



Wilton 2019

Plan of Conservation and Development

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Prepared by:

The Town of Wilton Planning and Zoning Commission

with assistance from

 **MILONE & MACBROOM**

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With special additional thanks to former Planning and Zoning Commissioner Sally Poundstone and the many individuals and groups of the Wilton community who dedicated their time and insight to this process and who will continue to make this vision for Wilton's future possible.

Cover Photo: *Wilton Center Gazebo*

Photo Credit: Wilton Economic Development Commission

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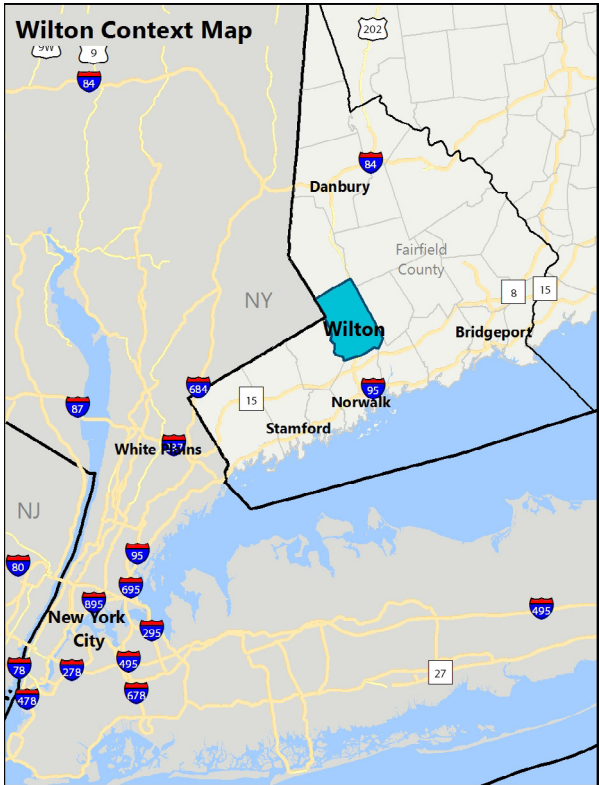
Photo Credit: Wilton Economic Development Commission

1: Introduction and Process

Introduction – A Connected Community

For more than three centuries, Wilton’s development has been driven by economic, natural, historical, physical and social connections to its surroundings.

Located on the New York border, Wilton physically connects coastal urban cities such as Norwalk and Stamford with northern and central cities such as Danbury. Bounded by Ridgefield to the north, Redding and Weston to the east, Westport and Norwalk to the south, and New Canaan and Lewisboro, New York, to the west, Wilton is a local commerce and employment center within rail and vehicular commuting distance to New York City and the metro area. Wilton’s commercial corridor along Danbury Road (Route 7) includes several Class A suburban office parks, an ASML manufacturing and R&D facility, new multifamily housing developments, and local and regional retail sites. More recent development has been, and is expected to be, concentrated in this corridor and Wilton’s three distinct, more potentially transit-oriented village centers (Wilton Center, Cannondale and Georgetown), providing residents with convenient access to a wider variety of housing options, transportation, employment, shopping, and dining.



Residents can connect to nature through the riverbanks, open spaces, habitats, valleys and vistas of the Norwalk River Valley that exist throughout and help define the Town. Among these vistas are connections to a rich rural-village community and architectural history going back centuries. Both nature and history attract a diversity of residents, businesses and visitors alike. Predominantly low-density residential neighborhoods help to preserve the natural environment and historic, rural and village design character of the community.

The Town's high-quality schools are a key source of community connection and pride, having been recognized as top-tier among peer towns, within the state, and nationally. The schools continue to be the primary driver for new families to move to Wilton.

Numerous social, political, historical, horticultural, artistic and similar organizations and programs provide cultural engagement, education, entertainment and vibrant social connections within and outside of the community.

These diverse connections have benefited Wilton since the late 1600s, when it was a collection of farms and mills, and have shaped its development into a vibrant, semi-rural/suburban community today. It is no surprise that the Town has been a uniquely attractive place to live, work, do business, raise a family, educate children, and invest.

Importantly, Wilton's development continues to be overseen by its residents through a system of self-governance established in 1802, when the Town was incorporated and adopted an annual town meeting form of government. Nearly all Town governance, policy, budgeting, and planning is determined by Wilton's residents serving on volunteer boards and commissions, with the assistance of expert Town staff and outside consultants, or by the Annual Town Meeting, where the Town's residents and property owners vote on the annual budget and Town ordinances. Wilton's local control over its fiscal, education, and land-use policy remains an identifying characteristic of the Town with tangible social, economic, and fiscal value.

This 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development sets forth the community's forward-looking vision for Wilton's development during the next ten years and beyond. It sets that vision by reflecting on what Wilton is today and what it wants to be, through the rubric of key land-use issues such as demographics, housing, conservation, sustainability, transportation, facilities, infrastructure, and economic development.

This comprehensive planning process has happened only six times in Wilton's history – in 1954, 1963, 1973, 1996, 1999, and 2009. Each process found different trends and challenges. Today's trends and challenges are notable due to their increased focus on Wilton's connections, both intrinsic and regional, whether involving economic growth, population trends, cost of living, housing affordability, environmental and historical resources protection; or the disruption of traditional commercial retail and office use from internet commerce and telecommuting; or increasingly uncertain state land-use, education, and fiscal policy that is, at times, adverse to Wilton's and the region's interests. This Plan presents a blueprint for meeting these challenges, achieving community goals and capitalizing on opportunities affecting development, conservation, the economy and resident quality of life.

Process

This Plan of Conservation and Development (the "POCD" or simply "the Plan") is an update of Wilton's 2009 POCD and is drafted in accordance with Section 8-23 of the *Connecticut General Statutes*. This law requires municipal planning commissions to prepare and adopt a POCD addressing key aspects of the Town's conditions, policies, and goals, and their consistency with regional and state plans every ten years.

This process began in the fall of 2017 with the Planning and Zoning Commission's (the "Commission") selection of Milone & MacBroom, Inc. ("MMI") to provide expert planning and data analysis, plan drafting, and community engagement services.

The Commission focused on establishing a professional and thorough process that was equally inclusive and transparent. MMI established a project website (www.Wilton2029.com) and Facebook account to keep the community informed of project announcements, meetings, and progress, and to house all POCD materials, including meeting minutes, data and analyses, surveys and survey results, and media. To incorporate town-wide expertise and perspective, the Commission established a Joint Working Group, comprised of members of the Conservation Commission, Board of Education, Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen/ WPCA/ Water Commission, Economic Development Commission, Energy Commission, Historic District and Historic Properties Commission, Inland Wetlands Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the entire Planning & Zoning Commission. MMI also asked Town boards, commissions and departments, via a questionnaire, to describe and evaluate their efforts at implementing the goals, strategies and objectives of the 2009 POCD, and to develop objectives for the new POCD. Finally, MMI conducted live and phone interviews and email exchanges with key stakeholders, including non-profit organizations and citizens with relevant local expertise.

The Joint Working Group met monthly from January through July 2018 to review current conditions and recent trends, hold public workshops on key planning topics, and consider public input on community trends, assets, needs and priorities. Public workshop topics included: demographics, housing, land use, open space, transportation, community facilities, Wilton Center and villages, and conservation, preservation and cultural resources.

The Commission actively sought resident feedback on the process, workshops, and Plan through public meetings, the POCD website, and email (wilton2029@gmail.com). The Joint Working Group held a kick-off community workshop in February 2018 and followed up on each of the six public workshops with an online community survey on key issues. Finally, MMI and the Commission engaged the Center for Research and Public Policy to draft and conduct a statistically significant, community-wide telephone survey focused on key community planning issues and priorities, which was completed in December 2018. Altogether, this planning process collected more than 2,200 survey responses. The surveys and workshop presentations are appended to this Plan in the Appendix.

Together, Town leaders, stakeholders, and individuals brought a wealth and diversity of knowledge, expertise and perspective in developing this Plan. The vision, goals, and objectives formulated in this POCD result from careful consideration of the data, expert analysis, and public input collected alongside the many vigorous and thoughtful discussions amongst residents and decision-makers, all of whom remain committed to enhancing Wilton's future.





Photo Credit: Historic Barns CT and the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

2: Wilton Today

Understanding current conditions and trends helps chart the course for policies and actions the Town can implement during the next ten years to achieve its vision. Additional data, charts, and maps can be found in the Appendices.

Demographics

Most of Wilton's early rural history saw very low populations and housing density, ranging from about 300 households when the Town was founded in 1802, to about 2,200 people and 440 houses in 1860.¹ At that time, nearly 80% of the Town's land was cleared for agricultural use.² Few homes were constructed in the ensuing decades and the population declined to just under 1,600 people as of 1900, but began to slowly increase, reaching 2,133 residents in 812 homes as of 1930.³ Wilton experienced its most rapid population growth between 1950 and 1990, as highway construction, rail service and telecommunication systems improved connections between Wilton and jobs in the New York/Fairfield County Metropolitan Area. As the recent Historic Resources Inventory for the Town of Wilton notes:

Between 1930 and 1970 Wilton underwent a dramatic transformation from a farming village to the suburban town it is today. At the beginning of the period population density was less than one person for every six acres; however, farms soon began to disappear. Farm labor was expensive, and developers were willing to pay high prices for land. Between 1940 and 1970 the town's population increased from 3,200 to 13,572. This substantial increase in residents required the construction of 2,750 new houses, seven new schools, and 160 new roads. The character of Wilton's main north/south thoroughfare, Danbury Road, changed from primarily residential to commercial; however, despite these changes, Wilton's first traffic light, located at the intersection of Route 33 and Danbury Road, was not installed until 1950.⁴

1 *Historic Resource Inventory- Phase II, Wilton, Connecticut. August 2018, pp. 13, 18, 22.*

2 *Ibid.*, 39.

3 *Ibid.*, 31.

4 *Ibid.*, 41.

Since 2000, Wilton's population has grown much more slowly, as vacant and developable land has become scarcer. Between 2000 and 2010, the population only grew by 2%. Between 2010 and 2016, the population continued to grow slowly by about 3%, reaching an estimated 18,616 people by 2016. Population projections vary, but generally indicate that Wilton will either experience some population decline or continue to grow very slowly over the next decade.

While the Town has seen its population growth rate slow and stabilize, it has seen a shift in its demographic groups similar to that experienced in the region and state outside of certain urban areas: most notably an aging population and smaller younger-worker and school-aged population. The median age of the Town's residents rose from 41.1 in 2010 to 42.5 in 2015, which is, nonetheless, younger than the median age in most neighboring Towns. The relatively high price of housing coupled with an available housing stock of detached single-family homes has more recently contributed to lower in-migration of younger working-age people and has increased the out-migration of empty-nesters and retirees. Like many communities across Connecticut, Wilton has seen a modest decline in school-aged population over the last decade, which is currently projected to continue for the next 5-10 years before reversing with slow increases again. Wilton's school system remains one of the top-performing districts in the state and continues to draw new families to Town. Finally, although Wilton's median household income is among the highest in the immediate region at \$172,095, about 28% of households make less than \$100,000 per year and 13% make less than \$50,000 per year.

Housing

The majority of homes in Wilton are detached single-family homes on lots of 1 or more acres. The low-density development patterns that have helped preserve Wilton's natural resources and rural character in terms of design and neighborhood feel. The owner-occupancy rate is higher in Wilton (86%) than in the county and state and is higher than in all neighboring towns except Weston. Wilton's high home ownership rates often contribute to, and are reflective of, a shared sense of personal investment, stewardship and pride for neighborhoods and the Town. However, the Town's single-family home market has seen some changing trends in the last ten years. This market was heavily impacted by the 2008 downturn; though the market has since stabilized, many homes today have not recovered to pre-downturn peak values. In more recent years, the community has increasingly expressed interest in increasing housing type variety and price points in design- and location-appropriate ways to provide greater diversity and liquidity to the overall housing stock, particularly in attracting and meeting the needs of occupants at different life and employment stages.

The Town has seen a modest rate of home construction in recent years. From 2007 to 2016, Wilton saw a net gain of 217 housing units, a majority of which were multifamily units. The number of demolition permits almost equaled the number of single-family permits over this time period. The trend of "tear-downs" and rebuilds that was noted in the 2010 Plan continued, albeit at a slower pace in more recent years, with older housing being replaced with newer, larger, and more expensive homes. Since 2009, the Town has added 128 affordable units⁵. However, affordable units have also expired, resulting in a net increase of 96 affordable units. The Town's affordable housing development net unit growth resulted in a moratorium on new affordable housing developments through December 2019.

⁵ Wilton Zoning Regulations Section 29-2.B.2. and 3. define "AFFORDABLE HOUSING" as: "A housing development (A) which is "assisted housing" as-defined in the Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-30g(a)(3); or (B) in which not less than twenty percent (20%) of the dwelling units will be conveyed by deeds containing covenants or restrictions which shall require that such dwelling units be sold or rented at, or below, prices which will preserve the units as affordable housing, as defined in the Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-39a, for persons or families whose income is less than or equal to eighty percent (80%) of the area median income, for at least twenty years after the initial occupation of the proposed development"; and "AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNIT" as "Housing for which persons and families pay thirty percent (30%) or less of their annual income, where such income is less than or equal to 80% of the area median income for the Town of Wilton, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development."

Economy

Wilton has a strong local economy. As of 2016, there are 8,590 Wilton residents in the labor force and 12,978 jobs in Town, indicating that Wilton is a net importer of employees and sees its population grow during the work day. The number of jobs in Wilton increased by 22% between 2007 and 2016.

Wilton has a highly educated workforce. Over 75% of adults age 25 and over have at least a bachelor's degree, and nearly 40% have a graduate degree or professional degree. Over 11% of employed Wilton residents work from home, which is more than twice the state average.

While keen to improve Wilton's economic strengths, residents and businesses are equally sensitive to challenges to Wilton's economic growth, including commercial tenant vacancies, local business turnover, property tax increases, and flat or declining home values.

Land Use

Wilton comprises 27 square miles, or approximately 17,500 acres. Residential land uses account for 60% of the developed or committed land. Open space (including both protected and unprotected lands) comprises the next largest percentage of committed land at 23%. Commercial uses comprise about 4% of the total land area. Conversely, 4% of the land in Wilton is considered undeveloped. Over the last decade, most of the new development in the Town has been single-family residential homes. However, there has been multi-family development and commercial development/redevelopment along Danbury Road and in Wilton Center.

Generalized Existing Land Use: 2018

Use	Number of Parcels	Area (Acres)	% of Developed or Committed Land	% of Total Land
Residential	5,461	10,520	62%	60%
<i>Single Family</i>	5,403	10,289	61%	59%
<i>Multi-Family or Multiple House</i>	58	230	1%	1%
Business	196	686	4%	4%
<i>Commercial</i>	189	450	3%	3%
<i>Recreation</i>	7	237	1%	1%
Open Space	532	4,083	24%	23%
<i>Protected Open Space</i>	287	1,985	12%	11%
<i>Unprotected Open Space (including Route 7 ROW)</i>	245	2,098	12%	12%
Community Facilities	47	466	3%	3%
<i>Municipal Facilities</i>	12	312	2%	2%
<i>Institutional</i>	35	154	1%	1%
Utilities & Transportation	100	1,126	7%	6%
<i>Road ROW (excluding Route 7 ROW)</i>	63	1,067	6%	6%
<i>Utilities</i>	9	16	0%	0%
<i>Water Features</i>	28	43	0%	0%
Undeveloped Land	190	617	-	4%
Total Developed or Committed Land	6,336	16,881	100%	96%
Total Land Area	6,526	17,498	-	100%

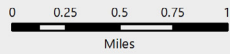
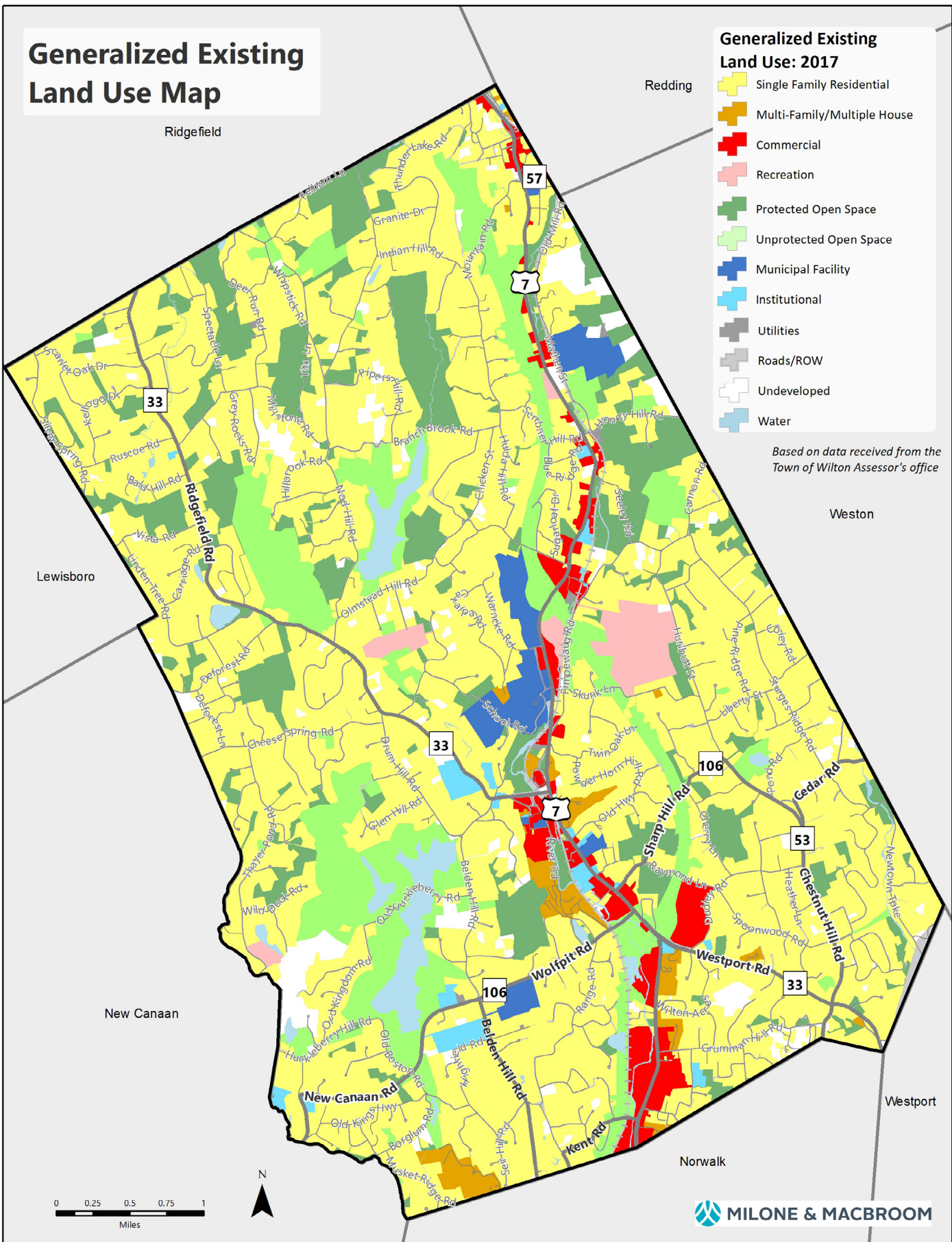
Data sources: Town of Wilton Assessor's Office, Land Use classes created by MMI in January 2018

Generalized Existing Land Use Map

Generalized Existing Land Use: 2017

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family/Multiple House
- Commercial
- Recreation
- Protected Open Space
- Unprotected Open Space
- Municipal Facility
- Institutional
- Utilities
- Roads/ROW
- Undeveloped
- Water

Based on data received from the Town of Wilton Assessor's office



This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.



Zoning














Like most communities, Wilton manages land-use activities in the community by zoning areas for specific uses and development intensities. Wilton contains a variety of districts for residential development, including three single-family zones (1-acre, 2-acre and all-affordable 1-acre districts), four multifamily housing zones of varying density, location and affordability requirements, and an affordable housing opportunity development district. Most of the land area in Wilton (85%) is in the Residential 2-Acre (R-2A) zone and permits single-family residences on lots of two acres or more. Wilton has five zoning districts for business development and other non-residential uses. In total, these districts comprise just under 3% of Wilton's land area. However, there are many businesses located outside of business zones. This is commonly seen along Danbury Road, where residential structures have been preserved by allowing their re-use for commercial purposes.

