

Pomfret Branding Strategy



January 30, 2019 Meeting Summary

The initial meeting of the Pomfret Branding Strategy Committee consisted of an introduction of just what community branding is and how it differs from community marketing, an overview of town statistics a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) exercise and an overview of the strategy process.

By way of background, the Town's economic development commission, in coordination with the First Selectman decided to develop a branding plan as first step to developing a comprehensive economic (community) development strategy for Pomfret. The town engaged the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments to facilitate the planning process to develop the branding plan.

At the meeting it was explained that the **goal of the branding strategy** is to craft a message about the special offerings of the Town that will resonate or appeal to persons and businesses within and outside of Pomfret to embrace as well as encourage both visitation and re-location to the town. The presentation noted that communities typically develop branding strategies for the following reasons¹:

- Putting your community on the regional and national map
- Increasing a sense of local identity, well-being and pride
- Attracting new businesses, industries, investments and high profile events
- Drawing in new populations and a diversity of skills and talents
- Increasing tourism
- Developing and maintaining a clear and consistent sense of community identity and messaging for the outside world
- Supporting coherent local development efforts overall as physical, social, economic and cultural sectors come together to deliver your community's brand promise.

The presentation noted that it is important to understand that **community branding is not about pretending to be something you're not, a logo or a catchy phrase**. It's about revealing, packaging and promoting awareness about what the community is and how that can be beneficial.

¹ COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING - Federation of Canadian Municipalities Tool for Local Economic Development

NECCOG explained that While Pomfret does not have a formal brand - it nonetheless it is branded. That the process of developing a branding strategy does not begin with a “blank slate” - the town has multiple centuries of existence.

“Every citizen in a city, region and nation has a perception of that place. Through their actions and beliefs they express the brand. Complex brand perceptions about place are created over time and through functionality and experience. For cities, that means looking at the livability (i.e. functionality) and quality of life (i.e. citizen experience) of our cities, and understanding how that shapes our citizens’ perception and what they believe to be true about place.²”

Pomfret’s long history and people result in impressions (a form of branding) of the town that are both positive and negative. It is not like the launch of a new product where no one has any notion as to what the product is or could be. Towns are places with a history and on-the ground realities; which means—like it or not—Pomfret already is branded. **The town can’t escape from what it is and how people perceive it.** However, this can change through meaningful action, but it cannot be glossed over.

If town Policies are not incentivizing what the town wants and penalizing what it does not then you can’t sell vision; you can’t sell community. Along with history comes image. Image is anchored in the present and represents the visible impression people in and outside the town have of the town. This is a critical element in branding the town because that present image is either what we are seeking to enhance or change to effectively brand the community.

Why brand Pomfret?

- *What do we want to be known for?*
- *How can we stand out from the crowd and be more competitive?*
- *What thoughts and feelings do we want to come to mind when people are exposed to our name?*
- *How can we gain improved results from our resources?*³

The presentation emphasized that A branding strategy is NOT a marketing plan.

The branding strategy is the initial step — defining the brand and actions related to it to reinforce the brand — the marketing strategy is the next step.

NECCOG asked that the committee: “Consider all those people who don’t live in your town. What impressions do they have? Positive? Negative? The wrong impressions or none at all? Since they lack

² Federation of Canadian Municipalities, The Case of Regina, Canada

³ Page 17 / Destination Branding for Small Cities — Second Edition / © 2012 Creative Leap Books. All Rights Reserved

your knowledge and personal experience with the community, they make decisions based on what they see, read, hear or learn through chance encounters. Numerous positive impressions create one mindset; negative impressions or no impressions foster another. **The key is whether or not their perceptions and brand image align with your community's desired brand identity."**

Some of the key reasons to brand Pomfret are:

- *Putting your community on the regional and national map*
- *Increasing a sense of local identity, well-being and pride*
- *Attracting new businesses, industries, investments and high profile events*
- *Drawing in new populations and a diversity of skills and talents*
- *Increasing tourism*
- *Developing and maintaining a clear and consistent sense of community identity and messaging for the outside world*
- *Supporting coherent local development efforts overall as physical, social, economic and cultural sectors to come together to deliver your community's brand promise ⁴*

The key is that whatever the reason for the Pomfret brand - it must be one that is embraced and understood by your target audience(s).

