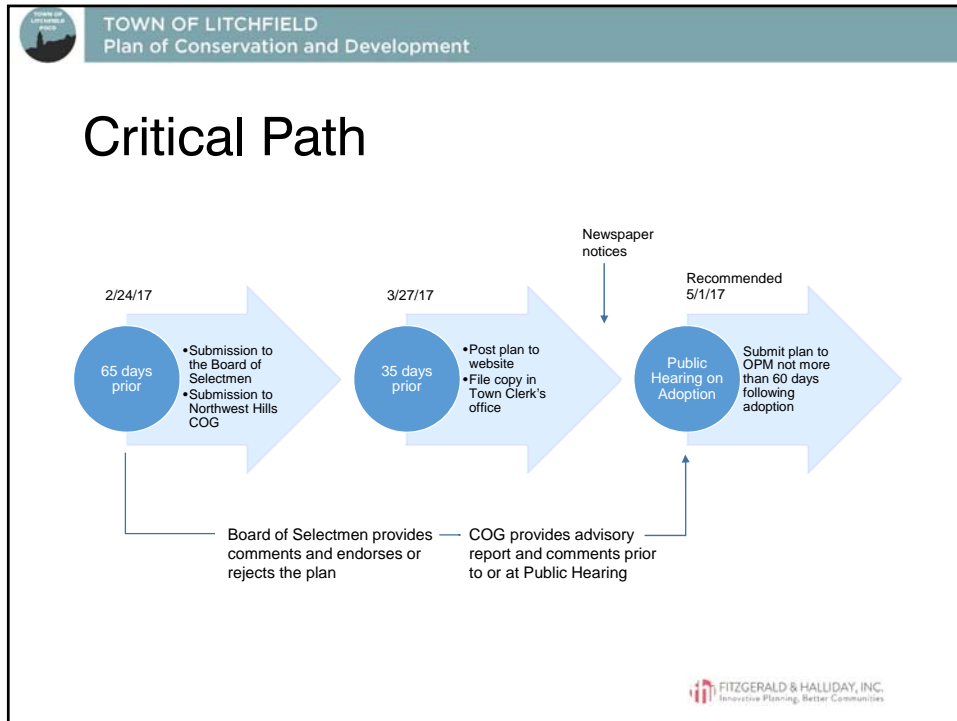
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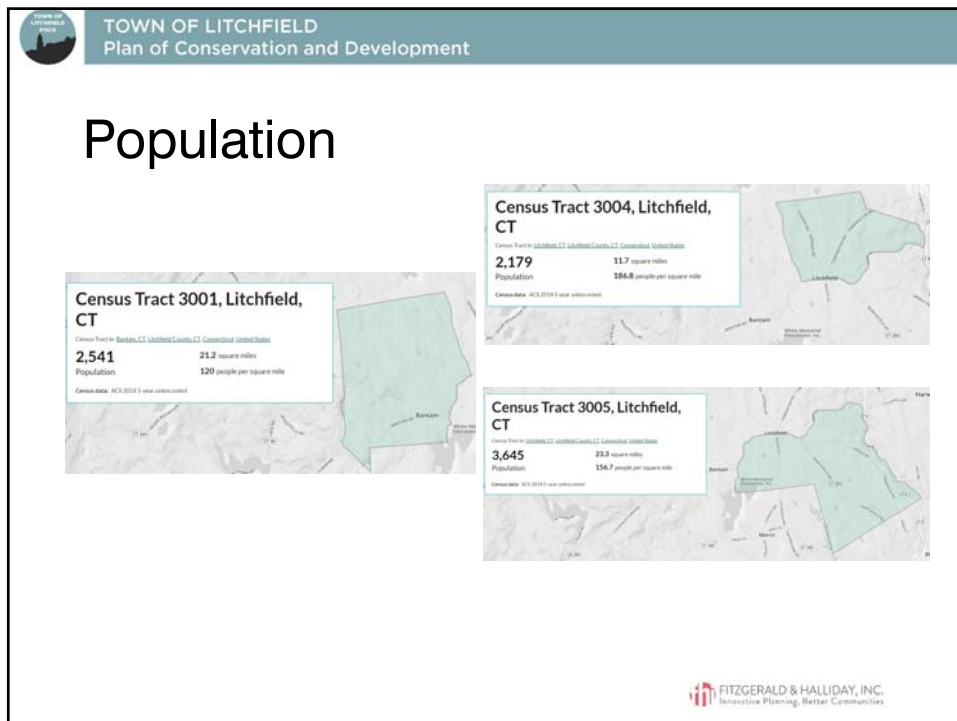
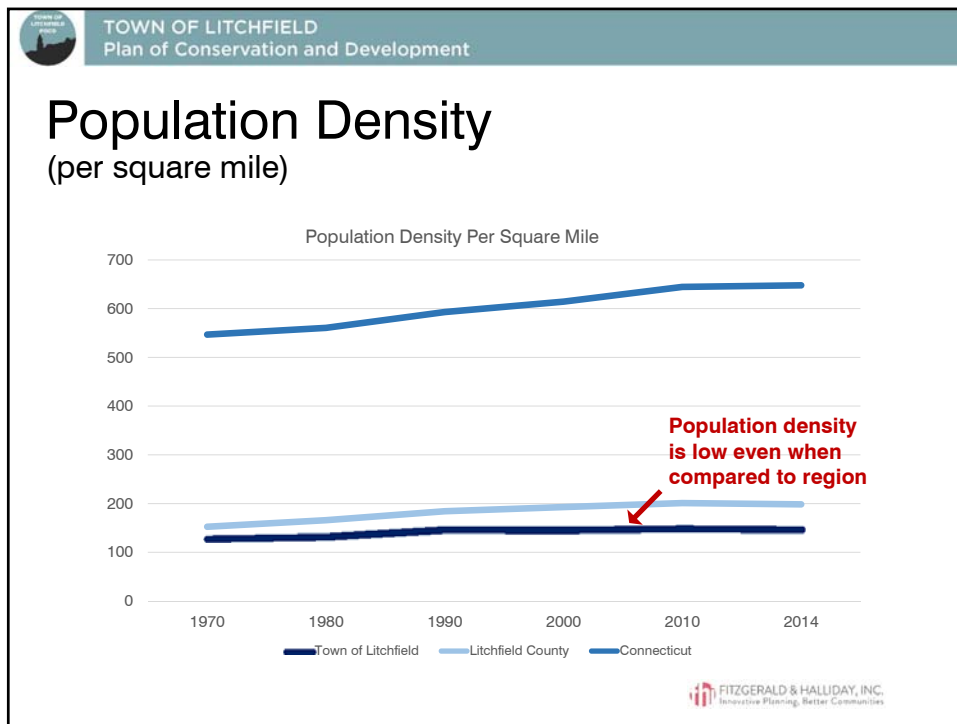


