

Seeking Grant funding for the Fratelli Zeta LLC property is consistent with the Wilton 2019, Plan of Conservation and Development

Excerpts (emphasis added)

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3: Vision and Plan

As a result of a robust, participatory, and forward-thinking planning process, the Wilton community aspires to see the following vision realized:

... A Wilton where its natural and historical environments are preserved, integrated, and improved to become sought-after design features, community amenities, and regional attractions.

...A Wilton where connectivity – natural, historical, physical, technological, social and economic – is cultivated by design.”

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Overarching Theme

Wilton will preserve and protect its natural resources, rural areas, and historic resources; and, provide residents with access to high quality open spaces, and recreational opportunities. The Town will continue to be a state leader in sustainability and conservation efforts.

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Goal 1: Conserve and Enhance Open Space and Greenways

Issues and Trends:

Wilton benefits from a wide variety of natural resources and open spaces, including forested lands, agricultural fields, wetlands, and meadows.

- ***Approximately two-thirds of survey respondents indicated the availability of open space was a “somewhat important” or “very important” consideration in deciding to move to or remain in Wilton.***

- ***Other stewardship organizations that collaborate with the Conservation Commission include Wilton Land Conservation Trust, Aspetuck Land Trust, Trout Unlimited, Norwalk River Watershed Association, Wilton Go Green, Norwalk River Valley Trail, Wilton Historical Society, Wilton Garden Club and Woodcock Nature Center.***

- ***Wilton’s system of parks and open spaces provides residents with numerous passive recreational opportunities as well as environmental benefits.***

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1.2 Acquire open space that complements existing holdings in an appropriate and fiscally prudent manner.

The Town should partner with local organizations to identify priority conservation lands. With public funds increasingly limited, the Town should explore a diverse range of mechanisms for open space protection, such as grant funds and private fundraising efforts.

- *Maintain strong relationships with land trusts to facilitate partnerships in preservation.*
- *Explore a range of funding mechanisms for open space preservation...*

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Future Open Space Acquisition Criteria,

Properties Adjacent to Existing Open Space provide opportunities to develop larger and more contiguous open space corridors throughout the town.

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Goal 2: Protect Wilton's abundant natural resources,

Issues and Trends:

As economic development and housing opportunities are pursued efforts should be made to protect and improve water quality.

- *Protection of water quality was the second highest rated conservation issues among survey respondents.*

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As Wilton grows and develops, it has become increasingly important to conserve and enhance existing natural areas and improve habitat for plants and animals.

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- *Protect areas identified in DEEP's natural diversity database*

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- *Minimize forest fragmentation*

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70% of public survey respondents said that historic architecture, landscapes, scenic vistas, and character were "somewhat important" or a "very important" consideration when deciding to move to or remain in Wilton.

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4.3 Protect scenic roads and rural landscapes:

Wilton's rural and scenic landscapes, including farmland, scenic vistas, stone walls, and hilly terrain, exhibit the natural splendor of the Town and contribute to the Town's sense of place and quality of life.

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- *Seek opportunities to develop and promote more walking trails in active and passive recreation areas through public-private partnerships and/or grant opportunities.*

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Residential Rural Density

Due to limited public infrastructure ... conservation and low-impact development are the priorities. In addition, these areas have a unique design character and landscape, including many historic buildings, farm fields, stone walls, ridgelines, rolling terrain, and scenic winding roads that should be preserved.

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Conservation Priorities Plan

Riparian Corridors are located along Wilton's many streams and rivers... Riparian corridors are priority conservation areas and protect water quality, control flooding, filter stormwater runoff, reduce erosion, and restore ecologically important areas.

Properties with significant natural resources should be considered for future open space protections

Existing Open Space – future consideration should be given to properties that are adjacent to existing open space properties, as they provide an opportunity to develop larger and more contiguous open space corridors throughout the Town.

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Consistency with State and Regional Plans

State of Connecticut Growth Management Principals:

- ***Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands.***

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The goals of the 2006 Regional Plan and 2019 draft Regional Plan are very similar to the State Plan and focus steering development towards areas with existing transportation and infrastructure, creating a more diverse housing stock in the face of shifting demographics, maintaining a strong business climate, preserving historic resources, **and protecting natural resources and open space**. ***Overall, the Wilton POCD aligns very well with the goals and objectives of the current and proposed Regional Plans.***