During the meeting the following two questions were asked:

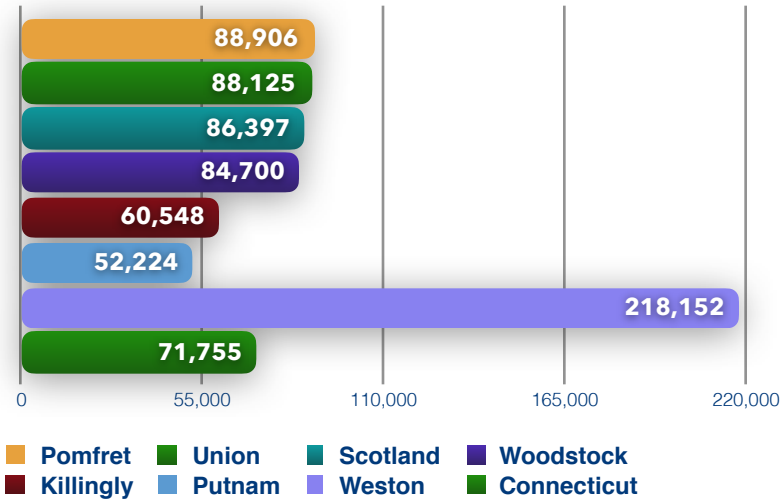
- *What one word or phrase would you use to describe Pomfret?* Answers to this included: **Peaceful, Rural, Natural Beauty, Open Space and Home**
- *What place or activity would you recommend to someone visiting Pomfret for the first time?* **Hiking, Horseback riding, the Bean**

The presentation offered a series of demographic information:

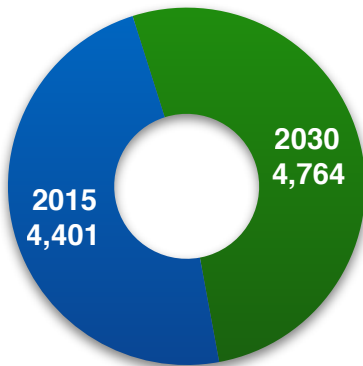
- Persons Per Square Mile - 102.2 (147th lowest) Connecticut was 732.6
- 2016 Per capita Income - \$42,246 (77th) Connecticut was \$39,906
- Unemployment - 3.4% (157th lowest) Connecticut was 5.1%
- Median Household Income - \$88,906 (65th highest). Connecticut was \$71,775
- 1,644 Households

⁴ COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING - Federation of Canadian Municipalities Tool for Local Economic Development

