

PLANNING & ZONING
DEPARTMENT
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TOWN OF WILTON
Town Hall Annex
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

PLANNING AND ZONING STAFF REPORT

November 6, 2019

APPLICANT: Dominick P. and Marie C. Agostin, by J. Casey Healy c/o Gregory and Adams, P.C., **REG#19381**

ZONE: N/A

LOCATION: Potentially affecting residential dwellings located on residentially-zoned properties, fronting on Old Ridgefield Road

OWNERS: N/A

ACREAGE: N/A

Background:

The applicant is requesting an amendment to Section 29-5.C.6 of the Zoning Regulations as it pertains to “professional offices for nonresident occupants”. Similar to the adaptive use regulation, this provision allows for the partial conversion of residentially-zoned dwellings to professional office space; subject to the approval of a Special Permit and adherence with certain regulatory conditions; including a requirement that the property possess a minimum frontage of 50 feet on Danbury Road. The current regulation, including requisite conditions, is provided on Attachment #1.

The application before the Commission (REG #19381), seeks to amend the Zoning Regulations by designating Old Ridgefield Road as a potential second location for such conversions. The amendment proposal, as drafted, does not affect other requirements.

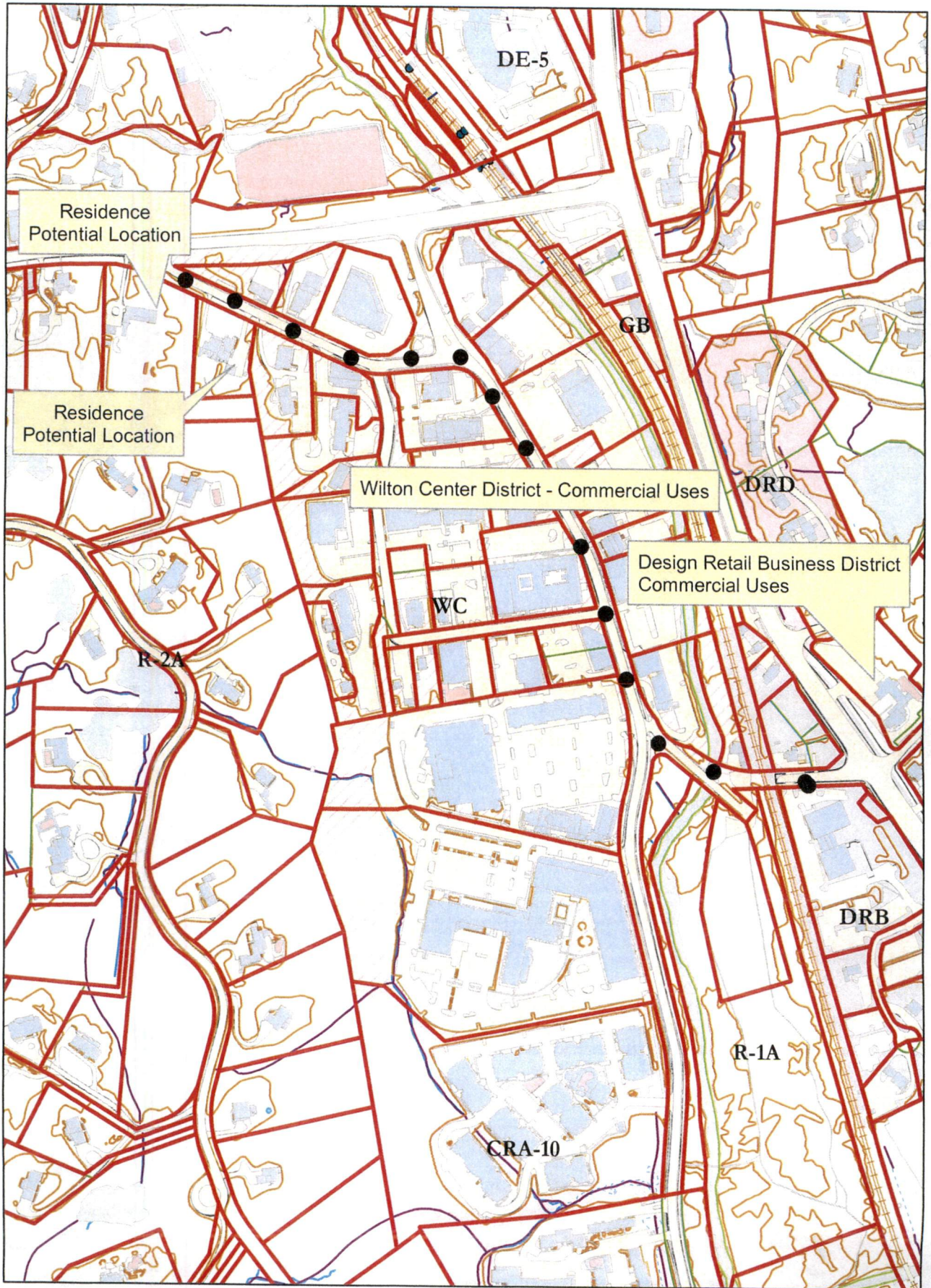
Issues for Consideration:

1. Old Ridgefield Road runs a distance of 2,975 feet; starting at Danbury Road and continuing west to the MetroNorth railroad, then crossing the Norwalk River and continuing through the village center before terminating at the intersection of Ridgefield Road. The regulation as drafted appears to affect two properties (15 Old Ridgefield Road and 67 Ridgefield Road). This is due in part to the limited number of residential dwellings on Old Ridgefield Road as well as the limited area of residentially-zoned land. Old Ridgefield Road and the underlying zoning designations appear on Attachment #2.
2. The concept of allowing non-resident professional offices as an ancillary use along fringe areas the downtown seems logical. Such policy may serve to better define the transition zone between heavier commercial uses within the town center and residential and institutional uses (Old Town Hall and Wilton Congregational Church) to the west.
3. The recently adopted 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development refers to an area described as “Greater Wilton Center”. A portion of this area extends from the village center west to the Wilton Playshop and Old Town Hall and is suggested as a potential location for step-down density and transitional uses. A copy of the relevant section of the POCD is provided by way of Attachment #3.
4. The applicant had initially submitted a request to change the zoning designation of property at 15 Old Ridgefield Road from Residential “R-2A” to “Wilton Center “WC”. The current approach of amending the zoning text as opposed to changing the underlying district designation is a preferred alternative. It will serve to better protect existing structures and prevent incompatible uses from encroaching into what can best be described as a transitional neighborhood.

Existing Regulation (including regulatory conditions)

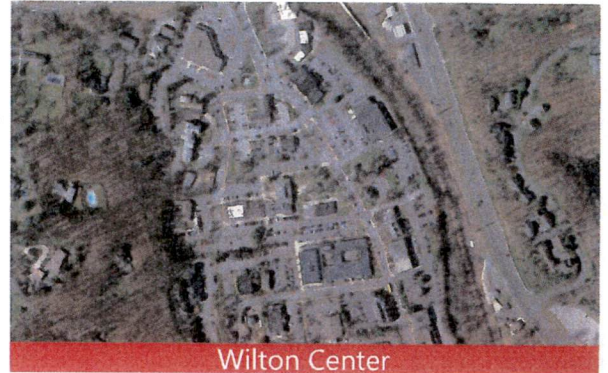
6. Professional Offices for Nonresident Occupants may be conducted in residential districts provided such property shall have a minimum of 50 feet of frontage on, and primary access from, Route 7, Danbury Road, by a person or persons other than resident occupants, subject to Special Permit and Site Plan approvals in accordance with 29-10 and 29-11 and compliance with the following:
 - a. Such use shall not occupy an amount of gross floor area in excess of one-half of the total gross floor area of the residence building.
 - b. There shall be no outside storage and no exterior display, advertising or other visible evidence of such use except in accordance with 29-5.C.6.e.
 - c. In order for a residence to qualify for an accessory office use, it shall have been used principally as a residence for at least three years prior to the date of application.
 - d. In conjunction with uses eligible for professional offices, residence apartments may be permitted within the principal building subject to the requirements of Section 29-5 C.5.c.(3).
 - e. All exterior signage shall be in accordance with the requirements of Section 29-8.A. and shall be in a style compatible with the existing architecture of the site.
 - f. All exterior lighting shall be in accordance with the requirements of Section 29-9.E. and shall be in a style compatible with the existing architecture of the site.

Attachment #2
Old Ridgefield Road



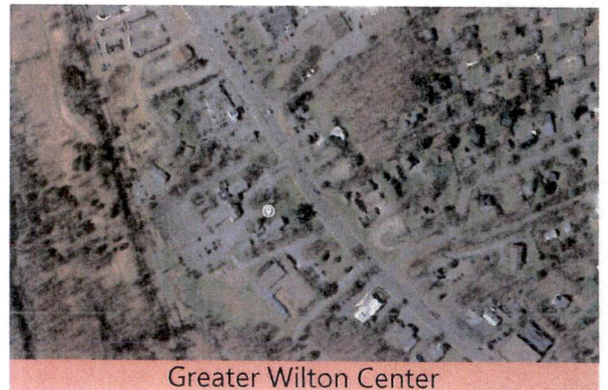
sensitive natural resources, especially the Norwalk River and future Norwalk River Valley Trail corridor.

Wilton Center – Wilton Center will continue to serve as the cultural, social, and economic center of the community. This area contains the current Wilton Center (WC) zone and also extends across the Norwalk River to include Danbury Road and the Train Station area. The Town will need to consider whether and how to expand the Wilton Center zone to encompass more of Danbury Road. Wilton Center is the Town's highest-priority development area. Wilton Center contains a mix of retailers, restaurants, public institutions, offices, and multi-family housing. Additional mixed-use development should be encouraged in alignment with the vision established as part of a Master Planning process. Efforts should be made to enhance river access and views, including fostering better connections to the Town green and nearby parks and open spaces such as Schenck's Island, Merwin Meadows, and the Norwalk River Valley Trail.



Wilton Center

Greater Wilton Center – Greater Wilton Center encompasses areas on the outskirts of Wilton Center that are intended to provide a residential and employment base supportive of Wilton Center businesses. The area extends west to the Wilton Playshop and Old Town Hall area, north to the School Road, south to Wolfpit Road and the Horseshoe Park area, and east to Danbury Road. The area is served by public water and sanitary sewer service. It may be intended to be a step-down in density between Wilton Center and the adjacent rural- and low-density residential neighborhoods, though Danbury Road could better support the traffic of higher density and intensity of uses, so this distinction should be carefully evaluated. Multi-family residences, offices, institutions, and mixed-use development should be encouraged, particularly as transit-oriented development within extended walkable distance to the Wilton Train Station. Greater Wilton Center is mostly built out and is a master planning and redevelopment priority area. As properties are redeveloped, efforts should be made to preserve existing historic structures along Danbury Road.



Greater Wilton Center