Residential Buildout

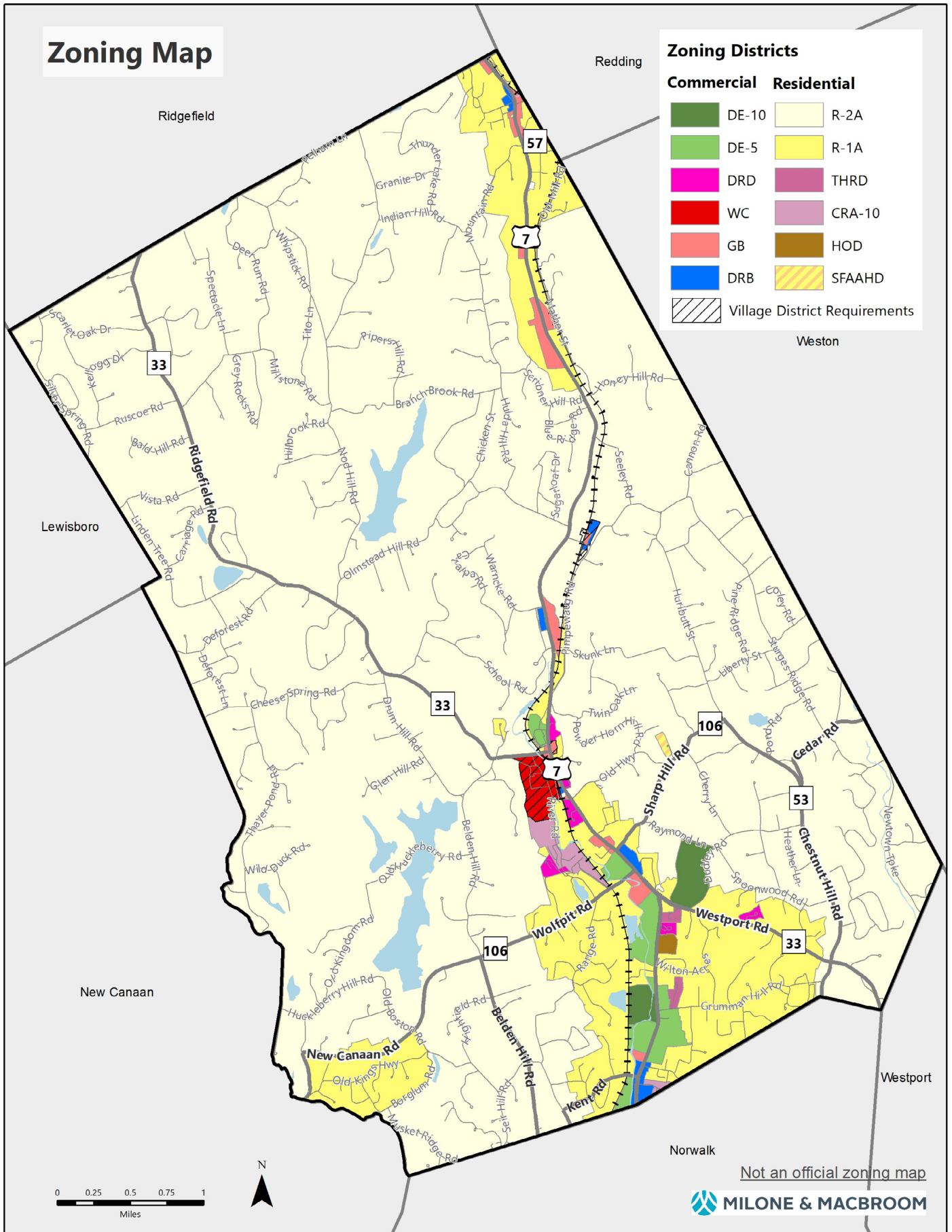
Most of the Town's vacant land development potential is on "unprotected open space" such as water utility lands or the Route 7 Expressway right-of-way owned by the state. These lands are unlikely to be developed during the next ten years. If all unprotected open space lands were developed, the Town could support an additional 550 housing units under current 1-acre and 2-acre zoning for these properties. The Town has limited development potential on vacant land (153 possible units) and excess land, which is existing residential lots that are large enough to be subdivided (64 possible units). There is currently no vacant land that is specifically zoned for multifamily housing, though multifamily housing of varying styles, densities, and price points can be constructed in several existing residential and/or business districts. At full build-out, under current zoning, the Town of Wilton could accommodate an additional 767 single-family dwelling units. With an average household size of 2.9, this equates to an additional 2,224 residents.

Zoning Map

Zoning Districts

Commercial	Residential
 DE-10	 R-2A
 DE-5	 R-1A
 DRD	 THRD
 WC	 CRA-10
 GB	 HOD
 DRB	 SFAAHD
 Village District Requirements	

Weston



Not an official zoning map

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This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.

Natural Resources

Wilton is situated at the heart of the Norwalk River Valley and enjoys exceptional access to natural resources, flora and fauna, making stormwater drainage, potable water access, water quality and quantity, and aquifer protection key considerations in future Town conservation and development. Most housing in Wilton is single-family in more rural areas, which use private wells and septic systems. Wilton has several public water supply watershed and reservoir areas serving the Town and region, including most notably the Norwalk River Aquifer. Wilton also has an abundance of public and private open space areas, parks and trails that serve as natural “pathways” and “enclaves” for wildlife. These areas protect environmental resources while also providing a valued community recreational asset to residents and visitors. About 23% of Wilton consists of open space, about half of which is formally protected. A majority of protected open space is Town-owned. Since 2010, Wilton has added 53 acres of protected open space with the purchase of conservation easements on the Levin and Keiser properties. The remaining protected open space is managed by land trusts, the state, the federal government, and through privately held conservation easements.

About half of open space in Wilton is not formally protected, although it currently functions as open space. The South Norwalk Electric and Water (City of Norwalk) owns 1,160 acres of land surrounding Pope’s Pond Reservoir, Rock Lake Reservoir, and South Norwalk Reservoir. The Route 7 expressway right-of-way forms an important open space corridor of over 600 acres and contains the Norwalk River Valley Trail. However, it is not formally protected.

Historical Resources

With settlement and development starting in the 1600s, Wilton has a wealth of historical buildings, properties and locales. The Town benefits from active stewardship of these resources through its Historic District and Historic Properties Commission, the Wilton Historical Society and numerous property owners and individuals who document, inventory, maintain, protect and celebrate Wilton’s historical properties and assets. In 2018, the Town completed Phase II of its Historic and Architectural Resources Inventory, updating the Phase I inventory of 315 units performed in 1989, and adding some 150 structures to the now 470-structure inventory of various historical styles and build dates, thereby updating the Town’s historical record.

Community Facilities

Community facilities are municipally-funded schools, libraries, public safety facilities, government offices, and recreational areas that form the backbone for the Town’s excellent quality of life. In addition, many privately-funded facilities serve the community. Several significant projects have been completed since the last POCD, including the renovation of the Comstock Community Center, renovation of the Wilton Library, and a complete renovation-rebuild and addition to the Miller-Driscoll School. The Town is evaluating needs for potential capital investments at its facilities over the next five years, including potential projects at the Town Hall Campus and Police Station, Fire Station #2, school maintenance projects and recreation projects. The Town will also explore opportunities for shared municipal services with neighboring communities as a way of providing high quality service at potentially lower cost.

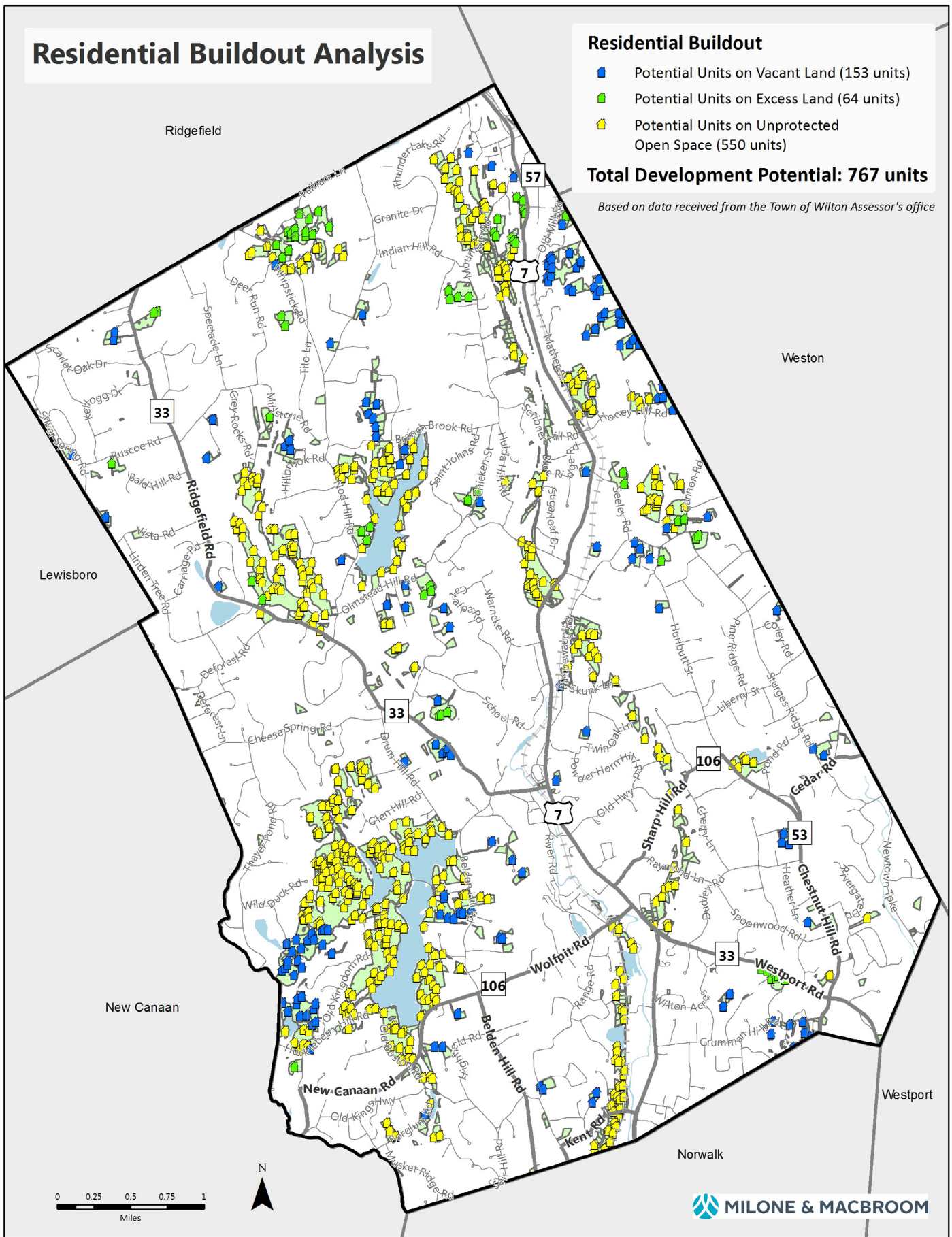
Residential Buildout Analysis

Residential Buildout

- Potential Units on Vacant Land (153 units)
- Potential Units on Excess Land (64 units)
- Potential Units on Unprotected Open Space (550 units)

Total Development Potential: 767 units

Based on data received from the Town of Wilton Assessor's office



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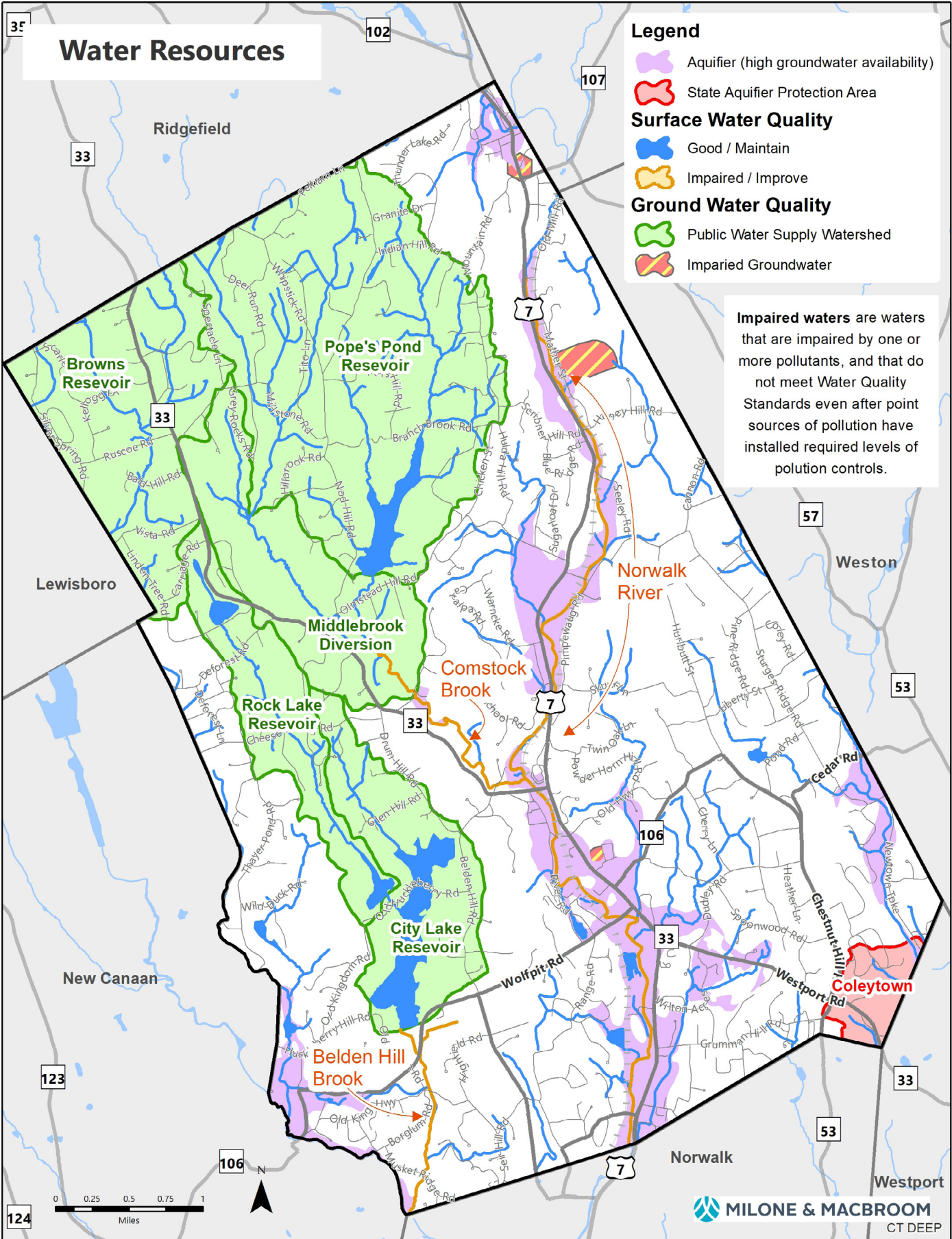


Water Resources

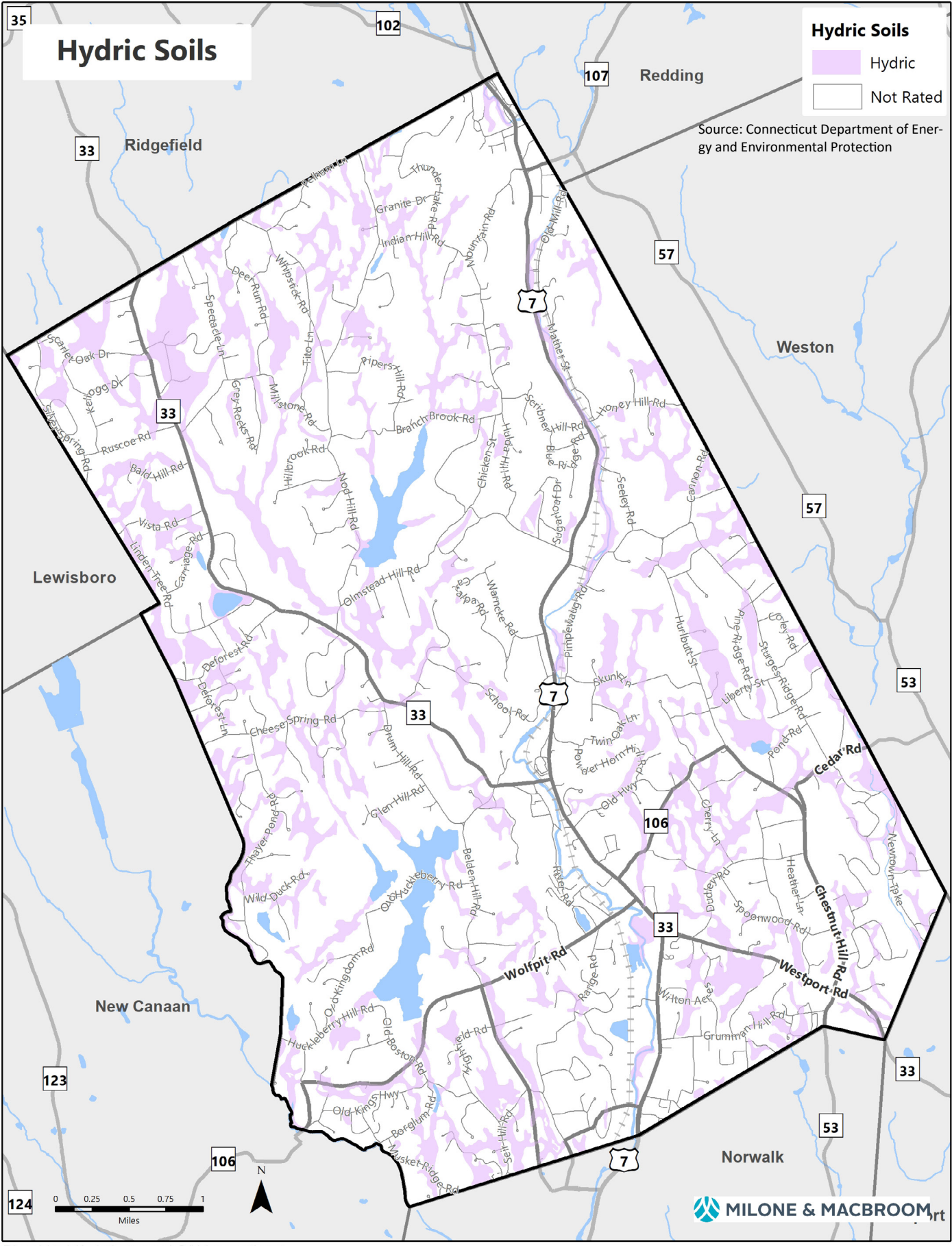
Legend

- Aquifer (high groundwater availability)
- State Aquifer Protection Area
- Surface Water Quality**
- Good / Maintain
- Impaired / Improve
- Ground Water Quality**
- Public Water Supply Watershed
- Impaired Groundwater

Impaired waters are waters that are impaired by one or more pollutants, and that do not meet Water Quality Standards even after point sources of pollution have installed required levels of pollution controls.