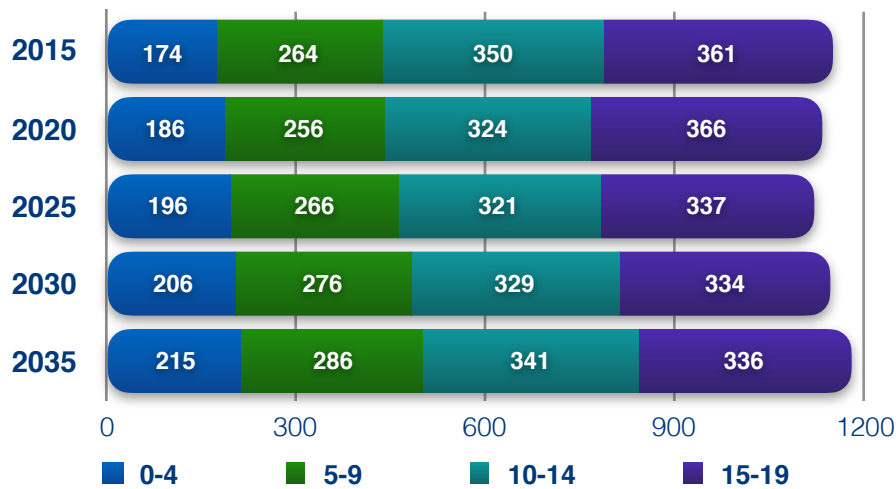
2016 Median Household Income



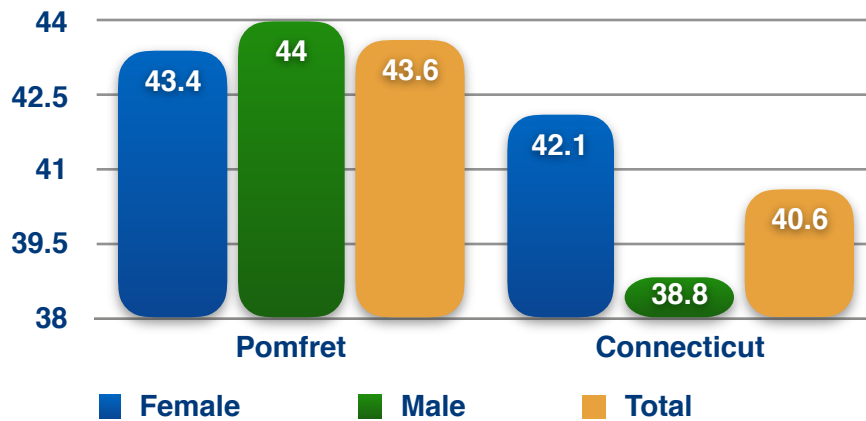
Population Change



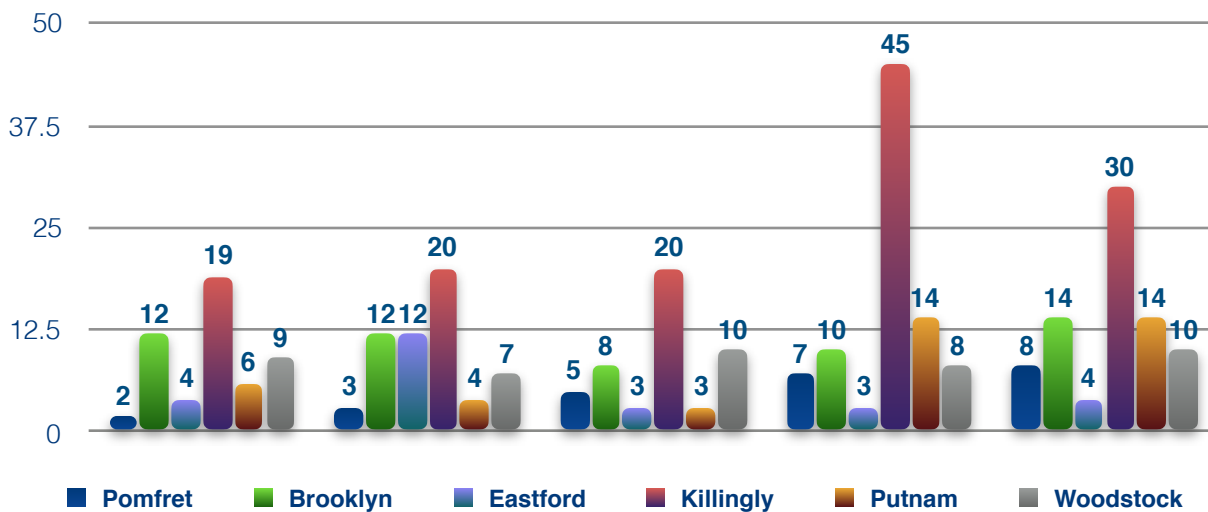
Population Projection for School Age Persons



