

TOWN OF WILTON

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Town of Wilton Saratoga County, New York

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Chapter I: Introduction & Plan Summary

The Town of Wilton authored its last “Technical Master Plan” in September 1990 and updated it in July 1994. Since that time the Town has undergone considerable growth and therefore some

unanticipated changes. Development pressure is continuing. The demand for housing in the Capital District continues to grow. Incentives by the State have recently resulted in an increasing number of hi-tech, light industrial jobs in the region. The pace of development has had an impact on community infrastructure and character. As a result of these pressures, the Town determined that it was necessary to update its comprehensive plan (“Technical Master Plan”). This new Plan will help to identify the issues affecting the community and to present an action program to effectively address these issues to the benefit of the Town and its residents.

A comprehensive plan or master plan as defined by Town Law (§272-a.2(a)), is the

“...materials, written and/or graphic, including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive materials that identify goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the town located outside the limits of any incorporated village or city.”

Comprehensive planning provides a community with the opportunity to guide land use/development to meet the current and future needs, goals, and objectives of its residents with respect to the public health, safety and general welfare. A comprehensive plan is the framework for land use regulation, providing a blueprint of what the Town is and what it wants to become in the future. The implementation of this plan, starting with the adoption of subdivision regulations, related supporting town ordinances and proceeding with recommendations such as amendments to the zoning ordinance, will

provide the legal authority to guide and control development in a prescribed manner.

A. Legislative Authority

The authority to conduct comprehensive planning and to adopt a comprehensive plan is granted to towns by the State Legislature. Adoption of a comprehensive plan by the town board requires that all town land use be in accordance with the plan. Furthermore, other governmental agencies must take the plan into consideration whenever capital projects occur on land included in the comprehensive plan. This provides a town with the appropriate guidance to review future projects and provides the essential background information and justification for amending or creating a zoning ordinance. This plan also provides developers/project sponsors with up-front guidance on where and how their projects can be developed, facilitating the site plan review process and providing early detection of potential land use conflicts or adverse environmental impacts.

B. Community Vision Goals and Objectives

Comprehensive Planning begins with a shared vision of a community's future.

The Town of Wilton has established a collective vision of a vibrant 21st Century community based on:

- . • a desirable mingling of suburban and rural character;
- . • a prime location along the Northway corridor between the state's capital and the Adirondack Park, and adjacent to historic Saratoga Springs;
- . • an emphasis on valuing and improving the quality of life in the Town;
- . • a shared sense of responsibility for the town's natural, agricultural, open space, and scenic resources and the value of these resources to the health, culture, and economy of the community;
- . • an effective balance of commercial and light industrial development.

The Town recognizes the impact of growth and development on the quality of life of its citizens and commits itself to planning town growth in a way which encourages the preservation of the remaining rural character, protects environmental quality, and balances land use. In working toward this vision, the Town is committed to providing quality services and diverse economic opportunities. At the same time, the Town will exercise fiscal prudence and accountability while ensuring an aesthetically pleasing commercial design. Wilton actively encourages civic involvement and open government based upon mutual respect for all stakeholders.

Goals and objectives for the Town of Wilton were developed in the areas of growth management, natural resources and open space, transportation and mobility, housing, recreation, historical and cultural resources, utilities, community facilities and services, fiscal concerns and economic development, town character, open government, and implementation.

C. Inventory & Analysis

As part of the determination of the vision for the Town, an inventory of the Town's physical (natural and built) and cultural resources was completed to identify opportunities and constraints in regards to future land use. The inventoried resources include:

- . • physiology & topography
- . • geology & soils
- . • water resources
- . • flood plains & drainage
- . • ecology
- . • land use & zoning
- . • agricultural resources
- . • recreational resources
- . • municipal/community services
- . • utilities
- . • transportation & mobility
- . • socioeconomic resources
- . • cultural resources
- open space

D. Summary of Plan Recommendations

The Comprehensive Plan is divided into Plan recommendations based on broad, Town-wide applications and more specifically focused on the seven planning areas. These recommendations consider existing development patterns, physical features, and potential land use in each area.

Town Wide Recommendations

Growth Management

There are many growth management tools that may be employed to guide land use in the Town. A description of land management techniques is included in Appendix B of this document. Although any of the tools described in Appendix B can be utilized as part of a growth management program, it is recommended that the Town focus on the following:

- . • Revise zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to address changes in land use and density, in response to identified goals and objectives.
- . • Consider incentive zoning as a means of encouraging open space conservation and the provision of other community specified amenities.
- . • Prepare an open space, recreation and pathways plan that protects farmlands, important natural resources/features, recreational resources (including trails), and scenic areas.
- . • Evaluate potential land preservation mechanisms such as term easements, land acquisition, purchase of development rights, and the use of incentive zoning to achieve the transfer of development rights.
- . • Protect and enhance historic/cultural resources, utilizing the resources/knowledge of the Wilton Heritage Society.
- . • Encourage the Wilton Water & Sewer Authority to revise its Comprehensive Plan for Water and Wastewater Management to be consistent with the recommendations for benefit areas in the Town of Wilton Comprehensive Plan, including no extension of services east of the Northway. Density should be determined by the Town's land use goals, protection of the environment and the desire to encourage preservation of the rural character that currently exists east of the Northway.
- . • Consider residential development guidelines.
- . • Consider Commercial Development & Architectural standards or guidelines.

Several areas of the Town have been identified for rural residential uses, reflecting environmental constraints and a need for control on growth. There are many growth management tools that can be used to maintain rural character, such as the use of incentive zoning and the purchase of development rights. The recommended growth management program for Wilton includes incentive-based tools coupled with regulatory measures implemented through zoning, development guidelines, and a conservation development site plan review process.

The regulatory approach includes the establishment of a required minimum amount of land to be dedicated as open space for each project as well as setting maximum densities of development. The flexibility to allow variable lot sizes, through incentive zoning or

subdivision regulations, will facilitate clustering and maximize open space. Maximum density can be established by setting minimum lot sizes or alternatively established as part of a flexible site plan review procedure whereby lot sizes vary based on site conditions and opportunities to protect resources. Incentive zoning has also been identified as an important component to encourage clustering by relaxing minimum lot size requirements in exchange for more open space.

It is anticipated that maximum density will be determined during the plan implementation process, potentially addressed during preparation of an open space and pathways plan and potentially supported by a fiscal model. It is the Town's expectation that revisions to its zoning regulations will encourage a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon suitable criteria.

Quality open space is defined as natural areas or agricultural lands that are interconnected, not fragmented; accessible, not tied up in back lots; and that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the area. Accessibility means that the open space must be adjacent to the main road (not the internal subdivision road) and/or adjacent to trail corridors. Steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands, floodplains, forested land, and even open fields (either natural or in agricultural use) are all quality open space providing they meet the criteria above.

Quality open space would be identified through the conservation subdivision/development process (a modification of the current site plan review process) that begins with collaboration between the applicant and the planning board to identify important natural, cultural and aesthetic resources, as well as the most appropriate area(s) for development. The planning board would receive guidance in the process from development guidelines incorporated into zoning. Final decisions on the density and design of a project would be partly based on the carrying capacity with respect to the maximum buildable density of the land, the protection of important resources, and the goal of maintaining rural character.

This interim measure would be evaluated during the comprehensive plan implementation process and perhaps modified or eliminated in favor of a different approach to achieve the same or better results. Initially, however, the 35 to 50 percent quality open space provision would help to preserve rural character and could be easily implemented, even with existing zoning.

Fiscal Management & Economic Development

- . • Consider preparing a fiscal impact model.
- . • Identify and prepare selected sites for economic development (i.e. shovel-

ready status).

- . • Reinvest in and redevelop older commercial areas to increase both their viability and value.
- . • Develop public-private partnerships to implement redevelopment and reinvestment programs/plans.

Community Development

- . • Reinvest in existing neighborhoods.
- . • Foster community pride.
- . • Identify housing needs.
- . • Protect residential neighborhoods, both old and new, from incompatible land uses.
- . • Prepare neighborhood/hamlet master plans to address the Wilton Hamlet and potential future Gurn Springs Hamlet and Maple Avenue Hamlet.

Transportation

Traffic congestion is a growing concern for residents of the Town. Development increases the number of vehicles on the roadways, as well as the number of conflicts (curb cuts, intersections) along arterial and collector roads that result in congestion. This is exacerbated by limited route choices in certain areas (e.g. Exit 15). Another important issue of concern is pedestrian and bicycle movement. The Town's focus on transportation is primarily vehicle oriented. This is a common issue in most suburban communities, resulting in increased traffic, noise, air pollution, water pollution, and health problems. The following provides some Town-wide solutions to reduce the impacts of travel.

- . • Conduct corridor studies for Routes 50, 9 and Ballard Road.
- . • Consider setback and access management requirements for the Town's collector roads.
- . • Link new neighborhoods via subdivision road systems when possible.
- . • Develop an open space or trails plan and coordinate implementation of trail projects with State, County, and local improvement projects.

Resource Conservation

The Town-wide recommendations for resource conservation seek to recognize and conserve the Town's unique natural features. Specific recommendations include the following:

- . • Require stormwater management plans to comply with the NYSDEC State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit guidelines.
- . • Require all projects proposed within the Town to be subject to the requirements of conservation overlay districts, including the WWPP Study Area.
- . • Preserve stream corridors and wetland to maintain and improve water quality and habitat and to preserve natural buffers between incompatible land uses.
- . • Recognize that wetlands, whether regulated or unregulated, are important ecological resources and shall be protected to the greatest extent practicable. All regulated wetlands shall be treated as development constraints during site plan review and shall be identified as such in the Development Guidelines proposed to be created in conjunction with the Conservation Subdivision/Development process.
- . • Increase local coordination with agencies responsible for the protection of natural resources, including the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- . • Avoid the Karner blue butterfly and frosted elfin habitats and their buffers without exception.
- . • Give strong consideration to habitat value for all new development and where opportunity exists to reclaim habitat in developed areas. Encourage the use of native species of plants for landscaping.
- . • Size culverts for road crossings of stream and wetland corridors to allow wildlife passage, as practical.
- . • The Wilton Town Historian and the Wilton Heritage Society should identify important historic resources and advise the Town Board and the Planning Board regarding proposals that may impact historic sites or resources on the state or National Historic Registers of local historical significance.
- . • Create an incentive program to encourage owners of historic structures and sites to maintain/improve their properties.
- . • Consider amending site plan review procedures in favor of a conservation review approach that would allow the Planning Board to proactively work with developers to identify constrained and buildable portions of a project site. This would essentially empower the Planning Board to determine the appropriate density of development

for each project within certain parameters established in the Town zoning. For example, the community should determine what constitutes rural character (eg, 50% open space, one unit per buildable acre, etc.) to serve as guidance for the Planning Board and to provide consistency as the members of the Planning Board change over time.

Planning Areas

For a full description of the boundaries of these Planning Areas, please refer to Chapter III. **Term Easements and Tax Abatement Program**

Planning Area 1 - Parkhurst Road

This Planning Area is located in the steep, somewhat mountainous northwest portion of Town. Due to the physical constraints that contribute to the natural beauty of Parkhurst Road, the area is and should continue to remain rural. The following recommendations are intended to achieve that goal:

- Maintain the rural character of this area by requiring a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon suitable criteria. Other recommendations to preserve the rural character and natural resources should be identified in the residential development guidelines. It may also be desirable to increase lot sizes to a 5 acre minimum as an alternative to the 35 to 50 percent quality open space provision to reduce density. This alternative should be carefully monitored. This type of zoning does not typically preserve rural character and may actually promote sprawl development if not combined with other land conservation measures, such as term easements and purchase of development rights. For example, a 100acre parcel with 5-acre lots built primarily on old farm field will result in suburban, not rural, character.
- Utilize a conservation overlay district to protect important resources.
- Review and revise, as necessary, the Timber, Soil and Stream regulation to ensure proper protection of both steep slopes and scenic views.
- Consider a CR-2 zone on Route 9 between Worth Road and Gailor Road to provide transition between land uses.
- Rezone areas from the Gailor Road/Route 9 intersection (west side only) as far north as the Wilton Hamlet to R-3.

Planning Area 2 – Jones/Northern Pines

This centrally located area is also the most intensely developed area in the Town. This area coincides with the majority of the Wilton Water & Sewer Authority's (WWSA) service area.

- . • Continue residential development at densities similar to existing subdivisions with a focus on maintaining the quality and desirability of existing neighborhoods.
- . • Encourage innovative design for new development by providing residential development guidelines and other flexible design options such as a conservation subdivision (clustering).
- . • Establish a mixed use neighborhood/hamlet. One potential location is the Northern Pines/Route 9 intersection (Maple Avenue Hamlet). This would require a significant amount of redevelopment and reinvestment and the extension of utilities into this area.
- . • Implement access management techniques including the use of shared driveways, and shared parking in commercial areas.
- . • Create performance standards for development and redevelopment
- . • Identify linkages between existing and new neighborhoods through sidewalks and pathways.
- . • Protect stream systems, wetlands and hydric soils to provide habitat, wildlife highways and open space links.
- . • Traffic congestion within the exit 15 planning area is inhibiting the build-out of desirable commercial and light industrial development. To help relieve the congestion, the Town could consider supporting the development of exit 15A.
- . • Conduct a Route 9 Corridor Study.

Planning Area 3 -Wilton-Gansevoort Road

This Planning Area is bounded to the north by the Town of Moreau, to the east by I-87 and the Snook Kill, to the south by Ballard Road, and to the west by the foot of the Palmerton Range. The area is generally rural in nature. The remnants of the historic hamlet of Wilton are located in this neighborhood.

Recommendations for the Planning Area include:

- . • Design a neighborhood redevelopment plan for the historic hamlet of Wilton located at the intersection of Ballard Road and Route 9. The purpose of this plan would be to improve the condition and viability of the hamlet to encourage redevelopment and infill.
- . • Develop a neighborhood center that would encourage/allow mixed uses (small scale retail combined with housing and neighborhood service oriented businesses).
- . • Maintain the rural character of this area by requiring a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon suitable criteria. Other recommendations to preserve the rural character and natural resources should be identified in the residential development guidelines. Consideration could be given to increasing the minimum lot size to reduce density; however, it should also be recognized that this type of zoning does not typically preserve rural character and may actually promote sprawl development if not combined with other land conservation measures, such as term easements and purchase of development rights. For example, a 100acre parcel with 5-acre lots built primarily on old farm field will result in suburban, not rural,

character.

- . • Protect residential land uses from the existing commercial use on Wilton-Gansevoort Road and the commercial/ industrial land uses identified in Area 7.
- . • Protect both the appearance and function of the roadway system.
- . • Evaluate the potential to combine the R-2 and R-3 districts to a single district.

Planning Area 4 - Dimmick Road

This Planning Area is located in the northeast corner of the Town and is dominated by rural residences, interspersed by agricultural lands. The only Agricultural District in Wilton is located in the northeast corner of this Planning Area.

The northern half of this area possesses some high-quality scenic resources, including the Snook Kill valley and the approach to Palmer Ridge. The southern end of this area is included within the WWPP Study Area.

In order to protect the rural character and important physical features of the planning area development that occurs should be implemented in concert with the goal of protecting and enhancing these resources.

- . • Maintain the rural character of this area by requiring a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon suitable criteria. Other recommendations to preserve the rural character and natural resources should be identified in the residential development guidelines. Consideration could be given to increasing

the minimum lot size to reduce density; however, it should also be recognized that this type of zoning does not typically preserve rural character and may actually promote sprawl development if not combined with other land conservation measures, such as term easements and purchase of development rights. For example, a 100acre parcel with 5-acre lots built primarily on old farm field will result in suburban, not rural, character.

- . • Identify and protect high-quality scenic resources in this Planning Area.
- . • Limit the location, spacing of access and the type and scale of development that can be seen from roadways through techniques such as increased lot frontage requirements, vegetative screening, and “nocut areas”.
- . • Identify and protect stream systems and wetland areas through a Town wide open space or trails plan
- . • Preserve and support farming operations.

Planning Area 5 – Edie Road

This Planning Area is generally east of Route I-87 in the southeast quadrant of the Town. This area is largely undeveloped, with housing generally consisting of single residential lots along existing roadways. The area includes much of the 3,800 acre Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park (WWPP) Study Area.

To protect the important resources in this Planning Area the following recommendations are made:

- . • Create a conservation overlay district which protects critical resources both in and out of the WWPP Study Area.
- . • Maintain the rural character of this area by requiring a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon suitable criteria. Other recommendations to preserve the rural character and natural resources should be identified in the residential development guidelines. It may also be desirable to increase lot sizes to a 3 acre minimum as an alternative to the 35 to 50 percent quality open space provision to reduce density. This alternative should be carefully monitored. This type of zoning does not typically preserve rural character and may actually promote sprawl development if not combined with other land conservation measures, such as term easements and purchase of development rights. For example, a 100acre parcel with 3-acre lots built primarily on old farm field will result in suburban, not rural, character.
- . • Implement incentive zoning to protect open space or critical resources.
- . • Develop performance standards for projects located within the WWPP Study Area to ensure protection of critical habitats and resources.
- . • Develop a pathways system that connects to areas within the WWPP Study Area and to other destinations in the Town.
- . • Identify and protect stream systems and wetland areas through a Town wide open space or trails plan
- . • Preserve and support farming operations.

In order to address/avoid current and future land use conflicts on Route 50, a Corridor Study should be completed extending from Exit 15 (Planning Area 6) to West Lane. At a minimum, the study should consider the following:

- . • Appropriate commercial and residential zoning.

- . • Access management techniques.
- . • Review of Jones Road, Ingersoll Road, Gick Road, and Route 50 intersection.
- . • Standards that reduce land use conflicts.
- . • Updated landscaping and site plan requirements.
- . • Potential Exit 15A at Jones Road.

Planning Area 6 – Exit 15

This Planning Area includes a vast majority of the Town’s retail development. The Exit 15 commercial area is an automobile oriented commercial area with malls, fast-food franchises, big boxes, and traffic. There are a few houses of varying age on Old Gick Road and a large mobile home park.

When considering the future of this area, a plan should be developed that addresses the complexities and challenges of this area to establish more sustainable development and a balance between the pedestrian and vehicular environments. The area is currently commercially viable with large, regional commercial facilities, including the Wilton Mall. However, history indicates that the type of development is not sustainable. Development, infill, and redevelopment may all come into play over a period of time. Planning for this area should begin now, setting the stage for future opportunities.

