

## **Appendix D**

### **Conservation-Based Development**

The purpose of a conservation-based development process is to preserve open space, rural character, and other key site amenities that might be lost as a result of conventional development. The process is similar to the conventional subdivision review process except that the first drawing presented to the planning board is a site analysis map that identifies all the site's resources. These resources might include wetlands, streams, ponds, forested areas, open fields, important habitat, farmland, and archaeological resources.

Using a set of development guidelines specifically prepared for this process, the planning board and the applicant can then begin to define the important resources that should be targeted for preservation. These areas then become part of the future subdivision's open space requirements. The amount of open space is predetermined for a given area of Town, as is the allowable density (units per acre).

With this information in hand (including the development guidelines), the applicant can then design the site. Flexibility is important to the success of the process. Elimination of some or all of the dimensional and lot size parameters (bulk regulations) will allow the designer to create a unique and high quality project.

The three concept plans following this page illustrate the impact of conventional and conservation designs on a fictional 100-acre lot. Site resources include farmland, woodlots, a stream corridor, and wetland.

Layout Option 1 is a conventional subdivision of 3-acre lots with no common open space. This is the type of development that might be expected in Wilton's rural areas under current zoning. What is evident from this design is that although the lots are fairly large, they consume the road frontage and would clearly eliminate the rural character of this particular stretch of road. Additionally, site resources are largely consumed by the sprawling lots. Even with specific requirements to protect wetlands, enforcement is very difficult and residents are often unclear of boundaries.

Layout Option 2 represents a 1-acre cluster development with no municipal water and sewer services that might evolve from a conservation development review process. This is not presented as a recommended design for any given site. Rather, it illustrates how site features can be preserved without eliminating lot yield. It is not unreasonable to provide adequate water supply via individual wells and functional septic systems on 1-acre lots.

Layout Option 3 assumes that municipal water and sewer services are available to achieve a much denser project with a very high percentage of contiguous open space. This particular layout also assumes that a density bonus was available for providing additional open space beyond the requirement. Such a scenario can be worked out

through incentive zoning or written into the underlying zoning. The primary amenity for residents of this subdivision is a large area of open space with limited maintenance requirements. Other amenities might also be incorporated such as sidewalks, trails linked to destinations or other major trail systems, pedestrian scale street lighting, narrower roads with a village or hamlet atmosphere. Again, there are many ways to design such a project but the primary purpose of this example is to show the benefits of conservation subdivisions on site resources and community character.