Median Age



Annual Housing Permits by Town



Information

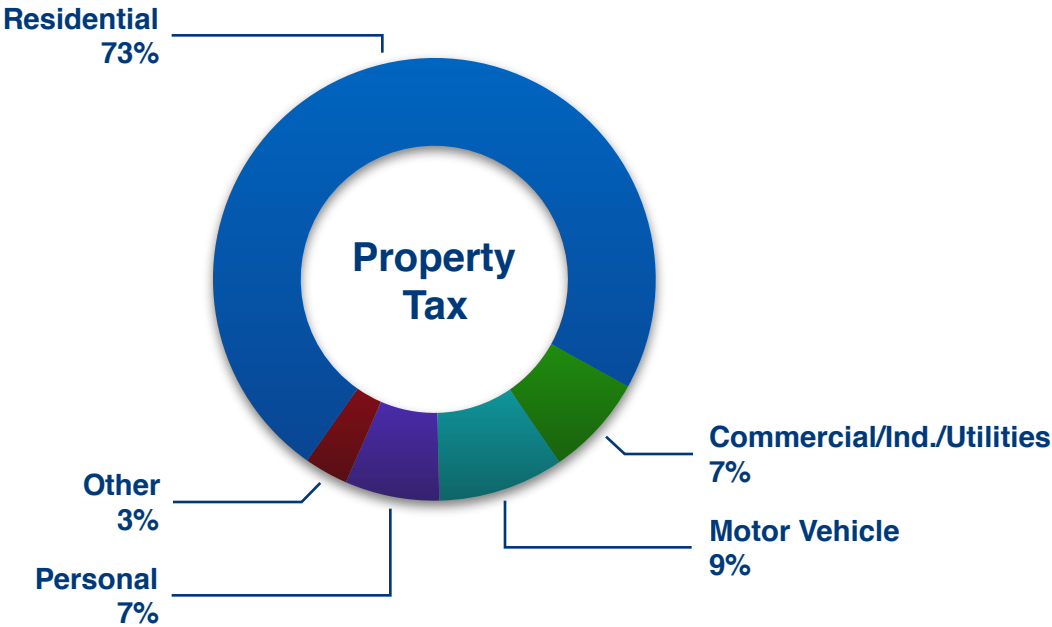
| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Population: | 4,149 |
| Community Size: | Tier 4 |
| ENGL: | \$490,571,570 |
| Square Miles: | 40.329 |
| Miles Of Road: | 91.26 |
| School Enrollment: | 601 |
| School Type: | Municipal K-8/Sending 9-12 |
| Health Department: | Multi-Town District |
| Public Safety Answering Point: | Regional |
| Resident Trooper: | No |
| Fire Services: | Volunteer Fire |

Revenue Sources

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Total Revenue: | \$12,335,683 |
| Property Taxes: | \$8,841,752 |
| Intergovernmental: | \$3,196,899 |
| Other Revenue: | \$297,032 |