Recommendations for this area are as follows:

- . • Prepare a strategic master plan for future development of the Exit 15 area. This plan should include goals and objectives and recommendation or “guiding principles” for future master plans dealing with specific areas. Some important considerations raised during the preparation of this comprehensive plan include mixed development, pedestrian improvements, shared access and parking, and infill development with less or no sprawl and strip development. The plan should also establish an action plan that would include specific studies and initiatives.
- . • Treat the Route 50 corridor as a gateway to the Town, which should provide a welcoming experience that portrays the high quality of life in the community.
- . • Consider the extension of the boulevard theme in Saratoga Springs.
- . • Conduct a Corridor Study for Route 50 that addresses function, character and viability.
- . • Continue to develop at high densities to take advantage of its location and services and to protect other areas from undesirable development.
- . • Consider adopting architectural and development standards or guidelines and reconsider the types of uses for this area to eliminate the future development of undesirable uses.
- . • Stress quality as well as quantity of green space and reduce the required size of parking areas.
- . • Encourage mixed uses, particularly for infill development.
- . • Consider preparing a master plan for a mixed-use development in the area of Old Gick and Perry Roads.

Access management is critical to the success of this area. The following actions are recommended to address mobility issues:

- Complete the Route 50 Corridor Study including the boulevard and gateway themes.
- Provide shared entrances and access roads to improve access and traffic movement on Route 50.
- Continue to promote a denser grid of streets, such as the new Lowes Drive extension and the proposed “Northern Collector”. This collector would provide additional access to lands fronting Route 50, thereby reducing pressure on that roadway.

Planning Area 7 – Exit 16 – Ballard Road Corridor

This Planning Area consists generally of the parcels along Ballard Road between Northern Pines Road and the commercially zoned parcels just east of the Northway and the Exit 16 interchange. The uses in this area are predominantly commercial, along with governmental and residential uses.

It is anticipated that future land use will continue to be varied. The focus will be on mixed use development and light industrial/commercial uses while protecting the surrounding residential and rural development patterns. The following actions should be taken in regard to this neighborhood:

- Review zoning to address existing and potential land use conflicts.
- Complete a Corridor Study for Exit 16/Ballard Road to address land use, access management, buffers between land uses, and specific site plan requirements.
- Preparation of a neighborhood/hamlet master plan for the Gurn Springs Hamlet in the Travers Road/Exit 16 area. This is intended to be the municipal center of the Town, anchored by Town Hall.

Uses to the east of Exit 16 should be reviewed to protect adjacent residential uses and lands of the WWPP Study Area.

E. Summary of Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts

The Plan recommendations and specific actions outlined in the Action Plan clearly establish a new course for the management of growth in the town. The Town has generally relied on zoning and subdivision regulations as their primary means of addressing growth and protecting the health, safety and welfare of the community. In recent years the Town has made strides towards more proactive ways of managing and directing land use with such tools as the Conservation Overlay District, and the establishment of the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park. Increased development both within and adjacent to the Town of Wilton has continued to impact the community. Once rural in character, the Town is growing and changed in many ways and can no longer be defined as simply rural.

The recommendations of this Plan attempt to provide the community with additional planning tools and a different approach to growth management, which is necessary to deal with the complexities of a rapidly growing community. The Town has no intent to shut its doors to development; however, it wishes to be more proactive in controlling the location, type and style of development along with retaining open spaces to maintain and improve the quality of life in the Town. Recommendations to help the community achieve its vision have been recognized as beneficial impacts to the Town and are as follows:

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Introduction & Plan Summary

- . • Establishment of a conservation subdivision/development process to provide greater flexibility in design and conserve important community resources, particularly open space.
- . • Consider the creation of development and architectural guidelines to assist in the above process and to address community aesthetics.
- . • Stronger recognition of community resources (such as ecology, visual resources, and history) and measures to protect them.
- . • The conservation of important open space.
- . • Reduction in the allowable density of development in currently rural areas and the encouragement of land conservation design (hamlet style development). A reduction in overall density can translate into a reduction of air, water, noise and light pollution, less traffic, and a general improvement in the quality of life. It should be noted that some areas, when properly designed, can accommodate high densities and high quality of life. Concentration of development in combination with land preservation is both environmentally beneficial and energy efficient.
- . • Reinvestment and redevelopment of older commercial and residential neighborhoods to provide amenities necessary to retain residents, improve aesthetics and economic viability, and maintain if not increase property value.

- Concentration of development within certain planning areas such as Exit 15 and the Jones/Northern Pines neighborhood. In addition the development or redevelopment of “hamlets” that promotes mixed uses and a strong pedestrian component.
- Provisions for housing stock that meets the needs of all residents at various stages of life.
- Provision of adequate recreational uses.
- Improvement of the pedestrian environment and the transportation network.
- Reinforcement of the sense of community and pride.

Beneficial impacts bring about change, and along with change may come more impacts to the environment and individual landowners. Although the idea of a comprehensive plan is to achieve consensus with the majority of residents, it is important not to ignore some of the potential implications. The following potential adverse impacts are recognized:

- The potential decrease in the allowable density of development in some areas of town (Parkhurst Road, Edie Road, Wilton-Ganesvoort Road, and Dimmick Road Neighborhoods) may be perceived by some landowners as a loss of development potential and therefore a loss of property value.
- An increase in development potential within the Exit 15 area may result in a potential significant adverse impact if the issues of traffic congestion, pedestrian facilities, and incompatible uses are not addressed. The Plan provides mitigation for this impact by recommending a Corridor Study for this area to address land use, access, mobility and other related issues.
- Since the plan does not preclude future development, there will continue to be a loss of wildlife habitat, an increase in runoff and pollutants, and potential impact to important resources such as scenic views, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, historic features, aesthetics, and other community resources. To mitigate these potential impacts, the plan calls for much greater recognition and conservation of these resources during site plan review than currently practiced. This would be accomplished through the conservation subdivision/development process and the establishment of community derived development and architectural guidelines.

Some of the potential impacts previously stated will be unavoidable. This will include the following:

- Potential individual impacts as a result of density and other land use changes.
- Loss of natural and cultural resources but at a lesser extent than under current conditions and perhaps much less impact to significant resources.
- Potential for increased density and activity in Exit 15 but partially, if not

fully mitigated by the provision of adequate services, amenities, and infrastructure.

G. SEQR Compliance

In accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and Town Law (§272-a), adoption of the Town of Wilton Comprehensive Plan by the Town Board is a Type 1 action subject to review under 6 NYCRR 617. Pursuant to Town Law § 272-a.8, the Draft Plan served as a generic environmental impact statement.

The components of a generic environmental impact statement (GEIS) as outlined in 6 NYCRR 617.10 are included in this Plan as follows:

- . • Executive Summary – Chapter I, Introduction and Plan Summary
- . • Project Description – Chapter I, Introduction and Plan Summary, Chapter II Community Vision, Chapter III, Plan Recommendations, and Chapter V Action Plan
- . • Environmental Setting – Appendix A, Inventory & Analysis
- . • Environmental Impacts – Chapter III
- . • Mitigation – Chapter III
- . • Unavoidable Adverse Impacts – Chapter III
- . • Alternatives – Chapter IV Alternatives
- . • Recommendations/Thresholds – Chapter III and Chapter V
- . • Growth Inducing Aspects – Chapter III

Town of Wilton
Comprehensive Plan

Introduction & Plan Summary

Upon evaluation of the Draft GEIS contained within the Draft Plan, the Town Board, acting as SEQR Lead Agency, determined that adoption of the proposed Comprehensive Plan would have no significant adverse impact on the environment and subsequently issued a Negative Declaration on December 2, 2004 in accordance with SEQR regulations (6 NYCRR 617.7).

CHAPTER II: COMMUNITY VISION

Comprehensive Planning begins with a shared vision of a community's future. A town's comprehensive plan reveals the community's collective values and shapes how it functions as a community. The Comprehensive Plan is a roadmap by which the Town can realize its Vision.

The Town of Wilton's vision statement has evolved in accordance with the mission given to the Town's 21st Century Planning Commission, with community input through a town-wide citizen survey and public meeting participation combined with the results of the Inventory & Analysis (Appendix A).

The Town of Wilton has established a collective vision of a vibrant 21st Century community based on:

- . • a desirable mingling of suburban and rural character;
- . • a prime location along the Northway corridor between the state's capital and the Adirondack Park, and adjacent to historic Saratoga Springs;
- . • an emphasis on valuing and improving the quality of life in the Town;
- . • a shared sense of responsibility for the town's natural, agricultural, open space, and scenic resources and the value of these resources to the health, culture, and economy of the community.
- . • an effective balance of commercial and light industrial development.

The Town recognizes the impact of growth and development on the quality of life of its citizens and commits itself to planning town growth in a way which encourages preservation of the remaining rural character, protects environmental quality, and balances land use. In working toward this vision, the town is committed to providing quality services and diverse economic opportunities while exercising fiscal prudence and accountability and ensuring aesthetically pleasing commercial design. Wilton actively encourages civic involvement and open government based upon mutual respect for all stakeholders.

A. Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are essential to the comprehensive plan process. In order for a community to guide land use and development, it must have measurable goals or

milestones to implement. A goal is a desired condition or a physical state we ultimately desire to achieve. An objective is the means by which the goal is achieved. An objective is usually more specific and provides an outline for developing the plan recommendations in areas such as land use, transportation, community facilities, services, recreation and open space. These goals and objectives are translated to policies, activities, projects and programs for implementation within the context of land use regulations and policies.

Growth Management

GOAL-Create a land use management system that protects and enhances the Town's environmental quality, rural and suburban character, unique resources and features, that directs growth in ways that benefit the residents and community overall.

Objectives:

1. 1. Adopt a Comprehensive Plan that includes a future land use plan that will provide a balance between open space, conservation and development - one that promotes ongoing fiscal health without compromising the town's diverse neighborhoods or environmental quality.
2. 2. Protect existing residential areas from encroaching non-residential development (e.g. encourage distinct, development areas and discourage leapfrog development)
3. 3. Identify areas of the Town for both development and open space conservation to achieve a desired balance. Implement through the use of both regulatory and incentive-based growth management tools such as those listed in item 4 below to properly manage both the pace and impacts of desirable growth.
4. 4. Develop regulations and incentives to guide future land use in conformance with the future land use plan. Revise zoning, site plan, and subdivision provisions to address innovative clustering, average density zoning conservation easements, and other open space protection provisions. Identify the tools, financing and administrative structure to implement an ongoing growth management program.
5. 5. Review the policies of the Wilton Water & Sewer Authority (WWSA), in light of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency between the two documents. Inconsistencies must be addressed in light of overall land use policies and utilities policies to ensure that they are in conformance with land use policies and zoning. Although the WWSA operates independently of Town government the goal of both entities is to serve the residents of Wilton through cooperation and good planning.
6. 6. Recognize the link between transportation and land use and utilize both local and regional planning to address current and future land use and quality of life impacts.

7. 7. Recognize the investment and stewardship of land by landowners, respect property rights, and provide support for the responsible use of land by private landowners.

Natural Resources & Open Space

GOAL- To conserve, improve, and protect our Town's natural resources and open space including wildlife habitat, that contribute to the diversity, character, aesthetics, environmental quality, economy, and general health, safety and welfare of the community. Resources such as the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park (WWPP) Study Area, Pine Barrens, the Snook Kill and other stream systems and wetlands, viable farmland, mineral resources, aquifers, McGregor Fault, Palmerton Range, and viewsheds are all recognized for their role in drainage, water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, recreation and aesthetics.

Objectives:

1. 1. Identify and map important resources such as steep slopes, surface and groundwater resources, wetlands, soils, important habitats, scenic vistas, in order to identify resources to be protected as well as those areas that pose severe constraints to development. Create an overlay map to aid in the identification of areas with multiple constraints or opportunities. This map will be an important tool in the identification of both wildlife and other natural areas that should be linked and be incorporated as part of an open space plan.
 - ☐.2. Thoroughly review and update as necessary existing Town regulations
 - ☐.(i.e. zoning, site plan, subdivision) to achieve a balance between adequate protection of resources balanced by the fiscal and social needs of the Town and its residents.
2. 3. Protect open spaces/environmental quality via the preparation and formal adoption of an open space plan. This plan should identify lands to be protected and explore such protection options as easements, tax abatements, transfer of development rights and purchase of development right programs, incentive programs, outright purchase and other funding mechanisms to implement these. The WWPP Study Area will be an important component of any open space plan.
3. 4. Limit impacts to these sensitive resources through site plan, subdivision, zoning, and other applicable regulations such as the conservation subdivision process.
 - ☐.5. Comply with the most recent State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Construction Permit requirements for stormwater management and

pollution prevention. As of the date of adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the current SPDES General

□.Construction Permit (GP-02-01) implements the Federal Phase II regulations of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Compliance with this program and the continued use of Best Management Practices, improving standards, and their application as necessary including on-site inspections will help to minimize the potential impacts of erosion and sedimentation.

4. 6. Review the Stream Corridor Overlay District requirements and update as necessary to work toward protecting the integrity of natural stream systems to the maximum extent possible. Incorporate these protections as necessary into site plan and subdivision regulations.

5. 7. Explore the feasibility of an improved application protocol for road salt and sand as well as alternatives.

6. 8. Encourage Best Management Practices for fertilizers and pesticides and waste removal associated with all types of property maintenance.

7. 9. Protect scenic vistas identified and mapped on the Town's resources map through zoning and site plan, and design provisions. The use of a visual overlay districts for highly sensitive areas, e.g., the Palmerton Range should be considered to address to road setbacks, cut and fill, lighting, reflective glass, height, structures that could be considered intrusive such as billboards or cellular towers, and site layout/design.

8. 10. Recognize and support the WWPP and its mission and ensure that actions relating to land use at the local and regional levels are consistent with the program's identified goals. We will outline protections in a later section of the plan.

9. 11. Protect the integrity of the WWPP Study Area through the establishment of an Overlay District or other methods of protection.

10. 12. As a courtesy, refer projects proposed within the WWPP Study Area to the WWPP Board of Directors for review and comment to minimize potential conflicts with the intended goals of the WWPP.

11. 13. Evaluate and identify methods of protecting the Town's watersheds and well fields through an overlay district or performance standards.

12. 14. Evaluate potential methods to identify and protect unregulated wetlands (including vernal pools).

13. 15. Review and adopt standards in the site plan review process to reduce light pollution, especially in areas in or adjacent to residential development. Excessive or poorly designed lighting can detract from the rural character and quality of life in areas outside the commercial areas.

14. 16. Cultivate public awareness and appreciation of the town's natural resources and open spaces; specifically, their value and importance to the community's quality of life.

Transportation & Mobility

GOAL- To provide safe and efficient transportation options that minimizes the impacts of traffic on the town's character and quality of life.

Objectives:

1. 1. Maintain the integrity and capacity of state, county, and local roads through coordination with the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), Saratoga County Department of Public Works, and the Saratoga County Planning Board through growth management and land use controls, and through access and corridor management.
2. 2. Support planning efforts with adjoining municipalities and regional entities such as: Saratoga County, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC), the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC), and NYSDOT.
3. 3. Work with NYSDOT and the City of Saratoga Springs to achieve coordinated signalization along Route 50.
4. 4. Consider extending the Route 50 "Boulevard" design across Exit 15 (planned for 2005).
5. 5. Identify and initiate engineering studies to aid in the safe and efficient operation of high-use intersections and streets.
6. 6. Conduct a traffic impact analysis of various future land use scenarios to make informed planning decisions
7. 7. Develop an "Official Map" to enable the Town to acquire critical rights-of-way as opportunities arise.
8. 8. Consider working with the State in studying the feasibility of constructing an "Exit 15A" on Jones Rd.
9. 9. Review effectiveness of the enforcement of traffic laws in town (e.g., speed limits, traffic control devices).
10. 10. Consider the adoption of design standards for certain thematic roadway types. (e.g., "Rural road standard"; "Neighborhood Center standard"; etc). Maintain the character of rural roadways by evaluating maintenance and improvement programs as they relate to the goal of maintaining the rural character of the roadway.
11. 11. Limit land uses, which rely on intensive truck traffic to the immediate vicinities of the Interstate interchanges to minimize wear and tear on Town owned roadways. Development should not exceed the capacity of existing services (roads, utilities) and in such cases should be limited until such time as these services "catch up".
12. 12. Conduct Transportation Corridor studies for Routes 9 and 50. Corridor studies should address such issues as access management, shared parking and driveways, road setbacks, land uses and landscaping and the visual

appearance of development along these roadways. Explore funding options through CDTC's Transportation Linkage Program.

12. 13. Create a multi-use trail system linking community centers, shopping and employment areas, recreation areas, and neighborhoods. Where practical, encourage new development to incorporate non-motorized multi-use trails into their development plans.

13. 14. Develop pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly standards for residential streets and commercial areas and incorporate these into site plan requirements and subdivision standards.

14. 15. Identify and require methods for pedestrian safety such as crosswalks, widening or adding shoulders, sidewalks, landscaped medians and shared driveways, particularly along developed portions of busy roads.

15. 16. Identify and require appropriate traffic calming and safety measures (crosswalks, sidewalks, landscaped medians, trees, and shared driveways) and implement them on a systematic basis.

16. 17. Include a link to CDTC's ridesharing program on the Town website

17. 18. Protect the appearance and function of rural roadways through the use of a rural road standard or rural road overlay to address such items as setbacks, driveways, lot frontage, vegetative screening and "no clearing" areas.

Housing

GOAL- Provide a balanced blend of quality housing opportunities, including price ranges that are affordable for all income levels and housing types that consider the needs of a diverse population including older residents, young families, first time homeowners. Properly plan for and locate housing based on density and purpose to take full advantage of existing and future community services, alternative transportation opportunities, and recreational facilities.

Objectives:

1. 1. Develop policies and programs that help maintain and strengthen the character, value and enjoyment of existing housing in the established neighborhoods of Wilton.

2. 2. Create incentives and appropriate regulations that guide the location, pattern and design of new housing in a manner that protects the character and resources of the community.

3. 3. Ensure that the town's zoning accommodates the need for housing diversity.

4. 4. Encourage housing opportunities for the elderly, those on limited incomes and those with disabilities that may allow residents to remain in the Town as their housing needs change.

5. Identify appropriate sites and incentives for the creation of housing options that are needed but not adequately provided by the marketplace.
6. Protect existing and future residential developments from the impacts of incompatible uses.

Recreation

GOAL- To provide sufficient opportunities and facilities for both active and passive recreation activities.

Objectives:

1. Continually evaluate the town's recreational facilities and programs to ensure responsiveness to the town's changing recreational needs.
2. Provide for different types and different locations of recreational resources such as the addition of parks throughout the Town. These may take the form of neighborhood parks, pocket parks or town wide parks both passive and active depending on need and location and would be developed based on specific data collected in a recreational needs survey.
3. In conjunction with the Town Comptroller, provide a structure to evaluate and identify revenue streams for the continued expansion and maintenance of both active and passive recreational resources to meet current and future demands.
4. Prepare an open space, recreation, and pathways master plan to identify an overall plan of trail locations throughout the Town. Use this plan to establish a useful network of multi-purpose trails connecting different areas of the town and surrounding towns, to be used for both recreation and for those who prefer to be less dependent on their vehicles.