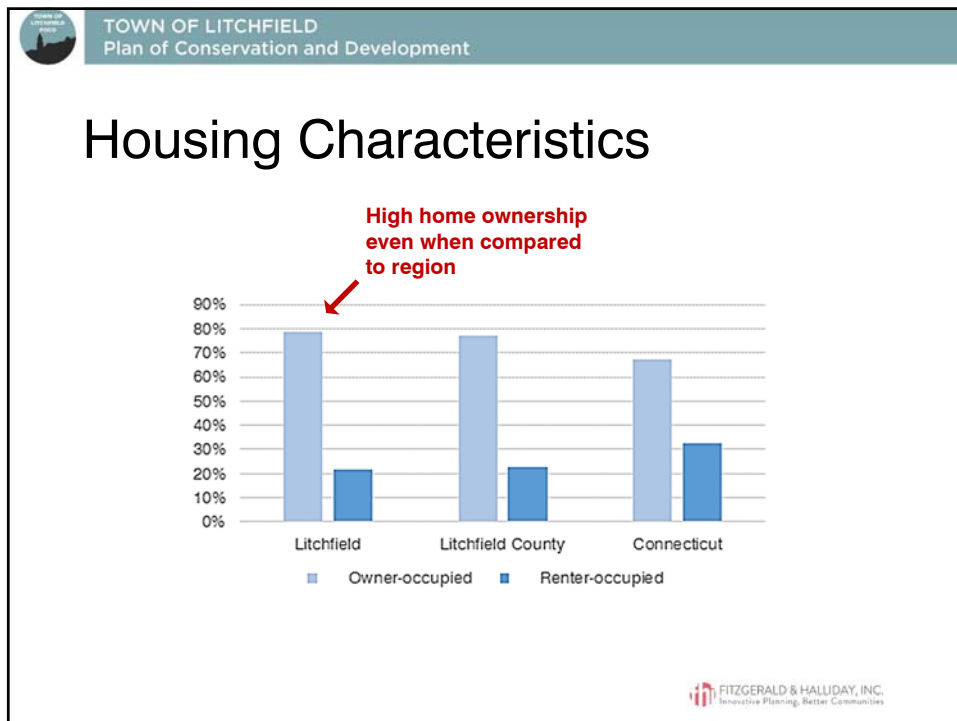
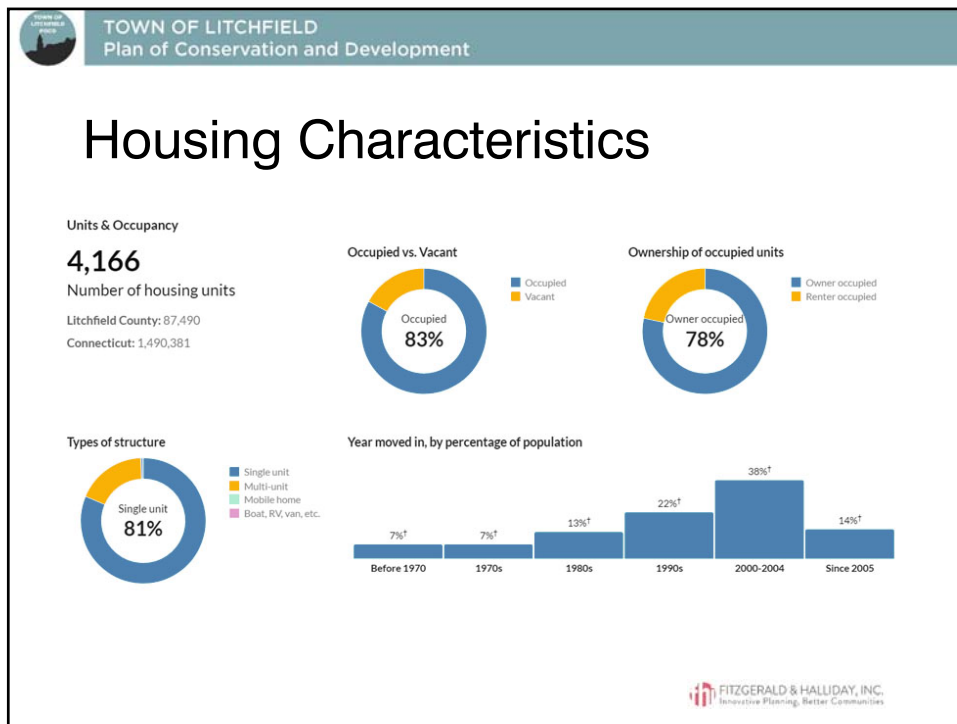
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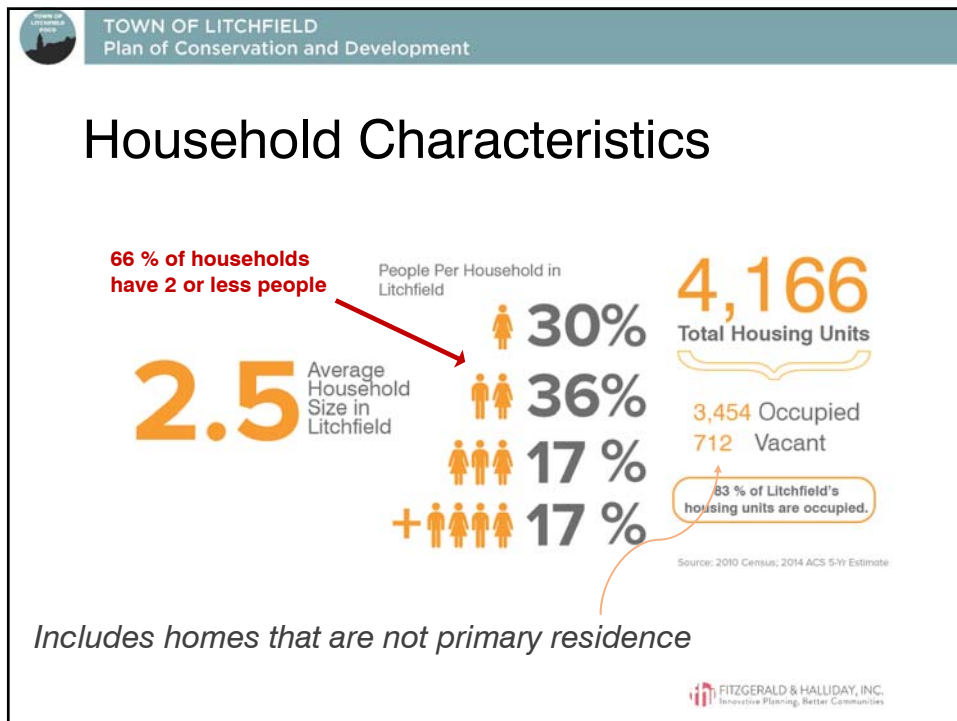
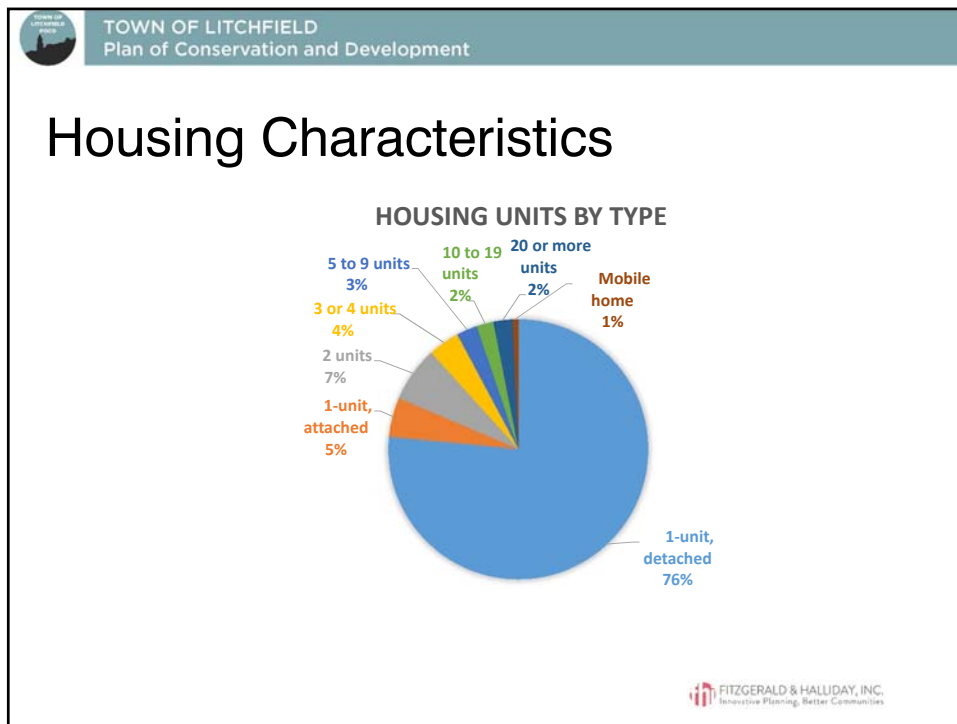
graph LR
    A[Analytical Research] --> B[Public Survey]
    B --> C[Public Workshop]
    C --> D[Stakeholder Interviews]
    D --> E[P&Z Guidance]
    E --> F[Plan of Conservation and Development]
  