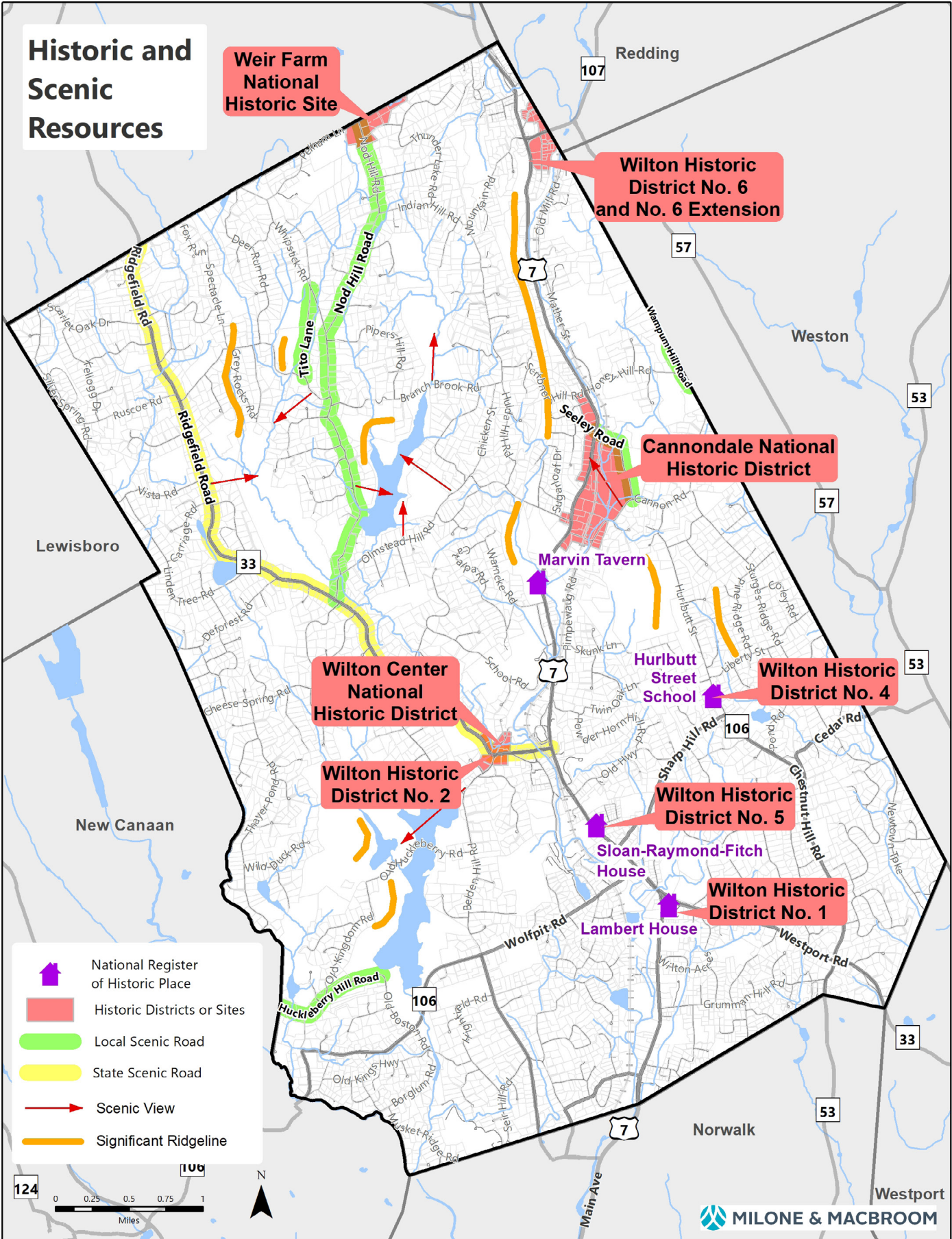


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Historic and Scenic Resources



Weir Farm National Historic Site

Wilton Historic District No. 6 and No. 6 Extension

Cannondale National Historic District







Wilton Center National Historic District

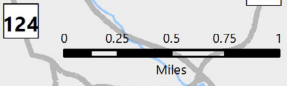
Wilton Historic District No. 2

Wilton Historic District No. 4

Wilton Historic District No. 5

Wilton Historic District No. 1

-  National Register of Historic Place
-  Historic Districts or Sites
-  Local Scenic Road
-  State Scenic Road
-  Scenic View
-  Significant Ridgeline



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Town Fiscal Indicators

Wilton has strong fiscal standing and is one of a handful of municipalities in the State with an AAA bond rating from Moody's. Property tax revenue comprises 88.1% of Town expenditures. Wilton ranks 11th in the state in Equalized Net Grand List per capita, reflecting high property values. Residential uses comprised 74.5% of the grand list as of Grand List Year 2016. The Town has a diverse tax base for a suburban community, with 14.2% of the Town's Grand List comprised of commercial, industrial, or utility property. Compared to its neighboring communities, only Norwalk has a greater share of commercial, industrial, or utility property in its Grand List. In FY 2016, the per capita property tax levy in Wilton was in the middle of its peer group, but among one of the highest in the State, due to the high quality of services and the local school system that the Town provides.

Wilton's residents and businesses are increasingly sensitive to the effect of local property taxes and state fiscal policy on cost of living, home values, and business competitiveness of the Town. The Town has seen a decline in its Grand List value for the FY 2017 revaluation performed this year. This is due in part to changing real estate markets and lack of demand for more expensive single-family homes in the Wilton market. It is also due to market pressures on traditional commercial retail and suburban office products like Wilton's, which have been affected by internet commerce, an increased desire of younger workers to work in urban areas, softening economic conditions and fiscal policy at the state level and uncertainty in state economic and fiscal policy affecting local property tax structures and costs of doing business.

Transportation System







Wilton residents benefit from a variety of ways to travel. Wilton is served by two Metro North Stations on the Danbury Branch Line and several bus stops operated by the Norwalk Transit District and Housatonic Area Regional Transit. Danbury Road (Route 7) is the major thoroughfare for automobile travel, though the Town is also served by several state roads connecting Wilton to neighboring Towns, including State Route 33, connecting the Town north and south to Ridgefield and Westport, respectively, and State Routes 106 and 53, connecting the Town to New Canaan to the west and Weston to the east.












Since the last Plan there have been several major transportation projects in Town. In 2009-2010, Danbury Road (Route 7) was widened from two to four lanes between Wolfpit Road (Route 106) and Olmstead Hill Road. Future widening is being evaluated for the section between Grist Mill Road and Route 33.

In 2016, about 69% of Wilton's 7,429 commuters drove alone to work, while 12.8% took the train. The number of rail commuters increased by nearly 70% from 2010 to 2016. The average commute time for all commuters is 38 minutes, a 15% increase since 2010. Increasing commute times underscore the importance of making regional transportation improvements during the next decade that preserve and enhance Wilton's connections to employment opportunities to the south.

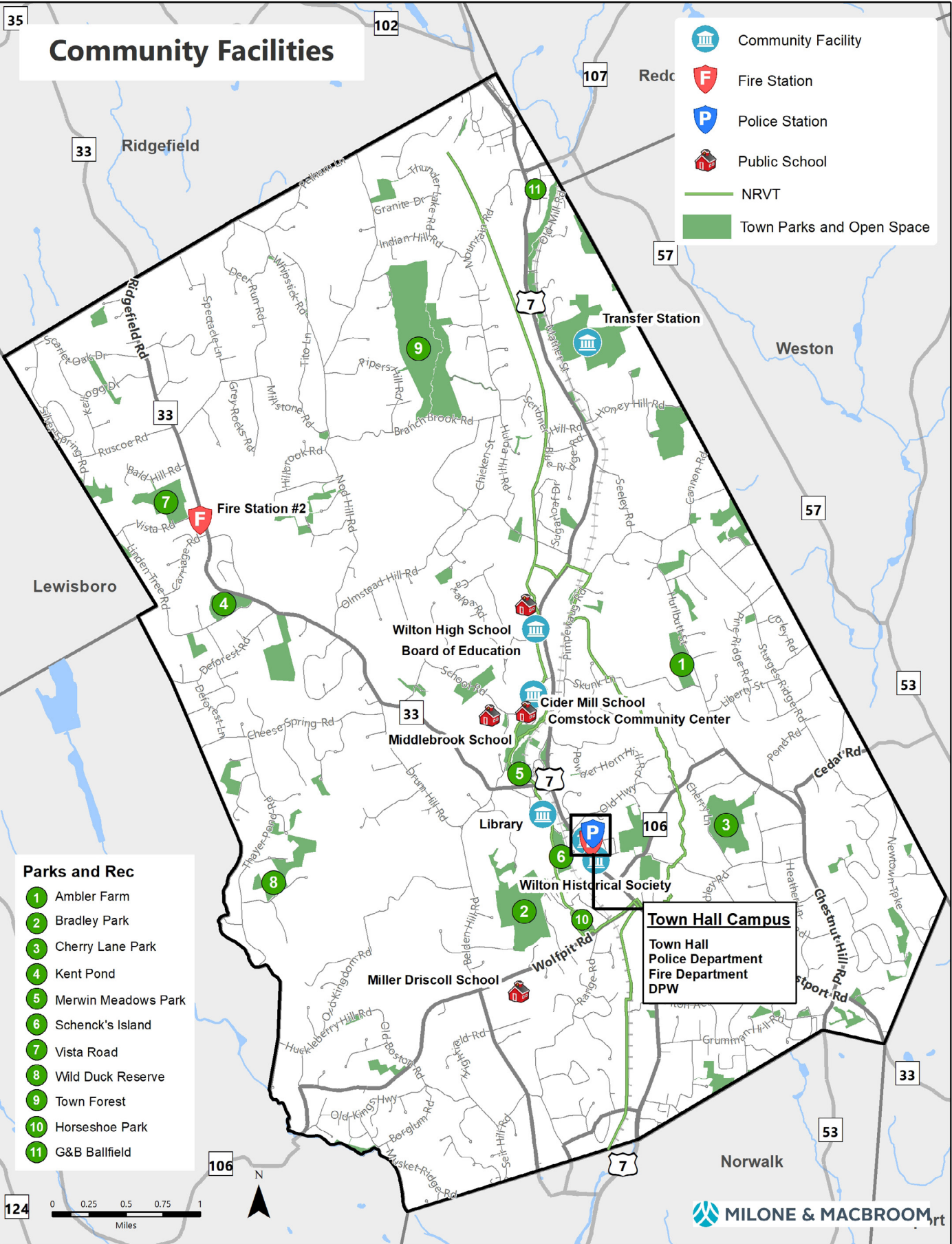
The Community's desire for improved pedestrian and bike infrastructure and connectivity has increased in recent years. Since the last Plan, the Town has seen the completion and integration of several sections of the Norwalk River Valley Trail, which now serves as one of the most used and appreciated pedestrian, dog-walking, and biking assets in Town and the region. Additional sections are planned to be built over the next decade connecting the path south through Norwalk to the shore and north up to Danbury.

Community Facilities

-  Community Facility
-  Fire Station
-  Police Station
-  Public School
-  NRVT
-  Town Parks and Open Space

- ### Parks and Rec
-  1 Amble Farm
 -  2 Bradley Park
 -  3 Cherry Lane Park
 -  4 Kent Pond
 -  5 Merwin Meadows Park
 -  6 Schenck's Island
 -  7 Vista Road
 -  8 Wild Duck Reserve
 -  9 Town Forest
 -  10 Horseshoe Park
 -  11 G&B Ballfield

Town Hall Campus
 Town Hall
 Police Department
 Fire Department
 DPW



This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.

Transportation Plan

CTDOT Functional Classification

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local

Improve Intersection

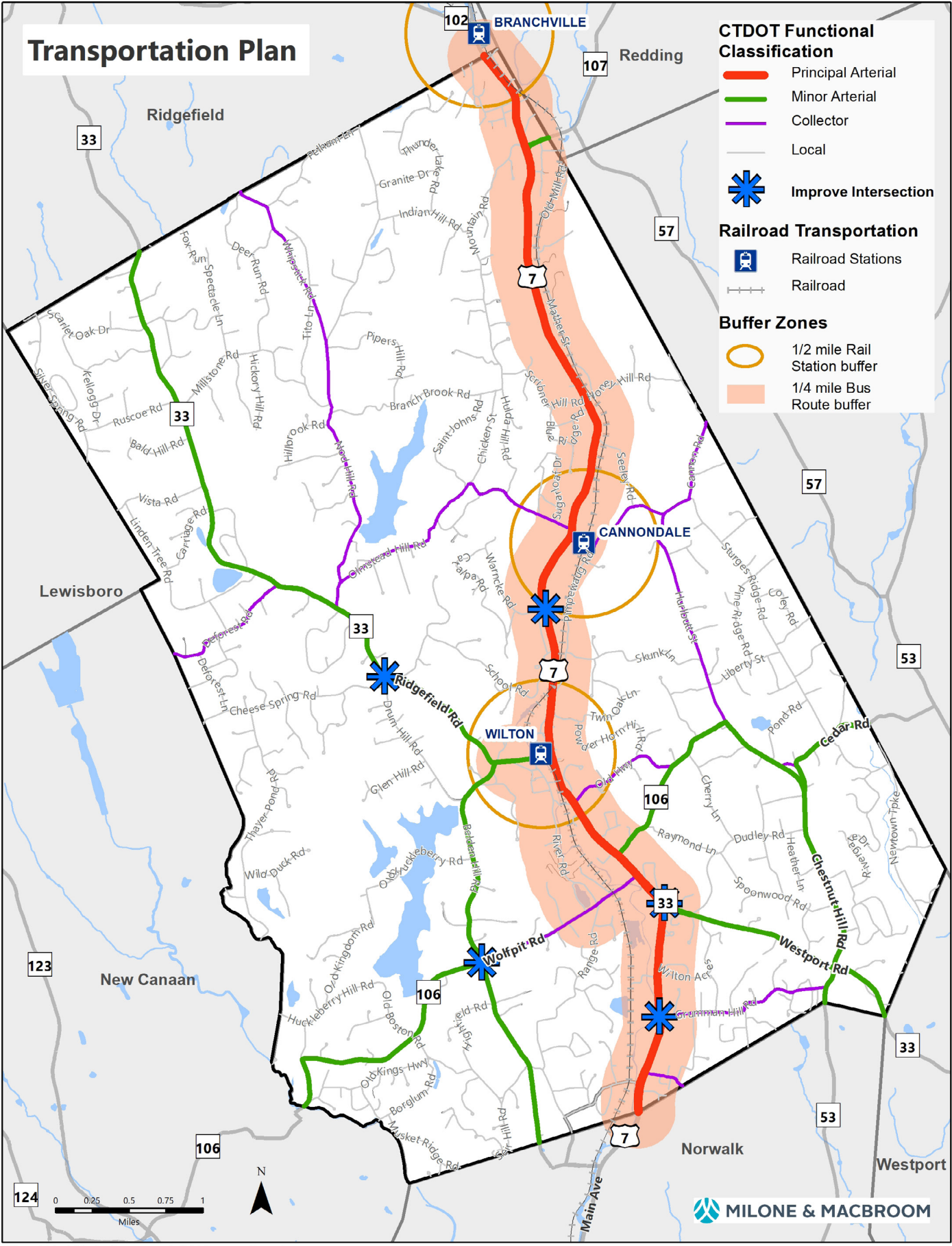
- ✳

Railroad Transportation

- Railroad Stations
- Railroad

Buffer Zones

- 1/2 mile Rail Station buffer
- 1/4 mile Bus Route buffer



This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.





Photo Credit: Wilton Economic Development Commission

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:

Wilton has simultaneously respected its rich history and natural environment while growing and transforming itself into a 21st-century community. Learning the lessons of the town's and region's development in the 20th century, town leaders, and the community course-corrected to provide what has become a vibrant village core, dynamic commercial, and mixed-use spine along the Norwalk River and Danbury Road, where new businesses and residences have grown and new and old generations of Wiltonians live, work, shop, and play in a connected and harmonious built environment.

They have fostered a Wilton for the current community and next generation. A Wilton where town leaders and residents simply expect and demand a community that is inviting, prosperous, connected, clean, safe and sustainable, and provides exceptional education and recreation alongside modern services and infrastructure for its citizenry. A Wilton where new housing typologies and mixed-use designs emerge through organic means to provide desired and versatile living, working, shopping, and entertaining opportunities and experiences. 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 the post-war, automobile-centric suburban zoning model was rethought and revamped for the new millennium. A Wilton where the built form, function, and aesthetic guided policy on issues such as use, height, and setback. A Wilton where connectivity – natural, historical, physical, technological, social and economic – is cultivated by design. A Wilton that is an incubator of land-use ideas that attract residents, businesses and investors for their innovation and efficacy. A Wilton where forward-thinking citizens incentivized and educated the builders of the new millennium. A Wilton that is the model for Fairfield County and Connecticut in the 21st century.

Wilton 2029 Plan

The following Plan evaluates the Wilton 2029 vision by setting the key goals, including underlying issues and trends, strategies and objectives of the community, from natural and historical resources protection to housing, schooling and employment, to development, transportation, and infrastructure planning.

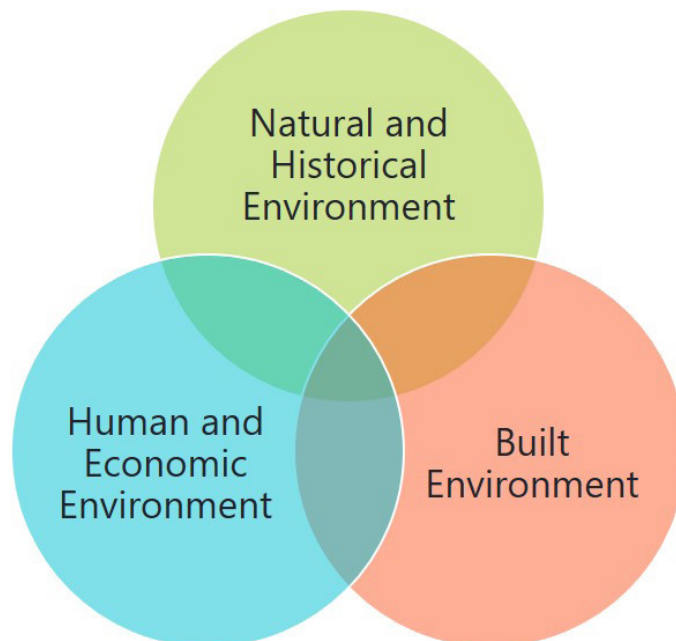
Chapters 4 through 6 of this Plan organize the vision-oriented goals under the broad rubrics of the “Natural and Historical Environment”, “Human and Economic Environment”, and “Built Environment”. Each goal’s issues, trends, strategies, and objectives are evaluated separately and holistically. Concurrently, each “Environment” is inextricably linked to the others and may vary in priority when comprehensively planning for an issue, goal or strategy over the next decade. Therefore, order of the natural, human, and built environments and their associated goals is not intended to imply prioritization, and some goals, objectives, and strategies within each Environment may overlap or may serve multiple Environments.


Natural and Historical Environment focuses on goals for Wilton’s unique natural and historical settings, including its open space, trails, natural resources and habitats, energy and sustainability programs and its pervasive rural, scenic and historical resources.

Human and Economic Environment focuses on goals for Wilton as a place to live, do business, educate children and participate in local government, including the topics of demographics, housing, general economic development, education facilities, and Town governance.

Built Environment focuses on goals for Wilton’s physical and design development, including its village centers, commercial corridor, transportation networks, infrastructure, and Town facilities.

Chapters 7 and 8 of this Plan incorporate the vision, goals, objectives, and strategies to create the Future Land Use Plans and Implementation action agendas that recommend steps for achieving Wilton’s goals over the coming decade. The lasting value of this Plan resides in these recommendations and the commitment of a variety of boards and commissions, agencies and stakeholders to implement the strategies identified in coordination with one another. The Plan acknowledges that shifting conditions and priorities may make successfully attaining each objective impossible or undesirable. The Plan does not mandate or require any specific action from Town staff, commissions, or elected officials, nor does it compel any expenditures or budget allocations, which are the responsibility of the Board of Finance, Board of Education, and/or Board of Selectmen. However, the full action agenda assigns responsibility for implementation of specific actions to entities under whose purview the action item falls to guide all decision-makers and agencies in their work.






Natural and
Historical
Environment

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.

Goals:

- 1) Conserve and Enhance Open Space and Greenways
- 2) Protect Wilton's abundant natural resources
- 3) Continue to lead the State in energy conservation and resiliency, waste reduction, sustainability, and public health
- 4) Preserve Wilton's Rural Character, Historic Resources, and Cultural Landscapes



Human and
Economic
Environment

Wilton will support diverse housing types while protecting its low-density residential neighborhoods. The Town will maintain its high quality schools, town facilities, and services, and will foster a sense of community.

- 1) Continue to increase housing options to benefit the shared interests of the Town's residential and commercial communities
- 2) Preserve and protect Wilton's established rural and lower-density residential neighborhoods
- 3) Enhance the strength and diversity of the local economy and its connections to the region
- 4) Continue to cultivate and maintain a high-quality school system under local control
- 5) Foster community engagement, coordination, and a culture of self-governance



Built
Environment

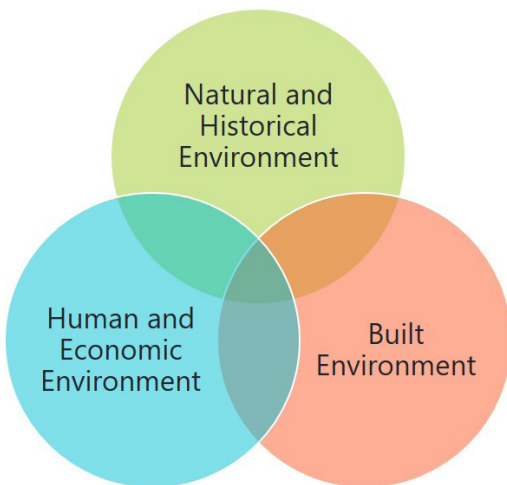
Wilton will pursue attractive and appropriate development that increases the vibrancy of its village centers and commercial corridors, while preserving its historic character. High quality transportation and utility infrastructure will support both residents and the business community.