Historical & Cultural Resources

GOAL- Recognize and protect historical and other cultural resources as a priority in the Town of Wilton.

Objectives:

1. Request the Heritage Society and the Town Historian to update and prioritize the list and map of historical sites that should be protected and preserved on a regular basis.
2. Request the Heritage Society and the Town Historian to create a historical resource evaluation checklist or other criteria to be used by the Planning Board and potential developers to identify potential impacts to historic or cultural resources during

project review. The Heritage Society and Planning Board should work together to identify mitigation measures as necessary (i.e. buffers, historic markers, modifications to site plans).

3. 3. Develop land use regulations and incentives to protect historic and archaeologically sensitive areas and/or resources through techniques such as overlay districts or incentive zoning.
4. 4. Enhance the opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the town's historic and cultural sites.
5. 5. Encourage the rehabilitation of historically significant privately owned structures through community recognition, historic walks or tours featuring restored structures, and assistance with the identification of potential funding sources.
6. 6. Protect and maintain all cemeteries, large and small, in the Town of Wilton, which are not under the direct supervision of a particular church or other organization.
7. 7. Cultivate public awareness of the town's historical and cultural resources through the schools and local youth programs.
8. 8. Evaluate the adequacy of existing facilities to support programs for youth, adult and senior populations, small-scale performances, recitals, concerts and other public events.
9. 9. Create strategies for the sustained financial support of the town's historical and cultural sites and programs.

Utilities

GOAL- Evaluate the utility infrastructure system to ensure that it meets the needs of the Town while protecting both surface and groundwater.

Objectives:

Water

1. 1. Seek an adequate supply, treatment, distribution, and fire-fighting capacity of potable water to meet current and planned future needs.
2. 2. Continue to review land use and proposed development in accordance with established Town policies for water service as outlined in the Wilton Water and Sewer Authority (WWSA) Comprehensive Plan for Water & Wastewater Management and this Comprehensive Plan to ensure the continued protection of surface and groundwater resources, including wellhead protection.
3. 3. Continue to require developers to identify water needs of proposed projects that are located outside the Municipal Water Benefit Area and provide the hydrologic data required by the Town or other reviewing agency to clearly identify if adequate water capacity exists to serve the proposed project.

Storm Water Management

1. 1. Develop storm water management requirements that protect upstream and downstream areas both within and outside the community.
2. 2. Seek to protect all streams and their drainage basins throughout the Town by limiting the effects of sedimentation and erosion through site plan and subdivision regulations.
3. 3. Comply, at a minimum, with current State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Construction Permit requirements for stormwater management and pollution prevention. As of the date of Plan adoption, the current regulation is GP-02-01.

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Goals and Objectives

Sewer

1. 1. Work with the WWSA and the Saratoga County Sewer District, to strive to provide adequate collection and treatment capacity of wastewater to meet current and planned future needs and to accommodate future growth to ensure that development and capacity, conveyance, and treatment keep pace.
2. 2. Continue to review land use and proposed development in accordance with established Town policies for sewer service as outlined in the Town of Wilton WWSA Comprehensive Plan for Water & Wastewater Management and this Comprehensive Plan to ensure the protection of surface and groundwater resources.
3. 3. Meet the requirements of Saratoga County Sewer District #1 proposed Rules and Regulations governing the construction and connection of new sewer facilities discharging into the District's sewer system and dedication of sewer systems to the district.

Communications, Electricity, and Natural Gas

1. 1. Support coordinated infrastructure development with public and private utility providers to serve existing developed areas and adjacent areas as practical as well as expand service to areas identified for future development.
2. 2. Identify appropriate circumstances and criteria for the locations of communication towers within the town in accordance with federal requirements. The criteria should be incorporated as part of the zoning or other Town regulations and address such issues as scenic vistas, historical and cultural resources.
3. 3. Work with public and private utility providers to identify the location and timing of various power supplies.

Community Facilities & Services

GOAL-Continue to support adequate community facilities and services including fire protection, police protection, emergency services, solid waste collection, education facilities, healthcare services, libraries, services for youths though seniors and social services. Continually improve and expand community services as needed.

Objectives:

1. 1. Determine a preferred level of service for existing and future community facilities and services.
2. 2. Formalize a dialogue and process with service providers to ensure preferred levels of service.
3. 3. Support, encourage, and provide incentives to continue and enhance volunteer services.
4. 4. Continue to support adequate fire and emergency services to meet the needs of the current and future town population and monitor these services to prepare for the potential need for paid professionals to supplement volunteers.
5. 5. Work with community leaders and service providers to ensure that community services keep pace with planned levels of development.
6. 6. Create a process by which the town and the schools share information and coordinate planning efforts to ensure that schools can adequately serve the needs of existing and potential new students.
7. 7. Work with the school districts to support continuing educational opportunities for all town residents.
8. 8. Provide residents the opportunity to participate in hazardous waste collection days, spring and fall clean up days, and recycling programs perhaps in cooperation with nearby municipalities or the County.
9. 9. Continue to work to establish a post office and separate zip code for the Town.
10. 10. Support the existing Health Advisory System operated by the County and State.
11. 11. Establish a means by which the town government can communicate regularly with its citizens through the use of the Town website and/or town newsletter as well as local publications such as the Wilton Reporter.

Fiscal Concerns & Economic Development

GOAL- Promote diverse economic development that provides goods and services, quality employment opportunities and tax revenues in properly located commercial, office and industrial districts that support the Town's goals of balancing economic development with the preservation of open space and community character.

Objectives:

1. 1. Actively manage the pace of growth as fiscal policy, particularly as it relates to the protection of open space and resources and the integrity of Town services. Utilize various land use regulatory techniques to minimize the fiscal and quality of life impacts of future development.
2. 2. Consider conducting a fiscal impact analysis of various future land use scenarios as part of the Town's ongoing planning process.
3. 3. Identify the desired mix and scale of businesses in the commercial districts in a manner that recognizes, and is sensitive to the neighborhood setting, historic significance and desired character of the town.
4. 4. Identify existing and potential centers for economic and community development, and establish mechanisms and partnerships to encourage appropriate development in these locations.
5. 5. Consider conducting a study of Exits 15 and 16 that identifies development and redevelopment opportunities in this area to determine the appropriate levels/types of land uses for these areas and to ensure that these areas have the required utilities to accommodate anticipated levels of development.
6. 6. Seek to diversify the tax base to reduce dependence on increasing sales tax revenue by encouraging light industry, professional office, and other non-retail commercial uses in planned centers for economic and community development.
7. 7. Focus marketing efforts, investments in infrastructure and transportation systems, and economic development incentives, on the areas identified as centers for economic and community development.
8. 8. Encourage a low-impact, high-quality use for the redevelopment of the Wilton Developmental Center site.
9. 9. Encourage locally and regionally owned businesses. Promote infill in existing developed areas and parcels.
10. 10. Work with SEDC and the Chamber of Commerce to develop a local business incubator.
11. 11. Work with entities such as SEDC, Empire State Development Corporation, and Adirondack Community College to develop training and educational opportunities based on local labor force needs.
12. 12. Establish a dialog with existing businesses and the SEDC to identify the potential for both expansion and creation of professional, technical, skilled and management positions as well as facility needs.
13. 13. Support the continuation and profitability of agriculture in the town. Work with the State, SEDC, Saratoga County, and farmers to identify and implement strategies.
14. 14. Support home based businesses and "neighborhood" scale businesses through zoning, incentives and other methods without compromising the character of existing neighborhoods.
15. 15. Consider the preservation of undeveloped land in residentially zoned areas as a long-term cost avoidance strategy (municipal/school costs of servicing vacant land versus residentially developed land).
16. 16. As part of an Open Space Plan or other vehicle designed to protect open space, evaluate and prioritize potential open space and include parcel-specific cost-benefit analyses of fiscal impacts related to preservation compared to development.

Town Character

GOAL- Preserve and enhance Wilton's identity, image, quality of life and remaining rural character in accordance with the vision for the future.

Objectives:

1. 1. Promote community identity through the placement of appropriate signs and landscaping at key entry points to the Town.
2. 2. Establish guidelines to ensure that future residential and commercial development is of a scale and design that is appropriate from both a neighborhood and town wide perspective.
3. 3. Provide incentives for infill development first and discourage “leapfrog” development into previously undeveloped areas or areas identified for less intensive uses.
4. 4. Encourage the creation of development centers or hamlets for both residential and commercial/office/industrial development to avoid impacts to community character and to provide more efficient use of infrastructure and energy.
5. 5. Support continued use of viable farm land and incorporate more natural open space in project design.
6. 6. Improve the quality of site design, including harmonious signage, lighting, planting, and architectural guidelines in commercial and industrial districts.
7. 7. Ensure that new development does not result in adverse impacts such as excessive noise, odor, vibration, and pollutants.
8. 8. Encourage street tree planting and other aesthetic improvements in all developed areas of the Town (residential, commercial, and industrial). Native species should be used wherever possible.
9. 9. Protect and enhance natural buffers with native species wherever possible throughout the Town in order help maintain the Town’s aesthetic character and minimize land use conflicts.
10. 10. Identify potential public and private partnerships to implement needed improvements.
11. 11. Encourage the preservation of scenic vistas within the Town.
12. 12. Preserve the topography of the Town in recognition of its important role in the Town’s aesthetic character by requiring design with nature.

Open Government

GOAL- Encourage and promote citizen awareness and involvement in town affairs.

Objectives:

1. 1. Continue to communicate regularly with Town citizens through the use of a Town website and/or Town newsletter as well as local publications such as the Wilton Report.
2. 2. Establish an application process for consideration of appointees to the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and WWSA.
3. 3. Ensure that material available to board members is also available in adequate supply and format to the public to foster informed meaningful public participation (e.g. agendas, budget information, site plans, etc.)
4. 4. Promote an atmosphere of open government by exceeding the minimum requirements of the NYS Open Meetings Law in terms of notice of agenda items, as well as full and open discussion of issues by board members during public meetings.

Implementation

GOAL- Develop a viable action plan to implement the efforts of the community, which have culminated in a vision and plan for the future of the Town of Wilton.

Objectives:

1. 1. Identify and support specific actions, financial and administrative requirements, and follow-up planning work that will be necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of this plan.
2. 2. Prioritize proposed actions, set general time frames and assign responsibility to appropriate entities so that the community can focus attention and energy toward completing a manageable number of tasks at one time. Qualified volunteers should be encouraged to participate in this task.
3. 3. Review and update the adopted comprehensive plan on a regular basis.
4. 4. Encourage the pursuit of various grants and/or funding offered by public and private sectors.
5. 5. Consider hiring an experienced, professional planner to provide the required expertise to assist in the implementation of this plan.

CHAPTER III: Plan Recommendations

In order to develop Plan Recommendations that reflect the Town's vision for the future, the Town of Wilton's 21st Century Commission evaluated and studied numerous planning tools and concepts in the area of Growth Management, Economic Development and Community Development. Many of the draft recommendations have broad, Town-wide applications. These are discussed below under **Town Wide Recommendations**.

In order to address issues that are specific to geographic areas, the Town has been divided into seven planning areas based on common land uses and/or physical features. With the Town's vision and goals & objectives in mind, each neighborhood was evaluated and specific recommendations for each were developed. These recommendations consider existing development patterns, physical features, and potential land use in each area. This discussion follows the **Town Wide Recommendations** and is titled **Planning Areas**. Future land use is illustrated on Figure III-1.

It is important to note a number of actions listed below are already in place. The Commission felt that it was important to identify these actions as they are necessary components of the overall recommendations and success of this plan.

A. Town Wide Recommendations

Growth Management

Land Management

There are a great many land management tools that may be employed to control and direct growth in an area. A description of land management techniques is included in appendix B of this document. Although any of the tools described in Appendix B can be utilized as part of a growth management program, it is recommended that the Town focus on continuing or addressing the following:

- Revise the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to address changes in land use and density. Code revisions may be the appropriate starting point for the Town. As noted in each of the Planning Areas, recommendations have been made for changes in land use and density. Rezoning will be necessary to implement these changes. Also, there are a number of other revisions that have town-wide implications. These include residential and commercial development standards and guidelines,

incentive zoning (including site plan review), and conservation subdivision procedures. The Town's zoning code and subdivision regulations should be evaluated to properly incorporate the changes. Other sections of these documents may require amendments to be consistent with the changes.

- Consider creating incentive zoning as a means of preserving open space and providing other community amenities such as a community center or a trail connection. Incentive zoning is defined in the Growth Management Tools (Appendix C).

- Prepare an open space plan as a component of an open space, recreation and pathways plan. The purpose of the open space component of the plan is to protect farmlands, important physical features, significant natural resources, and scenic areas as part of a larger effort to preserve rural character in portions of the Town. The open space component would identify appropriate, long-term land protection strategies that manage future growth in rural areas of the Town. The plan should establish a goal for open space protection in terms of both acres of protected land and the types of open space resources that the Town seeks to protect. The plan should also establish the principles and techniques for how these lands should be protected (for example: incentive based techniques such as tax incentives, acquisition or conservation easements). A fiscal model could be developed to determine the potential fiscal implications (i.e. impact on taxes) of this program once the Town's protection goals and techniques are refined.

- Consider the use of term easements as an initial means for voluntary land preservation. Term easements involve tax incentives for the protection of open space. The incentives increase as the term of the easement increases. The term easement can be general, covering all undeveloped parcels of a specified acreage or more specific, such as farmland only. Once the term is up, the easement is lifted and the tax incentive ceases. The landowner could then seek to enter a new agreement, if desired.

- Take advantage of the resources/knowledge of the Wilton Heritage Society to protect historic/cultural resources. Once important resources are identified, programs such as recognitions and tax incentives can be established to protect these sites. Preservation easement programs which provide significant tax incentives (up to 50%) if individuals agree to preserve a designated property, have been established in other communities within the Capital District.

- Continue to ensure that land use policies outlined in the WWSA Comprehensive Plan for Water and Wastewater Management, the Town's Comprehensive Plan and the Town code are in conformance with one another. The clear policy outlined in the Comprehensive Plan for Water and Wastewater Management and supported by this comprehensive plan are important components to ensure that development occurs in desirable locations.

- Consider creating development and architectural standards or guidelines for all commercial zones. These design standards/guidelines will enhance the quality of proposed projects as well as help protect the existing commercial development. Design

standards/guidelines will serve to protect adjacent structures and land uses particularly in transition areas where land use conflicts are more likely to occur.

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Several areas of the Town have been identified for rural residential uses, reflective of environmental resources and a need for control on growth. There are many growth management tools that can be used to maintain rural character, such as the use of the purchase of development rights, and fee acquisition. The recommended growth management program for Wilton includes incentive-based tools coupled with regulatory measures implemented through zoning, development guidelines, and a conservation development site plan review process.

The regulatory approach includes the establishment of a required minimum amount of land to be dedicated as open space for each project as well as setting maximum densities of development. The flexibility to allow variable lot sizes, through incentive zoning or subdivision regulations, will facilitate clustering and maximize open space. Maximum density can be established by setting minimum lot sizes or alternatively established as part of a flexible site plan review procedure whereby lot sizes vary based on site conditions and opportunities to protect resources. Incentive zoning has also been identified as an important component to encourage clustering by relaxing minimum lot size requirements in exchange for more open space.

It is anticipated that maximum density will be determined during the plan implementation process, potentially addressed during preparation of an open space and pathways plan and potentially supported by a fiscal model. As an interim measure, it is recommended that each major subdivision (5 or more lots) in a rural area be required to provide a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon suitable criteria.

Quality open space is defined as natural areas or agricultural lands that are interconnected, not fragmented; accessible, not tied up in back lots; and that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the area. Accessibility means that the open space must be adjacent to the main road (not the internal subdivision road) and/or adjacent to trail corridors. Steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands, floodplains, forested land, and open

fields (either natural or in agricultural use) are all quality open space providing they meet the criteria above.

Quality open space would be identified through the conservation subdivision/development process (a modification of the current site plan review process) that begins with collaboration between the applicant and the planning board to identify important natural, cultural and aesthetic resources, as well as the most appropriate area(s) for development. The planning board would receive guidance in the process from development guidelines incorporated into zoning. Final decisions on the density and design of a project would be based on the carrying capacity of the land, the protection of important resources, and the goal of maintaining rural character, among other factors.

This interim measure would be evaluated during the comprehensive plan implementation process and perhaps modified or eliminated in favor of a different approach to achieve the same or better results. Initially, however, the 35 to 50 percent quality open space provision would help to preserve rural character and could be easily implemented, even with existing zoning.

Fiscal Management & Economic Development

- Consider developing a fiscal impact model to address the impact of land use decisions on the tax base. The model can be used to assist the Town in the identification of the costs and benefits of various types of development versus maintaining certain lands as open space. Once town officials and residents understand the costs associated with both scenarios (open space preservation, versus development of an area), they can balance open space preservation and fiscal responsibility. The model is also useful in comparing the impact of a variety of land use scenarios and programs. For instance, it would be valuable to know how much residential development the Town can support in light of the current amount of land designated for commercial and industrial uses, or what types of additional/extended amenities the community could support. Fiscal impact is not the sole factor in decision-making. Suburban life is changing and in order to maintain or improve the quality of residential and commercial areas, communities must invest in them. As previously noted, the long-term effects on the tax base from reinvestment and enhancement of developed areas are likely to be beneficial.
- Identify and prepare selected sites for economic development (i.e. shovel-ready status). The Town has a large area of well-located industrially zoned land such as

the Developmental Center. Having sites identified as shovel-ready will allow the Town to proactively direct the location and type of development. Development guidelines are critical to ensure high quality development on these sites. Contact should be made with the SEDC and the Wilton Global Job Development Corporation to begin to develop such a program.

- Reinvest in and redevelop older commercial areas. In order to strengthen established commercial areas, the Town should conduct an inventory of conditions in these areas. Based on this information, a plan should be created for each area to improve deteriorated conditions and apply new principles to promote economic development. Areas of improvement might include aesthetics (structures, layout, landscaping), access (vehicular and pedestrian), infrastructure and parking.

- Develop public-private partnerships where possible to implement redevelopment and reinvestment programs/plans. This type of relationship can be quite successful as both groups have a stake in the outcome of a particular project. This "ownership" usually results in high quality projects that will benefit a broad cross section of the community.

- Provide support and incentives to locally owned businesses and businesses with a track record of being strong community partners to strengthen the business community and attract additional like-minded businesses.