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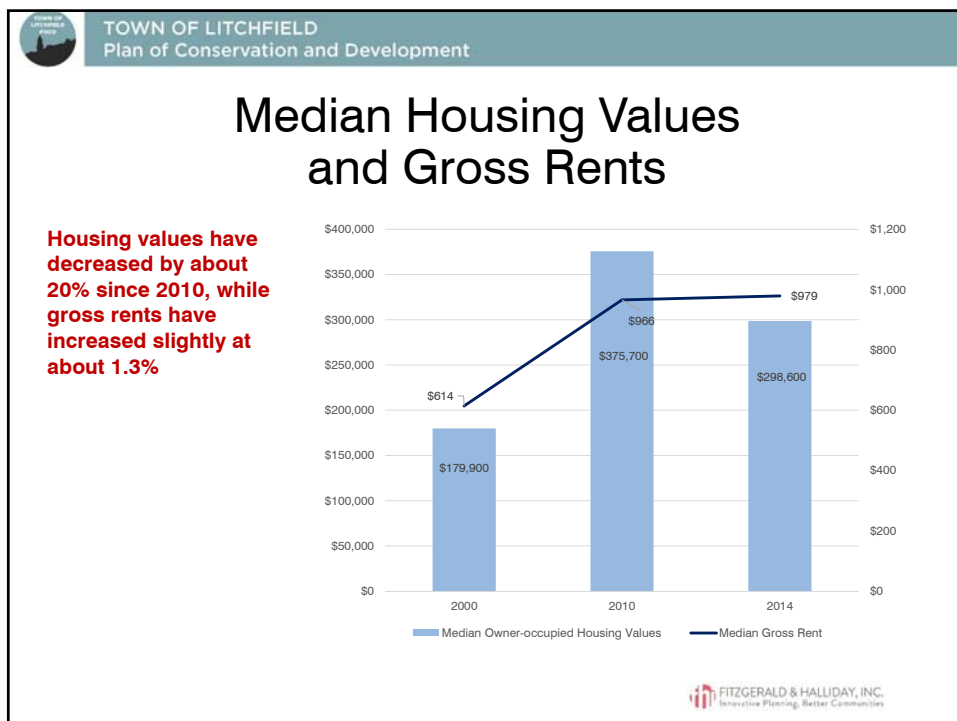
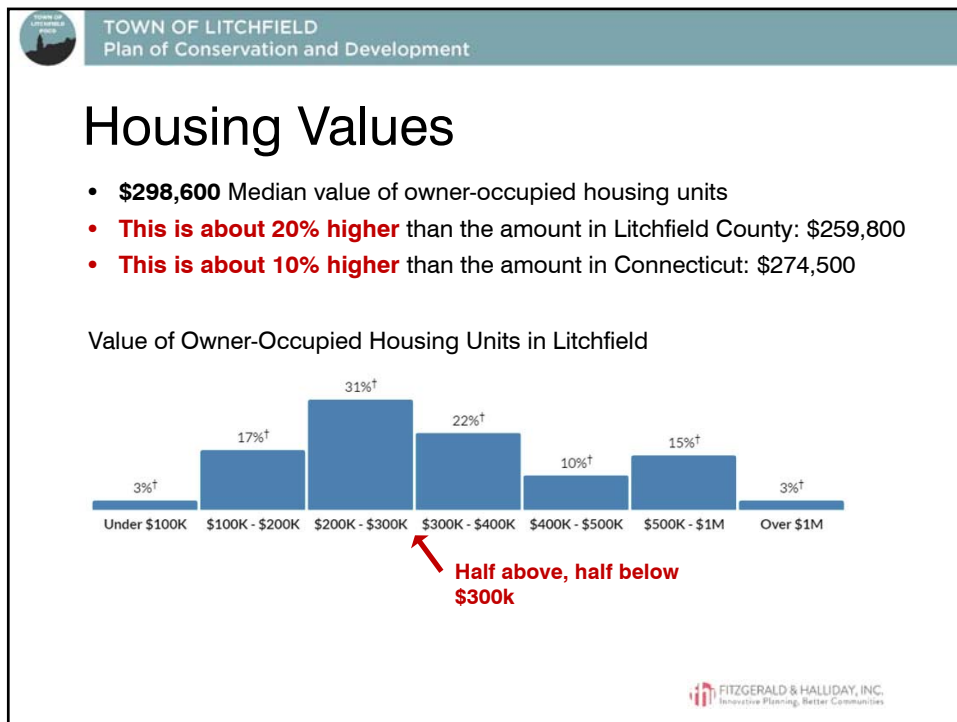
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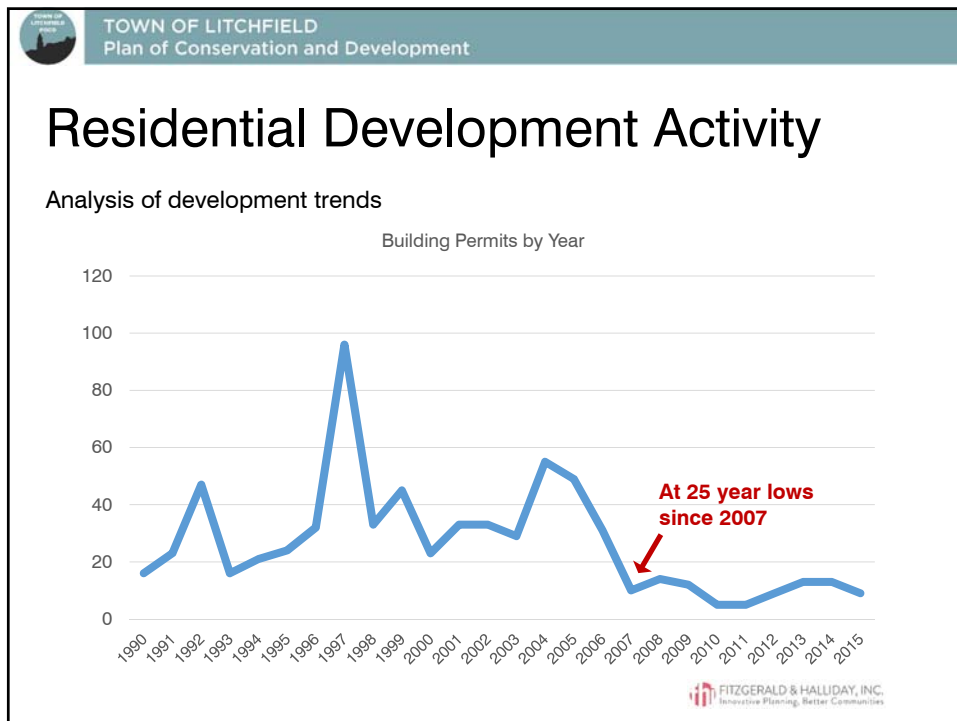
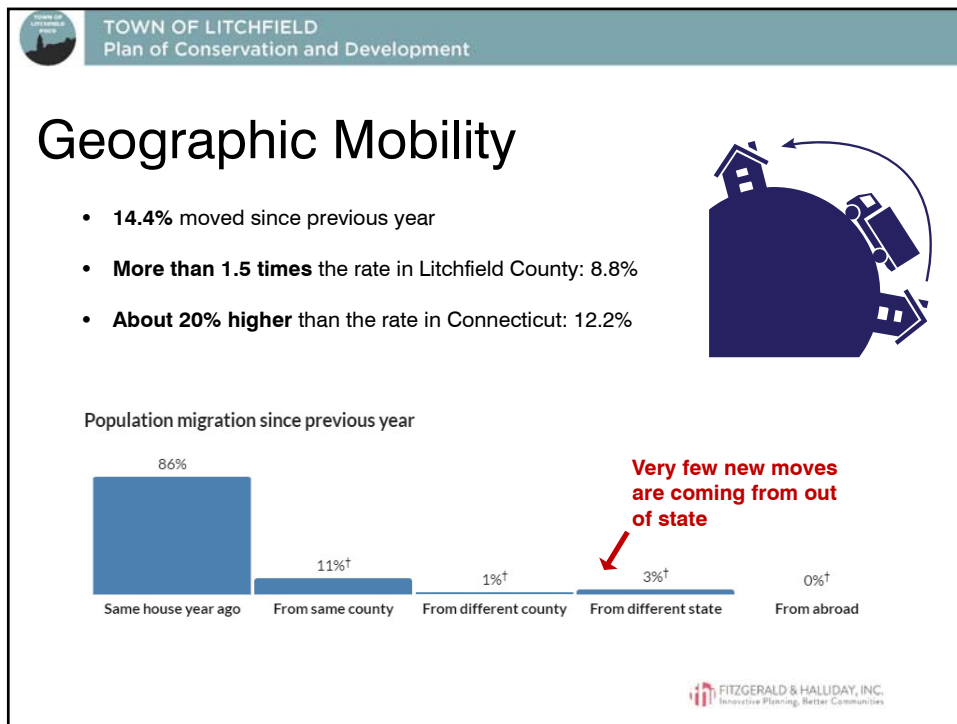