- 1) Strengthen Wilton Center as a vibrant economic, residential, recreational and cultural hub for the community and region
- 2) Pursue context-sensitive economic development on Danbury road
- 3) Strengthen the economic viability of the Cannondale area while protecting its unique design and historical character
- 4) Strengthen the Georgetown node through mixed-use, transit and pedestrian oriented development
- 5) Enhance Wilton's transportation network for all modes and users
- 6) Improve and maintain Town-owned facilities and services in a fiscally prudent manner
- 7) Maintain safe and efficient public utility services and infrastructure



Photo Credit: Louise Washer

4: Natural and Historical Environment



This Chapter focuses on goals for Wilton’s unique natural and historical settings, including its open space, trails, natural resources and habitats, energy and sustainability programs and its pervasive rural, scenic, and historical resources.

Goals:

1. **Conserve and Enhance Open Space and Greenways**
2. **Protect Wilton’s abundant natural resources**
3. **Continue to lead the State in energy conservation and resiliency, waste reduction, sustainability, and public health**
4. **Preserve Wilton’s Rural Character, Historic Resources, and Cultural Landscapes**

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. The Town also benefits from the many community organizations and dedicated individuals that help protect and steward these lands for public benefit and enjoyment.

- 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.
- Wilton has 1,968 acres of protected open space comprising 11.3% of the Town’s total land area.
- Conservation easements and restrictions continue to be used to preserve open space. Conservation easements are voluntary agreements between the Town of Wilton and landowners to limit development on private property. Since 2010, the Levin Property on Ridgefield Road and the Keiser Property on Seeley Road, totaling 53 acres, have been protected via conservation easements.
- Wilton has more than 2,000 acres of unprotected open space, comprising about 12% of the Town’s total land area. This includes water utility lands, lands with P.A. 490 status, and the “Super 7” expressway right-of-way. On behalf of the Town, the Conservation Commission, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Affairs, is responsible for stewardship of open space. In addition, the Town’s Parks and Recreation Department steward the grounds of active use parks and greenways.
- 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. The Town should focus available financial resources with a continued priority on improving and maintaining existing parks and open spaces. Ongoing improvements at existing facilities include:

- Continued maintenance of trails on Town-owned and land trust open space properties;
- Cleanup of Horseshoe Pond;
- Restoration of Kent Pond and its riparian buffer;
- Restoration of riparian buffers along the Norwalk River at Merwin Meadows Park;
- Annual Town clean-up events;
- Plans for restoration of Schenck’s Island Park and the Norwalk River riparian buffer along River Road
- Continued maintenance of the River Road Pocket Park

Public Act 490

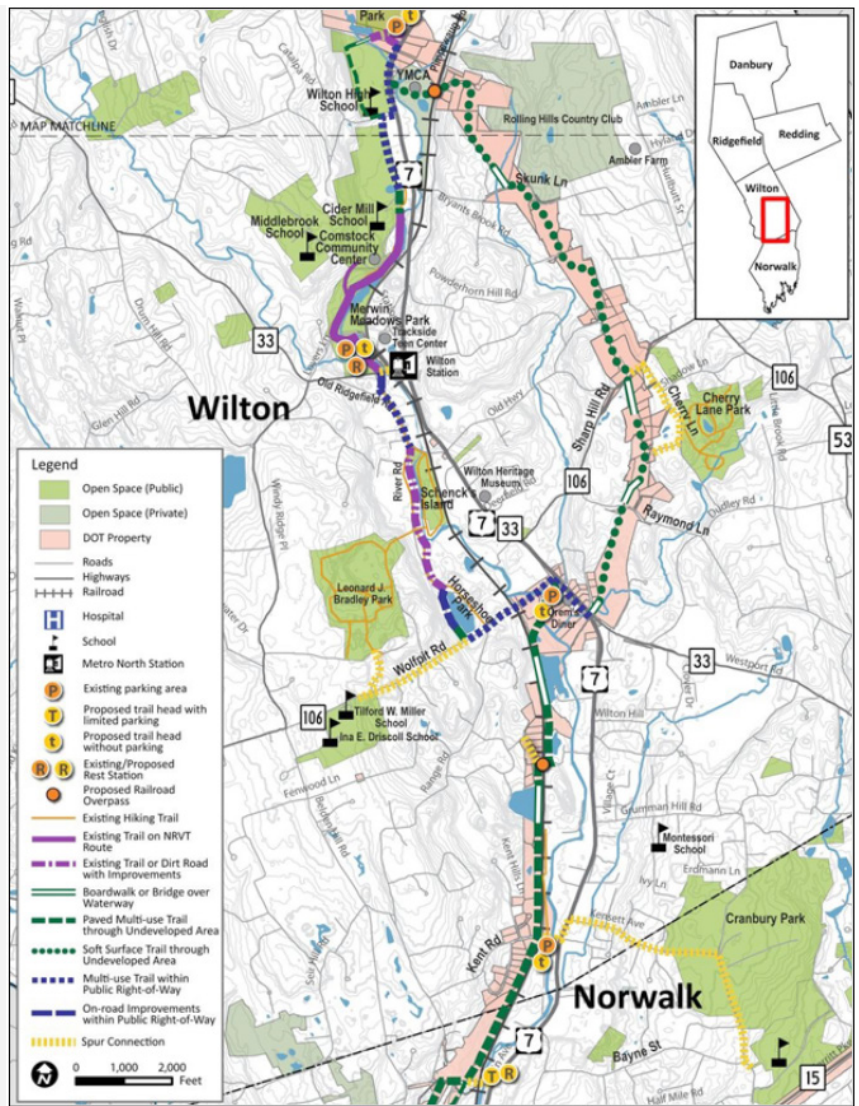
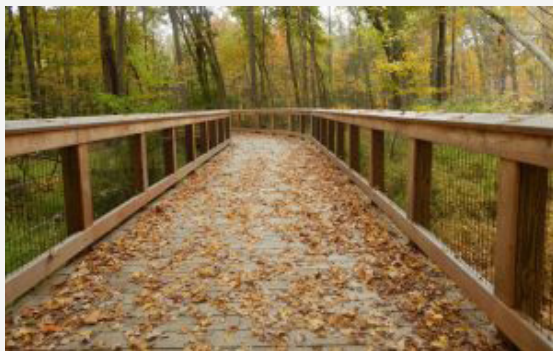
P.A. 490 (Connecticut General Statutes Sections 12-107a through 107-f) allows for farm, forest, or open space land to be assessed at its use value rather than its fair market or highest and best use value (as determined by the property's most recent "fair market value" revaluation) for purposes of local property taxation. Without the lower use value assessment, most landowners would have to sell the land because they would not be able to afford the property taxes on farm, forest, or open space land.

Wilton continues to develop its section of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) to provide residents a high-quality recreational amenity that connects them to the Town's natural beauty and, is planned to eventually connect to the Norwalk shore and Danbury. Several sections of the NRVT have been built in the last five years, and additional segments are in the planning stages. NRVT's priority segments are as follows:

- **“WilWalk” Section** – This is the short-term priority that will run from Lambert Corner into the City of Norwalk. This project was recently awarded a \$1.1 million trails grant through DEEP. NRVT is currently fundraising to cover the 20% local match. The Town provides assistance by pre-funding reimbursable DEEP grants for the NRVT.
- **Skunk Lane to Pimpewaug Road/Cannondale** – This is the mid-term priority and will extend the current northern terminus of the trail to Cannondale. This section of trail will traverse rugged terrain and will likely require boardwalks over wetland areas.
- **Cannondale to Ridgefield** – This is a longer-term priority due to rugged terrain and the need for easements over private property. Routing and design for this segment of trail has not yet been completed.

Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT)

Over the last decade, significant progress has been made on the NRVT in Wilton. Today, the trail is complete from Merwin Meadows to the School Campus, and from Lambert Corner to Skunk Lane. Other trail segments are in the planning or design phase



Map and Photo Credit: Norwalk River Valley Trail via www.nrvt-trail.com

Objectives and Strategies:

1.1 *Manage existing open space to maintain and enhance high quality environmental and recreational benefits*

The Town and local organizations have significant holdings of open space that protect natural resources and provide residents with opportunities for passive recreation. Based on feedback received from the public, the continued maintenance and stewardship of existing open space lands should take precedence over the acquisition of new lands.

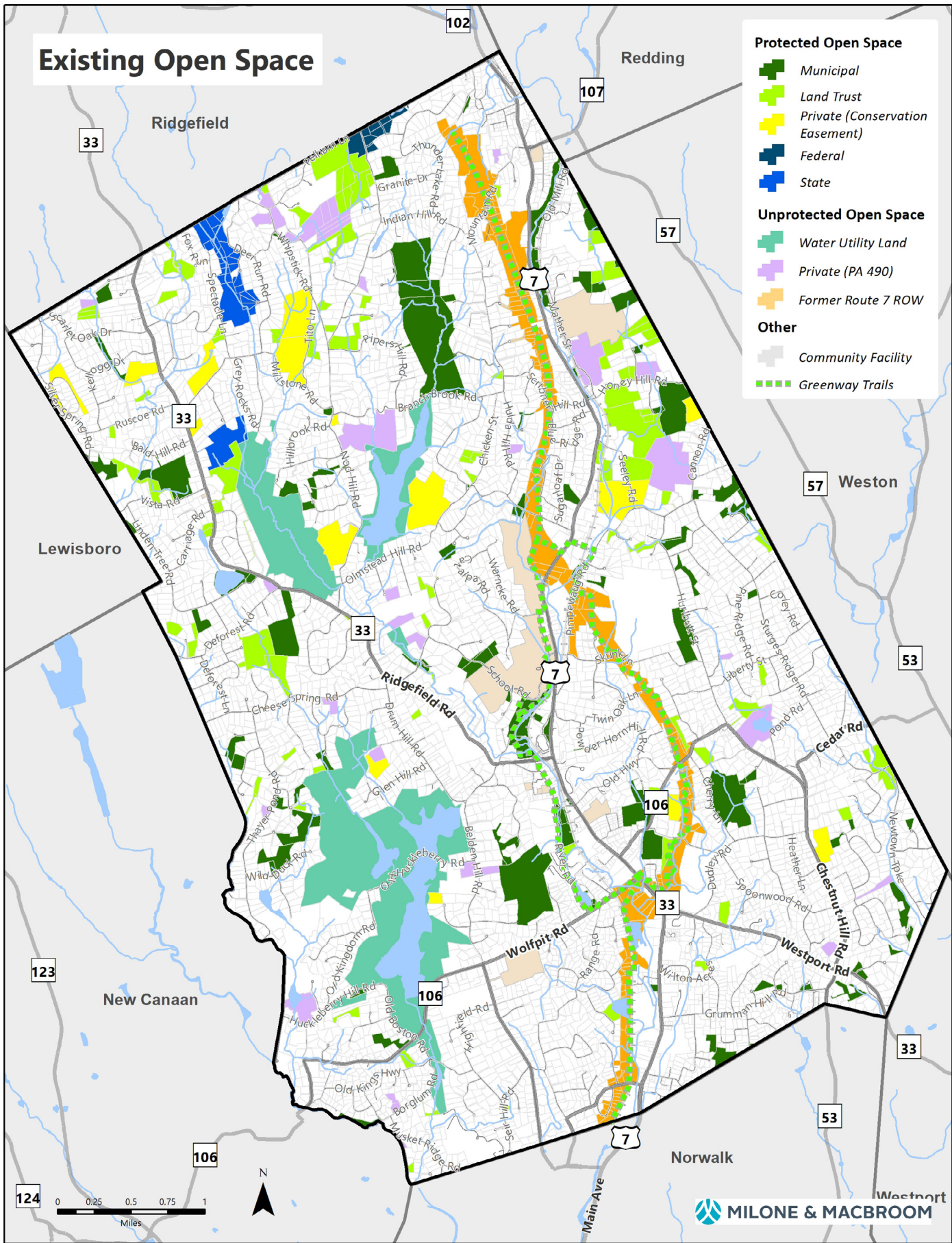
- Coordinate between various land holders/managers, Town departments and volunteer groups to prioritize maintenance issues and responsibilities. Consider conducting an annual coordination session, perhaps as part of the POCD implementation committee process recommended later in this Plan, to coordinate on work plan priorities, opportunities for resource sharing, etc.
- Update, maintain, and promote local open space trail maps in user-friendly formats for the public.
- Significantly improve the function and appearance of existing trails and open spaces as a high-quality amenity and educational space through public-private partnerships.
- Continue public education and stewardship efforts through public-private partnerships.
- Continue to educate eligible property owners on the use of the PA-490 tax assessment program to encourage the maintenance of the forests and open space lands that contribute to Wilton's overall character.

Town of Wilton Existing Open Space: 2018

Open Space Type	Number of Properties	Open Space Land Area (Acres)		
		Protected	Unprotected	Total
Municipal	125	943.4	0.0	943.4
Land Trust (Owned in Fee Title)	108	599.0	0.0	599.0
<i>Wilton Land Conservation Trust</i>	93	434.0	0.0	434.0
<i>Aspetuck Land Trust</i>	9	68.2	0.0	68.2
<i>Weir Farm Trust</i>	11	96.6	0.0	96.6
<i>New Canaan Land Conservation Trust</i>	1	0.2	0.0	0.2
State and Federal Land	237	151.7	603.5	755.3
<i>State Land</i>	26	121.5	0.0	121.5
<i>Federal Land</i>	12	30.2	0.0	30.2
<i>Former Route 7 ROW</i>	199	0.0	603.5	603.5
Water Company Land	10	0.0	1,160.2	1,160.2
Privately Owned	52	309.1	334.2	643.3
<i>Conservation Easement/Deed Restriction</i>	16	309.1	0.0	309.1
<i>Public Act 490 (P.A. 490) Designation</i>	36	0.0	334.2	334.2
All Open Space Categories	532	2,003.2	2,097.9	4,101.1

Sources: Town of Wilton, Wilton Land Conservation Trust, CTDEEP

Existing Open Space



This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.

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

During the next decade, opportunities may arise to acquire additional open space. 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.

- Work with regional governance bodies like WestCOG and local conservation groups to help establish criteria to identify properties that would benefit the Town if conserved.
- Maintain strong relationships with land trusts to facilitate partnerships in preservation.
- Develop landowner relationships and monitor properties of interest.
- Explore a range of funding mechanisms for open space preservation, which may or may not include acquisition.
- Monitor State policy and planning, including with regard to the "Super 7" right-of-way; discuss possible Town strategies to address future land use, acquisition, and development that is consistent with Town goals.
- Evaluate development of a Stewardship Policy for conservation easements and restrictions held by the Town.
- Evaluate existing conservation subdivision regulations and explore increased density and flexibility of design, ensuring quality open space is conserved, while also ensuring that the regulations are viable, attractive to developers, and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Evaluate impacts on the environment, health, and natural resources as part of endorsing the establishment of these developments.

Future Open Space Acquisition Criteria

While this Plan does not recommend specific properties to acquire or protect in the future, it does establish criteria that can help the Town and other conservation organizations to assess the value of properties, should they become available in the future. Four criteria should be considered when evaluating potential open space acquisitions in the future, in addition to criteria that may help with state, regional, or private funding.

Unprotected Open Space includes water utility lands, P.A. 490 properties, and the Route 7 Expressway right-of-way (ROW). These lands currently function as open space and conserve habitat, protect natural resources. The Route 7 ROW also provides recreational opportunities for residents through the Norwalk River Valley Trail. These properties should be considered for formal protection if they are under threat of development.

Lands with Natural Resources Constraints include properties that are encumbered by sensitive natural resource constraints such as waterbodies, wetlands, 100-year flood zones, and steep slopes of greater than 25%. In addition to limiting development potential, these areas provide habitat for flora and fauna and help protect the quality of adjacent waterbodies.

Lands with Unique Cultural and Historical Landscapes. Wilton contains numerous properties that contribute to Wilton's rural character and unique cultural landscape. These lands often contain vestiges of the town's agricultural roots, including stone walls, scenic views, fields, and barns.

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

1.3 *Create a River Walk and accessible greenway system throughout Wilton*

Wilton has been a leader in developing its segments of the Norwalk River Valley Trail, which will eventually connect to Norwalk and Danbury.

- Develop a River Walk in Wilton Center between Schenck's Island, the Train Station area, and Merwin Meadows. The River Walk should be evaluated as part of the Wilton Center Master Plan.
- Complete the NRVT and west side loop trail.
- Identify a preferred NRVT route in northern Wilton, including locations for parking areas.
- Install proper signage on the NRVT.
- Secure easements along the Norwalk River, State Right-of-Way, and utility land, as necessary.
- Assist in applying for and acquiring grant funding for construction of segments.
- Continue to monitor parking at trailheads and identify additional parking locations, as needed. Encourage the use of existing parking lots for trail users through arrangements with property owners on Danbury Road or in Wilton Center.
- Encourage sidewalk connections to the NRVT from major roadways and adjacent development.
- Continue to support the development of NRVT segments in neighboring municipalities.



Photo Credit: Norwalk River Valley Trail via www.nrvt-trail.com

Goal 2: Protect Wilton's abundant natural resources

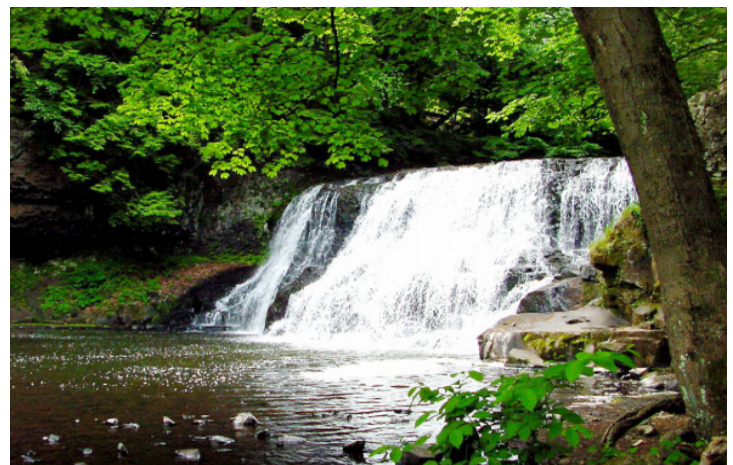
Issues and Trends:

Wilton contains numerous sensitive water resources that provide drinking water for residents and neighboring communities. As economic development and housing opportunities are pursued, particularly in the southern Danbury Road corridor and Wilton Center, efforts should be made to protect and improve water quality.

- A majority of Wilton residents utilize well water. Protection of water quality was the second highest rated conservation issues among survey respondents.
- There are four locations along Danbury Road that are designated as impaired groundwater areas by DEEP. Uses that have high risk for groundwater contamination should be restricted, particularly in or adjacent to areas that rely on well water.
- The lower Comstock Brook, Belden Hill Brook, and the Norwalk River are also listed as impaired waterbodies by DEEP.
- Sensitive water resources are depicted on the map on page 15 and include:
 - Public Water Supply Watersheds – drain into surface drinking water supplies, including the City Lake and Pope's Pond Reservoirs in northwestern Wilton.
 - State Aquifer Protection Area - southeastern Wilton is located within Coleytown Aquifer Protection Area.
 - Local Aquifer Protection Area – this area of high groundwater roughly parallels the Norwalk River and is a recharge area for drinking water supplies.
- Any new development in the Danbury Road corridor should be compatible with protecting the underlying aquifer.
- The Norwalk River Action Plan, updated in 2011, recommends ways of addressing water quality issues in the corridor in Wilton and surrounding communities that comprise the watershed. The NRACP, as may be amended from time to time, should continue to be considered and help guide future decisions.
- State and regional water demands on Wilton's water resources are increasing, as evidenced by the recent water diversion and pumping permit requested by Aquarion for up to 1 million gallons per day from an existing well in the Cannondale area. The request was withdrawn after Town officials and the public challenged the basis and impact analysis used by Aquarion. Similar diversion permit requests may occur in the future.