Community Development

- Reinvest in existing neighborhoods to provide the amenities and maintenance necessary to strengthen and rejuvenate these areas. The primary goal should be to retain residents and maintain or increase property values. The Town should identify these older neighborhoods, survey existing conditions and use this information to create an action plan.

- Foster community pride through the active engagement of business and professional associations, neighborhood and service associations. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Garden Clubs, the Elks, Lions, Rotary, etc, are all excellent sources of volunteers and community pride.

- Identify housing needs in the community. The Town should undertake a review of existing housing stock to identify price ranges and housing types. This will assist the Town in determining if it has a strong mix of housing types that meet the needs of residents.

- Residential neighborhoods, both old and new, should be protected from incompatible land uses particularly those that rely heavily on vehicular transportation. Existing land use conflicts should be addressed to the maximum extent possible through the use of buffers and other safeguards. Potential future land use conflicts should be addressed by updating the Town's zoning, subdivision regulations and the site plan

regulations.

- Prepare neighborhood/hamlet master plan to address the Wilton Hamlet and potential future Gurn Springs Hamlet and Maple Avenue Hamlet.

Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

The recommendations outlined above and the corresponding action plan tasks would generally result in beneficial impacts to the community and environment. The Town currently has a very effective growth management tool in the water and sewer boundary established by the Wilton Water and Sewer Authority (WWSA). Outside this boundary (Benefit Area), the density of development is significantly controlled by the lack of utilities as well as other policies that preclude package treatment plants and similar facilities.

Still, growth remains an important issue both within and outside of the WWSA boundary. Within the boundary, the concerns include the pace and quality of development and the preservation of a high quality of life within existing subdivisions. Recommendations for reinvestment, provision of amenities, open space conservation, development guidelines, and architectural standards for commercial areas will provide further controls on growth, yet support those projects that add value to the community.

Outside the boundary, the pattern of development that is and will continue to occur under current zoning will not preserve the rural character of the area and will contribute to environmental impacts such as increased runoff, degraded water quality, erosion and sedimentation, and air and noise pollution. To address these impacts, the Plan calls for development of an Open Space, Recreation, and Pathways Plan and tools to implement the plan, such as incentive zoning. Other measures such as a conservation subdivision review procedure and minimum open space requirements would help to highlight the important environmental and cultural features of a parcel and promote their conservation.

Regulatory growth management tools, such as zoning, may have economic implications (adverse and beneficial) on existing landowners. Potential decreases in allowable density for residential development are proposed for some planning areas where it is desirable to preserve rural character and where environmental issues are more significant. Should these recommendations be carried forward through zoning, the maximum number of units in some potential subdivisions could decrease. However, the value of the development is

dependent upon many other factors. The provision of open space within a development along with other amenities can add significant value to a development and may far outweigh the loss of developable area. Additionally, the location of a given parcel and ease of access are also critical to determining its value.

Some growth management programs, such as the purchase of development rights (PDR) and community reinvestment including the provision of amenities such as sidewalks, trails, and recreational facilities, will require Town-wide investment. At least initially, taxpayers will spend more to have these programs in place. The use of a fiscal model is an important tool to predict what the impact might be over a period of time. In some communities, the model has shown that over time, the cost savings on school taxes as a result of preserving land rather than developing it with residences are greater than the costs of purchasing the land; a beneficial fiscal impact. In general, residential uses place a greater burden on community services which is typically not offset by the tax revenue these uses generate.

Transportation

Traffic congestion is a growing concern for residents of the Town. Although pass-thru traffic constitutes some of the concern, the overriding problem is development in the Town itself. Development increases the number of conflicts (curb cuts, intersections) along arterial and collector roads that result in congestion. Another important issue of concern is pedestrian movement. The Town's focus on transportation is primarily vehicle oriented. This is a common issue in most suburban communities, resulting in increased traffic, noise, air pollution, and water pollution. The following provides some Town-wide solutions to reduce the impacts of travel.

- Conduct corridor studies for Route 50, Route 9, and Ballard Road. A corridor study addresses the road and adjacent land uses along a given corridor to provide solutions for traffic congestion, pedestrian access, aesthetics (streetscape), public transportation, economic development and related land use issues. Details of this recommendation include the following:

☞

☞ The Town of Wilton will be required to consider shared parking, new access roads, and possibly parallel service roads. This analysis will require parcel level planning.

- ☞ Prepare a streetscape beautification plan for each corridor. The plan will identify the character of the area through discussions with residents and businesses and will provide design guidelines for facade treatments, lighting, signage, landscaping, street furniture, and other amenities that will make the corridor a desirable place to visit and patronize.
 - ☞ Provide a continuous sidewalk system, where practical and needed, in the developed portions of the Town.
 - ☞ Ensure a natural progression from intensively developed commercial areas to medium density mixed-use areas to low density residential areas. These areas should be buffered from incompatible land uses such as light industry.
 - ☞ Provide pedestrian linkages to integrate the corridor with adjoining neighborhoods. These linkages will complement the streetscape beautification plan and provision of sidewalks. Begin discussions with the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) and NYSDOT on the potential for extended bus service and, if applicable, to determine the appropriate locations for bus stops, shelters and other amenities that will promote ridership.
- Consider setback and access management requirements for the Town's collector roads. The purpose of these requirements will be to preserve the integrity of the collector and its primary function of safely and efficiently accommodating traffic. The following actions should be considered:
 - ☞ Require common access drives for minor residential subdivisions. Subdivision regulations should be amended to require a flag lot subdivision for up to four lots (minor subdivision). A single access drive would serve all four lots. Sufficient right-of-way (ROW) should also be required along the access road corridor so as to allow the drive to be widened to serve as a Town road, should the interior of the subject parcel be developed.
 - ☞ Consider denying lots that front on existing collector roads within future major subdivisions. All lots in the subdivision should front on the internal subdivision

road system. If, as a result of the layout, side or back yards are adjacent to existing roads the home should be set back a minimum of 100 feet from the existing road ROW. This will provide ample land area to account for potential future road improvements (e.g., upgrade from a rural road to a collector) and future trail development. Depending on the size of the development, a new internal collector road should be considered and the same standards applied to it as for existing collector roads.

- ☞ Require the dedication of lands for ROW where future road widening is anticipated.
- ☞ Develop trails and sidewalks in accordance with a pathways plan or the provision of sufficient ROW for trails and sidewalks if no plan has been established.

- Review existing zoning and subdivision regulations pertaining to roadway access and amend to reflect access management concepts.

- Link neighborhoods via subdivision road systems when possible. This will relieve some of the traffic volume on the collector roads. Many subdivisions have stub roads that are intended to link with future development off site. These stubs should be incorporated into project plans for future development and should be clearly disclosed to buyers. Such linkages may serve as collector roads. If so, development of frontage along these roads should be limited.

- Develop a pathways plan that includes primary and secondary corridors, design standards, and a financing program. Coordinate implementation of trail projects with State, County, and local improvement projects.

- .• Protect both the appearance and function of the roadway system:

- .▶ Limit both the number and location of driveways and other access.

- .▶ Review frontage requirements.

- .▶ Address the aesthetics of road frontage (Is clearing necessary? Should plantings be considered?).

- .▶ Review safety, capacity, repair, and geometry issues on rural roadways before taking action.

- .▶ Wildlife concerns should be incorporated into planning and design of new roads.

- Include traffic calming techniques, where appropriate, as part of proposed projects. Techniques to be used could include but not be limited to sidewalks, landscaped medians, trees, and lower speed limits.

- Size culverts for new road crossings of stream and wetland corridors to allow wildlife passage, as practical. The same consideration should be given whenever existing culverts require replacement. In general, the culvert should support natural streambed and banks. If the existing streambed is gravel, then the gravel bottom should be carried through the culvert. If the stream is silt and it is necessary to protect the culvert from erosion, then washed stone/gravel should be used for the bed and banks. Riprap should not be used since it is unnatural and tends to create barriers to some species.

- Development of the medium density mixed-use hamlets on a pedestrian scale will allow residents to make some of their trips on foot instead of by car, thereby reducing traffic volume.

Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

The measures identified to address traffic in the Town can be considered beneficial impacts or mitigation for the current traffic impact. In most cases, the implications of the recommendations are beneficial to businesses, residents, and the general health, safety and welfare of the community. Opportunities to improve traffic flow along major corridors and increase pedestrian movement and safety should have a beneficial impact on businesses and provide additional opportunity for increased economic development that may not be achievable under current development patterns.

Similar to the impacts identified for the growth management tools, the corridor studies and other roadway improvements will cost the community money to both study and implement, which may have a short term fiscal impact. There is funding available from the State for corridor studies and improvements, but they are often matching funds. In the long run, the economic benefits of improving the streetscape and addressing pedestrian and vehicular movement may benefit the Town through increased property value and sales tax.

Resource Conservation

As noted in the Inventory and Analysis (Appendix A), the Town contains important environmental resources including the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park Study Area (WWPP), numerous stream corridors, some with steep ravines; wetlands; threatened and endangered species; and significant views. Additionally, some agricultural resources remain.

The following recommendations address several of the available methods of conserving the community's natural resources and limiting environmental impacts.

- Require all projects to comply with the NYSDEC State Pollutant

Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit requirements. This should include the provision of a stormwater management plan and pollution prevention plan.

- Require all projects proposed within the WWPP Study Area to be subject to the requirements of a conservation overlay district and expand the use of overlay districts to other areas of Town that warrant specific protection.

- Preserve stream corridors and associated wetlands to maintain and improve water quality and habitat and to preserve natural buffers between incompatible land uses through the continued implementation and update as necessary of the Timber, Soil and Stream Regulations. Consideration should be given to the quality of the stream corridor, steepness of slopes, erodibility, habitat, and other factors to determine appropriate setbacks. Other streams may warrant such protection to preserve existing quality or to re-establish lost functions and values.

- Recognize that wetlands, whether regulated or unregulated, are important ecological resources and shall be protected to the greatest extent practicable. All wetlands shall be treated as development constraints during site plan review and shall be identified as such in the Development Guidelines proposed to be created in conjunction with the Conservation Subdivision/Development process.

- Require project sponsors to limit wetland and stream impacts to less significant portions of the resource and avoid fragmentation (splitting wetland into parts, isolating the parts through impervious areas and other barriers). This is consistent with the requirements of federal and State regulations to avoid and minimize impacts.

- Increase local coordination with agencies responsible for the protection of natural resources, including the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

- Avoid the Karner blue butterfly and frosted elfin habitats and their buffers without exception.

- Give strong consideration to habitat value for all new development and where opportunity exists to reclaim habitat in developed areas. All projects should provide open space that is interconnected within and outside of the project boundaries. To maintain a healthy environment, wildlife should be able to pass unencumbered from habitat to habitat. Stream corridors provide excellent opportunities to provide linkages.

- Size culverts for road crossings of stream and wetland corridors to allow wildlife passage, as practical. The same consideration should be given whenever existing culverts require replacement. In general, the culvert should support natural streambed and banks. If the existing streambed is gravel, then the gravel bottom should be carried through the culvert. If the stream is silt and it is necessary to protect the culvert from erosion, then washed stone/gravel should be used for the bed and banks. Riprap should not be used since it is unnatural and tends to create barriers to some species.

- The Wilton Heritage Society and the Town Historian Jeannine Woutersz, should be commissioned to advise the Town Board and Planning Board regarding proposals that may impact historic sites or resources both those on the National Historic Register and those of local significance.

- Create an incentive program to encourage owners of historic structures and sites to maintain/improve their properties.

- Consider amending site plan review procedures in favor of a conservation review approach that would allow the Planning Board to proactively work with

developers to identify constrained and buildable portions of a project site. This would essentially empower the Planning Board to determine the appropriate density of development for each project within certain parameters established in the Town zoning. For example, the community should determine what constitutes rural character (eg, 50% open space, one unit per 2-5 buildable acres, etc.) to serve as guidance for the Planning Board and to provide consistency as the members of the Planning Board change over time.

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Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

The provisions outlined in this section will benefit natural communities if properly implemented. Many of the provisions simply strengthen existing regulations and encourage cooperation between federal, State and local agencies.

Benefits to the environment also benefit Town residents. Healthy, diverse natural systems make our environment healthy. Natural systems are important in the production of oxygen, recycling of nutrients, purification of air, cleansing of groundwater and surface water, and the reduction of nuisance species. As an example, wetlands that are periodically or permanently flooded provide breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Yet the same healthy, diverse wetland system also produces many species of birds, mammals, and insects that feed on mosquitoes and their larvae.

Cultural resources will benefit from increased awareness and concern for historic structures in the Town. Additionally, incentives to repair and maintain historic structures will likely lead to further preservation of the Town's history.

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B. Planning Areas{tc \l3 "Term Easements and Tax Abatement

Program}

Planning Area 1-Parkhurst Road

Existing Conditions

This planning area, located in the northwest portion of Town, is generally bounded on the west by the Greenfield Town Boundary, on the south by the property line extending from Worth Road, on the east by Route 9 and Mt. McGregor Road, and on the north by the Town of Corinth (Figure III-2).

Route 9 serves as the principal north-south artery for this area, comprised of a mix of restaurants, light industrial uses, and single-family residences. Route 9 is roughly paralleled by Parkhurst Road to the west and east. This road still retains much of its original rural character, including farmhouses from the 18th and 19th centuries. In addition a wide range of newer housing types, from mobile homes to large contemporaries, and from raised ranches to massive steel buildings have also been constructed in this area.

Terrain varies from rolling to mountainous. Other significant natural features in this area include several deer wintering areas, and the gorge associated with the Snook Kill which bisects the McGregor Fault. Adirondack plants are present in this unique ecosystem. The combination of natural constraints and limited sewer and water service (with the exception of Route 9) has resulted in limited development pressure compared to other areas in the Town.

Two county roads serve as Wilton's gateway from our neighbors to the west, Wilton-Greenfield Road (Gailor Road east of Route 9) from Greenfield and Corinth Mountain Road (Ballard Road east of Route 9) from Corinth. Corinth Mountain Road is also noteworthy for having the highest accident rate in town, principally due to drivers regularly exceeding the speed limit on this steep, winding roadway despite numerous warning signs and lights.

The remnants of the hamlet of Wilton, discussed further in Planning Area 3, can be found just outside the northeast corner of this Planning Area. The bulk of Mount McGregor Correctional Facility is immediately to the north in the Towns of Moreau and Corinth, although there are several outbuildings on the entrance road located in Wilton. The New York State Department of Corrections owns 170 acres along the entrance road

in Wilton, as well as an additional 62 acres on the southwest side of Corinth Mountain Road.

Civic buildings within this Planning Area include a church and a satellite post office, both located on Route 9. The Orra Phelps Nature Preserve is an 18acre parcel of open space on Parkhurst Road.

Plan Recommendations

The Parkhurst Road area is and should continue to remain rural due the physical constraints that contribute to its natural beauty. Lot sizes in this area are currently 2 or 3 acres. The Town should consider the following options to protect the rural character and the resources in this area:

- . • Maintain the rural character of this area by requiring a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon suitable criteria. Other recommendations to preserve the rural character and natural resources should be identified in the residential development guidelines. It may also be desirable to increase lot sizes to a 5 acre minimum as an alternative to the quality open space provision to reduce density. This alternative should be carefully monitored. This type of zoning does not typically preserve rural character and may actually promote sprawl development if not combined with other land conservation measures, such as term easements and purchase of development rights. For example, a 100acre parcel with 5-acre lots built primarily on old farm field will result in suburban, not rural, character.
- . • Utilize a conservation overlay district to protect important features identified by the Town such as deer wintering areas, steep slopes and stream systems from the impacts of development.
- . • Develop and implement a Conservation Development Process to protect important resources.
- . • Identify subdivision and design standards to address clearing limits, screening requirements, and setback requirements to maintain the rural feel of low density neighborhoods. This will be particularly important if the provisions for quality open space are not implemented.
- . • Review and revise, as necessary, the Timber, Soil and Stream regulation to ensure proper protection of both steep slopes and scenic views.

The road system in this neighborhood should be carefully considered when reviewing

potential development. Narrow roads with limited capacity contribute to the rural character but if pressured with too many vehicles will result in safety issues. Widening or repairing these roadways will increase capacity but may increase development pressure. The key is to provide a balance between safety considerations and the rural atmosphere.

Corinth Mountain Road is one example where safety issues have become an overriding concern due to the steep, winding nature of this roadway and high traffic volumes. This road should be taken into the county highway system connecting Ballard Road (County Road 33) with County Road 34 in the Town of Corinth.

In addition to traffic mobility, consideration should be given to non-vehicular mobility by creating trail connections to other open space/trails in the Town. Route 9 isolates this Planning Area. Therefore, several locations should be identified to provide safe crossings. The proposed Town Center and Historic Hamlet areas discussed below could be one of these.

In order to protect the adjacent residential areas and the function of Route 9, the following changes are proposed for land use along Route 9:

- Consider a CR-2 zone (see Appendix E for definition) on Route 9 between Worth Road and Gailor Road to provide a transition between the more intense CR-1 zone to the south and residential uses to the north. Emphasis would be on professional offices and maintaining existing residential structures with attractive buildings and site design. Shared driveways and access management techniques should be utilized.
- Rezone areas from the Gailor Road/Route 9 intersection (west side only) as far north as Wilton Hamlet to R-3.

With the exception of properties on Route 9, this area is not included in the Sewer and Water Benefit Area identified in the Wilton Water and Sewer Authority (WWSA) Comprehensive Plan for Water & Wastewater Management. Consideration should be given to including the Hamlet of Wilton, in the benefit area. Services should not be extended to the remaining parts of the area.

Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

The recommendations of this section will help to preserve important environmental features within this planning area and to maintain the rural character and scenic views.

Planning Area 2-Jones/Northern Pines

Existing Conditions

This centrally located area is also the most intensely developed area in the Town. The Planning Area boundaries are roughly Route 9 to the west; the City of Saratoga Springs to the south; I-87 to the east, and Ballard Road on the north (Figure III-3). As a result of the many subdivisions, a high percentage of the town's population resides in this area. This area coincides with the majority of the WWSA's service area.

As the name implies, the primary transportation routes in this neighborhood are Jones Road, Northern Pines Road and the southern portion of Route 9. This area has been extensively developed and is characterized predominantly by single-family residential subdivisions. Other uses include mobile home communities, multi-family housing developments, the Dorothy Nolan Elementary School, the McGregor Golf Course, Gavin Park, and a few agricultural operations. Uses along the Route 9 corridor are predominantly commercial, including various small to moderately sized retail, restaurant, professional office operations as well as the Saratoga Springs Middle School. The Route 9 corridor is transitioning from residential to commercial area.

The terrain consists primarily of a slightly rolling sandy plain. A significant portion of the Snook Kill stream system is contained in this area, as well as the northern portion of Loughberry Lake, and the stream system that feeds it.