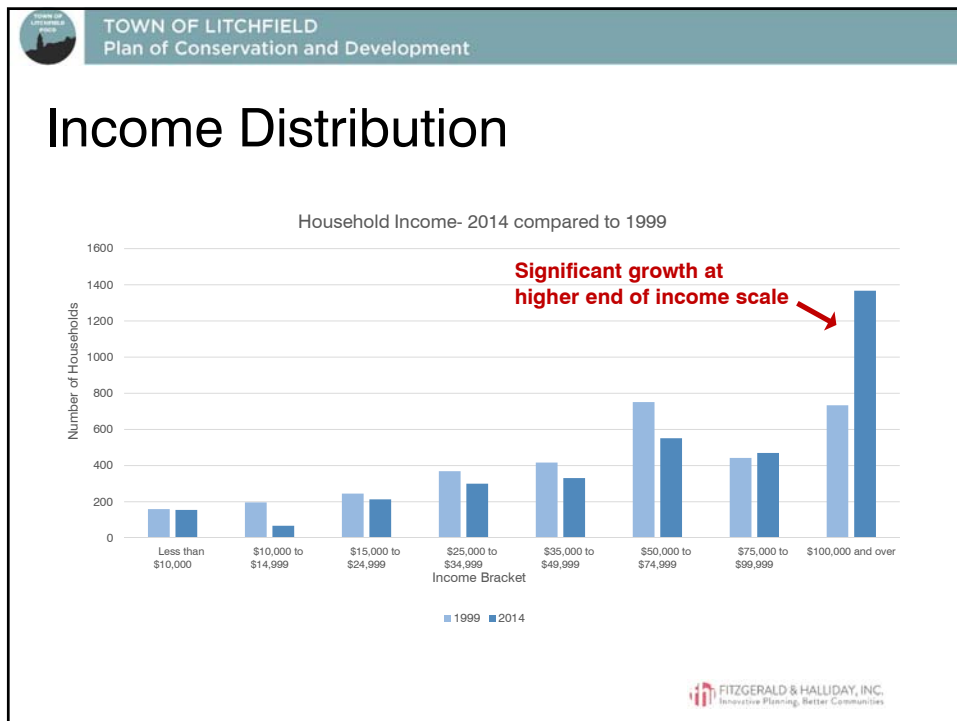
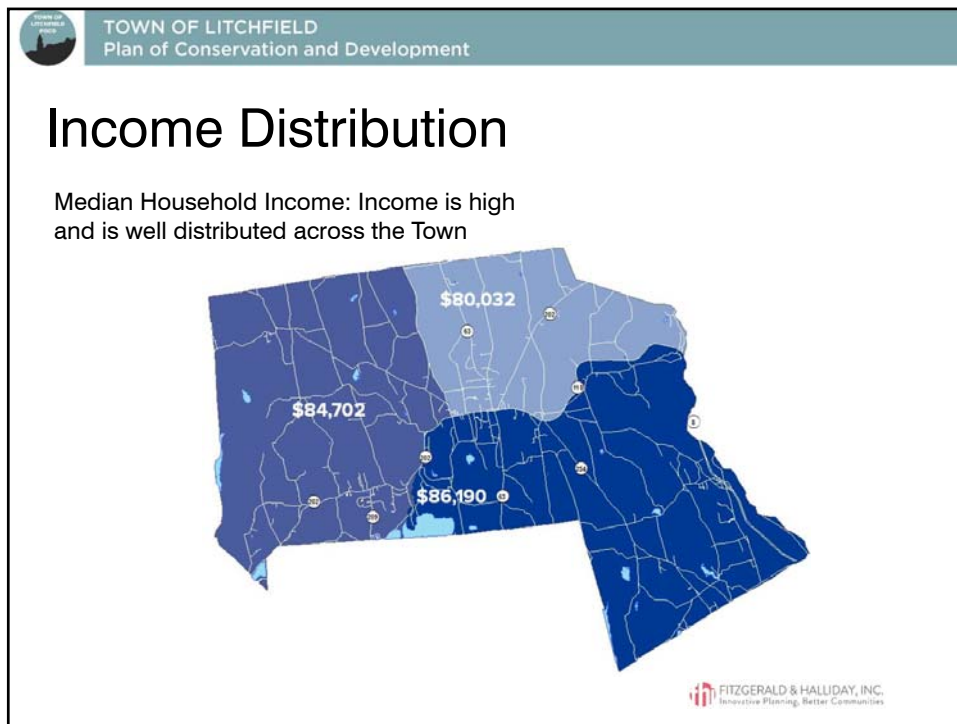


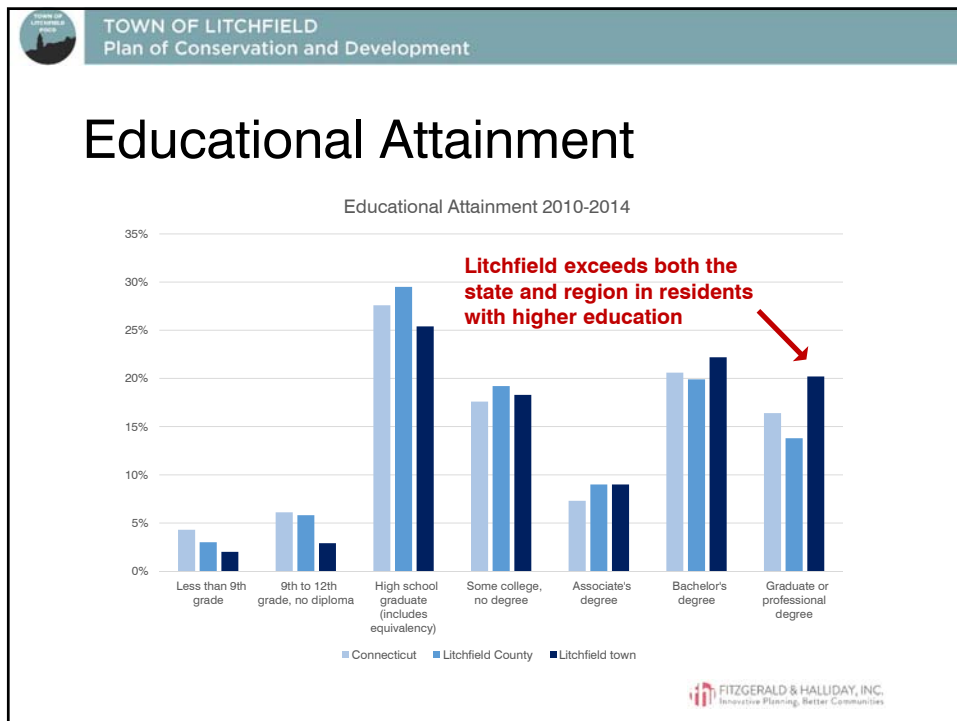
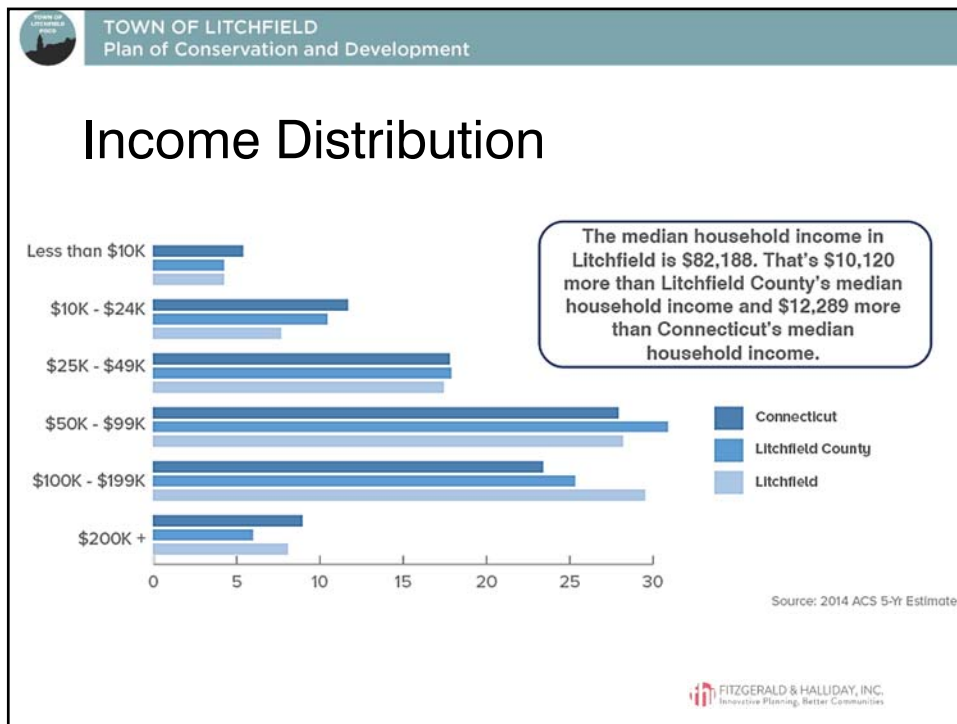