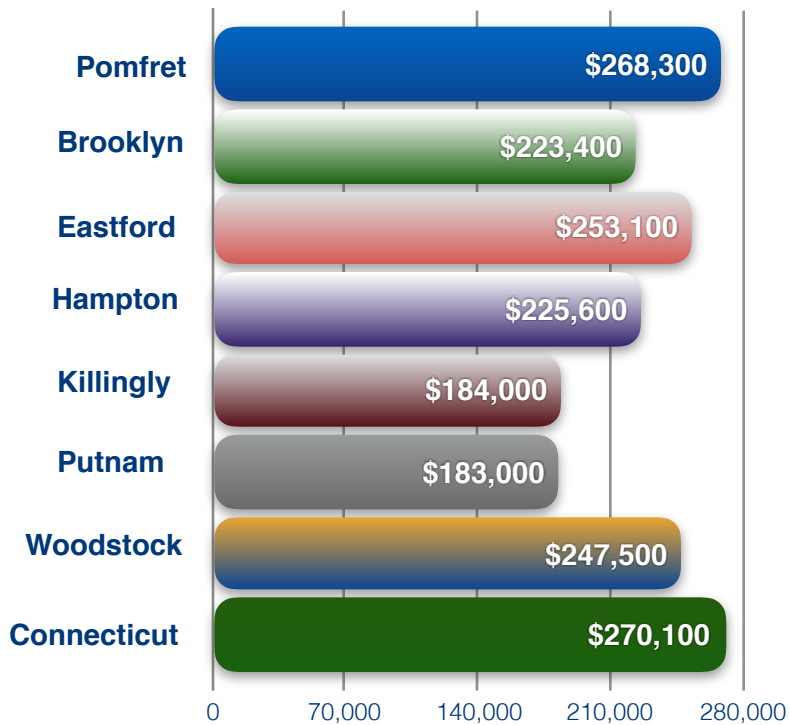
Spending Analysis

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Total Expenditures: | \$12,264,331 |
| Education Expenditures: | \$9,750,852 |
| Municipal Expenditures: | \$2,513,479 |
| Municipal Wages: | \$766,654 |
| Employee Benefits: | \$351,597 |
| Debt Service: | \$405,702 |
| Other Municipal Expenditure: | \$989,526 |