Recommendations

It is envisioned that this Planning Area will continue as the most intensely developed area in Town due to its central location and availability of sewer and water. Residential development in this neighborhood should continue at densities similar to existing

subdivisions. There are a limited number of large, undeveloped parcels in this area; therefore emphasis should be placed on providing both existing and new development with adequate services (roads, utilities, recreation, schools). The town should focus on maintaining the quality and desirability of existing neighborhoods and business areas.

To provide a focus and identity to this area of Town where so many people reside, consideration should be given to the establishment of a mixed use neighborhood or hamlet. A potential location for such a hamlet is the Northern Pines/Route 9 intersection (Maple Avenue Hamlet). This would require a significant amount of redevelopment and reinvestment by both the public and private sector as there is a limited amount of undeveloped land. The extension of utilities into this area to realize these goals would be appropriate. To accomplish this goal, a hamlet master plan should be completed for this area to address the following:

- . • Redevelopment guidelines/requirements to bring existing structures and land use in compliance with the vision for this area.
- . • Traffic calming techniques such as sidewalks, landscaped medians, trees and other landscaping to provide a safe streetscape for pedestrian movement throughout the Town Center.
- . • An attractive streetscape that includes sidewalks, landscaping, period lighting that is inviting to pedestrians.
- . • Provisions for the safe movement of pedestrians across Route 9 & Northern Pines Road.
- . • Commercial buildings built out to the sidewalk to create a continuous pedestrian environment with parking to the rear or interior of the site. The incorporation of green space is important however the emphasis should be on quality and the relationship to the pedestrian environment.
- . • Encourage uses and structures that combine ground story retail with second story residential or small office service uses.
- . • Access management techniques including the use of shared driveways, and shared parking.
- . • The development of architectural guidelines to encourage attractive buildings.
- . • Establishment of public/private partnerships to facilitate project review and development.

As discussed in Planning Area 1, to protect the adjacent residential areas and the function of Route 9, the following changes are proposed for land use along Route 9:

- Establish a CR-2 zone on Route 9 between Worth Road and the Gailor Road to provide a transition between the more intense CR-1 zone to the south and Residential uses to the north. Emphasis would be on professional offices and maintaining existing residential structures with attractive buildings and site design. Shared driveways and access management techniques would be utilized. Lands that are considered as part of the “Hamlet” should be identified and regulated as such (See Planning Area 3).
- Rezone areas from Gailor Road/Route 9 intersection (west side only) as far north as the Wilton Hamlet to R-3.

The open space, recreation and pathways master plan should identify linkages between new and existing neighborhoods through a series of pathways. Consideration should be given to linking new and existing subdivisions to each other as well as to destinations such as recreation facilities and business areas. The potential for new parklands should also be studied and included as part of this plan.

The stream systems in this area should continue to be afforded protection through the Timber, Soil and Stream Regulations (Stream Resource Management District) and/or incorporation into an open space plan. The Snook Kill and its tributaries as well as Loughberry Lake are high quality water resources. Additionally, there are wetlands and hydric soils associated with many of these streams. The protection of important stream corridors will protect not only the quality of the streams themselves but can provide wildlife critical “highways” between larger habitats. In some cases these areas may also serve as open space links for residents.

Transportation/Mobility Planning

Roadway function and traffic movement in the entire neighborhood are critical. Consideration should be given to the potential of an Exit 15A in the area of Jones Road. This new exit should be designed to allow northbound off and southbound on to the Northway. The neighborhood surrounding the potential Exit 15A should remain residential. An additional interchange would reduce pressure on Exit 15 and roadways to the south of potential Exit 15A and be more convenient for residents in the central part of Town. It is the intent of the Town to maintain this potential interchange for continued residential use.

There might be potential for an access road parallel to Old Gick Road. The Town should

initiate discussions with the NYSDOT regarding this possibility in order that appropriate land use decisions can be made for this area.

In addition to the above, a review of the entire Route 9 Corridor should be considered. The land use changes identified above as well as a potential new interchange will impact traffic patterns. Route 9 could be addressed through a Corridor Study, which would evaluate land use, zoning, site design elements and roadway function (access management, shared driveways and parking) and appearance.

The connection of subdivisions to one another and to destinations such as parks, businesses etc. is an important part of the mobility planning for this area. The open space plan discussed above can be effectively utilized to accomplish this goal.

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Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

This portion of Town is within the Wilton Water and Sewer Authority Benefit Area and therefore has access to water and sewer in many locations. It is reasonable to assume that development within this area could continue under current densities and land use patterns. The focus of the land use recommendations is to adjust growth patterns to provide a more pedestrian friendly environment, reduce the dependence on motor vehicles through pedestrian linkages, strengthen neighborhoods both in character and quality, and to provide for a variety of housing opportunities.

Since this planning area contains the majority of the Town's population, it is important for the plan to recognize the current issues and devise the methods and means to maintain a high level of service and quality of life. This is an essential tool to curb the pressure for sprawl development. If families are provided with quality neighborhoods that are well maintained and protected from land use conflicts and other impacts, then they are more likely to remain in those neighborhoods. Otherwise, the primary amenity to be sought is open space and people will continue to move towards and into rural areas. Open space, recreation, and pedestrian mobility are key amenities that are addressed in this plan. Efforts to reduce sprawl can have very significant beneficial environmental impacts.

Planning Area 3 -Wilton-Gansevoort Road

Existing Conditions

This Planning Area is bounded to the north by the Town of Moreau, to the east by I-87 and the Snook Kill, to the south by Ballard Road, and to the west by the foot of the Palmerton Range (Figure III-4).

The Wilton Hamlet in the southwest corner of the area was the historic beginning of the Town also once known as “Palmertown.” Several historic structures still exist in the Wilton Hamlet near the intersection of Route 9, Ballard Road and Corinth Mountain Road. The scale and functionality of the hamlet was adversely impacted by the construction of Route 9 and Ballard Road. The Route 9/Wilton Gansevoort Road intersection is now visually dominated by truck storage and dirt piles.

This area is predominantly zoned for 2 acre minimum lot size and includes single family residential housing along Blanchard Road, Washburn Road and Wilton Gansevoort Road. There are two mobile home parks on Wilton Gansevoort Road.

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The existing Wilton hamlet area has a handful of small number of automotive-related business. Large lots dominate this area with some agricultural activity taking place. A private waste transfer station, Hiram Hollow, is on Washburn Road.

This area in general has severe soil limitations due to wetness and poor filtering. The Little Snook Kill and its tributaries wind through this area converging with the Snook Kill in a designated wetland area. Steep slopes exist along the banks of the Snook Kill.

No water or sewer serves this Planning Area with the exception of service for the Elementary School on Ballard Road.

Recommendations

The remnants of the historic hamlet of Wilton are located in Planning Area 3. This hamlet provides the opportunity for the development and redevelopment of hamlet style land uses at this location roughly defined by Route 9, Parkhurst Road, and Ballard Road. To protect these historic resources and encourage sound land use decisions, consideration could be given to creating a new “Hamlet District”. Specifics regarding this area can be determined through the preparation of a hamlet master plan for this area. The development of this concept is predicated on the extension of sewer and water infrastructure into this area. Goals for the hamlet include:

- . • The creation of a neighborhood center (hamlet) that would encourage redevelopment and infill and allow mixed uses such as small scale retail combined with housing and neighborhood service oriented businesses.
- . • Protection and improvement of existing historic resources.
- . • Creation of a pedestrian friendly environment to include sidewalks, attractive streetscapes, quality landscaping, adequate parking and non-motorized connections to adjacent land uses.
- . • Design guidelines to encourage/require architectural consistency.

With the exception of Ballard Road, land use in this area is generally rural residential and includes several parcels in agricultural use and a number of undeveloped parcels. Based on physical constraints and the lack of services in this area, the area should remain rural for the foreseeable future. In order to maintain the rural land use component, the following should be considered:

- . • Maintain the rural character of this area by requiring a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon
- . suitable criteria. Other recommendations to preserve the rural character and natural resources should be identified in the residential development guidelines. Consideration could be given to increasing the minimum lot size to reduce density; however, it should also be recognized that this type of zoning does not typically preserve rural character and may actually promote sprawl development if not combined with other land conservation measures, such as term easements and purchase of development rights. For example, a 100acre parcel with 5-acre lots built primarily on old farm field will result in suburban, not rural, character.
- . • Adequate protection of residential land uses from the existing commercial use on Wilton-Gansevoort Road and the commercial/ industrial land uses identified in Area 7. These protections should include but not be limited to set back and screening requirements, limits on hours of operation, and strict access control.
- . • The provision of appropriate buffers in particular between the private waste transfer facility and adjacent residentially zoned land.
- . • Protection of both the appearance and function of the roadway system:
 - . ► Limit both the number and location of driveways and other access,
 - . ► Review frontage requirements,
 - . ► Address clearing and vegetation adjacent to the roadway,

- .► Carefully review safety, capacity, repair, and geometry issues on rural roadways before taking action.

The Town may wish to evaluate the potential to combine the R-2 and R-3 districts to a single district. The requirements for the existing districts are very similar. This could simplify both the zoning requirements and their administration.

Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

Recommendations for a Wilton hamlet would increase the intensity of development within a relatively small area but would do so in a manner that would improve traffic patterns and provide for a pedestrian-scale environment. Hamlets have historically served as focal points for growth while rural areas have historically been primarily farm lands and forest. The hamlet can be used today as a community focal point, providing diverse housing opportunities and economic development and relieving pressure on rural areas for development. It could become an important component of a future open space plan since it could serve as a receiving zone for the transfer of development rights.

The remaining recommendations focus on controlling density and design to maintain rural character and conserve natural resources.

Planning Area 4 - Dimmick Road

Existing Conditions

This Planning Area is bounded by the Northway to the west, the Town of Moreau to the north, the Town of Northumberland to the east, and Ballard Road to the south (Figure III-5).

Rural residences, interspersed by agricultural lands, dominate the area primarily along its principal roads. The only Agricultural District in Wilton is located in the northeast corner of this Planning Area. Other agricultural lands not included in this district are located in the southern portion of this area. Suburban style subdivisions are virtually non-existent. Commercial enterprises are scattered throughout the area and include Adirondack Tree Service and Oligny's Nursery. There is a mobile home park on Ballard Road and a campground off Gurn Spring Road.

Dimmick Road is the main north-south roadway in this area, with Ballard Road and Wilton-Gansevoort Road comprising the main east-west roads. Gurn Spring Road has been impacted by increased traffic in recent years, providing a link between Gansevoort and Exit 16.

The northern half of this area possesses some high-quality scenic resources, including the Snook Kill valley and the approach to Palmer Ridge. The southern end of this area is included within the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park (WWP&P) Study Area, as is a small portion of County Forest. Soils in this area tend to be more clay-laden than the sandy areas of the Town to the south.

There are no public water or sewer facilities in this area. Additionally there are no civic buildings in this area.

Recommendations

Dimmick Road is a rural area containing a number of important physical features and resources described above. In order to protect these resources the area should remain rural. Development that occurs should be implemented in concert with the goal of protecting and enhancing these resources.

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Maintain the rural character of this area by requiring a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon suitable criteria. Other recommendations to preserve the rural character and natural resources should be identified in the residential development guidelines. Consideration could be given to increasing the minimum lot size to reduce density; however, it should also be recognized that this type of zoning does not typically preserve rural character and may actually promote sprawl development if not combined with other land conservation measures,

such as term easements and purchase of development rights. For example, a 100-acre parcel with 5-acre lots built primarily on old farm field will result in suburban, not rural, character.

High-quality scenic resources in this Planning Area should be identified and protected. This will assist in protecting both the scenic and rural character of the area. Proposed development should be evaluated as it relates to views to and from these areas. The identified scenic resources should be afforded the same protection as the other resources discussed above.

Another important method of protecting the rural atmosphere of an area is to limit the location and spacing of access and the type and scale of development that can be seen from the roadway. Increasing lot frontage requirements, requiring vegetative screening or identifying “no-cut areas” are all techniques that can be implemented to protect the rural feel of a roadway. Additionally potential improvements to these roadways should be evaluated with the goals of safety, capacity and desired land use in mind.

This area, with its stream systems and wetland areas provides a number of important wildlife corridors linking to other habitat areas. It is important that these links be identified and protected. This can be accomplished as part of a Town wide open space, recreation and pathways plan

Farming operations should be preserved and supported in this area. Protecting remaining farming operations as discussed in the Town wide recommendations section is important, not only to farmers trying to make a living, but as a critical component of protecting the rural atmosphere in this planning area. The implementation of incentives, protections and tax breaks should be seriously considered for both existing and potential agricultural operations.

Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

This planning area is rural in character and contains agricultural lands and important views. A portion of the WWPP Study Area comprises the southern end. The plan recommendations recognize the importance of these resources and offer tools to ensure they are identified and evaluated appropriately during plan development and site plan review. These recommendations will benefit the natural environment and character of the area.

Planning Area 5 – Edie Road

Existing Conditions

This planning area includes the area bounded by I-87 to the west, Ballard Road on the north, the Town of Northumberland on the east and Loudon Road and the City of Saratoga Springs on the south (Figure III-6).

The terrain generally consists of sand plain with numerous wetlands and vernal pools. Miller Swamp, Bog Meadow Brook and Delegan Brook are the most notable surface water features. Kendrick Hill located on the northeast corner of Ruggles and Loudon Road is the second highest landform in the Town.

This area is largely undeveloped, with housing generally consisting of single residential lots along existing roadways. There are eight existing subdivisions (a ninth under construction as of this writing) and two mobile home parks. A small industrial area on Edie Road hosts Bakemark, and a portion of the Route 50 corridor has commercial and industrial businesses (Stone, Zinter). Another commercial site exists on Ballard Road (DA Collins). Water and sewer service does not extend to this area. Most residents rely on well point or dug wells, and private septic systems. Two large-scale subdivision (300+ units) proposals on Ruggles Road and Putnam Lane were denied recently primarily due to infrastructure availability, density issues, environmental constraints, and transportation impact.

The majority of the 3,800 acre Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park (WWPP) Study Area boundary is within this area. Approximately 1,600 acres of the WWPP Study Area are in some form of preservation. Numerous areas of important flora and fauna native to the Saratoga Sand Plains exist in this area. The federally and state protected Karner blue butterfly and frosted elfin inhabit the Study Area as well as the state protected Blanding's turtle and several Species of Special Concern including the eastern hognose snake and spadefoot toad. Deer yards are prevalent in the Miller Swamp area and east of the Kendrick Hill area.

Some agricultural use is seen on active farms, and several parcels are being used as hay fields and wood lots.

Recommendations

Due to its location and sandy soils, this area has and will continue to feel development pressure. Existing zoning does not provide adequate protection to the important resources in this Planning Area. Zoning should be adjusted to protect the WWPP Study Area and its resources. This protection can be provided in several ways that bears consideration:

- . • Create a conservation overlay district which protects critical resources both in and out of the WWPP Study Area. Resources should be protected through avoidance, adequate buffers and effective mitigation. Requirements such as cluster, landscaping guidelines, conservation subdivisions or simple resource avoidance can be included in the overlay requirements.
- . • Maintain the rural character of this area by requiring a minimum of 35 to 50 percent quality open space where practical and dependent upon suitable criteria. Other recommendations to preserve the rural character and natural resources should be identified in the residential development guidelines. It may also be desirable to increase lot sizes to a 3 acre minimum as an alternative to the quality open space provision to reduce density. This alternative should be carefully monitored. This type of zoning does not typically preserve rural character and may actually promote sprawl development if not combined with other land conservation measures, such as term easements and purchase of development rights. For example, a 100acre parcel with 3-acre lots built primarily on old farm field will result in suburban, not rural, character.
- . • Implement incentive zoning to provide a potential opportunity to protect open space or critical resources through the land development process. The Town would need to establish both the type and magnitude of community benefits and the type and magnitude of the potential incentives to be offered in exchange.
- . • Develop performance standards for any projects that occur within the WWPP Study Area to ensure protection of critical habitats and resources.
- . • Develop a pathways system that connects to areas within the WWPP Study Area.

The variable groundwater availability and soil conditions will impact the ability to develop wells and septic systems. It is critical that systems are designed and installed to meet or exceed all NYSDEC and NYSDOH requirements. Lots that cannot meet these requirements should not be developed. This area is outside the WWSA benefit area and

should not receive municipal water and sewer service.

The WWPP Study Area presents a unique opportunity to develop a trail system that connects not only to areas within the study area but also to other destinations in the Town. Connections should be made between the various publicly and privately owned and controlled lands.

The variety of land uses and zoning districts along Route 50 has resulted in a number of land use conflicts. Zoning and land use needs to be reviewed in light of existing and anticipated trends as they relate to the goals of this area. To properly address these land use conflicts, simplify land use issues and provide more consistency, the consolidation of some zoning districts may be necessary. The Corridor Study discussed below would assist in the identification of the appropriate zoning for this area.

Transportation/Mobility Planning

Land uses and traffic patterns on Route 50 have created a number of land use conflicts in this area. In order to address these conflicts a Corridor Study should be completed extending from Exit 15 (Planning Area 6) to West Lane. The following issues should be addressed in the Corridor Study:

- . • Review of commercial zoning on the Route 50 corridor to determine if it is appropriate (both intensity of uses and boundaries). Emphasis should be placed on the intersections at Route 50/Old Gick/Ingersoll Road and Route 50/Edie Road.
- . • Access management techniques such as shared driveways, limited access, and service roads.
- . • Review of Jones Road, Ingersoll Road, Old Gick Road, and Route 50 intersection for design, function, capacity and land use.
- . • Standards that may require the use of buffers between various development types to include vegetation, topography, and setbacks.
- . • Landscaping and site plan requirements to ensure attractive development that presents a uniform theme.
- . • Consideration of the potential for Exit 15A at Jones Road.

Collector roads such as Edie Road, Ingersoll Road and Ruggles Road should be protected

from multiple curb cuts. Driveways should be shared whenever possible. Entrances to subdivisions should be carefully located so as not to impact the function of the roadway and to include attractive landscaping and signage.

Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

Recommendations focusing on the WWPP will benefit the ecology and significant habitat of this area. The recommendation to develop trails offers opportunities for recreation and education. Development of the trails may result in site specific impacts that will require evaluation during development of layout alternatives and plans.

The Route 50 corridor study will help to identify the appropriate uses along this roadway. Further SEQR review may be necessary as specific recommendations are developed. The potential for a new exit 15A at Jones Road may also present some impacts to this planning area that cannot be identified at this time.

Planning Area 6 – Exit 15

Existing Conditions

This Planning Area is bounded on the west by the Northway, on the north by the CP Rail railroad tracks, on the east by Route 50 and state and county forest lands, and on the south by Loudon Road and the City of Saratoga Springs (Figure III-7).