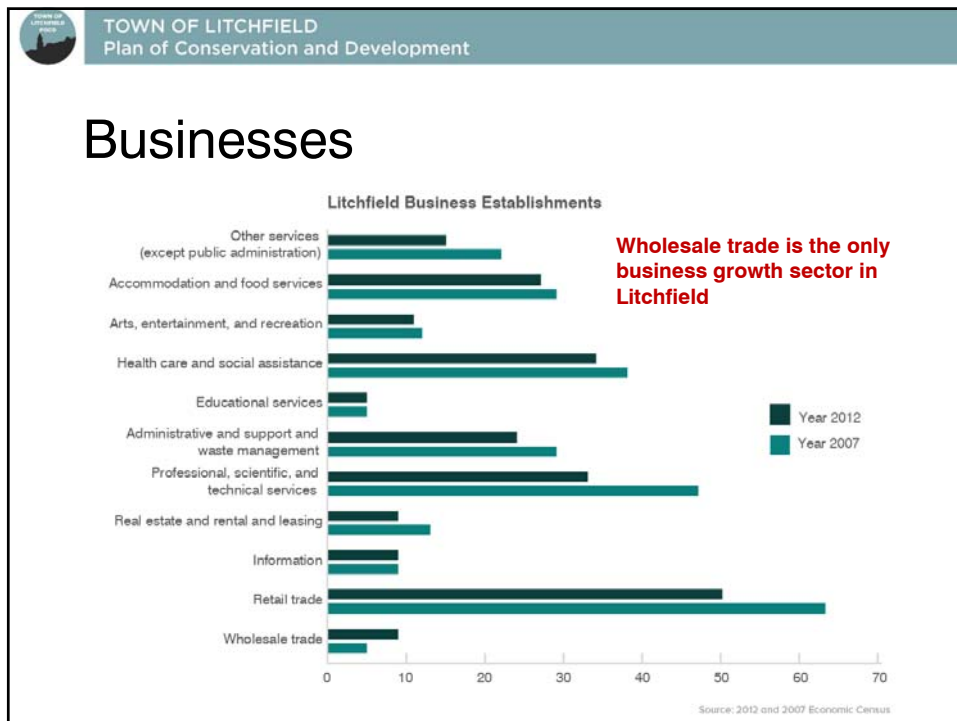
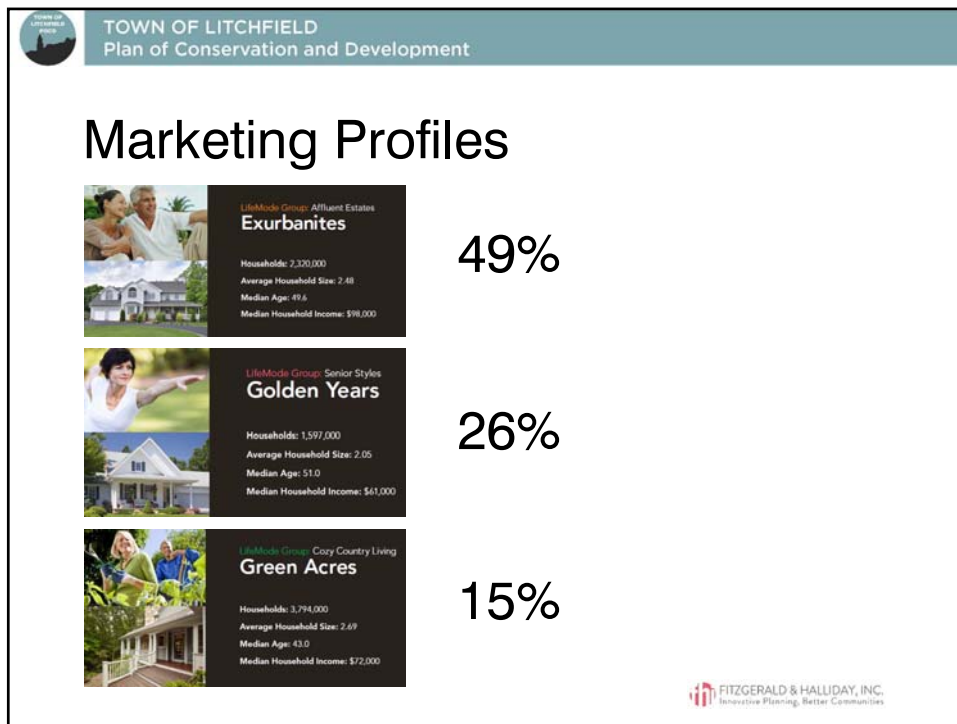


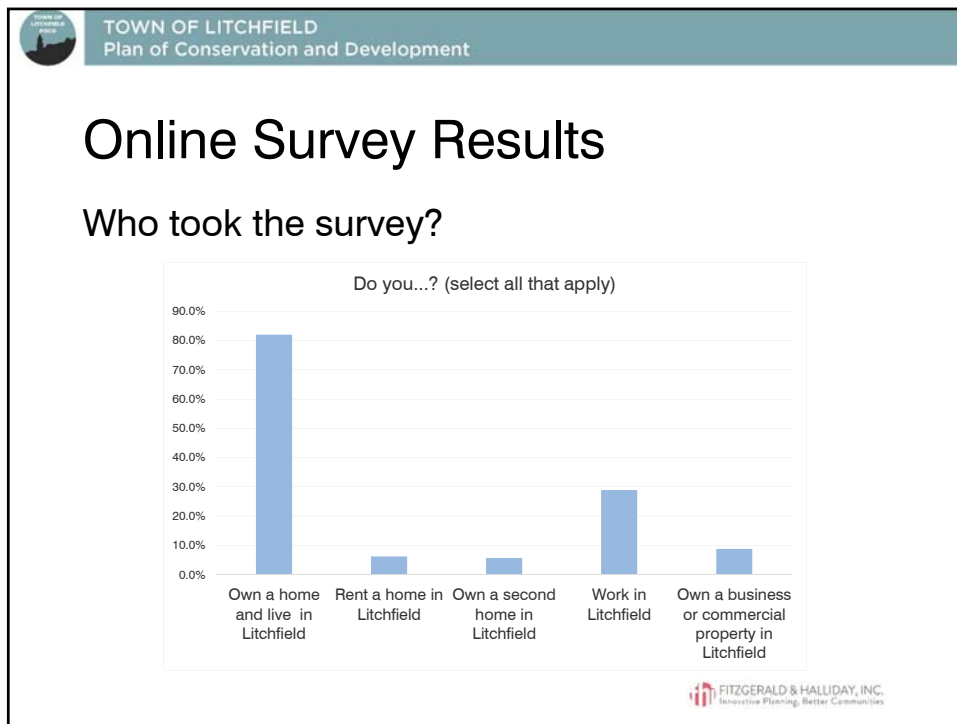












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## Survey Results

- Online Survey was available September – October
- 194 people participated

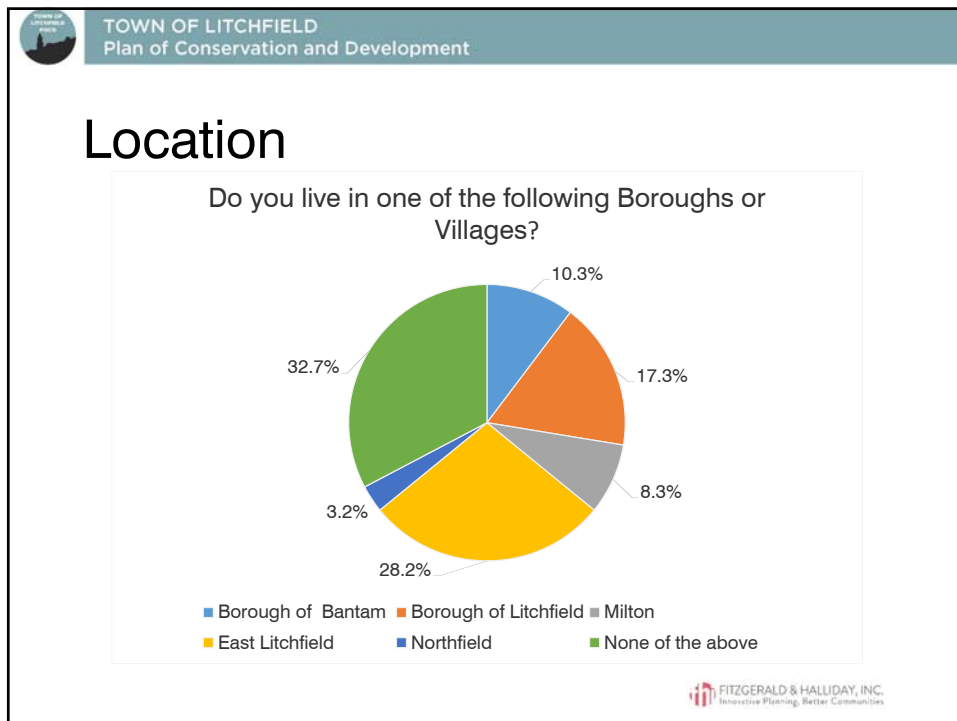
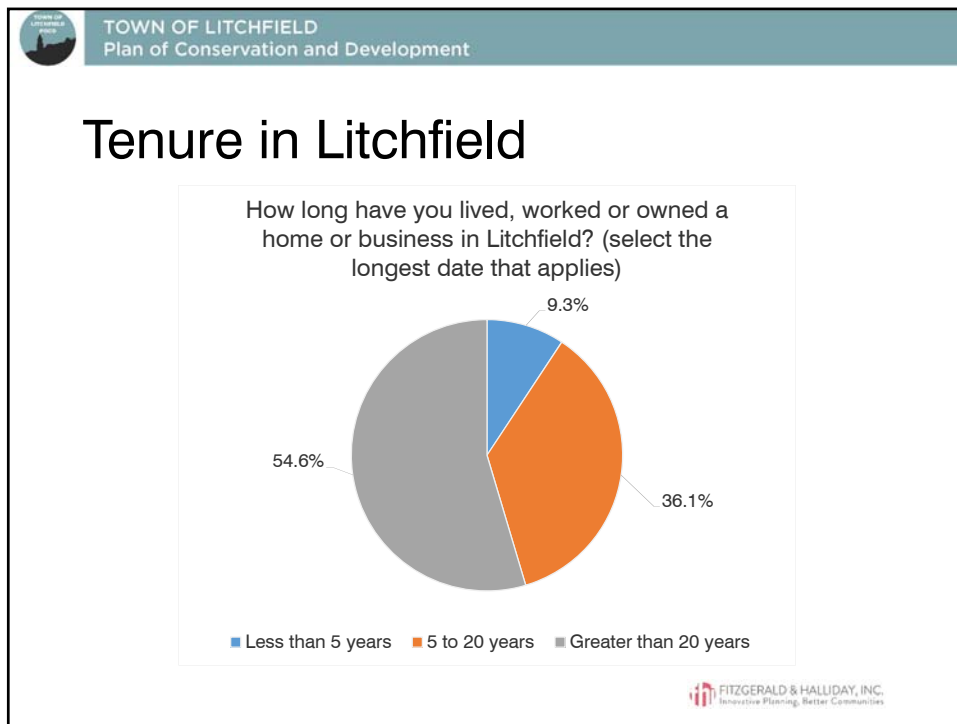
Welcome to the Litchfield Plan of Conservation and Development Survey!