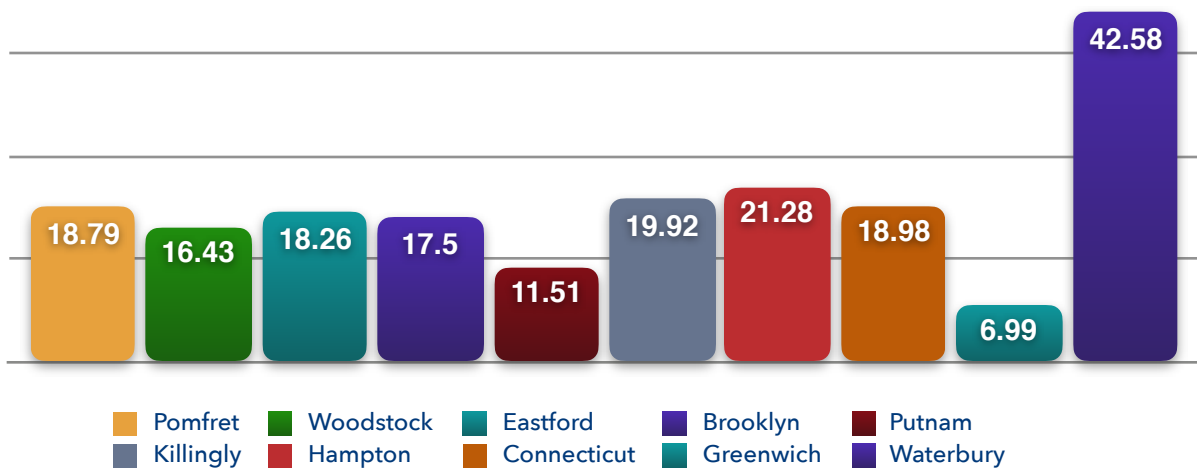


137th Lowest Tax Levy Per Capita at \$2,127
Connecticut - \$2,872

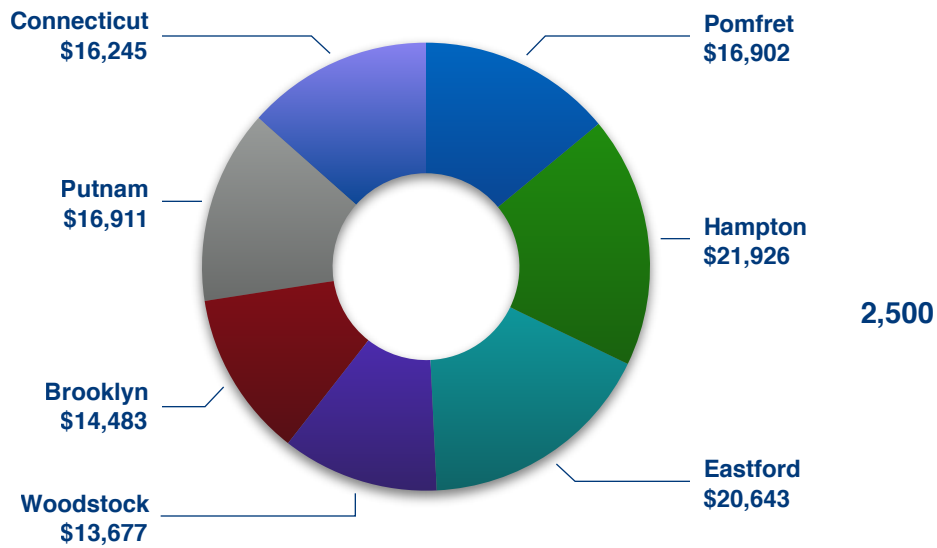
Median Home Value



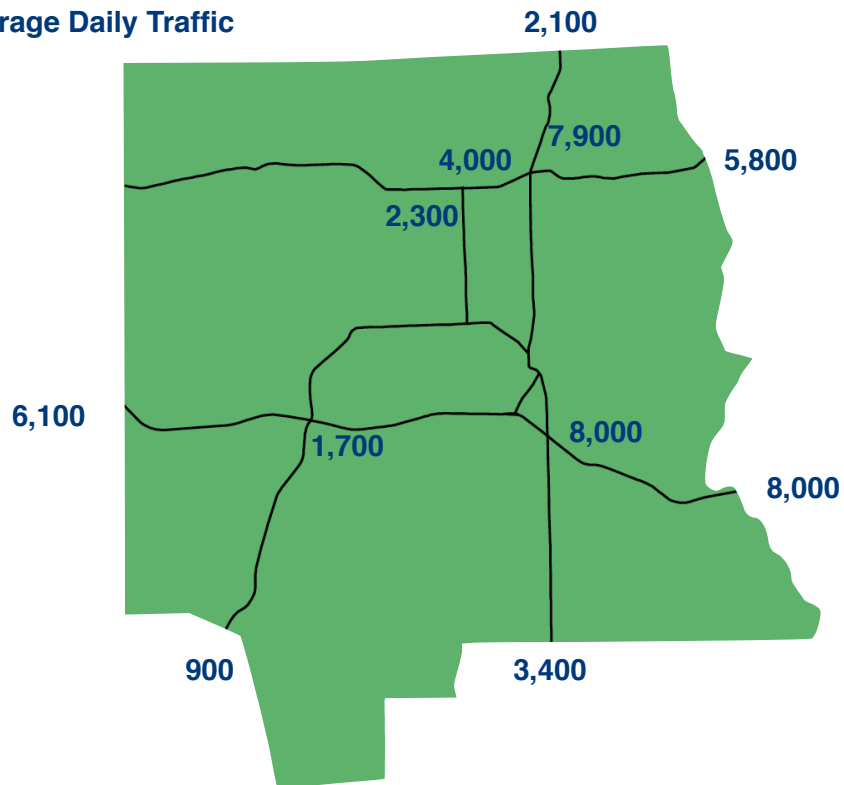
Equalized Mill Rates - FYE 2016



Net Expenditure Per Student, 2016



Average Daily Traffic



2,372,500 vehicle trips that pass annually by the Bean intersection
 2,920,000 vehicle trips that pass annually through the 101/169 intersection