Historically, this area was farmland on the outskirts of the City of Saratoga Springs. Some farmland still exists, primarily along the railroad tracks. Following the construction of the Northway the area around Exit 15 has experienced strong development pressure. Within easy access from both Saratoga and Warren Counties, successive waves of retail development have occurred. Today, the Exit 15 commercial area exhibits a pattern of automobile oriented commercial development that is typical across America, with its mall, fast-food franchises, big boxes, and perennial traffic on Route 50. This area does provide a substantial tax base for both the Town and the Saratoga Springs School District.

Old Gick Road contains a scattering of homes of varying age. There is a large mobile home park off Old Gick Road which abuts the rear of The Shoppes of Wilton. State and County forest lands provide a buffer between the mall and the single-family houses beyond.

Civic uses are limited to a church on Perry Road and a “Veterans Park” in front of Applebee’s. Saratoga Hospital runs an ambulatory care center on Route 50, and has expanded it to include an outpatient surgery center. Sewer service is provided by Saratoga Sewer district #1, and public water is provided by WWSA.

Recommendations

When considering the future of this area, a plan should be developed that addresses the complexities and challenges of this area to establish more sustainable development and a balance between the pedestrian and vehicular environments. The area is currently commercially viable with large, regional commercial facilities, including the Wilton Mall. However, history indicates that this type of development is not sustainable. Development, infill, and redevelopment may all come into play over a period of time. Planning for this area should begin now, setting the stage for future opportunities.

Recommendations for this area are as follows:

- Prepare a strategic master plan for future development of the Exit 15 area. This plan should include goals and objectives and recommendations or “guiding principles” for future master plans dealing with specific areas. Some important considerations raised during the preparation of this comprehensive plan include mixed development, pedestrian improvements, shared access and parking, and infill development with less or no sprawl and strip development. The strategic plan should also establish an action plan that would include specific studies and initiatives.
- Treat the Route 50 corridor as a gateway to the Town providing a welcoming experience that portrays the high quality of life in the community.
- Consider the extension of the boulevard theme in Saratoga Springs.
- Conduct a Corridor Study for Route 50 that addresses function, character and viability.

- Continue to develop at high densities to take advantage of its location and services and to protect other areas from inappropriate development.
- Consider adopting architectural and development standards or guidelines and reconsider the types of uses for this area to eliminate the future development of undesirable uses.
- Stress quality in addition to quantity of green space and reduce the required size of parking areas for some functions.
- Encourage mixed uses, particularly for infill development.
- Consider preparing a master plan for a mixed-use development in the area of Old Gick and Perry Roads.

Transportation/Mobility Planning

Access management is critical to the success of this area. The following actions are recommended to address mobility issues:

- Complete the Route 50 Corridor Study discussed in Planning Area 5 and including the boulevard and gateway themes.
- Provide shared entrances and access roads to improve access and traffic movement on Route 50.
- Continue to promote a denser grid of streets, such as the new Lowes Drive extension and the proposed “Northern Collector”. This collector would provide additional access to lands fronting Route 50, thereby reducing pressure on that roadway.

Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

This portion of Town is recognized for its potential to develop with business uses, taking advantage of the growth potential and success of this area. However, it is also recognized that the current pattern of growth cannot continue without significant impact to the character of the Town. The plan recommendations will benefit the area by providing more in-depth information on the Route 50 corridor and how to accommodate future development as well as to facilitate access and circulation within and adjacent to existing development. Future land use recommendations are also anticipated and will require further SEQR evaluation at that time.

Planning Area 7 -Exit 16 - Ballard Road Corridor

Existing Conditions

This planning area consists generally of the parcels along Ballard Road between Northern Pines Road and the commercially zoned parcels just east of the Northway. It contains the Exit 16 Northway interchange, the I-1 industrial zone along North Road, and the northernmost leg of Traver Road between Town Hall and Ballard Road (Figure III-8).

The uses in this area are predominantly commercial, but there are governmental and residential uses as well. The major uses in this area are the Ace and Target warehouses, the former Wilton Developmental Center, gas stations, the truck stop, small retail, a mobile home park, and several single-family residences. Civic uses include Town Hall, State Police barracks, Camp Wilton, and the Ballard Road Firehouse. The warehouses, which are in excess of one million square feet combined, and truck stop draw significant truck traffic along Ballard Road (County Road 33), and the Exit 16 overpass. The section of Ballard Road west of the Northway is served by public water and sewer.

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Plan Recommendations

Much of the terrain along the Ballard Road corridor is rolling with sandy soils. However, steep slopes and wet soils are associated with the Snook Kill. Soils north of Ballard Road are variable.

Recommendations

This area includes a diversity of uses and will continue as such. The focus will be on mixed use development and light industrial/commercial uses while protecting the surrounding residential and rural development patterns. The number and type of existing uses as well as zoning districts in this area should be reviewed to eliminate existing and potential land use conflicts and ensure that development that occurs is sustainable and of high quality. Strip development is not part of the plan for Ballard Road. It is recommended that a Corridor Study be completed for Exit 16/Ballard Road to address the

following issues:

- . • A review of the various land uses and zoning districts in this corridor to identify land use conflicts and potential future opportunities/changes in land use. Protection of nearby uses such as the Ballard Road School should be carefully considered.
- . • Access management techniques such as shared driveways, limited access, and service roads should be implemented along Ballard Road to allow traffic to flow efficiently through the area and protect roadways in the Planning Area.
- . • Standards that may require the use of buffers between various development types to include vegetation, topography, and setbacks.
- . • Landscaping and site plan requirements to ensure attractive development.

Any planning for this corridor must be done in light of the potential for improvements/redesign of the Exit 16 Bridge over I-87. The Town should work with the NYSDOT in regards to any future design in order to include it as part of the Ballard Road corridor study.

In conjunction with the Corridor Study, the Travers Road/Exit 16 area (Gurn Springs) should be considered for development of a hamlet, which would serve as the municipal center of the Town, anchored by Town Hall. This could be accomplished through a hamlet master plan. Design elements could include:

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- . • Traffic calming techniques such as sidewalks, landscaped medians, trees and other landscaping to provide a safe pedestrian movement throughout the hamlet.
- . • An attractive streetscape that includes sidewalks on both sides of Traver Road, landscaping, and period lighting that is inviting to pedestrians.
- . • To encourage non-motorized traffic in the hamlet, provide for the safe movement of pedestrians across Ballard Road & Traver Road.
- . • Buildings placed closer to the road with landscaped front yards attractive to pedestrians, and parking to the rear or interior of the site. Emphasis should be on quality as well as quantity of green space.
- . • Projects should protect and enhance historic resources in this area. Historic markers in combination with pedestrian walkways and landscaping will provide opportunities to promote the historic resources of Gurn Springs. The development of public space in this area in keeping with the Town Hall and character of the historic area could provide an excellent location for Town events and community celebrations.
- . • Encouraging uses and structures that combine ground story retail with upper story residential or small office service uses. Allowance for higher buildings

(maximum 60 feet) to allow for this mixed use and provide for visual interest.

- . • Access management techniques including the use of shared driveways, and shared parking.
- . • The development of architectural guidelines to encourage attractive buildings and/or performance standards for all development in the district to ensure that it meets the “vision” (respects the historic nature of the area) of the Town and its residents.
- . • Establishment of public/private partnerships to facilitate project review and development.

Uses to the east of Exit 16 should be reviewed to protect not only the adjacent residential uses but also the sensitive lands of the WWPP Study Area. Intensity of uses should be carefully considered, along with site design (layout, lighting, landscaping, hours of operation, scale, setbacks) that protects the adjacent uses. An overlay district should be considered that would project the WWPP Study Area as well as other sensitive areas town-wide.

The “Gurn Spring Trail Plan” should be implemented. This plan would establish trail connections between Kings Mills Estates, Northern Pines and the Ballard Road School. Also included should be connections from Gurn Springs to the many residential neighborhoods to the south.

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Plan Recommendations

Explore options for replacement of “Park & Ride” off of Exit 16, in the event that the existing park and ride lot is developed.

Potential Adverse & Beneficial Impacts of Recommendations

The plan recommendations call for additional study of the Ballard Road corridor and the development of a Gurn Springs Hamlet master plan to identify appropriate land uses for these areas and to adopt measures to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow balanced with respect to the pedestrian environment. These recommendations will be beneficial to the Town since they will provide more detailed information and planning to correct problems and encourage appropriate land use mixes. Further SEQR evaluation may be necessary in order to adopt/implement future recommendations for this area. Particular attention should be paid to existing residential uses and the WWPP Study Area.

Chapter IV: Alternatives

The development of a comprehensive plan involves a process of evaluating alternatives. A plan begins with community discussions and an inventory and analysis. It is given focus with a vision and supporting goals and objectives, and refined through the evaluation of alternative land uses and development scenarios.

A number of alternative growth and land use scenarios were explored during the creation of plan concepts. The first growth alternative typically considered during the planning process is the “no-action” alternative. The “no-action” alternative represents the impact (beneficial and adverse) of allowing development to continue under current land use and zoning regulations. Alternative land uses that were explored during the development of plan concepts included the location and density of both residential and nonresidential development. Other alternatives addressed infrastructure, natural resources, and social/cultural resources. The following provides a summary of some of the more significant considerations made during the planning process.

A. No-Action Alternative

The “no-action” alternative represents the growth potential of the Town of Wilton under existing zoning and land use regulations. Residents of the town have determined that this scenario is unacceptable because it would lead to a continuation of current growth patterns and trends that have already resulted in adverse impacts to the community. Town officials are equally concerned about the current rate of growth and the town’s ability to keep pace with adequate levels of municipal service. The town also desires to become more proactive in regards to land use decisions, which requires additional growth management tools.

Major concerns in the town include traffic along major roadways, strip and “big box” commercial development along Route 50 and Route 9, lack of pedestrian facilities and connectivity to open space, loss of open space and rural character, air quality, water quality, and natural resource impacts. These issues cannot be effectively addressed using existing planning documents, zoning, local laws and review procedures. Therefore it is anticipated that the no-action alternative would lead to further adverse impacts to the community that are contrary to community goals.

B. Growth Alternatives

The following alternatives address potential growth scenarios the town could adopt as a land use/development policy. There are both beneficial and adverse impacts associated with each. For the purposes of comparison, the plan recommendations (Chapter III) represent a “managed growth” alternative, which allows for future growth but both encourages and places limitations on the location and the amount of growth and addresses appropriate land use in concert with guiding principals derived from the vision statement and the goals and objectives.

No Growth Alternative

This scenario would require the adoption of a no growth policy in the town, which essentially closes the door to any future new development. On the surface, this policy appears extreme and unrealistic for a community in the heart of a high growth region. However, it might also be considered as a temporary solution to current issues of rapid growth and difficulties keeping pace with utilities and services. This is discussed as a separate alternative.

Assuming no growth as a permanent policy, the town would deem itself “built-out”. This may have some significant repercussions from landowners that are anticipating future development. It may also prevent the town from developing amenities such as recreational facilities and other important community facilities. It may prevent the development of projects that have been deemed beneficial by this Plan. It would also limit the town’s ability to attract both local businesses and responsible corporations (sustainable businesses).

No further growth may have a beneficial impact on the natural environment by preventing further loss of habitat. This would depend on how landowners utilize their property. It would probably be necessary for them to reconsider farming or to at least cut their land for hay.

This scenario does not preclude redevelopment and reinvestment in older areas, which could have beneficial impacts on property value and community character.

Level of Service Alternative

The basis of this alternative is to allow growth in a prescribed manner only when sufficient infrastructure and services are in place. Most developed and developing communities have the basic services to protect the health, safety and welfare of their residents. The issue with growth is related to the ability to provide adequate levels of services. Most communities have limited services and limited budgets. During periods of high growth, the service limits are easily exceeded, many times with little warning. This is primarily due to a lack of coordinated review of an entire area or a series of projects to identify cumulative impacts. The impacts to a community that exceeds its capacity can be significant. There can be major, unexpected infrastructure improvements that may affect budgets and taxes. System failures can result in impacts to the natural

environment. Lack of coordination with school districts can lead to overcrowding and limited resources.

As the primary policy in the town, this alternative would require the use of moratoriums on development and a more equitable means of distributing the costs of development. State legislation presents limitations on what tools communities can use to address equitable cost distribution. Some communities have utilized the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process to address potential cumulative impacts over a given time period and identify the costs of mitigation, which are then distributed to all who develop within the study area. However, there are limitations on the types of impacts that can be quantified. As a result, many services are not addressed such as recreational needs, open space, social services, and education.

The Town of Wilton has addressed the level of service alternative in regards to sewer and water through the development and adoption of the WW&SA's Comprehensive Plan for Water & Wastewater Management. That plan specifically identifies service areas which are also reflected in this Comprehensive Plan. This is an effective management tool to direct development towards appropriate areas.

The managed growth alternative (plan recommendations) provides opportunities to address level of service issues through proactive planning and the use of SEQR. It does not provide a program and criteria for the use of moratoriums as a tool for growth management nor does it specifically recommend that growth be based on level of service. Such policy might be considered in the future as the town conducts further study of its resources and services and establishes greater coordination with other service suppliers, such as the school districts and the county.

C. Land Use Alternatives

The following alternatives address various land use scenarios that have been considered during the development of the plan recommendations.

Residential Development

Several residential development scenarios were discussed including changes in density. Discussions centered on increasing lot sizes from 3 to 5 acres in some neighborhoods

(Parkhurst Road) or from 2 to 3 acres (Wilton-Gansevoort Road, Dimmick Road, and Edie Road). It was agreed that increasing lot sizes alone, would not ensure the goal of “maintaining rural character”. After further study it was determined that increased lot sizes will aid in the protection of rural character however other actions such as increasing road frontage, maintaining natural or “no-cut” zones, increasing side yard and front yard set backs, and developing lands with the intent of protecting important physical resources would accomplish this goal more completely. As a result several neighborhoods include recommendations for increased lot sizes but also include incentives to allow lots to be developed at existing densities if certain criteria are met (i.e. performance standards) which protect important resources and rural character.

Exit 15 Planning Area

Discussions for this neighborhood centered on traffic movement and the visual environment as well as development and redevelopment. Alternatives ranged from removing traditional zoning and subdivision constraints and creating design criteria (performance standards) which would allow development meeting these criteria, to creating a mandatory main street or traditional neighborhood design for the entire neighborhood. Discussion also included rezoning Route 50 east of Perry Road from C-1 to C-2.

The idea of removing all zoning requirements and relying solely on design criteria would place a large burden on the Planning Board or other agency charged with the review and/or approval of projects in this area. It was determined that the combination of the initiation and implementation of a corridor study for Route 50, the development of commercial design standards and regulations encouraging mixes use, along with necessary changes in zoning would be more effective and easier to administer for the Town.

It was also determined that although a mandatory main street may be impractical for the entire neighborhood many of these principles should be applied. The creation of the boulevard on Route 50 will serve to slow traffic and improve the visual environment. Providing safe non-vehicle crossings and limiting driveways and creating parallel access will increase mobility and safety. Development that occurs along the parallel access roads will be well suited for Main Street style development discussed in Chapter III, Plan Recommendations.

Proposed zoning changes may begin to address the many conflicting land uses that exist on Route 50 particularly moving east to the residential areas. It was determined that a broader view of development patterns and land use along Route 50 was necessary to identify positive changes for development and redevelopment that promotes quality land uses and reinvests and improves existing development. As a result the Plan

Recommendations recommend a Corridor Study for Route 50 prior to any zone changes.

Commercial and Industrial Development

There are many alternatives for commercial and industrial development in the town. The plan recommendations attempt to organize commercial development based on size and potential impact to the community. It is recognized that existing non-residential zoning at times results in conflicting land uses being sited in close proximity. Thus it is recommended that the commercial zones particularly along Route 9, Route 50 and Ballard Road be reviewed to ensure that they meet the intent of the Town in providing appropriate opportunities, while protecting and enhancing both residential and non-residential development. Current zoning in the Route 50 Corridor consists of three different commercial zones, an industrial zone, and residential zoning.

There was also discussions regarding creating new commercial zones and rezoning certain areas to address the varying impacts, and the size and scale of commercial development on surrounding land uses and to ensure appropriate transitions of land use from most intense to least intense (commercial to residential). It was determined that particularly along Routes 50 and 9, and Ballard Road that Corridor Studies should be conducted first and would result in part, in zoning changes that address land use compatibility.

Chapter V: Action Plan

The Action Plan makes reference to the creation of several committees to study various aspects of community development and prepare various master plans. Where practical, these tasks should be combined in order to be more efficient and effective in meeting the stated goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The Action Plan is an essential component of the Comprehensive Plan that transforms the plan recommendations into specific tasks and prioritizes those tasks based on such issues as urgency of problem, availability of community resources, and interdependencies. The Action Plan provides guidance on how and when recommendations could be implemented. Time frames are general and represent what might reasonably be accomplished over the next 20 years.

An action plan is also meant to provide focus and organization but should not be rigid so as to miss opportunities or fail to adjust to the dynamics of the community. Some tasks will logically come before others, especially when the initiation of one task is dependent upon the outcome of another. However, in many instances, community interest, budget, and outside or regional influences may elevate one task over another.

The purpose of this Action Plan is to provide the community with direction; a path towards achieving its vision. Prioritization is based primarily on community interests and needs. Public consensus on the order and timing of these tasks is critical to achieving the support and leadership of the elected officials.

Tasks are grouped into short, medium, and long-term time frames. Short-term tasks should be completed very soon after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. These tasks address the issues of highest and most immediate concern, as identified through this planning process. Medium term tasks should be completed in the next 2-4 years. Long term tasks are those that are expected to occur in excess of 5 years out and are typically dependent on the outcome of short and medium term tasks, or are simply not of high priority at this time.

A. Implementation Priorities

The implementation table to follow prioritizes and summarizes the action plan tasks. Full descriptions of the Action Plan tasks are provided following this section.