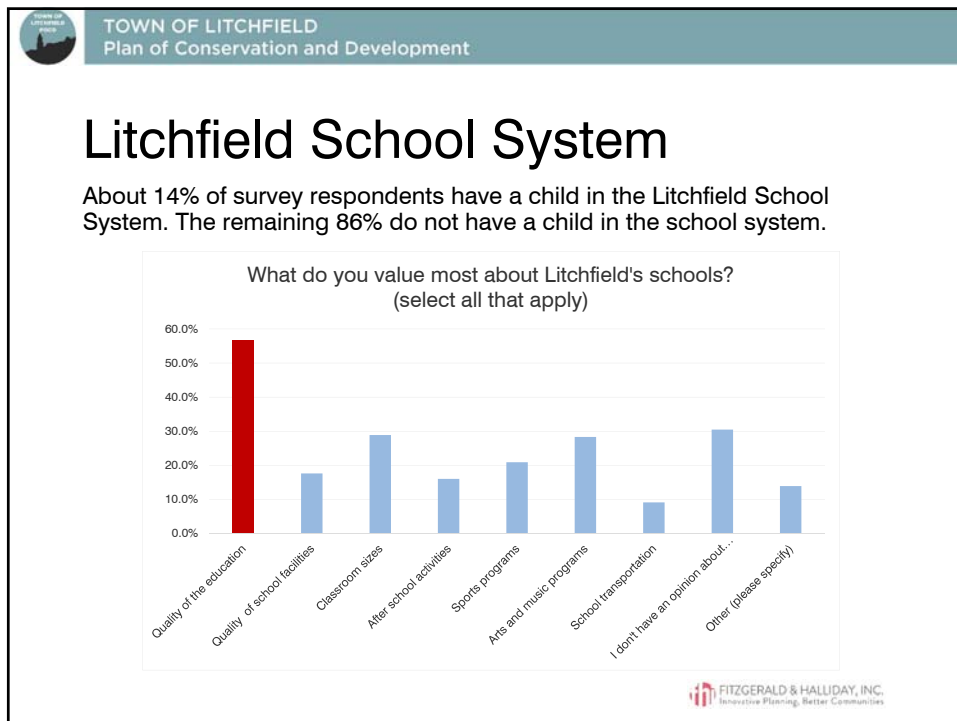
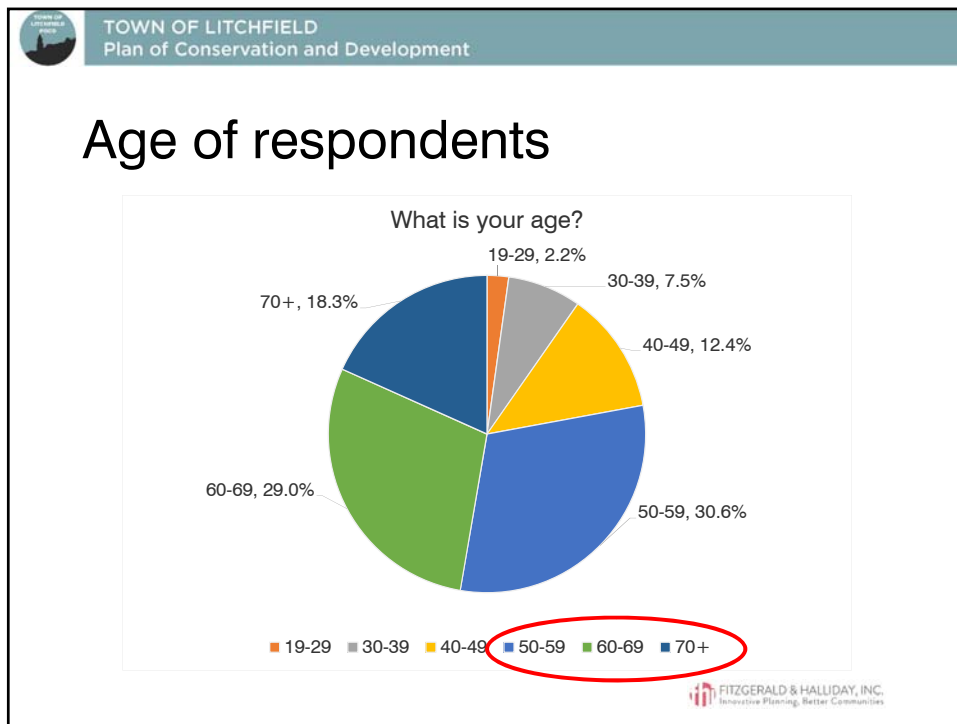
The purpose of this survey is to collect information for Litchfield's update to its Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

The Planning and Zoning Commission would like your thoughts on how Litchfield should plan for the future. Your response to this survey will help in the preparation of a new POCD. This is an opportunity for everyone in the community to revisit the overall vision for Litchfield that was laid out in its last POCD and to decide how to guide change in the coming decade.

The survey should only take five to ten minutes for you to complete. The survey will remain open between September 8th, 2016 and October 31st, 2016.

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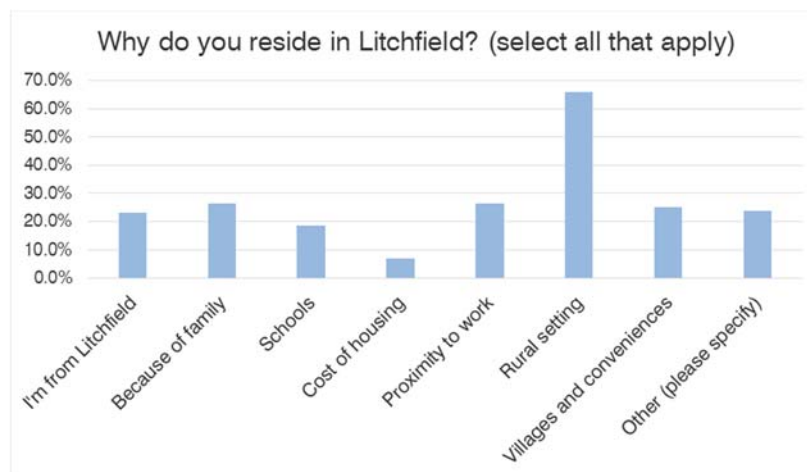
## Schools: Some common themes expressed through open ended responses include:

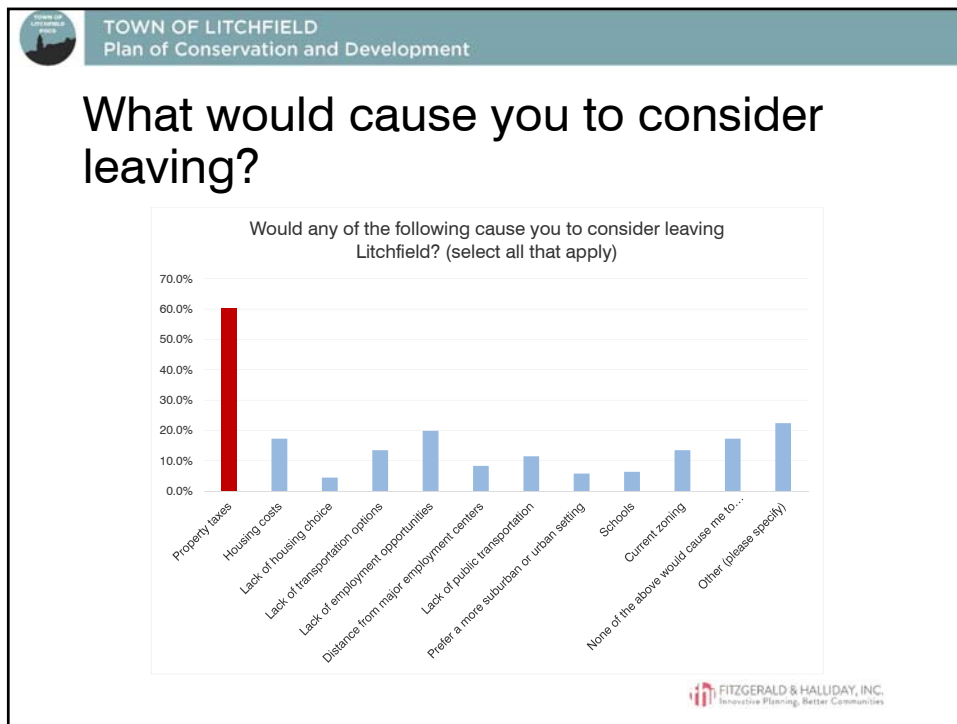
- Consolidate all the mostly empty buses to save money
- Declining enrollment it is not sustainable
- It is imperative that the schools provide a high-quality education to all students. To accomplish this, it may be necessary for the school system to find creative ways for sharing services with other towns
- Regionalization must happen



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## Why do you live in Litchfield?





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## Comments regarding potential factors in deciding to leave Litchfield:

- If Litchfield becomes overdeveloped
- Loss of Litchfield's environment and character
- Medical choices and availability
- Major changes in zoning or reductions in quality of life
- Lack of foresight in growing business base and expanding existing business
- High cost of living in Connecticut

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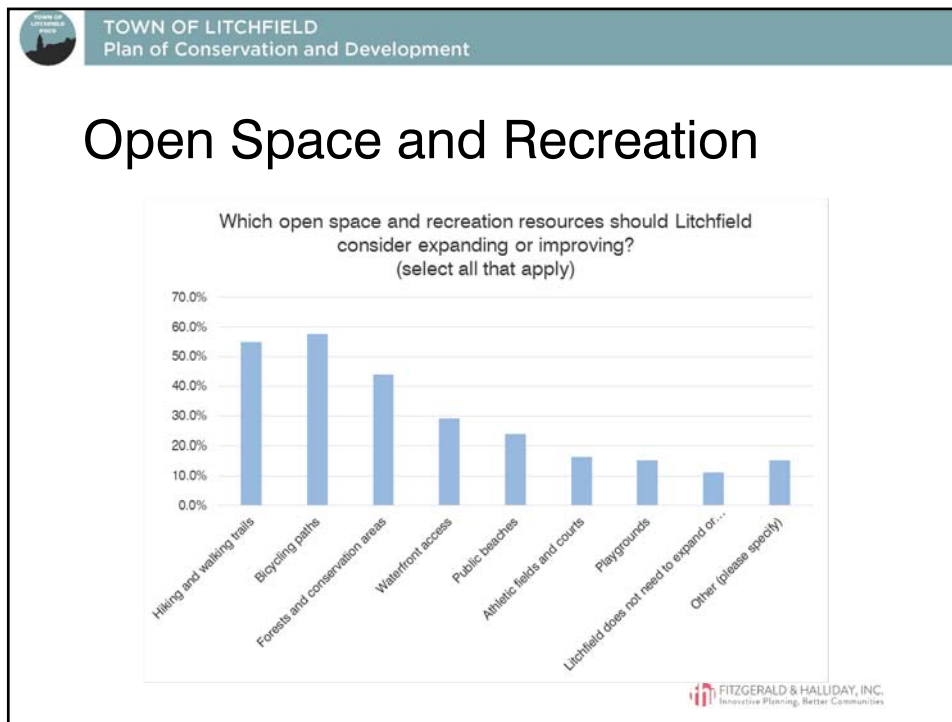


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## Housing Comments:

- Sustainable, green living homes and neighborhoods that attract young families are desired
- Affordable housing is needed for young families, not necessarily subsidized
- Tighter housing groups with more contiguous shared open space is desirable
- Small houses on small lots should be targeted for where water/sewer lines already exist,

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## Open Space and Rec Comments

- Open space should be targeted towards ecologically significant areas
- Farmland preservation of viable farms
- Public indoor swimming pool\*
- We would like to see some local government support for the Greenway Trail so that it could be completed quicker

\*The public swimming pool was a frequent response  
(5 discrete comments) in the open-ended answers section

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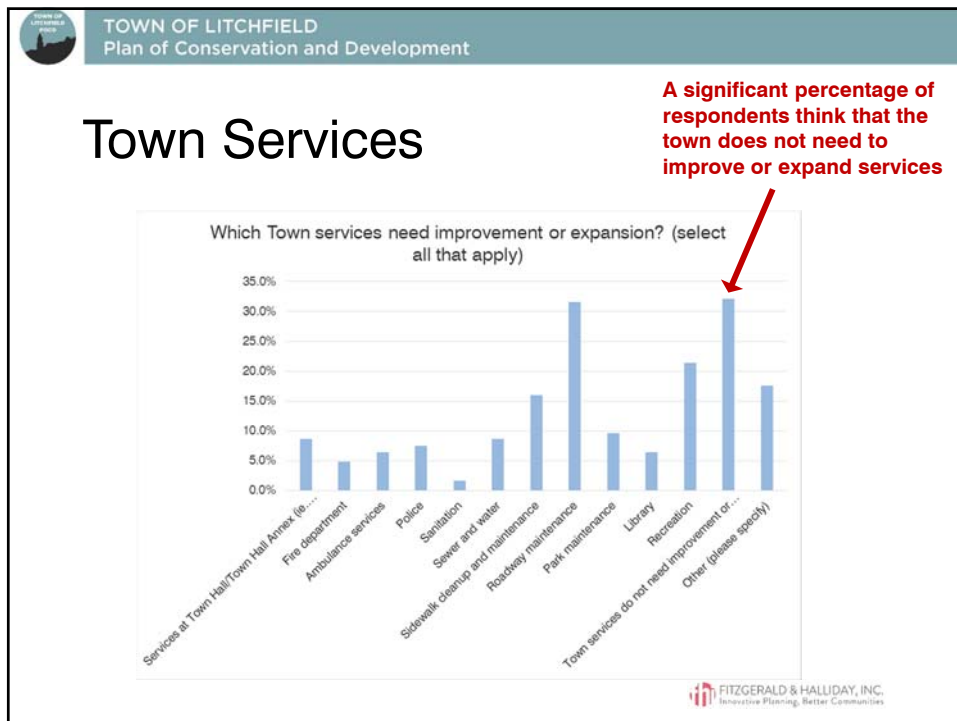
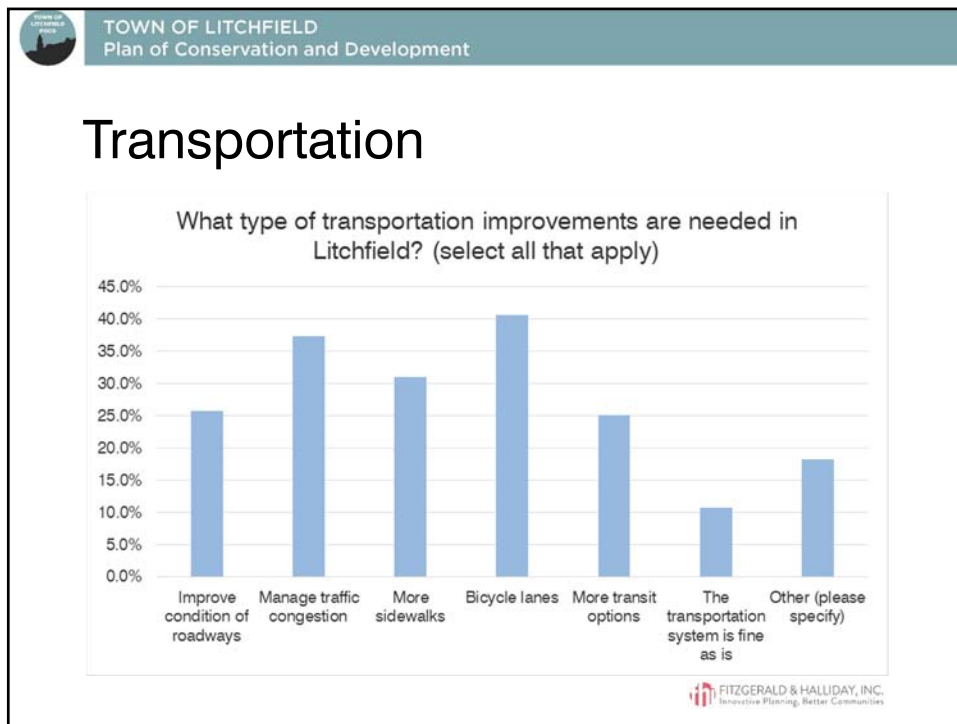