*Pollinator Pathway Volunteers.
Photo Credit: Louise Washer*



*Stonebridge Preserve
Photo Credit: Town of Wilton*

- The Town adopted a Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) in 2017 that includes many recommendations from the Norwalk River Watershed Action Plan. The SWMP, as may be amended from time to time, should continue to guide future decisions.
- According to DEEP, 56 dams exist in Wilton, including two on the Norwalk River. Dam removal offers many ecological benefits including habitat restoration, water quality improvements, and restoration of fish migration. Consideration should be given to dam removal, where appropriate, subject to adherence with engineering standards,
- Improper disposal of medication through septic or sewer lines, stormwater drains, or as solid waste, can result in drinking water contamination. To ensure safe disposal and prevent negative impacts upon water quality, Wilton initiated a Medication Drop-off Program in August 2011.

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

- The Town, working with the Conservation Commission, Trout Unlimited, Wilton Garden Club, Norwalk River Watershed Association, and with individuals have made many recent efforts to remove invasive species and restore habitats along the Norwalk River.
- The Pollinator Pathways Initiative was brought to Wilton by citizen groups in 2017 and has participants throughout Wilton and in more than 45 municipalities in Fairfield and Westchester counties. Pollinator Pathways provide pollinator friendly habitat and food sources for bees, butterflies, and other pollinating wildlife, aid in defragmentation of environmental resources, and create corridors, other than roadways, for wildlife to traverse.
- The Town has established the Deer Management Committee to manage the white-tailed deer population in an effort to reduce tick-borne illness, improve ecology, and improve public safety. This Committee's work has reduced the deer population in Wilton; however, work continues in order to meet the Town's health and safety related goals.



*The Norwalk River near Schenck's Island
Photo Credit: Milone & MacBroom, Inc.*

Objectives and Strategies:

2.1 *Improve stormwater drainage systems and reduce stormwater runoff and non-point-source pollution to mitigate stormwater drainage effects and preserve and improve water quality*

Certain areas of the region and Town along the Norwalk River are more susceptible to flood and stormwater drainage effects, particularly with increasing risk of extreme precipitation events in recent years. Also, because a majority of Wilton residents rely on private wells for their drinking water, it is critical to protect water quality through the reduction of non-point source pollution.

- Continue to implement the Town's stormwater management plan (SWMP) in accordance with its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit, which employs Low Impact Development techniques and Best Management Practices to mitigate impacts on water quality, such as pet waste, impervious cover runoff, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and illegal discharges. The SWMP also seeks to educate property owners and the public on pollutant sources, how to prevent or reduce pollutant discharge to waterways, and the effects of pollutants on waterways.
- Require DPW and/or expert engineering review of all projects with potentially significant stormwater, flood zone, or floodway impacts. Evaluate how to improve and facilitate Town engineering review processes.
- Incorporate aquifer protection, low-impact development, and other stormwater best management practices into Town facility upgrades and Town road projects.
- Encourage aquifer protection and stormwater best management and low impact development practices in new development (including pervious pavement and other methods), as appropriate.
- Develop a strategy for existing property owners to reduce and improve the quality of stormwater runoff, including how to address site change applications.
- Explore zoning or financial incentives (fee reduction) for existing property owners that reduce and/or improve the quality of stormwater runoff.
- Educate residents and businesses on stormwater and pollutant impacts (salt, pesticides, fertilizers, etc.).

2.2 **Monitor water resources and promote water conservation**

In addition to water quality, water conservation is increasingly a concern, given recent variations in weather trends and severity with drought conditions last experienced in 2016.

- Develop a strategy to limit future water diversion projects in Wilton to protect existing and future drinking water sources and the health of the aquifers in Wilton and the Norwalk River. This strategy should monitor, evaluate, and recommend appropriate action on water usage, diversion, pumping and well drilling permits and programs proposed by regional and/or State agencies.
- Implement municipal water use and drought management policies, including reviewing Sustainable CT recommendations, developing a policy on using efficient fixtures in Town facilities, formalizing a drought communications plan, and adopting a drought ordinance. Continue to educate residents on well water issues, usage, testing, and best practices, including how well water usage can impact neighbors during periods of drought.
- Work with the Town and State health departments to continue to understand well water quality and resource issues on a neighborhood, Town, and regional basis.
- Consider partnering with a local conservation group to educate the community on water conservation.
- Evaluate requiring reports on estimated water usage, area well depth, and area well yield studies for new developments proposing to use wells.
- Encourage upgrades and expansion of public water utility systems where appropriate, particularly in areas with impaired surface or ground waters, low-yield wells, approved higher-intensity or commercial uses, or where requested by users.
- Evaluate Wilton Water Commission and other established boards' potential role in establishing oversight and policy over water resources.

2.3 **Protect and enhance wildlife**

- Encourage the creation of greenways and backyard wildlife habitat through efforts such as the Pollinator Pathway Initiative.
- Continue to manage nuisance species and the deer population, which negatively impact trees and shrubs, habitats, other wildlife, and the health of residents and their pets.
- Implement the actions recommended by Sustainable CT to [Facilitate Invasive Species Education and Management](#).
- Protect areas identified in DEEP's natural diversity database.
- Continue fish bypass and dam removal efforts on the Norwalk River, as appropriate.

2.4 *Conserve and enhance habitats*

- Create a healthy and aesthetically welcoming view of the Norwalk River along River Road and Danbury Road by eradicating invasive species and replanting with species that are native to the Northeastern United States. Open 'windows' of scenic views of the river and the park behind it; maintain these conditions following best practices for riparian buffers through regular healthy methods of eradication of invasive regrowth.
- Require native plants when a landscaping plan is required for a project per zoning regulations. Encourage native plant use, even when a landscaping plan is not required.
- Educate the public on the benefits of greenways, wetlands, riparian buffers, and native plants.
- Continue to support efforts to eradicate invasive plants along the Norwalk River and other waterbodies.
- Continue to implement Wilton Center Tree Plan and consider expanding the initiative to other parts of Town, including other villages and along Danbury Road. Develop a private sponsor and a maintenance plan for trees and significant shrubs in the Town Center and along the major roads. Include in the maintenance plan the need to address known diseases and likely demise of trees. Recommend replacement species in keeping with the long-term planting plans of the Wilton Tree Committee.
- Encourage tree and shrub plantings in any required vegetative buffers along Danbury Road to utilize the "[right tree, right place](#)" best practices. This ensures that the proper tree species are selected based on environmental factors, including proximity to buildings and utility poles.
- Minimize forest fragmentation.



*The Cannondale Fish Bypass is part of an ongoing effort to restore migratory fish habitat on the Norwalk River
Photo Credit: Milone & MacBroom, Inc.*

Goal 3: Continue to lead the State in energy conservation and resiliency, waste reduction, sustainability, and public health

Issues and Trends:

The Town of Wilton, in partnership with local organizations, has become a State leader in energy conservation, sustainability, and waste management.

- Key partner groups and organizations include the Wilton Energy Commission and Wilton Go Green.
- The Town adopted an Energy Management Plan in 2012.
- The Town has achieved a 20% energy reduction in public buildings since the last POCD.
- Solar panels have been installed at the High School (small system), Miller-Driscoll School, Middlebrook School, the School Sisters of Notre Dame building, the Wilton Library Association building, and at nearly 80 residences. There are pending installations at the High School (large system) and Cider Mill School.
- Wilton plans to meet 70% of municipal and school building energy needs through rooftop solar and virtual net metering. This program increases the use of sustainable energy and reduces Town energy costs.
- Wilton became a registered member of the Sustainable CT Program in 2018 but has not yet completed the certification process.
- The Town is taking energy resiliency into account in its various zoning and emergency response planning processes, including its Emergency Preparedness Plan, as drought, heat waves, flooding, and long-term power outages pose greater risks to public health and safety.
- The Town performs a community-wide Annual Town cleanup in partnership with local community organizations.
- Wilton is recognized for its efforts to reduce and encourage responsible disposal of waste. In recent years, the Town has worked with DEEP to assist in the development of statewide regulations for electronics and paint recycling programs. Ongoing efforts include the Zero Waste Challenge, Carry-in Carry-out Program, and household hazardous waste collections. The public is generally well-educated and enthusiastic about these local waste management initiatives and programs.
- Recent changes in the global recycling market have made the recycling of some products a net cost, rather than savings, posing a significant challenge for continued recycling efforts on local, State and national levels.

Objectives and Strategies:

3.1 *Encourage sustainable waste management practices*

- Continue to reduce waste generated at Town facilities and schools through initiatives such as the Zero Waste Challenge.
- Continue to participate in household hazardous waste collections and statewide product stewardship initiatives.
- Educate residents and businesses on available waste reduction strategies and programs.
- Support coordinated efforts and local, regional, State, and national policies that encourage recycling, improve its efficiency and reduce its cost, including clean recycling.

3.2 **Promote energy efficiency and resiliency**

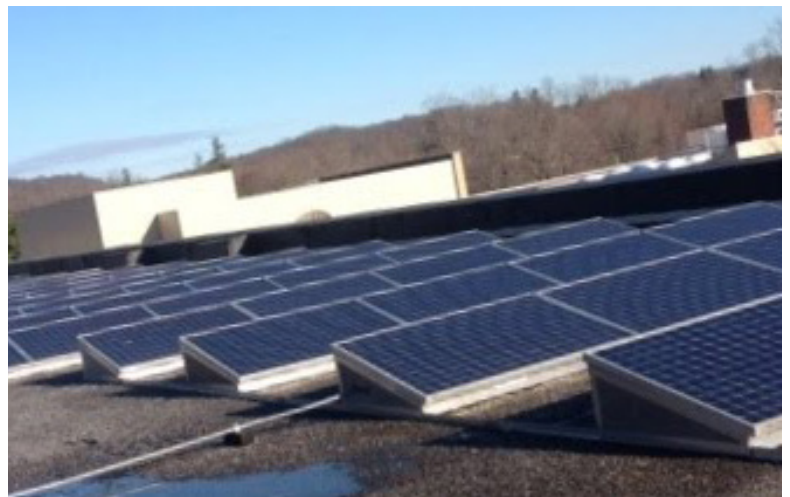
Continue to incorporate cost effective energy efficiency upgrades to Town facilities and private development, which meet environmental goals and help reduce overall building operating costs. With severe weather becoming more common in recent years, the Town should also evaluate and promote resiliency at critical facilities.

- Support the Energy Commission and related initiatives to study and improve energy efficiency and resiliency.
- Identify preferred locations for electric vehicle charging stations and pursue opportunities for construction, particularly when privately funded or installed.
- Provide 70% of municipal and school building energy needs through rooftop solar and virtual net meters. Continue to incorporate cost-effective renewable energy and energy efficiency upgrades to Town-owned buildings and properties and continue to explore renewable energy opportunities with neighboring Towns.
- Promote economically feasible efficiency and resiliency improvements at key Town buildings and parking lots (for both public and private properties) through the use of backup power supplies, solar energy/heating systems, and micro grids where cost effective.
- Explore zoning incentives for incorporating energy efficiency designs and upgrades, including solar access and orientation for residential development, net zero energy designs, public electric vehicle charging stations, and renewable energy sources for development projects.
- Update the Town Energy Plan and establish renewable energy goals for 5, 10, and 20 years from 2019.
- Implement recommendations from the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

3.3 **Market Wilton's achievements in energy conservation, waste reduction, sustainability, and public health to prospective businesses and residents**

Wilton is a State leader in energy conservation, sustainability, and waste reduction. The Town should continue to maintain and market its reputation as a leader in these fields and use it as a tool to attract new businesses and residents.

- Continue to participate in the Sustainable CT program and pursue certification based on desired and completed actions that are compatible with this Plan and community input.
- Continue to support local commissions and organizations that help achieve sustainability goals.
- Incorporate Wilton's sustainability accomplishments in economic development marketing brochures.
- Collaborate with other organizations that offer funding and/or technical assistance to help bolster the Town's reputation as a leader in energy conservation, waste reduction, sustainability, and public health.

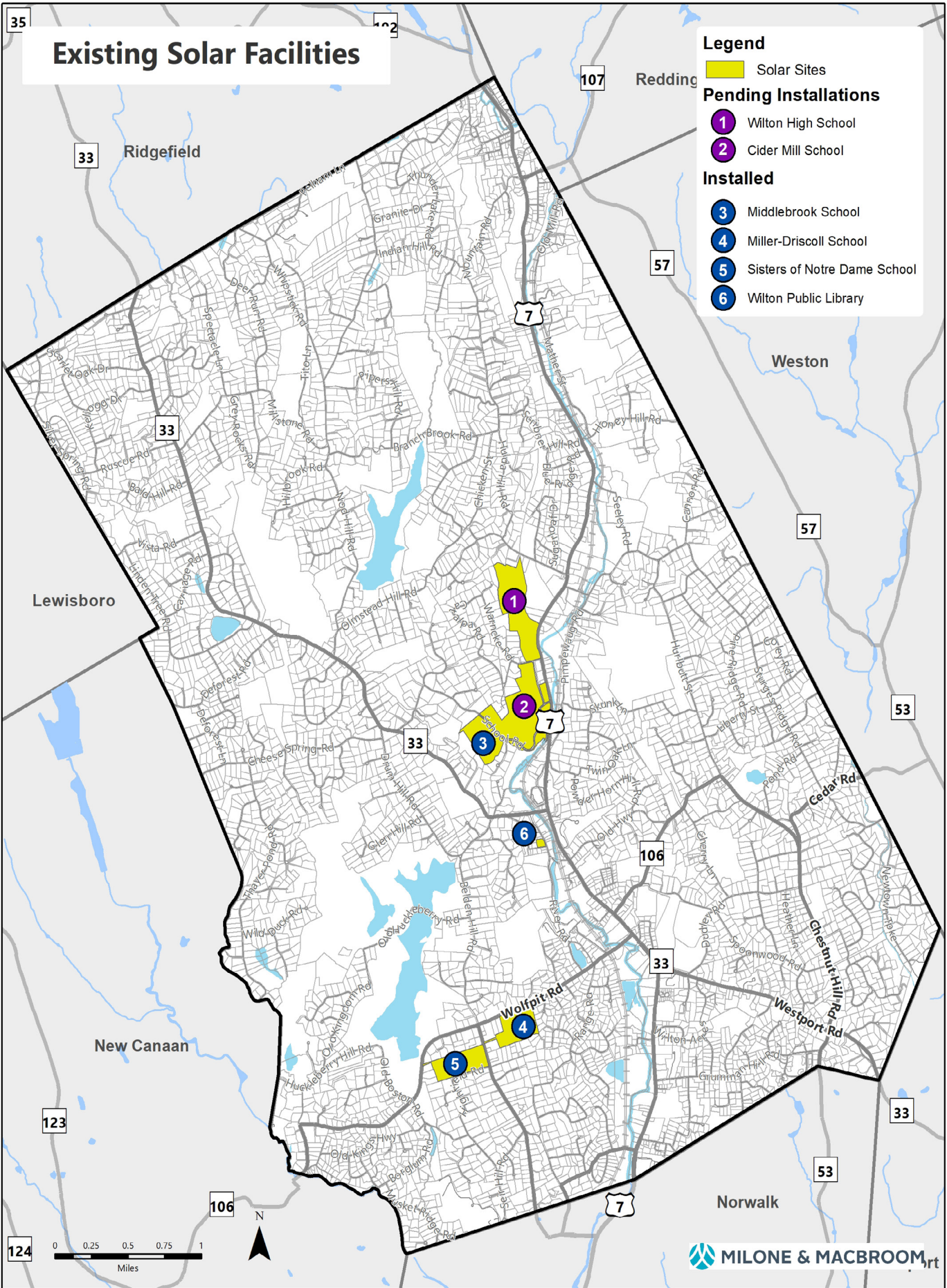


Solar panels at Wilton High School. The Town has made significant progress in reducing energy consumption at Town Facilities and installing green energy sources. Photo Credit: Wilton Energy Commission

Existing Solar Facilities

Legend

- Solar Sites
- Pending Installations**
- 1 Wilton High School
- 2 Cider Mill School
- Installed**
- 3 Middlebrook School
- 4 Miller-Driscoll School
- 5 Sisters of Notre Dame School
- 6 Wilton Public Library



This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.

Goal 4: Preserve Wilton’s Rural Character, Historic Resources, and Cultural Landscapes

Issues and Trends:

Wilton has significant historic assets from its rural origins, which fundamentally complement its natural environment and contribute to its character, sense of place, and quality of life. Notable historical and scenic assets include:

- Weir Farm National Historic Site;
 - Wilton Center National Historic District;
 - Cannondale National Historic District;
 - Georgetown National Historic District;
 - Four properties individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Marvin Tavern, Hurlbutt Street School, Lambert House, and the Fitch House) as well as numerous contributing properties within the National Historic Districts
 - Five local historic districts:
 - Historic District No. 1 – Lambert Corner
 - Historic District No. 2 – Wilton Center
 - Historic District No. 4 – Hurlbutt Street Schoolhouse
 - Historic District No. 5 – Historical Society Museum Complex
 - Historic District No. 6 and 6 Extension – Georgetown
- * Historic District No. 3 was repealed in 2005 when the Fitch House was relocated to the Historical Society Museum Complex.
- Ridgefield Road (Route 33), a State-designated Scenic Road; and,

Definitions:

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) – The NRHP is the federal government’s official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of historical significance. The NRHP includes National Historic Districts as well as individual properties outside of historic districts that are of historical or architectural significance. National historic listings require a public review process only if public funds are being used for a project. Property owners are also eligible to apply for federal tax incentive programs.

National Historic District (NHD) – These districts are recognized by the Federal government and possess a significant concentration of structures that are of historic or architectural significance.

Local Historic District (LHD) or Property (LHP) – Local designation overseen by a Historic District & Historic Property Commission (HDHPC) established to protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places of historical and architectural significance to the community. The HDHPC is responsible for reviewing and certifying the appropriateness of proposed exterior changes of a historic structure that will be visible from a public way. These districts can only be established with the approval of two-thirds of property owners and the municipal legislative body.

State Scenic Roads – This designation applies to state roads that have significant natural or cultural features. The state Department of Transportation has special improvement and maintenance standards for these roads and discourages straightening or widening of the roadway and removal of stone walls and trees.

Local Scenic Roads – This designation is similar to the state program, but applies to local roadways. This program is administered by local departments of public works.

Historic Resources Inventory – Historic Resources Inventories create detailed records of historic buildings, sites, structures and/or objects within a defined geographical area, or multiple resources related to a theme, throughout the state. These documents are based on archival research, field work and photography. Wilton’s HRIs, done in 1989 and 2018, document approximately 470 significant structures, and are often referred to as Historic House Surveys.

- Five Local Scenic Roads:
 - Huckleberry Hill Road
 - Nod Hill Road
 - Seeley Road
 - Tito Lane
 - Wampum Hill Road.
- Many other buildings, neighborhoods, and roadways contain unique resources that could be eligible for official designation.

Wilton’s historic architecture, streetscapes, landscapes, scenic vistas, and design character are important points of pride and identity for the community. There is a desire to explore regulatory and financial means to protect historic assets and ensure that new development is consistent and compatible with the design history and character of Wilton.

- 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.
- Public survey responses indicated very strong support for design guidelines or an architectural review process for Danbury Road and other commercial and gateway areas.
- There is general support for regulatory and financial incentives for historic preservation.



Wilton contains several scenic roads that contribute to the Town’s cultural landscape and sense of place. These include State Scenic Roads like Ridgefield Road (right) and Local Scenic Roads such as Huckleberry Hill Road (lower left) and Nod Hill Road (upper left).

Photo Credit: Google Maps

Additional education on historic preservation is needed, as is clarifying the roles and responsibilities of different Town boards and commissions.

- Recent years have seen increased pressures on historical buildings, particularly those in disrepair, having obsolescence issues or located in commercial areas along Danbury Road. In response, the Town adopted “Adaptive Use of Historic Structures” and “Historically/Architecturally Significant Building” regulations to permit additional or varying use, construction, or development that preserves the original architecture, features, and value of historical buildings and properties.
- Many public survey respondents noted the challenge of balancing historic preservation and economic development. Several respondents noted that not all antique structures have historical or cultural value, while others may have high value that is not well known, and that the community would benefit from more information to help make those determinations.
- Wilton’s Historic Resources Inventories (HRIs), done in 1989 and 2018, document approximately 470 significant structures, and are often referred to as Historic House Surveys. HRIs create detailed records of historic buildings, sites, structures, and/or objects within a defined geographical area, or multiple resources related to a theme, throughout the state. These documents are based on archival research, field work, and photography.
- The importance of historic buildings and districts, both visually to save the town’s character, and, for those in LHDs, their actual market value, needs to be better communicated to owners and real estate agents. The value of buildings in historic districts tends to be higher when their neighborhoods are more stable. Regulatory and policy incentives may help this process. State historic preservation funds for education would become available if the Town attained Certified Local Government Status via an application by the Historic District and Historic Properties Commission.
- A vast majority of historical structures are owned by private citizens. Without a formal designation of a property as a local or national historic district or property, there are limited actions the Town can take to prevent demolition or redevelopment of an antique structure.