Implementation Priority Table Short Term Actions (1-2 Years)

Action	Linkages/ Dependencies	Description
Zoning Amendments -Rezoning -Density -Development Guidelines -Historic District Overlay -Conservation Overlay -Conservation Review (site plan and subdivision)	Plan Adoption by Town Board	Revise zoning code in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.
Subdivision Amendments (conservation subdivision)	Typically done in conjunction with zoning amendments	
Residential & Commercial Development Guidelines	Linked to conservation subdivision and site plan review amendments.	Detailed development guidelines that will also include special regulations to address development in environmentally sensitive areas and within overlays.
Evaluate Incentive Zoning Legislation	Linked to Open Space Conservation Plan and economic development initiatives.	Under specific circumstances, the Town Board can consider proposing an incentive to a developer in exchange for a community benefit. Incentives and benefits are specifically identified in the legislation. The community should be engaged to help identify the incentives and benefits. Community benefits may include open space, trails, historic preservation, scenic views, economic development and redevelopment, neighborhood amenities.
Open Space, Recreation, and Pathways Plan	Implementation linked to incentive zoning, PDR, term easements, partnerships, grants, fee acquisition, etc.	A plan combining open space, recreation use and needs, and non-motorized linkages. The open space component will focus on the identification of important parcels potentially to be preserved. The recreation component of the plan should include an inventory of existing facilities, survey of community needs, and the development of an action plan. The amount and location of land for recreational use is an important consideration for the open space plan. The pathways plan will consider the linkages between neighborhoods and recreational resources and other destinations and may require open space to achieve these linkages.
Corridor Studies (Routes 9 and	Linked to overall mobility	The purpose of a corridor study is to identify

50 and Ballard Road)	planning study.	the relationship between land use and traffic within the corridor and develop measures to decrease congestion, improve pedestrian environment, define land use, and improve aesthetics.
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Town of Wilton Comprehensive Plan	Action Plan
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Short Term Actions (1-2 Years)		
Action	Linkages/ Dependencies	Description
Neighborhood/Hamlet Master Plans: <i>Wilton Hamlet (Ballard & Rt. 9)</i> <i>Cum Springs Hamlet (Exit 16 area)</i> <i>Maple Ave Hamlet (Rt. 9 & Northern Pines)</i>	Linked to economic development initiatives.	Neighborhood or hamlet master plans provide the opportunity to create a more detailed plan for development/ redevelopment with help from residents and businesses. Typical issues include theme/vision, mobility, economic development, aesthetics, utilities, and linkages.
Fiscal Model	Linked to incentive zoning and open space plan.	The fiscal model provides for the comparison of the impact of various land use scenarios on taxes over time. Often used to compare open space preservation with one or more development scenarios. It can also be used to help define the right mix of development (commercial, residential, industrial, agricultural, etc.) to balance the tax base.
Mobility Plan	Linked to corridor studies, pathway planning, and incentives for implementation.	The mobility plan utilizes the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan supplemented by more detailed evaluation of the road network, pedestrian linkages, multi-use paths, public transportation, potential future roads, and regional traffic planning. Specific recommendations/actions might include the establishment of Exit 15A, development of future connector roads, safety improvements, and the protection of residential areas from traffic impacts.

On-Going Actions		
Action	Linkages/ Dependencies	Description
Economic Development Initiative	Partially dependent upon code revisions, design guidelines and other short term planning tasks that involve incentives and partnerships.	The focus of the initiative will be the establishment of partnerships and the initiation of dialog to identify opportunities for economic development. The outcome may include marketing efforts, shovel-ready projects, and incentives for sustainable development and local businesses.
Planning Education	Linked to many planning and zoning actions that result in changes to current project review procedures.	Changes in review procedures, such as the establishment of conservation subdivision/site plan review, will require training. It may also be desirable to establish a budget for planning conferences and courses.
Town of Wilton Comprehensive Plan		Action Plan

Short Term Actions (1-2 Years)		
Action	Linkages/ Dependencies	Description
Neighborhood/Hamlet Master Plans: <i>Wilton Hamlet (Ballard & Rt. 9)</i> <i>Cum Springs Hamlet (Exit 16 area)</i> <i>Maple Ave Hamlet (Rt. 9 & Northern Pines)</i>	Linked to economic development initiatives.	Neighborhood or hamlet master plans provide the opportunity to create a more detailed plan for development/ redevelopment with help from residents and businesses. Typical issues include theme/vision, mobility, economic development, aesthetics, utilities, and linkages.
Fiscal Model	Linked to incentive zoning and open space plan.	The fiscal model provides for the comparison of the impact of various land use scenarios on taxes over time. Often used to compare open space preservation with one or more development scenarios. It can also be used to help define the right mix of development (commercial, residential, industrial, agricultural, etc.) to balance the tax base.
Mobility Plan	Linked to corridor studies, pathway planning, and incentives for implementation.	The mobility plan utilizes the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan supplemented by more detailed evaluation of the road network, pedestrian linkages, multi-use paths, public transportation, potential future roads, and regional traffic planning. Specific recommendations/actions might include the establishment of Exit 15A, development of future connector roads, safety improvements, and the protection of residential areas from traffic impacts.

On-Going Actions		
Action	Linkages/ Dependencies	Description
Economic Development Initiative	Partially dependent upon code revisions, design guidelines and other short term planning tasks that involve incentives and partnerships.	The focus of the initiative will be the establishment of partnerships and the initiation of dialog to identify opportunities for economic development. The outcome may include marketing efforts, shovel-ready projects, and incentives for sustainable development and local businesses.
Planning Education	Linked to many planning and zoning actions that result in changes to current project review procedures.	Changes in review procedures, such as the establishment of conservation subdivision/site plan review, will require training. It may also be desirable to establish a budget for planning conferences and courses.
Town of Wilton Comprehensive Plan		Action Plan

Short Term Actions (1-2 Years)		
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Neighborhood/Hamlet Master Plans: <i>Wilton Hamlet (Ballard & Rt. 9)</i> <i>Cum Springs Hamlet (Exit 16 area)</i> <i>Maple Ave Hamlet (Rt. 9 & Northern Pines)</i>	Linked to economic development initiatives.	Neighborhood or hamlet master plans provide the opportunity to create a more detailed plan for development/ redevelopment with help from residents and businesses. Typical issues include theme/vision, mobility, economic development, aesthetics, utilities, and linkages.
Fiscal Model	Linked to incentive zoning and open space plan.	The fiscal model provides for the comparison of the impact of various land use scenarios on taxes over time. Often used to compare open space preservation with one or more development scenarios. It can also be used to help define the right mix of development (commercial, residential, industrial, agricultural, etc.) to balance the tax base.
Mobility Plan	Linked to corridor studies, pathway planning, and incentives for implementation.	The mobility plan utilizes the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan supplemented by more detailed evaluation of the road network, pedestrian linkages, multi-use paths, public transportation, potential future roads, and regional traffic planning. Specific recommendations/actions might include the establishment of Exit 15A, development of future connector roads, safety improvements, and the protection of residential areas from traffic impacts.

On-Going Actions		
Action	Linkages/ Dependencies	Description
Economic Development Initiative	Partially dependent upon code revisions, design guidelines and other short term planning tasks that involve incentives and partnerships.	The focus of the initiative will be the establishment of partnerships and the initiation of dialog to identify opportunities for economic development. The outcome may include marketing efforts, shovel-ready projects, and incentives for sustainable development and local businesses.
Planning Education	Linked to many planning and zoning actions that result in changes to current project review procedures.	Changes in review procedures, such as the establishment of conservation subdivision/site plan review, will require training. It may also be desirable to establish a budget for planning conferences and courses.

Medium Term Actions (2-4 years)		
Action	Linkages/ Dependencies	Description
Neighborhood Revitalization Planning – commercial and residential areas	Linked to economic development initiatives and incentive zoning.	The purpose of this planning effort is to identify and repair/improve older areas of the community to maintain, if not improve upon, the quality of life. Possible components of the plan include the inventory and evaluation of resources, assessment of trends in property value, establishment of a theme, and provision of amenities. Some areas, such as Exit 15, may be considered for redevelopment and infill.
Historic & Architectural Review Guidelines and establishment of an Advisory Commission	Linked to neighborhood/hamlet master plans, redevelopment and economic development initiatives, and development guidelines.	There are many historic resources within the community that would benefit from local protection. These resources are part of the character of the community. Architectural standards would develop out of the establishment of themes/visions for hamlets and corridors through respective planning.

Long Term Actions (5+ years)		
Action	Linkages/ Dependencies	Description
Comprehensive Plan Review & Update	Successes and failures of Action Plan tasks.	It is important to revisit the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan on a 5 year basis to determine if there have been any major shifts in direction that could impact the vision or require additional planning effort.

B. Action Plan Discussion

Most of the action plan tasks identified in the preceding tables are important to the community. Prioritization is often a very personal decision based on an individual's concerns and interests in the community. Therefore, it is important to understand the theory behind the decisions reflected in the tables. It is also important to note that priorities change for any number of reasons and the Action Plan is meant to be flexible. The discussion of linkages can be useful in determining whether a task can be brought forward or pushed back based on its relationship to other projects.

The following discussion of each task provides the reasoning for its priority designation. However, the general theme for prioritization is to establish the regulatory framework that will support future planning efforts.

Although desirable, it may be difficult for the Town to accomplish all the tasks in the short-term list. It is reasonable to assume that the first year of implementation will be devoted to code revisions and development guidelines. It is quite possible, assuming adequate funding is available, that other short-term items can be completed or at least begun.

Short-Term Actions

Zoning Code Amendments

The Comprehensive Plan provides the Town with a parcel-based future land use map. This is intended to be used as the base map for rezoning portions of the Town. Land use is not zoning. It is much more general. The zoning process will take the proposed land uses and develop appropriate zoning districts to meet the intent of the land use decisions. It is possible that more than one zoning district may evolve from the process, reflective of a single land use decision. Therefore, the land use plan is a guide for zoning. Since Town Law requires that a community's zoning ordinance be consistent with its land use plan, this task should be one of the first items addressed.

In order to proceed, the Town should either direct the Town Attorney and Town staff (perhaps with a committee) to draft the zoning revisions. Alternatively, the Town may wish to retain professional services to perform the task, typically in concert with the Town Attorney, staff and a committee. Once the draft zoning is available for public review, the Town Board would hold a public hearing. After sufficient opportunity for public input has been provided and any necessary revisions incorporated, the Town Board would adopt the zoning amendments. Adoption of the zoning amendments is a Type 1 action under the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) regulations (6 NYCRR 617). However, rezoning and other major code amendments are addressed in the SEQR documentation for the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, it may not be necessary to conduct SEQR, unless the proposed zoning amendments are significantly different than envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan. There are also areas of Town where the Plan calls for further study to better define appropriate land use (such as the major road corridors). In these instances, the potential impacts of future land use have not been

sufficient addressed and further SEQR action would be necessary to address proposed land uses and rezoning.

The components of this task include the preparation of a zoning map (draft and final) and the necessary written amendments. The extent of the amendments will depend on other code revisions that might be wrapped into this task (discussed separately). In general, the amendments would include new and revised zoning designations and uses, revised site plan review procedures (consistent with the conservation subdivision process), revised special uses, and revised definitions. Other portions of the zoning code would require review and possible amendment to be consistent with the major changes.

Although discussed as a separate task, the creation of development guidelines for commercial and residential development will be an important component of the revised site plan review process. As envisioned, the bulk regulations currently used to define project layout would be eliminated in favor of the more flexible set of guidelines.

Other special zoning designations included in this task are described as follows:

Historic District Overlay

Overlay districts are zoning districts that provide an additional level of regulation and/or incentive program to address the specific concerns of a given area. Historic areas of the Town would benefit from an overlay zone that would provide additional protection of the area and incentives for owners to maintain their structure and properties in their historic context.

The overlay zoning regulations would provide protection from incompatible land uses and other modifications that might jeopardize the character of the area or a given structure or site. It is also possible to provide incentives to property owners, such as a tax abatement, that would help them maintain their properties.

Conservation Overlay

This overlay district will recognize the unique or otherwise important natural features of a given area of the Town and will require a more thorough review process for these areas to ensure the resources are not adversely impacted. At a minimum, it is intended that the overlay district be considered for the Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park (WWPP) Study Area. However, a similar level of review and disclosure can be achieved through development standards and the use of conservation subdivision/review procedures.

Conservation Review

Existing site plan review procedures, as well as subdivision procedures (see action

below), should be revised to reflect the conservation review process. This process is adapted from the conservation subdivision, which evaluates a given project site to identify important resources that should be preserved or conserved and areas suitable for development. It is a form of cluster subdivision whereby the standard lot sizes and setbacks are replaced by site specific requirements. The subdivision is clustered on small lots to respect site features and to visually preserve the rural character of the area.

Although the Town may want to employ clusters to achieve this goal in various areas of the community, the process itself is proactive and applicable to all site development projects in the Town.

The initial step in the process is for the applicant to map important site features. Development guidelines will provide the applicant with guidance on the level of analysis necessary for this step. For example, the Planning Board may want to see a wetland delineation that has been field verified by the Corps of Engineers. Other important features may include a stand of mature woods, agricultural fields, historic and archaeological sites, stream corridors, steep slopes, and significant habitat. This information is then brought to the Planning Board and both the Board and the applicant review the results to identify the most suitable areas for development, density, access, and applicable design guidelines. Note that this step does not involve review of a subdivision or site plan. This step sets the parameters for the applicant to begin design.

The review process would continue with the applicant's submittal of a development plan. The upfront collaboration between the Planning Board and the applicant create a proactive process. Current site plan review and subdivision process place the board in a reactive position, which often leads to longer review periods, difficulty in formulating consensus on the board, and perhaps the unintended loss of or degradation to important resources.

Critical components of the process will be the development guidelines and the identification of maximum density for given areas of the Town.

Subdivision Amendments

The primary objective will be to incorporate the conservation subdivision process into the Town's subdivision regulations. This task is dependent upon the preparation and adoption of residential and commercial development guidelines and therefore should be undertaken during or shortly after the zoning code revisions.

In order to proceed, the Town should direct the Town Attorney and staff (perhaps with a committee) to draft the subdivision revisions. Alternatively, the Town may wish to retain professional services to perform the task, typically in concert with the Town Attorney, staff and committee. Once the draft is available for public review, the Town Board would hold a public hearing. After sufficient opportunity for public input has been provided and any necessary revisions incorporated, the Town Board would adopt the subdivision amendments. Adoption of the subdivision amendments is subject to the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) regulations (6 NYCRR 617). However, the environmental impact of the subdivision amendments are addressed in SEQR

documentation for the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, it may not be necessary to conduct SEQR unless the proposed amendments are significantly different than envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan. This would be decided by the Town Board.

Residential and Commercial Development Guidelines

This task will involve the creation of illustrated guidelines for development of both residential subdivisions and commercial projects. The guidelines are intended to replace current bulk regulations that specify rigid setbacks and lot dimensions and will provide much the same guidance but in a more flexible manner that can address the unique characteristics of each project. Illustrations should be incorporated into the guidelines to visually express the Town's intent.

This task is an essential element of the revised site plan review and conservation subdivision processes and therefore should be undertaken in the short term.

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Plan recommendations that address the conservation of environmental and community resources should also be incorporated into the guidelines as policy statements and required procedures. An example of this is the coordination process with federal and state agencies for the delineation and confirmation of wetland boundaries. Although flexibility is important, the Town can incorporate any portion of the guidelines as requirements to reduce uncertainties, as necessary.

The guidelines should also include guidance on landscaping and the preservation of existing trees and other important vegetation. A tree survey should also be required for all projects and available for review during the initial stages of the conservation subdivision process. A maintenance plan is needed to ensure that landscaping and other elements designed for aesthetic improvement and public benefit are kept in good condition and replaced as necessary throughout the life of the project.

Evaluate Incentive Zoning

Incentive zoning is permitted under Town Law § 261-b. This is the last important component of the legislative (regulatory) group of growth management tools recommended for controlling future development and has therefore been designated a short term action. As envisioned, the Town will adopt zoning in accordance with the land use plan. The zoning will specify permitted uses and densities. The development process will be dictated by the conservation subdivision/review process, which provides much more flexibility in design. Site layout will be guided by illustrated residential and commercial design guidelines. Incentive zoning provides the opportunity for the provision of additional public benefit and amenities in exchange for bonuses that benefit the developer.

The latter component, incentive zoning, is important to the process because of the increased flexibility. If the Planning Board's hands are no longer tied on issues such as minimum lot size and road design standards, they can work with a developer to

protect/enhance the unique characteristics of the particular project. Incentive zoning allows the Planning Board to offer a developer a bonus in exchange for some desirable community benefit. An example might be that the Town agrees to allow the developer to increase the number of units (increase density) if he/she is willing to purchase (from a willing landowner) the development rights of a parcel of land that has been identified by the community as important farmland or open space. The incentive based approach to achieving community goals complements what will become a very interactive and open process for future development projects.

Incentive zoning is not intended as an avenue for increased density with marginal benefits. It will be critical for the Town to identify what incentives will be offered and what is expected as a corresponding community benefit. The Town must identify a maximum density for any given area so as not to jeopardize the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

It will be necessary for the Town to designate which zoning districts or overlay zones will carry the incentive zoning provisions.

The following procedures are recommended to establish the incentive zoning legislation.

- . • Based on information collected for the Comprehensive Plan, the Town should derive a draft list of incentives and community benefits. The list should be made available for public review and opportunity provided for public input.
- . • While conducting community outreach for the above, the Town should prepare the draft zoning.
- . • Depending on the extent of benefits and incentives, it may be necessary to engage the SEQR process.
- . • A public hearing would be required and the process for adoption would follow the same procedures as any zoning amendment.

This task could be combined with the other code amendments.

Open Space, Recreation, and Pathways Plan

The purpose of combining the actions of open space conservation, recreational needs, and linkages is that these issues are highly dependent upon one another and equal in terms of their importance to the community. Therefore a single plan is proposed to cover the following components:

Open Space Conservation – This component would identify appropriate, long-term land protection strategies that manage future growth in rural areas of the Town. The types of tools and techniques that might be considered are described in some detail under the *Growth Management* section of this comprehensive plan. The plan should be developed with active participation from farmers, other landowners, and interested Town residents.

The plan should establish a goal for open space protection in terms of both acres of protected land and the types of open space resources that the Town seeks to protect. The

plan should also establish the principles and techniques for how these lands should be protected (for example: incentive based techniques such as acquisition or Purchase of Development Rights). A fiscal model could be developed to explore land use scenarios that included an open space protection program. The fiscal model would project the potential fiscal implications (i.e. impact on taxes) of this program once the Town's protection goals and techniques are refined.

A primary focus of this work should be the identification and preservation of appropriate parcels in the Town for open space or agricultural use. The plan would establish a completely voluntary program for land conservation. The most successful approaches to land conservation are incentive based, whereby the landowner is compensated for the lost development potential of the property while retaining the right to own and work the land. Farmers and other large landowners would have the opportunity to apply for these incentives.

The process for developing this plan involves discussions with individual land owners and community input to identify goals and appropriate implementation tools. In order to proceed, the Town Board should authorize professional services to develop the plan and conduct community outreach. Once complete, the Town should adopt the plan and establish funding mechanisms. Grants may also be available and should be investigated.

Recreation Master Plan - A detailed assessment of recreational needs and opportunities should be developed. Active and passive recreational opportunities, programs, and recommendations should be identified along with funding sources. In addition to larger centralized facilities, the plan should include neighborhood parks. Standards for the incorporation of recreational facilities into new development projects should also be provided.