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## Economic Development Comments

- Litchfield needs:
  - A mix of businesses to serve local population and attract visitors.
  - Hometown stores that Litchfield full time residents can afford
  - Clean commercial/industrial
- There are many vacant spaces all over town, nothing new should be built but property owners need to participate in getting those vacancies filled. Many of them are asking for astronomically high commercial rents

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## General Comments

- *I think modest improvements related to updating and maintaining town and school buildings are needed without significant expansion or excess spending in this time of economic uncertainty. Housing should be focused on improving current available, updating existing buildings rather than building new*
- *It's very hard to balance the historic nature and character of Litchfield with the need for more income (tax dollars) from a larger business base. But that being said, if Litchfield could bring in some larger, mid-sized industry and or offices, we could offset the increase to business space by creating more bike paths, greenways, parks etc*
- *The POCD is such an important process and the resulting document can't be shelved. There must be accountability on the part of our town leadership to move all findings and plans to completion with an informed and supportive community behind the action plan. I am grateful for the effort that is put into this plan*



## Public Workshop Findings



## Open Space and Natural Resources SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths:** Beautiful open space and rural town character, open space sets the character and culture of the town. White Memorial is a valuable open space resource. School resources (ballfields, track, etc.) are open to all. Working farms, farmers' markets.
- **Weaknesses:** No community pool, lack of parking at many recreational property locations, much of the open space is not truly protected, limited government support for the Greenway Trail
- **Opportunities:** Recreation Department should work with greenway and land trust groups, outdoor education, link economic development to resources, example- bike repair shop near trails, café or refreshment spot
- **Threats:** Aggressive development and failure to plan for development, maintenance and overuse of some properties



## Housing SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths:** Well priced, high end homes, public sewer/water in downtown Litchfield and Bantam, low population density
- **Weaknesses:** Insufficient affordable housing, difficult to find rental housing, very few starter/smaller homes available, residential tax burden, flat population growth
- **Opportunities:** Upper story apartments could be added/expanded upon in commercial areas, zoning flexibility
- **Threats:** Delicate balance between existing character and future development, tax increases threaten affordability of homes, Trade-offs between the tax potential of farm redevelopment and loss of bucolic rural character



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## Schools and Economic Development SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths:** Top tier schools, education is valued, fiscal strength, local businesses
- **Weaknesses:** Declining school population, high taxes, difficult to encourage and start businesses and attract families, the Town is perceived as unfriendly to businesses
- **Opportunities:** More town services could be online and town offices could be combined, town needs an economic/retail development strategy
- **Threats:** Cost of maintaining school facilities- excess school capacity, declining town facilities- town hall, Decline of “Mom and Pops” – displaced by the “big box”



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## Transportation SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths:** Easy access to highways (RT8), well maintained state and local roads, thru-traffic generates business, scenic roadways
- **Weaknesses:** Lack of bike or pedestrian facilities, poorly maintained sidewalks, public transit options are lacking, traffic and parking congestion on the weekends
- **Opportunities:** Improved bike/ped facilities, increased transit service, traffic congestion mitigation
- **Threats:** Conflicting interests with CTDOT, Increasing costs of maintaining roads, extensive road network with need of maintenance




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## Focus Group Interview Summaries

- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Social Services
- Economic Development
- Historic Resources
- Housing



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## Transportation and Infrastructure

- Last WPCA upgrade was in the early 2000's- this has a typical 20 – 25-year lifespan horizon
- Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) of the freshwater getting into the system is the primary issue
- Riverview Commerce Zone would be a prime location for sewer service and would be a suitable location for future economic development
- Many people, particularly on the north edge of Bantam lake have failing septic and they would like to connect into the system. This gets complicated as they lease the land and own their homes



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## Transportation and Infrastructure

- 119 Miles of local roads, 16% of these are unimproved, dirt rural roads that the town maintains
- Drainage will be the focus of public works department for the next 5 years- they are starting to access outfalls (60 main outfalls in Litchfield)
- PW needs to identify the status of the drainage infrastructure, right now much is unknown about the system- this inventory is a serious concern
- Tree maintenance is a huge issue, budget is not nearly large enough to maintain trees along roads
- PW is trying to create a plan to address infrastructure and work on a corridor by corridor route branching out from corridors



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## Social Services

- The Town receives about 100 energy assistance applications per year
- Litchfield has many elderly residents that have outlived their savings
- The people that need help are lost, they often don't use the internet and computer dependency sets them back
- The town needs to hire someone educated in social services to help those in need
- The closest full service social services location is in Torrington, which can be difficult to access



## Historic Resources

- Difficult to maintain the residential and commercial balance of the town
- There is the threat of the spread of development into Historic Districts
- The town is lucky to have maintained its residential core
- Many people cannot afford to maintain historic homes, there are newer technologies that people want to upgrade to and are often not allowed to do so
- Finding money and grants to do things is increasingly more difficult



## Historic Resources

- Many residents that move into town don't know they are in a Historic District- realtors should capitalize on that and explain the history of the homes to new residents
- Trees are also part of the historic landscape, but when utility companies prune, they often do so in very unattractive ways
- It would be great to have signage and a wayfinding plan for the Borough
- 300-year anniversary of the town is coming up in 2019, this should be coordinated throughout town
- Goals- wider education about the town's historic resources is needed



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# Housing

- Town has 4.9% affordable housing—the goal is 10%
- Litchfield Housing Trust (LHT) provides 47 units in town, (4 rental units, a Co-Op with 16 self-sustaining units, but LHT owns the land, and 27 properties where homeowner's own homes but lease the land) and maintains a wait list, but this is outdated as people cannot afford to wait and often disappear
- Litchfield Housing Authority (LHA) has 66 units- 30 at Wells Run and 36 at Bantam Falls- most people prefer Bantam Falls which has newer, larger units
- Most people don't realize that affordable housing is an issue, but 38% of the population are spending over 30% of incomes on housing
- Most projects are geared towards areas within sewer service areas, and the sewers are in historic districts, this creates a challenge to development
- The development of affordable housing takes many years per project



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# Economic Development

- Litchfield needs to increase its tax base
- The town needs to set 10 year goals and quantifiable objectives that are adhered to
- Infrastructure, sewer, water, internet is a limiting factor to development
- Town should have a better, user friendly website
- Need to have better coordination between town groups
- Very awkward zones in the zoning regulations and zoning is often challenged in lawsuits
- Very difficult to open a business in Litchfield



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## Vision Statement

*Litchfield is a rural community with a rich agrarian history. The town is home to unique villages that are comprised of historic structures anchoring Litchfield to its past. Open space is highly valued and Litchfield actively protects its most sensitive ecological and scenic areas. Litchfield is home to life-long families, new arrivals, and is welcoming to visitors. The town has a range of housing that allows its families to grow and remain members of the community throughout their lives. The town values its local farms and businesses and provides essential goods, services, and employment opportunities to its residents. Litchfield's students are provided with a high quality education and diverse recreational opportunities. The town's leadership carefully balances the challenge of providing quality services and facilities while ensuring that Litchfield remains a community where residents and businesses can sustain their presence.*




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## Key Issues, Goals, and Strategies

- Is the town supportive of population growth?
- How can Litchfield encourage economic development and diversification of its tax base?
- What kind of economic growth should be pursued?
- How does the town support more opportunities for the development of affordable housing?
- Are there areas of town that are suitable for commercial or higher density residential development?
- Which town services, if any, should be regionalized?
- How can the town respond to the need for social services?
- Are there opportunities for improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities and transit?

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Questions?



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