The Wilton Historical Society and Museum on Danbury Road contains a collection of structures dating from the 18th through early 20th centuries. Photo Credit: Wilton Historical Society

Objectives and Strategies:

4.1 *Preserve Wilton's historically important structures and cultural heritage*

The Town can help preserve historically significant structures by changing the Town's administrative process, establishing regulatory or zoning incentives for historic preservation, and educating property owners and the public on the value of historic structures.

- Pursue a variety of incentives to preserve historic structures in redevelopment scenarios, from tax abatements to zoning incentives (e.g. density bonuses, parking reductions, redevelopment, and relocation). Work with the Historic District and Historic Properties Commission, local property owners and local developers to determine appropriate incentives.
- Become a Certified Local Government to have a designated partnership with the State Historic Preservation Office and become eligible for additional grant funding for historic preservation activities.
- Add a historic preservation layer to Wilton's GIS system, including Local Historic Districts as well as individual properties listed on the historic house survey (Historic Resource Inventory) so that all boards and commissions can understand the current location of important historical resources.
- Consider modifying the Town's demolition delay ordinance/administrative process to ensure reasonably sufficient time for review and possible action, including possibly extending the delay from 90 days to 180 days.
- Expand or create new local historic districts or properties, as appropriate, based on neighborhood values and property owner support.
- Maintain Town-owned historic structures in a state of good repair.
- Improve coordination and communication between the Planning & Zoning Commission and Historic District and Historic Properties Commission.
- Revisit adaptive use regulations to permit more flexible use and development while still preserving key historical features, elements, and design character.
- Provide a budget for the Historic District and Historic Properties Commission to mail information to owners of structures in local historic districts, create signage for marketing local historic districts and historic markers for Town-owned buildings that are listed in the Historic Resource inventory.
- Develop landowner relationships and monitor historical properties of interest.

Note: Additional objectives and strategies related to historic preservation are analyzed in the Human and Economic Environment Goal 3 and Built Environment Goal 2.

4.2 *Promote and market Wilton's historic assets*

Wilton's historic character is an asset that should be promoted and marketed to existing and prospective businesses and residents.

- Install signage at historic districts and properties.
- Continue to educate the public and owners of historic structures on available funding opportunities and historic preservation resources.

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.

- Expand the local scenic road program, as appropriate, to ensure maintenance and improvements do not impair scenic qualities.
- Strengthen stonewall guidelines/regulations - consider incorporating specific recommendations pertaining to stone walls into any design guidelines developed.
- Continue to support the PA-490 tax assessment program and educate eligible property owners on the program.

4.4 *Continue to support and promote cultural organizations and institutions*

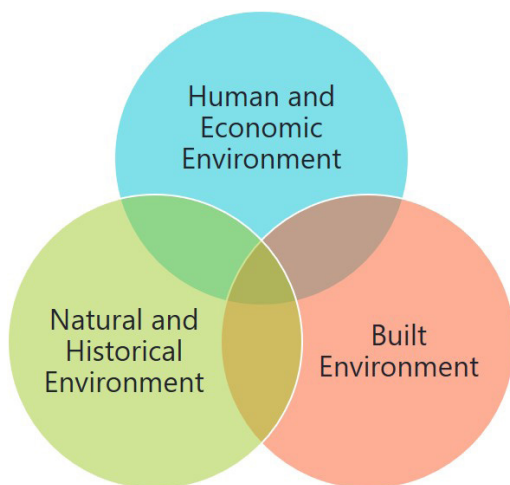
Wilton is home to numerous public and private cultural and arts organizations, including the Wilton Public Library, Wilton Playshop, Music on the Hill, Cannon Grange, Weir Farm, the Wilton Historical Society, and the G&B Cultural Center. These and numerous other organizations contribute to Wilton's character and quality of life, spanning the performing and studio arts, music, historic preservation, fraternal organizations, and educational groups.

- Continue to support cultural, social, and intellectual programming at the Wilton Public Library.
- Consider establishing a local or multi-town arts council to better coordinate, market and promote historical, rural, arts and cultural tourism in Wilton, as part of a larger region.
- Continue to support other Town cultural institutions and organizations through partnerships and collaboration, including through Townwide events and programs like Ambler Farm Day, the Summer Concert Series, street events, street fairs, arts and craft shows, farmers markets, regional and national sport events, and holiday parades and strolls.



Photo Credit: Danielle Robinson Calloway/Hearst Connecticut Media

5. Human and Economic Environment



This Chapter focuses on goals relating to Wilton as a place to live, do business, educate children, and participate in local government, including the topics of demographics, housing, general economic development, education facilities, and Town governance.

Goals:

1. **Continue to increase housing options to benefit the shared interests of the Town's residential and commercial communities**
2. **Preserve and protect Wilton's established rural and lower-density residential neighborhoods**
3. **Enhance the strength and diversity of the local economy and its connections to the region**
4. **Continue to cultivate and maintain a high-quality school system under local control**
5. **Foster community engagement, coordination, and a culture of self-governance**

Goal 1: Continue to increase housing options to benefit the shared interests of the Town's residential and commercial communities

Issues and Trends:

Wilton's population is growing slowly and aging.

- The Town's population growth rate has slowed and stabilized. The demographics have shifted and reflect trends in the region and State, outside of urban areas, most notably an increase in population age and decrease in younger workers and school-aged population.
- According to estimates from the Connecticut Department of Public Health and U.S. Census Bureau, Wilton's growth rate experienced a natural decrease (more deaths than births) since 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, Wilton grew by 2.4% due to in-migration, which was the slowest growth rate in recent years.
- Slow population growth is typically tied to the slow pace of home construction and limited availability of vacant and/or developable land to support new housing.
- School-aged children (5 to 19 years old) and middle-aged adults remain the largest population groups in Town, but the senior population grew by 539 people or 25.1% between 2000 and 2016.
- School enrollment projections note that enrollment declines should level off and begin to rebound, especially in the elementary grades, during the next five to ten years.
- Wilton's average household size of 3.09 is larger than its peer towns, likely due to the large proportion of families with school-aged children.
- Wilton's median age is 42.8 years old, which is younger than most of its peer towns in Fairfield County.

Wilton's historically strong housing stock primarily caters to families with children and consists mainly of detached single-family, owner-occupied homes on large lots.

- Wilton has 6,466 housing units as of 2017, with 84% being single-family detached units.
- As of 2017, 86% of housing units were owner-occupied. Compared to peer towns in Fairfield County, only Weston has a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing.
- A 2016 analysis of home sales conducted by Wilton Public Schools shows that for each single-family home sale, 0.6 students enrolled in Wilton Public Schools.
- A Housing Analytical Survey conducted by the Wilton Economic Development Commission (EDC) in 2016 noted that buyers most frequently move to Wilton for its excellent school system and sellers most frequently leave Wilton to downsize.
- Homeowners rely on a strong housing market to sell their single-family homes, and an adequate supply of smaller units to allow them to stay in Town as they enter the market or age.
- Neighborhoods with smaller lot sizes, such as Georgetown, provide opportunities for smaller and more affordable housing for residents.



Photo Credit: Wilton Commons, Inc.

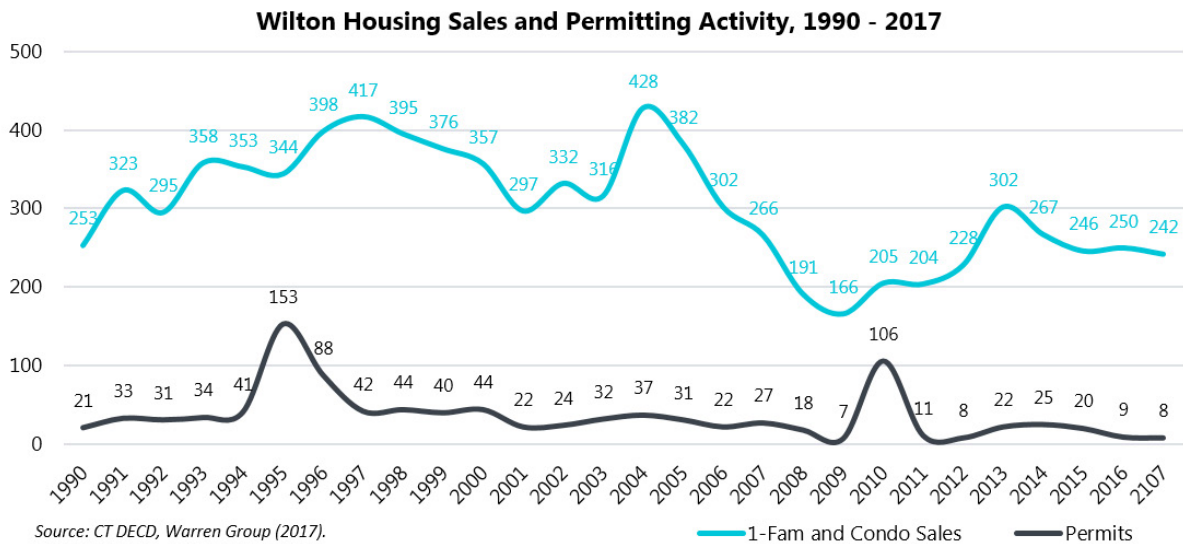
- According to the EDC Analytical Survey, downsizing and an empty nest (children having left the household) were the top two drivers for property sales. The limited number of smaller and lower-cost housing options in Wilton may cause many of these residents to move outside of town, or age-in-place in their larger single-family homes.

Wilton’s housing market is slowly recovering from the Great Recession.

- The 2017 median sale price for a single-family home in Wilton is just 81.1% of the median sale price in 2008. While none of Wilton’s peer towns have surpassed the 2008 median sale price, most have recovered at a faster pace.
- Towns along the shoreline with good schools, strong transportation networks, and vibrant downtowns have seen the fastest recovery in home values.
- The decline in home values has led to a proportional drop in the Town’s Grand List value. To make up for the loss in real property value, the Town has raised the mill rate in order to fund essential Town services.
- Home values are still well below their mid-2000s levels, and many residents are remaining in their homes until housing market conditions improve and their home equity rebounds. At the height of the real estate market, between 1996 and 2005, Wilton averaged 370 single-family and condominium sales per year. Between 2005 and 2009, the number of sales dropped by 57% to just 166 per year. Home sales rebounded to 302 in 2013 and remained at just 250 per year between 2014 and 2017. Sales decreased to about 220 per year in 2018.

Wilton is nearly built out and has limited vacant, developable land that can support new housing. While new housing construction has continued, it has come largely through redevelopment of existing properties.

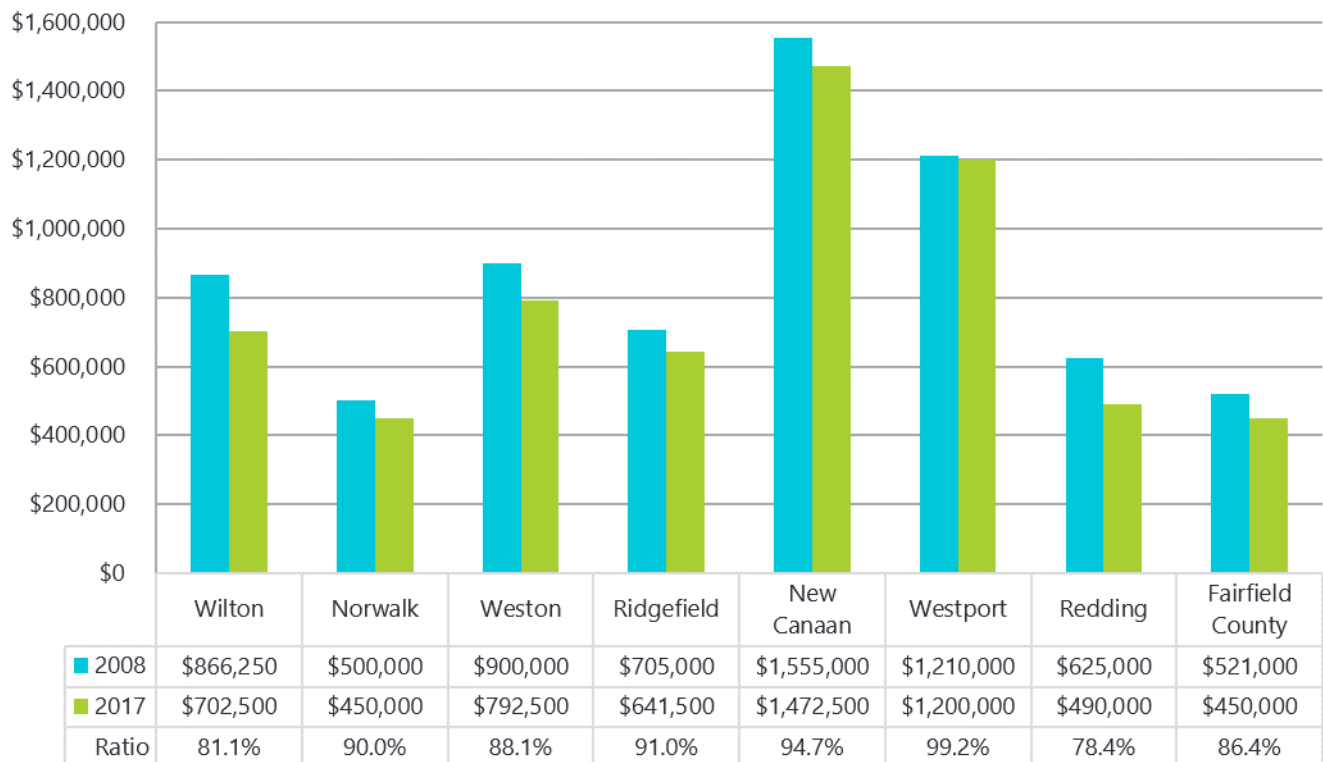
- Wilton issued 142 single-family housing permits and 102 demolition permits between 2007 and 2017, resulting in a net gain of 40 single-family housing units.
- A majority of new single-family housing units during this period were “tear down rebuilds,” where a smaller home was purchased and demolished and a new and possibly larger and higher-cost home was built.
- There were also over 200 multi-family housing units built and/or approved during the last decade, including, most recently, a proposed 74-unit mixed use development at 300 Danbury Road.



Wilton’s household income and home values are among the highest in the region. However, housing affordability remains a challenge for many households.

- The median household income in Wilton is \$172,095 according to the 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimate. A household earning Wilton’s median income can afford a home with an estimated \$683,000 value, including property taxes, mortgage, utilities, and insurance.
- Although Wilton has a high median household income, there are many households in lower income brackets. As of 2015, about 28% of households earned less than \$100,000 per year and 13% earned less than \$50,000 per year. While these households may not qualify for “affordable housing” under the state definition, there is nonetheless a need for additional housing units that these households can afford.
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2015 the median home value in Wilton is \$810,700. This is about 19% higher than what a household earning the Town’s median income can afford.
- As of 2015, 32% of homeowners and 41% of renters are cost burdened, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their household income on housing, and may have difficulty affording other necessities such as transportation, food, and medical care.
- As of 2018, Wilton had 259 affordable housing units, which represents an increase from 2.65% to 4.00% of the total Town housing unit stock since 2009. Most recently, the Town approved a 30-unit affordable housing project pursuant to Connecticut’s Affordable Housing Appeals Law (CGS) §8-30g and a 90-unit assisted living facility with a 10% affordability component. Due to the progress Wilton has made towards reaching its affordable housing goal in the last decade, the State granted the Town a moratorium on new §8-30g developments from December 2015 through December 2019.
- Since 2009, affordable units have also been built as part of the Wilton Commons development and Avalon Wilton on Danbury Road.

Comparison of Median Single-Family Home Sale Price: 2008 and 2017



- Assuming no net gain in the Town's approximately 6,466 housing units or a loss of existing affordable units, Wilton would need to add an additional 387 affordable units to meet the State's 10% affordable housing goal (646 total units).
- The Town has established provisions in its zoning regulations to increase the availability of affordable housing. Two affordable housing "floating zones" have been established (MFAAHD and SFAAHD zones) and affordable housing set-asides (10-20% of units) are required for new development in multi-family residential districts (CRA-10, THRD, DRD, and HODD zones) and new assisted living facilities.

Wilton needs a greater variety of housing types. Wilton residents are generally open to diversifying housing options, provided new housing development occurs in design-compatible areas with supporting infrastructure and respects the expectations of existing low-density neighborhoods.

- The 2011 Town Senior Survey indicated that more than 75% of Wilton seniors more than 75 years of age live in a single-family home and 60% live on a property of 2 acres or more.
- About 60% of Senior Survey respondents expect that their projected income in retirement will not be sufficient to allow them to continue to live in Wilton.
- Demand for smaller and more affordable homes is likely to grow in the coming years with the aging of the large "baby boom" generation into their 60s and 70s.
- According to planning surveys, 84% of respondents believe that Wilton should try to attract more young professionals.
- About 60% of survey respondents support the development of housing options that are affordable to households making less than 80% of the area median income (AMI).
- About 70% of public survey respondents supported additional residential development in Wilton Center. There was also general support for more residential development on Danbury Road, with the highest levels of support on Danbury Road south of Cannondale, and in Georgetown.

Objectives and Strategies:

1.1 *Increase the Availability of Multi-Family Housing and Smaller Housing Units*

Diversifying the Town's housing stock is a top community goal for the next decade. This diversification is focused on creating smaller housing units that can support a range of life stages and includes multi-family apartments, condominiums, and smaller single-family homes. Multi-family housing is currently permitted in several business districts, and assisted living and congregate housing is permitted in certain residential zones under more strict requirements. The greatest opportunity to diversify Wilton's housing stock, achieve housing goals, smartly grow population, enable more of Wilton's workforce to live in Town, and foster a vibrant and socio-economically diverse local community is with regulatory changes and zoning incentives encouraging property redevelopment where development capacity and access to utility and transportation infrastructure exists into design-appropriate, attractive, and fiscally-prudent multi-family housing and smaller housing units. Policies directed toward reasonable population growth rates will also support the economic goals of this Plan by providing a larger consumer and employee base for businesses, improved economic activity, and higher property values, which will provide additional property tax revenue to the Town.

- Encourage smaller-scale, lower cost, and/or multi-family housing, whether as transit-oriented, stand-alone, or mixed-use development, to serve the entire Wilton community, including younger working age and older populations whose housing and affordability needs overlap and for whom access to transit and services is important. Target this housing in Wilton Center, Georgetown, train station areas, and Danbury Road south of Cannon Road.
- Increase permitted residential density in the village centers and along Danbury Road where development capacity and supportive infrastructure is available or appropriately expanded.
- Consider denser, yet compatible housing opportunities in abutting transition areas, including condominiums and smaller single-family homes.
- Consider requiring more meaningful fiscal impact statements with multi-family development applications to ensure a balance between meeting housing needs and maintaining high-quality Town services.
- Consider regulatory incentives, including density, floor-area-ratio, setback and/or bulk adjustments, for use of green building techniques in new multi-family development, to lower overall costs and reduce environmental impacts.
- Consider regulatory incentives for new multi-family/mixed-use development that provides dedicated car-share parking, and pedestrian and bicycling amenities; evaluate and revise parking requirements for existing and new uses along Danbury Road.
- Maintain, but improve the clarity and utility of, accessory dwelling unit zoning regulations as a means of increasing housing variety and attaining smaller housing units.

1.2 *Diversify the price points of Wilton's housing stock*

Diversifying the price points of housing will increase the Town's ability to attract and retain a socio-economically diverse range of individuals and households inclusive of young professionals and seniors. This will help drive local commerce, personal spending, and tax revenues. While Wilton is not likely to reach the 10% affordable housing threshold established by CGS §8-30g during the next ten years due to the sheer numbers of new units that are required, the Town will continue to increase its affordable housing stock. The Town can help facilitate the expansion of more diverse housing through regulatory changes, establishing alternative funding structures, or utilizing Town-owned land.