Typically, a recreation master plan begins with a resident survey to identify needs. This procedure replaces the older method of projecting needs based on national standards. Once these needs have been established, recommendations can be made to address:

- . • Location for new facilities
- . • Guidelines for the incorporation of recreational areas in new development
- . • Funding mechanisms

The results of the needs survey can be included as part of the criteria for identifying open space parcels.

Pathways Master Plan – The purpose of the pathways plan is to investigate the establishment of trails for recreational use and linkage. This may occur as the last component of the overall plan since the identification of locations for recreational use will partially dictate proposed trail linkages. Pathways should link population centers/neighborhoods with important destinations, such as parks. Such linkages will promote a healthier lifestyle and less dependence on motor vehicles. Pathways can, at times, dictate the desired location for parks and other open space, particularly when considering incorporating regional trails. This plan component can be distinguished from the Mobility Plan by its emphasis on recreational use and connectivity. The Mobility

Plan will address other linkage issues such as connections between commercial areas and neighborhoods and overall recommendations for improving upon the pedestrian environment.

Corridor Study & Action Plan (Route 9, Route 50, & Ballard Road)

The need to address development and mobility along Route 9, Route 50 and Ballard Road is important and a candidate for a short term action.

The corridor study should address access management, streetscape improvements, and pedestrian linkages. Corridor studies are as much land use studies as they are traffic studies. Land use is critical to the flow of traffic. Multiple access points along a highway create multiple points of congestion. The corridor study should evaluate the potential to combine driveways and possibly construct service roads.

Also from a land use perspective, the study should include design standards that halt strip development. Where appropriate, careful attention should be paid to the pedestrian environment, providing sidewalks and streetscape amenities that will encourage people to walk rather than drive from point to point. Opportunities to link near-by residential neighborhoods to various destinations along the corridors may also reduce the number of vehicle trips.

Like most of the planning tasks, the corridor study should begin with an inventory of resources and the development of a base map to address access issues. Prior to developing recommendations, it would be useful to conduct a design charrette to address visual character, commercial architectural design standards, and pedestrian linkage opportunities.

The final product should be an action plan that includes alternatives for access management, pedestrian access, draft design/architectural standards, a vision for the streetscape, and a plan and schedule for financing the projects.

Neighborhood/Hamlet Master Plans

Three areas have been identified for the potential future development or redevelopment of hamlets. They include the Wilton Hamlet (Ballard Road and Route 9), Gurn Springs Hamlet (Exit 16 area), and Maple Avenue Hamlet (Route 9 and Northern Pines). In order to determine the appropriate land uses and form for the hamlets, master plans should be conducted.

Development of the hamlet master plans should involve the following:

- The Town should establish a small (perhaps 5 to 7 member) Hamlet

Master Plan Committee consisting of neighborhood residents, business owners, and other neighborhood stakeholders. The Committee would work with the Town's professional planning consultant and Town staff in the development of the plan.

- The process of developing a hamlet master plan should include a series of public workshops in which neighborhood residents, neighborhood business owners, Town officials, additional neighborhood stakeholders (for example, the school district) and any other interested/concerned Town residents are invited, and encouraged to participate.

- Early in the process, the geographic extent of the hamlet should be determined. A hamlet should have an identifiable center and an edge, and should be fairly compact. Ideally, the distance between center and edge would be between 1/4 and 1/2 mile, a distance that someone can comfortably walk in 10 to 15 minutes.

- The Hamlet Master Plan should identify opportunities and constraints for the hamlet, define a vision, and produce goals and objectives that establish policy for achieving the vision. This component of the plan should be developed in concert with the vision, goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

- The Hamlet Master Plan should consider: the appropriate mix of land uses, architectural and urban design characteristics, transportation (including all modes), economic development opportunities, natural resource conservation, recreation, and other areas of concern.

- The Hamlet Master Plan should make specific zoning code recommendations, should identify sites for appropriate residential and commercial development, should provide suggestions for pedestrian circulation, trails, traffic calming, automobiles and public transportation, and should locate areas for recreation and for open space conservation.

- The Hamlet Master Plan should include an implementation section. This section would detail public and private sector activities that would

advance the recommendations in the plan, would identify methods of funding neighborhood improvements, and would prioritize actions.

The process for developing a Hamlet Master Plan should include the following:

- Creation of the Master Plan Advisory Committee by the Town Board, including appointment of members.

- Conduct neighborhood meetings to identify issues in greater detail.

- Interview all stakeholders in the area including Town departments, schools, business, and civic groups.

- Identify opportunities and constraints.

- Develop a vision and goals and objectives.

- Develop plan recommendations and the means of implementation.

Fiscal Impact Model

This very useful tool for projecting the future impact of various land use decisions is

often linked to open space plans. Decisions to purchase development rights or remove parcels from the tax rolls may have fiscal impacts. The fiscal model can be used to predict what the impact might be relative to other land use scenarios.

But this is only one use of the model. It might be important for the Town to know how much commercial and industrial development is necessary to balance the tax base. The model can incorporate spending for amenities other than open space (trails, recreational facilities, redevelopment and revitalization, cultural activities, senior citizen facilities, etc.) to identify a reasonable spending program for amenities.

Since the model is a planning tool, it typically does not require community input or other actions by the Town. However, there are a number of data inputs to develop a baseline condition that should involve consensus on the part of a committee. Development of the model typically includes an evaluation of a few land use scenarios. These can be developed to address a given task underway. If linked to the open space plan, the model might be used to compare development and land preservation.

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Once completed, the model can be used to address a number of land use decisions. To provide the most flexibility, selected town officials/staff should be trained in the use of the model.

Mobility Plan

The Town could consider a plan for the circulation of vehicles and pedestrians in the Town. The purpose of the mobility plan is to provide greater balance between the vehicular and pedestrian environment. Pedestrian linkages between neighborhoods and the various destinations (present and future) should be laid out. The plan should also address public transportation, potential future collector roads, regional traffic, potential establishment of Exit 15A on the Northway, safety improvements, and protection of residents from traffic impacts (safety and quality of life).

The mobility plan is not intended to be a traffic engineering study. It should take a broad look at the Town and establish policies and make specific project recommendations to improve the vehicular and pedestrian transportation network.

On-Going Actions

Economic Development Initiative

The purpose of the economic development initiative is to promote well-planned, well-located commercial, office, and industrial development by establishing the framework for future specific tasks. Components of this task include the following:

- . • An inventory of existing commercial and industrial areas of the Town to identify issues to be addressed in future action plans.
- . • A strategy for the establishment and appropriate use of public-private

partnerships for economic development.

- . • A strategy for funding redevelopment/revitalization projects (budgeting and grants).
- . • Establishment of incentives to attract and retain locally owned businesses.
- . • Establishment of an Economic Development Committee to oversee the initiative and to develop relationships with the SEDC and related organizations.

The Town may also wish to identify sites suitable for commercial and industrial development and pre-approve these sites to encourage new economic growth. The primary component of this task is the identification of areas in the Town where future economic development will not significantly impact residential areas or community character and may include redevelopment efforts, especially in the Exit 15 area. Specific environmental review and permitting would follow.

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The Town Board should charge the Economic Development Committee with the task of identifying target areas and target businesses and marketing these areas with the assistance of the SEDC.

Planning Education

The purpose of this task is to train the planning and zoning board members on the new procedures for site plan and subdivision review. If implemented, several new procedures and tools will be available to the boards. Members should be knowledgeable of these tools in order to be effective and efficient with the process.

The Town should also consider budgeting for conferences and planning schools to keep board members and staff current on planning tools, decisions, and court cases.

Medium Term Actions – 2-4 Years

Neighborhood Revitalization Planning

Many older developments in suburban areas were constructed in like manner to today's subdivisions. That is, they were once situated in rural areas and little attention was paid to amenities that are typically found in urban areas. The primary amenity that people sought was rural character and open space. However, development has surrounded and extended beyond the older subdivisions, as it spreads outward. The older subdivisions have become interior residential neighborhoods, much like those of a city, but without the amenities. This has resulted in traffic, noise, air, water (stormwater and water quality), aesthetic, recreation, and general safety impacts. Disinvestment is also a problem in

some communities and should be carefully monitored.

The purpose of this task is to identify the issues facing older neighborhoods of the community (both residential and commercial) and to provide an action plan to reduce impacts.

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This task should begin with a series of neighborhood meetings aimed at identifying issues specific to the area and gaining consensus on the appropriate solutions. An action plan should be developed to prioritize mitigation. The action plan should include opportunity for neighborhood input/involvement with other redevelopment and improvement projects such as commercial revitalization (e.g. Exit 15), pedestrian linkages, and corridor studies. An effective tool for beginning neighborhood discussions is Study Circles. This program teaches neighborhood volunteers to be facilitators for small group sessions designed to discuss specific issues in a non-threatening environment.

Historic & Architectural Review Guidelines

The purposes of the historic and architectural review guidelines are to create standards for quality and uniformity of commercial/office/industrial design in conjunction with the community's concept or vision for a given area and to provide protection for historic structures throughout the Town.

The Town Board should consider establishing an advisory commission charged with reviewing projects referred to them by the Town Board or Planning Board. Their first task would be to serve as a committee for the development of the guidelines. This task may be linked to plans for the hamlets, commercial road corridors, and redevelopment areas. The advisory commission could provide input to these other planning efforts and revise their own architectural guidelines to reflect the new visions for areas of Town as they develop.

Architectural review guidelines would address the visual aspects of the structure as it relates to the surroundings and the vision for the area. Historic review guidelines would address the potential impact of a project on the historic character of a structure. They would also provide guidelines for the maintenance of the structure itself, usually in conjunction with owner incentives (tax abatement program).

Long Term Actions -(5+ Years)

Comprehensive Plan Update

Although a comprehensive plan typically adopts a 20-year planning period, communities that are undergoing development pressure cannot afford to wait that long to revisit the plan recommendations. The Town of Wilton should continue to monitor the changes in the community. Even if all is "going according to plan," the character and composition

of the community may shift significantly such that visions and goals change. The Town should conduct a review of the plan recommendations in 5-year intervals to determine if a comprehensive plan update is warranted.

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GLOSSARY OF PLANNING TERMS

Benefit Area: This term is used to identify the portion of the Town of Wilton that has or may have water and sewer service provided by the Wilton Water and Sewer Authority.

Buffer: Buffers separate different land uses by incorporating natural features such as woodlands, stone wall, and hedgerows wherever feasible, or require the creation of a substantial planted buffer where no natural features exists.

Clustering: A technique that allows the modification of the arrangement of lots, buildings, and infrastructure permitted by the zoning law to be placed on a parcel of land to be subdivided. The design flexibility created by this modification results in the placement of buildings and improvements on a part of the land to be subdivided in order to preserve the natural and scenic quality of the remainder of the land. The use of clustering provisions helps a municipality to achieve planning goals that may call for protection of open space, protection of scenic views, protection of agricultural lands, protection of woodlands and other landscapes, by placing development away from these resources.

Comprehensive Plan: (also known as Master Plan) A comprehensive plan is a written document that identifies the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, and strategies for the growth and development of the community.

Conservation Development: A form of site development that places important natural, cultural and aesthetic resources at the heart of the subdivision or site plan review process. The process begins by identifying what resources should be protected. Development areas are identified next, and are selected to avoid the areas identified for their conservation value in the first step. Conservation development design usually achieves a higher quantity and a better quality of open space protection through the development process than does clustering alone. In the case of residential development, this process is often used in conjunction with a cluster design or planned development and few, if any, requirements for frontage and setbacks. However, it is equally applicable to the development of standard lots under current zoning. The important aspect is the process that brings the reviewing agency (typically a planning board) in the early stages of site design to assist in identifying important resources to be preserved.

Conservation Easement: A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between the landowner and the municipality, and/or a third party such as a land trust, to protect land from development by permanently restricting the use and development of the property, thereby preserving its natural or manmade features. The legally binding agreement is filed in the office of the county clerk in the same manner as a deed. The landowner retains ownership of the land, and all of the rights of ownership except the ability to develop the land. The specific restrictions are detailed in the easement agreement.

Conservation Overlay District: An overlay district is a set of additional requirements for development/land use over and above the existing zoning. Typically, the requirements are more stringent and focused on a specific issue. The purpose of overlay districts is not to change the potential underlying uses (although some uses may be precluded) but rather to ensure the uses are developed/conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the specific issue. A conservation overlay district would provide a set of requirements to address specific natural resources and perhaps procedures for identifying and reviewing the presence of such resources.

Cultural Resources: The cultural features of a community which reflect the ways in which the people who have lived there have used their natural environment to suit their economic needs and social patterns.

Design Guidelines: Design guidelines are usually illustrated and describe the community's values in terms of site and architecture patterns of development. Design guidelines are generally informational and collaborative in nature, creating an opportunity for people to review the guidelines prior to designing a project with the advantage of understanding the goals of the community and the planning board.

Gateways: The main entrance to a community, typically a roadway, which influences the visitor's first response to the community. Gateways may highlight the general character of the area or project a theme on which the community is building.

Growth Management: The process by which a community controls the location, form, timing and amount of land development (growth) in the community. The community can utilize a variety of methods (tools) to achieve its growth management objectives.

Hamlet or Neighborhood Master Plan: The basic intent of the hamlet master plan is to identify appropriate land use and other related recommendations to address issues specific to the given area and to become an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. Like the Comprehensive Plan, the Town Board should adopt hamlet master plans as the Town's official land use policy for the designated areas. Careful attention should be paid to the needs of the residents and business owners of the hamlet, however, this feedback should also be weighed against the results of the community outreach program for the Comprehensive Plan, as reflected in the plan recommendations.

Incentive Zoning: Incentive zoning is a regulatory tool that allows a community to work creatively with a developer to produce projects that meet the needs of both parties. In general, incentive zoning involves the identification of specific benefits desired by the community (eg., open space) and corresponding incentives that can be offered to a developer in exchange for providing the benefit. These benefits and incentives are defined by the community in their incentive zoning legislation. An example of one use of incentive zoning would be an authorization to develop a parcel more intensively (by a specified amount) in exchange for the provision of public open space, perhaps the transfer of development rights from another parcel.

Open Space: Open space consists of farmland, woodland, and other ecological, recreational, and scenic land which helps to define the character of a community, and buffers residential and other land uses. Open space may be public or privately owned. Some open space is permanently protected from development such as parks, nature preserves, and wetlands while other parcels are subject to development. What land is defined as open space depends upon the surrounding area.

Even a narrow pathway or a cemetery surrounded by development can constitute an open space resource in a community.

Purchase of Development Rights: The development value of specific parcels of land can be *purchased* by the town or a land trust. When development rights are purchased, the process is called Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). The cost of PDR depends on the specific parcel. It is calculated by determining the current appraised value of the property and its appraised value as open or agricultural land without development potential. The difference between these two numbers is the value (the cost) of the development rights that will be purchased. Conservation easements are the legally

binding document that ensures that once the development rights are purchased, the land remains undeveloped in perpetuity.

Quality Open Space: Natural areas or agricultural lands that are interconnected, not fragmented and that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the area. A portion of the open space must be adjacent to the main road (not the internal subdivision road) and/or adjacent to trail corridors. Steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands, vernal pools, floodplains, forested land, and even open fields (either natural or in agricultural use) are all quality open space providing they meet the criteria above.

Right-to-farm: A term which has gained widespread recognition in the State's rural areas over the past several decades. Section 308 of the Agriculture and Markets Law grants protection from nuisance lawsuits to farm operators within agricultural districts or on land outside a district which is subject to an agricultural assessment under section 306 of the Law. The protection is granted to the operator for any farm activity which the Commissioner has determined to be a sound agricultural practice. At a local level, many rural municipalities have used their home rule power to adopt local right-to-farm laws. These local laws are statements of policy that indicate the municipality's support for continued agricultural activity. They commonly include provisions to notify *buyers* of land near farms that agricultural activities, which sometimes cause noise, odor, dust, etc., occur in the area in which they are purchasing land. The intent is to inform the purchaser about these agricultural activities in advance of their purchase so that they cannot claim later that they were unaware and argue that the agricultural activity is a nuisance. Notification is either made at the time of closing or, ideally, at the time of contract. Some right to farm laws also include provisions encouraging mediation strategies as an alternative to litigation, which can be helpful due to the high cost of litigation.

Shovel-Ready -A phrase which is usually used to describe a location that is designated and approved for future economic development. Environmental review and infrastructure (water, sewer, energy, communication) needs for the site are studied in advance of development to ensure that it is nearly pre-approved for certain types of economic activity. The goal is to have these sites ready for development as an incentive for luring companies to the locations. The term shovel ready, as used in the context of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), does not necessarily mean that site specific issues (such as a wetland delineation and a cultural resources survey) have been addressed. The proper term for this situation is "SEQR compliant."

Sprawl: A development pattern that is characterized by expanding metropolitan areas, the conversion of farmland and natural areas to development, disinvestment in existing developed areas such as cities, villages, and older suburbs, the segregation of all land uses, and heavy dependence on the automobile for mobility. Under this pattern of development it becomes very expensive to provide roads, sewers, water, and services like police and fire protection to low-density suburban development, a consequence felt by the taxpayers.

State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR): The State Environmental Quality Review Act requires local legislatures and land use agencies (town board, planning board, zoning board of appeal) to consider, avoid, and mitigate significant environmental impacts of the projects that they approve, fund, or directly undertake. The adoption of a comprehensive plan by a town board is an action subject to SEQR.

Tax Abatement: Tax abatement is a reduction in taxes often associated with term conservation easements.

Term Conservation Easement: A term conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement to keep a particular parcel of land undeveloped. This agreement between a landowner and the municipality is written to last for a period of years, most commonly for 5 to 25 years.

Utility Master Plan: A utility master plan is a town wide plan for the extension of services like, water and sewer, which shape and drive development patterns and densities.

Wetlands: Wetlands are ecosystems comprised of land areas that are highly influenced by water. The sources of water vary and may include surface runoff, flooding, and/or high groundwater. The presence of water, particularly during the growing season, influences soil characteristics and vegetation. There are many types of wetlands that are generally defined by the frequency and duration of hydrologic influence; in other words, inundation (flooding/ponding) or soil saturation. Hydrology influences the type of vegetation and the type of wildlife habitat that is created. Wetlands have been studied and classified for several decades and numerous benefits have been identified including the storage and treatment of stormwater, groundwater recharge, maintenance of stream flow, habitat for numerous wildlife species including threatened and endangered species, nutrient cycling, recreation, and aesthetic quality, to name some. The functions wetlands provide and the value of those functions to the environment vary significantly. Although typically regulated by State and federal agencies, wetlands can also be protected through local laws and less formally through development guidelines and the conservation subdivision/development process.

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