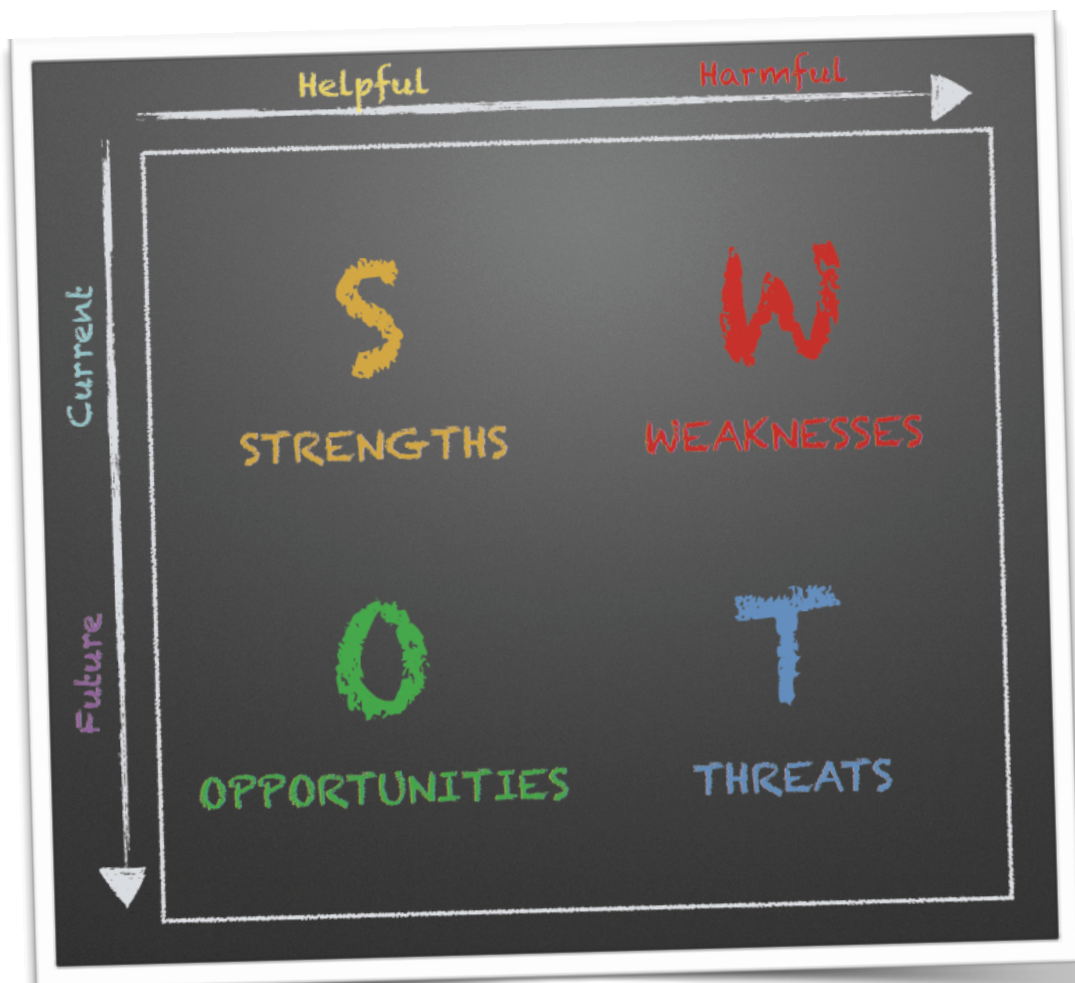
Participants at the meeting were asked about their perceptions of Pomfret. NECCOG informed them that these would be addressed during the study process.

- *What differentiates the Town from others?*
- *What sets the Town apart - what makes it unique?*
- *What can it offer potential investors, tourists and others?*
- *Why locate (business or home) in Pomfret?*
- *What are residents most proud of?*

There was discussion regarding the Town's landuse regulations and its Plan of Conservation and Development. Participants were urged to read the POCD as it is the Town's "blueprint" for the future.

The Study structure and process was reviewed with the note that the process is intended to be completed by May 2019.

The group assembled took part in a SWOT analysis.



Identified Strengths:

- Open Space
- Little League
- Restaurants
- Winery
- Distilling
- Equestrian
- "Litchfield of the Northeast"
- Memorial Day
- Public Land
- Ice Cream
- Interesting people
- Library
- History
- Great Historic neighborhood
- Tiffany Glass
- 4-H Camp
- Real Estate Values
- Pomfret Times

Weakness Identified:

- Commute
- Relationship between Town and Private Schools
- No Bed and Breakfasts
- Adverse Business Climate
- Lack of Town Center
- Ability for Kids to be Mobile
- Accessibility
- Volunteering
- Sense of Community

Opportunities Identified:

- Airline Trail
- Pomfret Horse Trail
- State Forest
- Mashamoquet Park
- Walktober
- Outdoor Recreation
- Educational Facilities
- Science and technology
- The Arts
- Hospital
- YMCA
- Agriculture

Threats Identified:

- Chain Convenience Stores
- Resources
- State Funding
- Pomfret's Funding from the State
- Property Taxes
- Demand for Services
- Ambulance Services

The next meeting is pending a date, time and location