- Evaluate requiring a set aside of 10-20%, or greater, of all units as affordable, consistent with CGS §8-30g requirements, community needs, and market conditions, in any new residential and/or mixed-use development, including mixed-use residential development in the Wilton Center (WC) zone. Evaluate regulatory incentives for greater set-asides, including density, bulk, and setback requirements, among others, with appropriate protections for public health and safety, historical asset protection, and environmental resources protection.
- Encourage legislative changes to CGS §8-30g to better address community concerns about public health and safety arising from overaggressive design, intensity of use, and overdevelopment, particularly where the community already has zoning regulations promoting meaningful affordable housing development and has demonstrated a history of achieving affordable housing goals.
- Explore tools and incentives to retain existing affordable units with expiring affordability covenants.
- Explore establishing an advisory housing committee panel of local and regional experts to evaluate the housing needs of all segments of the community.
- Consider use of a housing trust fund and/or a payment in-lieu-of affordable units system to fund the construction, rehabilitation, or repair of affordable housing, but generally favor mandatory set asides in commercial districts.
- Consider using Town-owned properties to meet housing needs, as feasible and appropriate.
- Promote energy efficiency in new housing as a means of reducing overall housing utility costs.
- Support education of the community on the means and importance of having a diverse housing stock.

1.3 **Promote universal design techniques (ensuring the built environment is accessible to anyone regardless of age, disability, etc.)**

Wilton's senior population is projected to grow over the next decade. Universal design techniques such as providing single-story housing units (or elevators), wheelchair accessible doorways, and grab bars in restrooms ensure that seniors will be able to "age in place" and continue to access key Town services and amenities.

- Consider implementing regulatory incentives for universal design in new housing and improvements to Town facilities.
- Strive for ADA accessibility in outdoor recreation facilities even where not required, such as on the Norwalk River Valley Trail.

1.4 **Support and maintain households at various life-cycle stages**

While housing is a critical component to attracting more young people and retaining more empty nesters and seniors, the Town needs to continue to provide, or partner with organizations that provide, high quality services and programs that contribute to quality of life.

- Continue to implement and support a variety of assistance and cultural programming through the Senior Center, Parks & Recreation, Library, and Social Services.
- Continue to implement and promote the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief program.
- Promote and support groups and agencies that provide a variety of assistance and recreational programs, such as Stay at Home Wilton, Trackside, etc.

Universal Design

Physical barriers to mobility exist inside many homes and neighborhoods. Universal design (UD) standards improve the livability of homes and neighborhoods, not only for the elderly and the disabled, but for every member of the community. The guiding philosophy of UD is to design spaces with the transformative ability to meet the changing needs of its users and allow them to navigate space freely and without barriers. This helps enrich the living experience by maintaining independence and safety of users throughout all life stages, from youth to old age.

Universal design promotes accessibility, safety, flexibility, functionality, simplicity, and comfort without compromising the aesthetics of space. One of the key concepts of UD is visitability, meaning that all housing meets minimum levels of accessibility to enable persons with disabilities to visit and navigate other people's houses freely and without barriers. The basic requirements for visitability include zero-step entries, wide doorways, and at least a half-bath on the first floor. An additional benefit is that these design features make homes more livable for both residents and visitors, as well as persons with perceived disabilities, at little or no extra cost.

Goal 2: Preserve and protect Wilton's established rural and lower-density residential neighborhoods

Issues and Trends:

Wilton's rural residential neighborhoods are vital to the Town's design character, sense of place, and fiscal stability.

- Most Wilton residents live single-family homes on 1 and 2 acre or larger lots.
- Residential land uses make up about 75% of the Town's Grand List, therefore the preservation and enhancement of residential property values is critical to the Town's long-term fiscal health.
- The decline in residential property values was cited as a top concern in the community survey.

Wilton has limited opportunities to construct additional housing under current zoning because there is little vacant and developable land left.

- If all vacant land were developed under current zoning, Wilton could accommodate an additional 767 single-family dwelling units, or approximately 2,224 additional residents. Most of that development potential (70%) is on "unprotected open space," which is land that is unlikely to be developed in the near future.
- There is no vacant land specifically zoned for multi-family residential uses.
- Many residents expressed concern that higher-density development could negatively impact low-density residential neighborhoods.
- Because Wilton's more rural areas and much of its remaining undeveloped land lacks arterial road frontage or direct access or public water and sewer, overdevelopment or over-intensification of use can give rise to significant traffic safety, water usage, drainage, environmental, and ecological issues.

Objectives and Strategies:

2.1 *Implement policies and regulations to better preserve and protect existing residential neighborhoods while balancing the need for growth and a greater variety of housing types*

Wilton's low-density neighborhoods and rural history and design character are one of the Town's greatest assets. Low-density neighborhoods are a significant contributor to the Town's tax base. While there is a need to diversify the housing stock, this should not be done to the detriment of prudent planning and zoning principles or to existing lower-density areas, particularly those located farther from train stations, village districts, commercial districts and Danbury Road, and those areas lacking adequate infrastructure, including road access, public water, and sewer.

- Review and revise regulations to ensure adequate buffering between higher density commercial/ mixed-use/ multi-family areas and adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Maintain current densities in rural residential areas.
- Avoid sewer extensions in unserved rural residential areas, except in areas with widespread desire and need, and/or significant septic failures, and/or environmental concerns.
- Explore the potential for additional historic districts, if and as desired by the neighborhood.
- Study appropriate development criteria for the transition areas between zones, particularly those within the existing sewer service area and those adjacent to higher density zones.

Goal 3: Enhance the strength and diversity of the local economy and its connections to the region

Issues and Trends:

Both Wilton's local economy and the regional economy benefit from Wilton's skilled and highly-educated local workforce. A vast majority of these workers commute to jobs outside of Wilton.

- Local unemployment rates are among the lowest in the State and county.
- Nearly 80% of Wilton adults have a four-year college degree. Nearly 40% have a graduate or professional degree.
- Wilton has a large and growing "work from home" population. As of 2016, more than 11% of residents worked from home.
- About 15% of employed Wilton residents work in Wilton. Fewer residents are working within Wilton compared to ten years ago.
- According to the EDC Analytical Survey, many Wilton businesses were established in Town because the owner or senior leadership had a connection to the Town (i.e. live nearby or in Town).
- Over the last few years, ASML, Wilton's largest employer, has expanded its presence within the Town.

Wilton has strong financial standing and has strengthened the Town government's relationship with the business community. However, the State's current fiscal challenges make the Town increasingly reliant on local property tax revenues to fund essential government services.

- The Town established an Economic Development Commission (EDC) in 2012 to help identify business needs, establish a Town marketing and branding campaign, and better market and promote Wilton as a place to live, work, and do business.
- Wilton is one of the few communities in Connecticut to maintain an AAA bond rating.
- Residential properties represent about 75% of the Town's tax base and will continue to be the largest part of the tax base over the next decade. Additional commercial development and Grand List growth will help reduce the overall property tax burden on residential property owners.

Many members of the community believe that Wilton’s economic environment is not thriving, and property taxes are too high – although data analysis shows more mixed conditions, with some business sectors outperforming the State and nation.

- As of 2016, there were 8,590 Wilton residents in the labor force and 12,978 jobs in Town, indicating that Wilton is a net importer of employees and sees its daytime population grow during the work day. The number of jobs in Wilton increased by 22% between 2007 and 2016.
- The regional retail market has a lower vacancy rate compared to the State and national averages, although high rents, driven higher in part due to triple-net operating costs (e.g., property taxes, insurance, utilities, and common area maintenance) are putting considerable pressure on local business tenants and may be deterring some retail businesses from moving to Wilton.
- Public survey responses indicate that 78% of respondents do not believe, to one degree or another, that Wilton’s economic environment is thriving. This belief may be linked to the lack of recovery in residential property values over the last decade and larger regional and State economic and fiscal issues.
- The commercial office market in the Central Fairfield County submarket has weakened, with a vacancy rate of about 23% as of 2018. Office buildings built before 1970 have a vacancy rate of 38.9%. There may be opportunities to adaptively reuse underperforming office buildings during the next decade.
- The EDC analytical survey conducted in 2016 indicated that many businesses desire improved communications with the Town regarding zoning and want to explore modifications to regulations to give businesses and property owners greater flexibility in attracting tenants.

Town of Wilton Principal Employers: 2018

Rank	Name	Nature of Business	Employees	Percent of Total Town Employment
1	ASML Lithography Systems	Printing Machinery & Equipment	893	10.8%
2	Bridgewater Associates Investments	Investment Advisors	462	5.6%
3	Tauck, Inc.	Tour Operator	243	2.9%
4	Wilton Meadows	Nursing Home	234	2.8%
5	Melissa & Doug LLC	Toy and Puzzle Wholesaler	230	2.8%
6	Cotiuti	Recovery Auditing	182	2.2%
7	Henkel Corporation	Household Products Provider	182	2.2%
8	Tracy Locke Partnership	Marketing Communications Services	166	2.0%
9	Louis Dreyfus	Agri Business	159	1.9%
10	Wilton Retirement Housing	Nursing Home	156	1.9%
11	TLP Inc.	Pharmaceutical Preparations	150	1.8%
12	Deloitte & Touch LLP	Household Products Provider	111	1.3%
Total	All Principal Employers	-	3,368	37.3%

Source: Town of Wilton Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, 2018

Objectives and Strategies:

3.1 Brand and market Wilton as a preferred location for businesses in targeted clusters

Wilton has many assets, including a highly educated and talented workforce, strong financial standing, successful small businesses, major corporate entities, and access to a large and diverse labor pool via the Route 7 corridor. Since the establishment of the EDC in 2012, Wilton has made significant progress in marketing its benefits and assets to prospective businesses.

- Support EDC efforts to market to business clusters that already have a presence in, or are appropriate for Wilton's existing workforce, development scale, and business mix. Target clusters identified in the EDC's 2014 Strategic Plan include: healthcare, professional and technical services, marketing/marketing research, film/performing arts, retail, and other entrepreneurial "clean energy" organizations.
- Promote Wilton's talented workforce, education systems, quality of life, and character (landscape, historic resources, etc.) in marketing the Town to businesses. This includes both amenities within Wilton as well as those within the larger region, which are accessible to Wilton residents.

3.2 Support the redevelopment of underperforming commercial properties

Wilton has little vacant commercially-zoned land that can support new development in current configurations. In order to grow the commercial component of the tax base, Wilton will need to promote the redevelopment of underperforming properties into higher and better uses, including by consolidation where appropriate to achieve zoning goals. With limited projected demand for additional office space during the next five years, vacant older office and retail buildings are likely to have the greatest potential for adaptive reuse or redevelopment over the coming decade.

- Conduct an expert-assisted zoning analysis that assesses potential barriers to reuse of underperforming commercial properties, and consider amendments to regulations to improve redevelopment potential. This should include evaluating form-based zoning approaches, permitted uses relative to market conditions, as well as dimensional and parking requirements, among other considerations.
- Evaluate targeted changes to zoning regulations that enable greater utility from as-of-right and special-permitted uses in commercial districts; consider making certain special-permitted uses as-of-right.
- Consider potential tax and grant incentives for improvements and/or redevelopment. Implement and market the most appropriate incentives.



There is limited vacant commercially-zoned land left in Town. As a result, most recent projects have involved the redevelopment of existing properties. For example, the former Young's Nursery site (left) is currently being redeveloped into an assisted living facility (right). Photo Credit: Google Maps

3.3 *Balance modern economic development with the need to preserve the Town's original and unique character*

The lack of vacant land will naturally put development pressure on older, less expensive, and/or underutilized properties. Without formal historic protections, antique structures are often seen as redevelopment candidates. Antique structures contribute to Wilton's community history, design character and sense of scale and place. At the same time, Wilton needs to grow its grand list in order to continue to provide high quality Town services. The PZC should initiate a process with input from both the HDC and EDC to ensure the proper balance is struck between preservation and economic development needs.

- Conduct an expert-assisted joint PZC/ HDPC process to explore zoning incentives (setbacks, density bonus, etc.) and potential form-based zoning strategies for the reuse, preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, reconstruction, and/or relocation of historic structures.
- Conduct a joint PZC/ EDC process to explore changes to sign regulations to ensure the appropriate balance between business-friendliness and aesthetic quality.
- Consider ways to reduce parking requirements in light of current and impending changes in transportation technology such as car sharing and other vehicular innovations. Interim steps towards reduced overall parking requirements may include: enabling deferred construction or pervious parking of some proportion of spaces, encouraging shared parking arrangements, and providing regulatory incentives for bike, pedestrian, and car-share amenities.

3.4 *Support existing businesses*

- Update signage regulations with business and community input. Updates should balance business needs with community aesthetic and safety considerations.
- Work collaboratively with the Chamber of Commerce to establish a business visitation program to identify issues and opportunities.
- Consider co-locating Town permitting departments (building, planning & zoning, Town clerk) in a centralized location as the Town implements its Town-wide Facilities Plan.
- Continue to work with public and private landowners and utilities to encourage improvements to telecommunications infrastructure, particularly wireless and fiber that enable high-bandwidth uses and applications.
- Consider developing business center amenities (such as a high-speed wireless infrastructure and internet infrastructure) at the Wilton Public Library or other Town buildings to support the Town's large and growing "work from home" population.
- Consider developing a co-working or "makerspace" (like in Danbury and New Milford) at a publicly accessible location, perhaps Comstock or the Wilton Public Library or other Town building, to support entrepreneurship and new locally-owned businesses.
- Assess the Town's zoning regulations and identify any potential regulatory barriers that impact the Town's growing work-from-home population.

Goal 4: Continue to cultivate and maintain a high-quality school system under local control

Issues and Trends:

Wilton's schools comprise the Town's largest and most-used physical facility and real estate assets, requiring careful planning, operational funding, and capital investments by the Town. Wilton's high-quality schools attract families and businesses, prepare future skilled workers, business owners and leaders, and serve as key focal points for community engagement and events. As a result, Wilton Public Schools support property values for all Wilton property owners through their vibrancy and reputation for excellence and their role in strengthening Wilton's sense of community.

- From establishing the earliest school districts and school houses in the mid-1700's, to the creation of a Board of School Visitors in 1860, to the latest renovation-rebuild of the Miller-Driscoll Elementary School in 2017, the Town has enjoyed a long-standing tradition of developing and prioritizing its education facilities, programming, and administration under a system of local funding and control.¹
- Today, Town schools, facilities, and budgets are overseen by the Board of Education in partnership with the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen and approval by Wilton residents at the Town's annual Town meeting. This system of checks-and-balances and continued local control has tangible social, fiscal, and economic value to Wilton residents, businesses, and landowners.
- The Town has 4 schools: Miller-Driscoll (preschool and grades K-2), Cider Mill School (grades 3-5), Middlebrook School (grades 6-8), and Wilton High School (grades 9-12).
- Most of the Town's school facilities were constructed in the 1950's, 60's and 1970's, though all have since been significantly expanded, renovated, and upgraded. The Town has invested in several capital projects within the school system since the last Plan, including:
 - Miller-Driscoll renovation, demolition, and new construction; and
 - Upgrades to science labs, auditorium, and tennis courts at Wilton High School.
- Further physical upgrades are planned, including roof replacements at Cider Mill and Middlebrook, HVAC improvements at Middlebrook, and paving improvements at Cider Mill. Athletic facilities improvements may include track renovations and playing field upgrades.
- Total enrollment has declined 5% over the last five years; however, elementary enrollments are projected to increase over the next five years. Enrollment projections forecast K-12 enrollments leveling off at about 3,500 students.
- Wilton High School was recognized as the 9th best high school in Connecticut by U.S. News & World Report in 2019. Rankings are based on reading and math proficiency, college readiness, and Advanced Placement test scores.
- Notwithstanding its successes, Wilton's educational system faces significant pressures that affect the Town's land-use planning. These include the above-mentioned enrollment trends, concerns about increasing costs and resulting property tax burden, particularly on seniors, and State policy that increases educational costs, reduces local control or forces "regionalized" educational districts or funding. Each of these issues could significantly affect demographics, facility needs, property values, and governance of the Town in the next ten years.

¹ Ibid., 14-15, 18, 23-24, 33-34, 44-46.

Objectives and Strategies:

4.1 Continue prudent community control and cost-effective investment in school facilities and programming to maintain and enhance Wilton Public Schools' attractiveness to current and prospective residents and businesses.

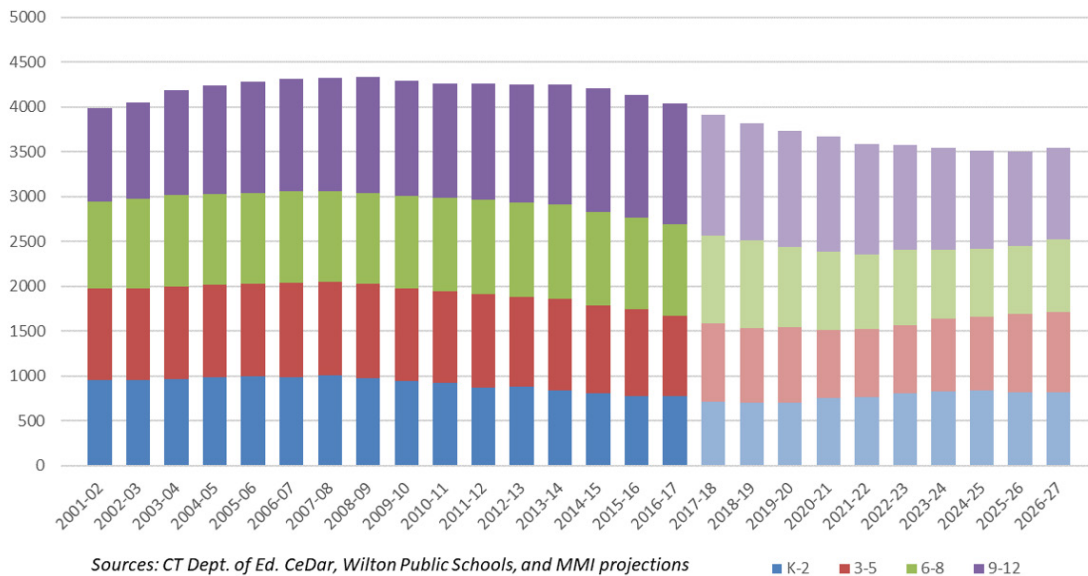
- Continue local control over educational facilities and programming investment while exploring voluntary cost-saving or program-enhancing measures on a local and regional basis.
- Address proposed State restrictions over the installation and use of artificial turf fields, including by considering alternatives and sharing knowledge of and promoting safe and environmentally-friendly design and materials use for athletic field upgrades.



Wilton has one of the top public school systems in the state of Connecticut. Existing facilities Miller-Driscoll School, and Cider Mill School.
Source: Wilton Public Schools

Actual and Projected Enrollment: 2001-02 to 2026-27

Medium-Growth Scenario
Wilton Public Schools



Goal 5: Foster community engagement, coordination, and a culture of self-governance

Issues and Trends:

Implementing this Plan requires cooperation amongst numerous Town departments, boards, commissions, and community organizations. A crucial component to successfully implementing the POCD is to build community trust and promote respectful and transparent dialogue, even in times of disagreement.

- Upgraded Town systems enable a more efficient and effective land-use application process, improve potential business development, and increase community participation in land-use matters.
- Several members of the public expressed concern regarding the deterioration of civil discourse that may be discouraging residents from participating in local decision-making processes.
- The PZC established a Joint Working Group (JWG) to collaboratively guide the vision, goals, and strategies of the POCD. The JWG is comprised of PZC members as well as members of other Town boards and commissions and may serve as a model for evaluating and ensuring implementation of this Plan.

Objectives and Strategies:

5.1 *Upgrade town systems and processes for land-use matters*

- Support continued maintenance and improvement of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and data.
- Explore ways to improve the land-use permitting and decision-making process through the use of electronic/online applications, forms, communications, public notices, live streaming of meetings, etc.
- Identify ways to improve coordination, responsiveness, and responsibility delegation among land-use boards.
- Evaluate the land-use permitting process and identify ways to create a more efficient, simple, and cost-effective process, including:
 - Better application, hearing, and timing coordination between boards and commissions, staff, and the public; and,
 - Improving the pre-application process to ensure that all boards, commissions and staff provide meaningful and efficient review early in the application process; and also ensure that requirements for approval are clearly communicated to applicants.
- Revisit procedures for staff and expert/peer review of land use matters, especially for drainage, traffic, and flood zone issues.

5.2 *Promote community engagement, civic-mindedness, and self-governance*

The Town can promote transparent and effective decision-making by improving communication with its constituents, fostering communication and collaboration across boards and commissions, educating the public on roles and responsibilities, and conducting proactive community engagement to “get ahead” of controversial or divisive issues.

- Conduct transparent decision-making processes across all boards, commissions, and departments to foster community trust.
- Value and encourage community participation in planning and policy decisions – consider public input alongside technical analyses.

5.3 *Establish a Plan Implementation Committee*

The POCD Joint Working Group recognized the need for persistent stewardship over this Plan's goals and visions over the coming decade, as summarized in the Implementation Plan in Chapter 8. Accordingly, this Plan recommends creating a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) populated with representatives from the Joint Working Group's member boards. The PIC would be responsible for shepherding specific objectives forward and periodically taking stock of the progress achieved, recognizing changes in conditions that may render some objectives infeasible or inappropriate, and refocusing the efforts of responsible entities to ensure continued progress towards the Plan's goals.

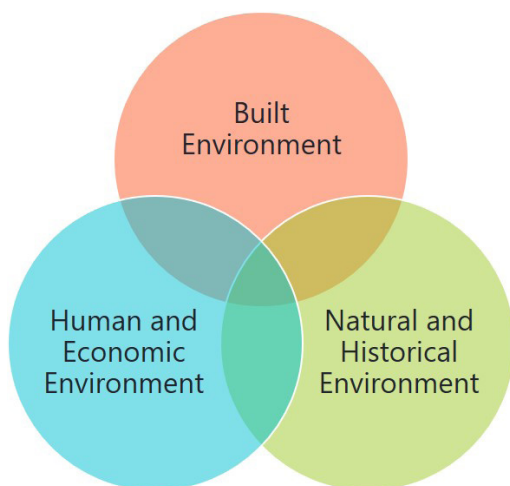
- The PIC should be comprised of boards and commissions who participated in the JWG process. This includes members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Education, Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Energy Commission, Historic District and Historic Properties Commission, Inland Wetlands Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Water Commission, Water Pollution Control Authority, and Zoning Board of Appeals. Member committees and organizations should select their own representatives to the Committee.
- The PIC's initial meeting should establish the priority and realistic timing for pursuing and achieving goals in the Implementation Plan. The priority and timeline of goals may change in light of shifting economic, demographic, policy, and data trends or real-world conditions
- The PIC should meet at least semi-annually to provide updates on progress made by various agencies, coordinate actions for which the PIC is the responsible entity, and report in advisory capacity to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- The PIC may consider holding biannual public forums to track POCD progress and gather additional community input.
- The PIC should monitor and evaluate significant planning data and policy developments and adjust objectives and implementation accordingly. Important upcoming developments currently include the releases of updated State and Regional Plans of Conservation and Development, transportation plans, water plans, and the 2020 United States Census, all of which are expected to occur in the next two years. The PIC should also monitor and evaluate significant state legislative and agency actions that will affect the Plan's goals and objectives.



6. Built Environment

This chapter focuses on goals for Wilton's physical and design development, including its village centers, commercial corridor, transportation networks, infrastructure, and Town facilities.

Goals:



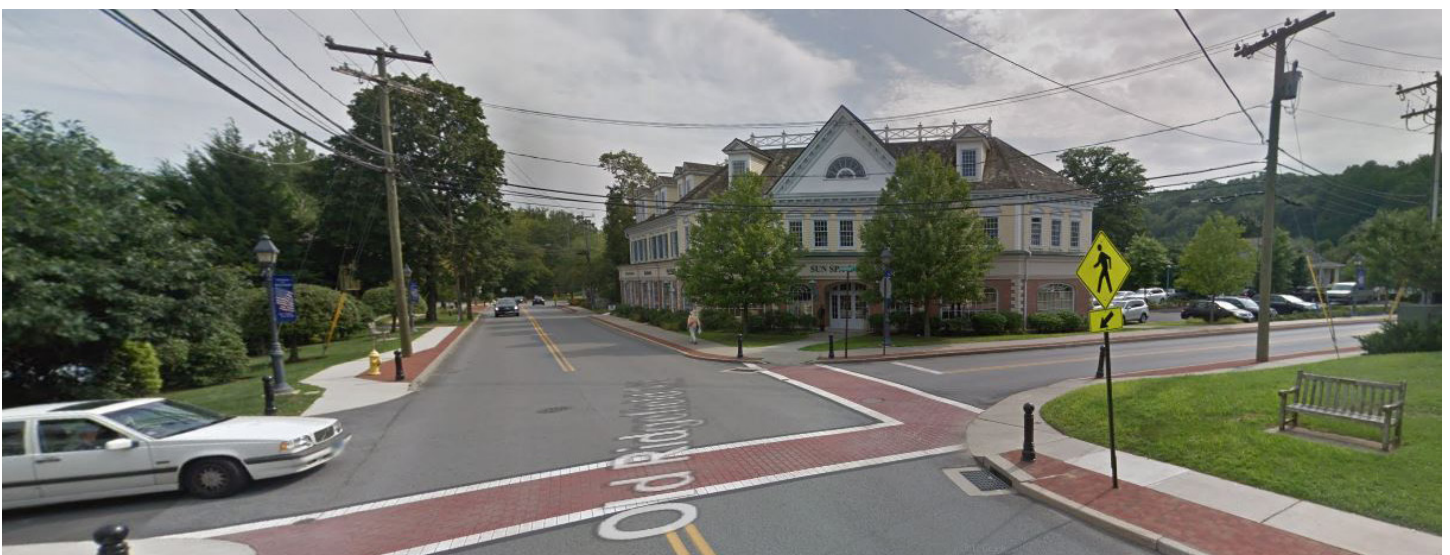
- 1. Strengthen Wilton Center as a vibrant economic, residential, recreational, and cultural hub for the community and region**
- 2. Strengthen the economic viability of the Candondale area while protecting its unique design and historical character**
- 3. Strengthen the Georgetown node through mixed-use, transit, and pedestrian oriented development**
- 4. Enhance Wilton's transportation network for all modes and users**
- 5. Improve and maintain Town-owned facilities and services in a fiscally prudent manner**
- 6. Maintain safe and efficient public utility services and infrastructure**

Goal 1: Strengthen Wilton Center as a vibrant economic, residential, recreational and cultural hub for the community and region

Issues and Trends:

Wilton Center is a focal point of community economic and cultural activity and offers high quality infrastructure and amenities.

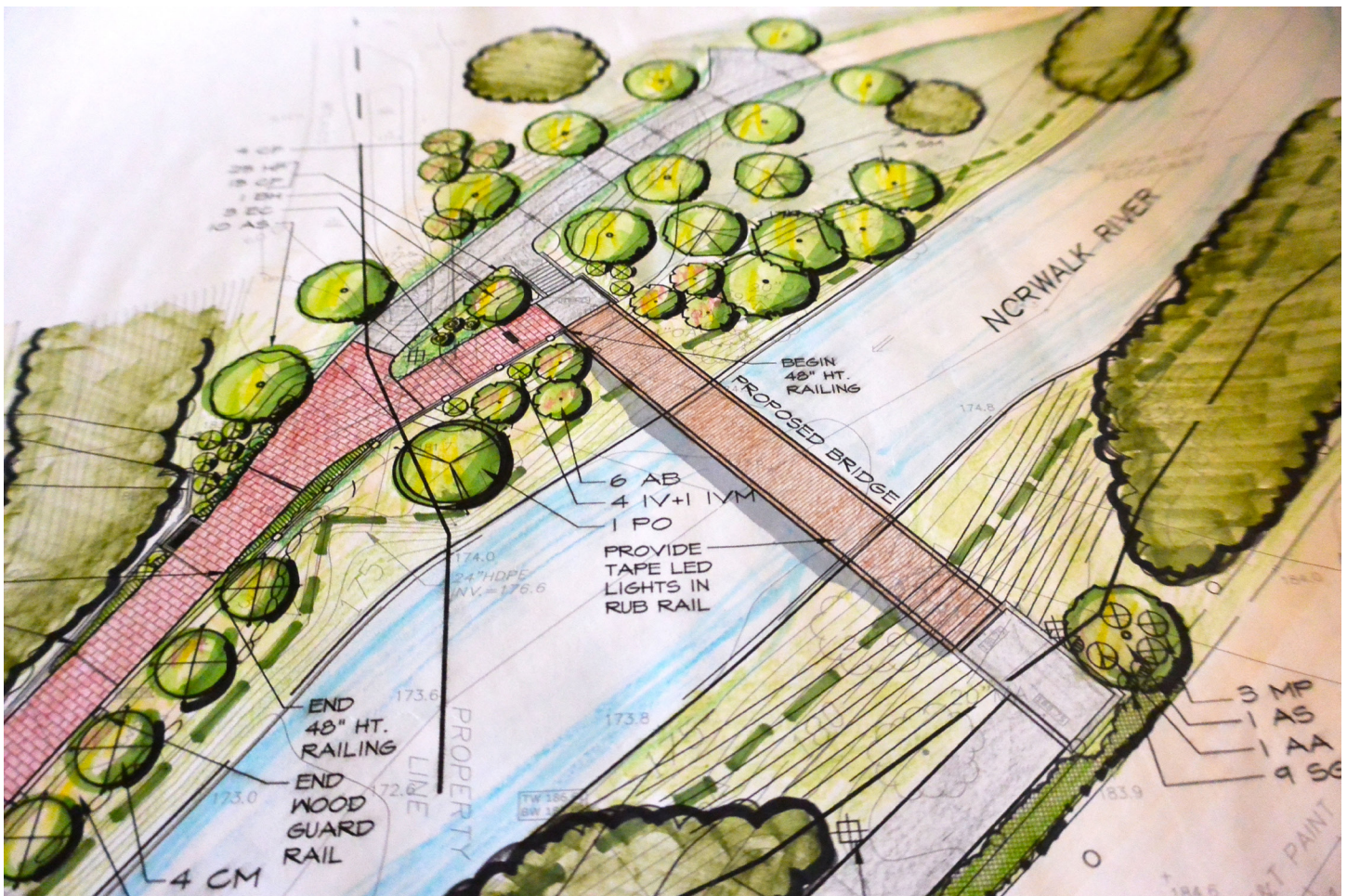
- Over 90% of survey respondents visit Wilton Center at least a few times per week.
- Wilton Center houses two grocery stores, numerous restaurants, and one of the highest concentrations of neighborhood retail storefronts in Town. It also serves as a cultural and historical center for the Town with the Wilton Library, Schenck's Island, the Town pavilion, and River Road serving as the location for entertainment, cultural, artistic, and commercial events.
- Wilton Train Station is the primary and most-used rail commuting center for the Town. Its parking area is well utilized.
- The Town completed a center streetscape project in 2017 using Main Street Investment Funds.
- The Town has an ongoing Wilton Center Tree Program overseen by the Conservation Commission and the Wilton Garden Club, and local business and community organizations maintain gateway plantings, gardens, and lampposts on Town properties and walkways.
- Renovations to the Wilton Public Library were completed in 2009.
- Some development of areas along the Norwalk River, particularly the Norwalk River Valley Trail along River Road, has progressed over the last five years, culminating most recently in a Schenck's Island – Merwin Meadows Committee tasked with improving the accessibility, utility, and aesthetic of those two properties along the Trail. The Town has also developed an easement program in the WC Zone for future a future River Walk.
- A Wilton Center Master Plan was completed in 2001 and resulted in regulatory changes and streetscape improvements. However, several infrastructure recommendations of the study were not implemented due to lack of support. It is recommended that infrastructure in Wilton Center be revisited as part of a new master planning process.



Streetscape improvements in Wilton Center were completed in 2017. Photo Credit: Google Maps

The boundaries of Wilton Center are not well defined, and the Center needs improved connections to surrounding transportation infrastructure such as Danbury Road and the Train Station Area.

- A mental mapping exercise by the public at a planning workshop and online survey indicated that most participants define Wilton Center as roughly bounded by Ridgefield Road, Wolfpit Road, and the Norwalk River – not extending to Danbury Road and, in some cases, not including the Wilton Center train station.
- However, high traffic volumes on Danbury Road are supportive of commercial development, but most vehicles currently bypass Wilton Center. Traffic volumes on River Road through the center of Wilton Center have decreased by 14% between 2003 and 2015, dropping most notably after the 2010 widening of Danbury Road.
- The proposed pedestrian bridge between Wilton Center and the Wilton Train Station has been designed and obtained all necessary permits. The project is not yet fully funded, though grant applications for full funding are in process.
- Lack of proper gateways into Wilton Center – including enhanced signage, landscaping, lighting, traffic calming, and roadway and pedestrian design – from Ridgefield Road (Route 33) and Wolfpit Road contribute to the isolation of Wilton Center from traffic, visibility and commerce on Danbury Road.

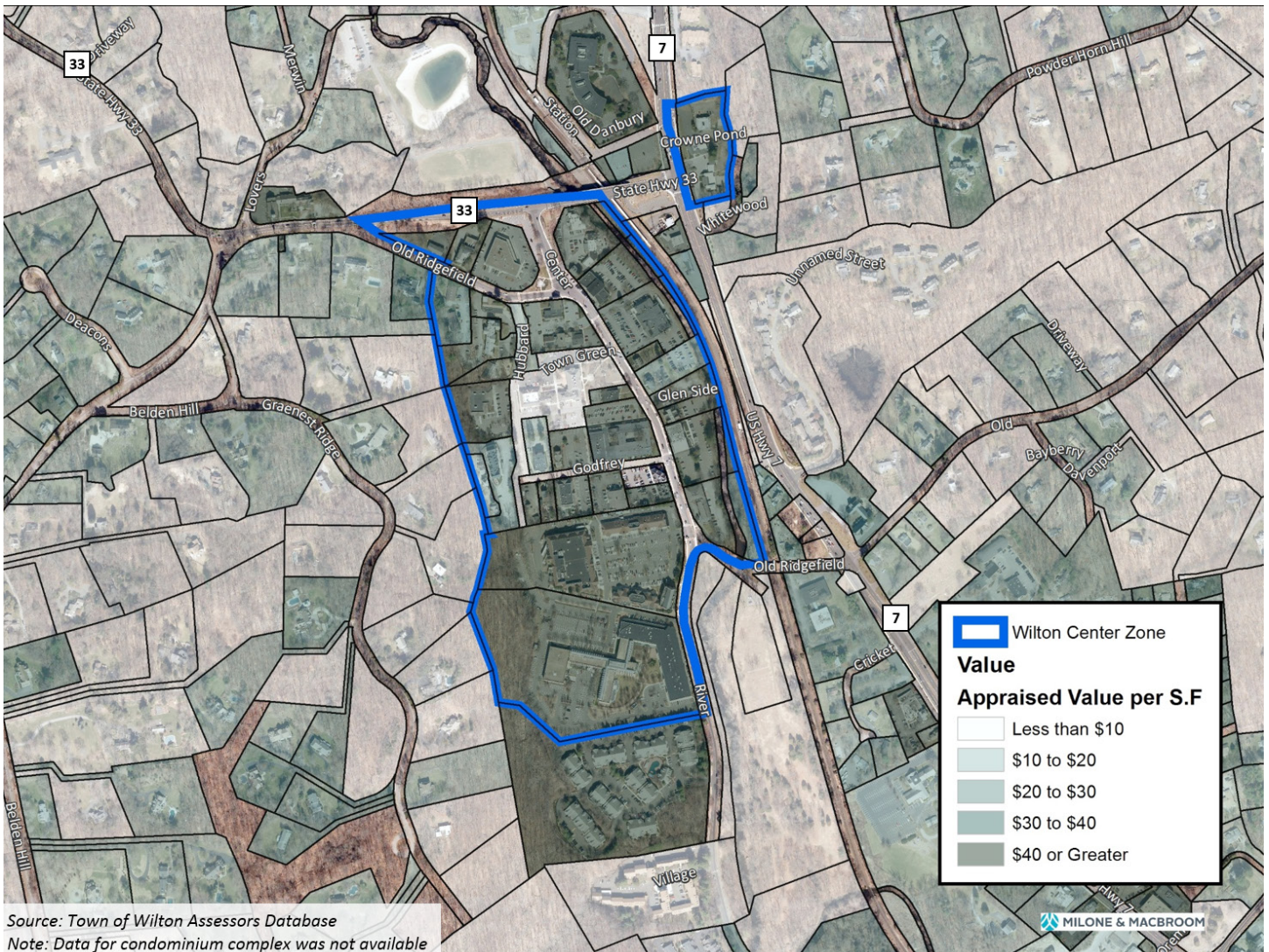


Rendering of the proposed pedestrian bridge connecting Wilton Center with the train station area. Photo Credit: Wilton Bulletin

Wilton Center and adjacent areas of Danbury Road provide the greatest opportunity to grow the Grand List while minimizing encroachment of development into low density areas.

- Wilton Center zoning, like much of Wilton’s zoning, separates and/or discriminates among uses, which can foster an auto-oriented and, at times, inefficient or suboptimal use of limited land, buildable area and natural resources. More compact, walkable, and mixed-use design approaches, perhaps using form-based zoning, may realize greater utility, function and market value while still respecting community design, aesthetic and environmental goals.
- Wilton Center has among the highest assessed value per acre in Town, averaging \$54 per square foot of lot area, nearly ten times the Town average. This reflects the density and intensity of development and quality of improvements.
- Additional development or redevelopment in Wilton Center equates to a bigger return in taxable property over a smaller land area.
- Public surveys indicated support for additional multi-family housing in Wilton Center and the train station area.
- The public survey indicated that higher density (3+ story) development was viewed more favorably along Danbury Road with smaller scale (2-3 story) development seen as more favorable on River Road and Old Ridgefield Road.

Appraised Value Per Square Foot in the Wilton Center (WC) Zone



Source: Town of Wilton Assessors Database
 Note: Data for condominium complex was not available

MILONE & MACBROOM

Objectives and Strategies:

1.1 *Improve the vibrancy, visual quality, and cohesion of Wilton Center while supporting new and existing businesses by planning for residential, commercial, and mixed-use development*

Throughout the POCD process, members of the public expressed a desire to improve the visual cohesion and character of Wilton Center. A Master Planning process should be initiated to set an overall vision for Wilton Center and recommend regulatory and infrastructure improvements that can achieve that vision. Inclusion and buy-in of property owners will be crucial to the successful implementation of the Master Plan.

- Conduct a professional, inclusive and transparent master planning process to:
 1. Define the bounds of Wilton Center, taking the train station and existing expansion of the Wilton Center zone across Danbury Road and recent approval of the mixed-use development at 300 Danbury Road into account;
 2. Explore the market opportunities for residential and commercial development and/or redevelopment, especially the potential for mixed-use and multi-modal, transit-oriented development that has more destination and experiential retail options serving a larger regional market beyond the Town's boundaries. Mixed-use development can include a range of uses and designs, including those without a residential component (such as retail and office) or required ground-level retail space;
 3. Using case-studies and possible form-based zoning approaches, assess property owners' and the community's desired design, form, and intensity of future redevelopment and development, including gateway and streetscape design, building architecture, height, bulk, and setbacks, parking – including at street, below-street-level or municipal garages, river access, civic/green space, historical preservation, and natural resources protection;
 4. Evaluate water quality, wetland, riverbank flood zone, and floodway impacts caused by higher density or intensity development that features Wilton Center's riverfront; enable development strategies and regulations to address those impacts;
 5. Develop a plan that reflects market realities and a proactive approach for development or redevelopment according to the community's vision, and that takes into consideration several ongoing initiatives, including further development of the NRVT, enhancements to the Town Green, Schenck's Island/ Merwin Meadows improvements, Chess Park, River Walk, and the train station/Wilton Center pedestrian bridge; and
 6. Plan for roadway, rail, pedestrian, water, sewer, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure improvements, to the extent possible, which will facilitate achieving redevelopment and development objectives.
- Investigate regional or State programs to help fund planning, especially for transit-oriented development.
- Identify the preferred administrative vehicle for implementing the Master Plan. Potential options may include form-based zoning, enhanced village district design review, revised village district boundaries and/or design guidelines, and/or an architectural review board for areas outside the village district.
- Implement regulatory changes/incentives per the recommendations of the Master Plan.
- Pursue infrastructure improvements per the recommendations of the Master Plan.

1.2 **Better connect Wilton Center to Danbury Road, the Train Station, and the Norwalk River**

While Wilton Center is proximate to Danbury Road and Wilton Train Station, it lacks direct connections to either. As a result, most Danbury Road traffic “passes by” Wilton Center, whose businesses miss out on prospective inter-region customers. Physical infrastructure can improve connectivity to Wilton Center, but it is also important to change the perception of Wilton Center and its boundaries. By making streetscapes and development patterns on appropriate sections of Danbury Road similar to those in Wilton Center, the two areas can be better integrated while improving the overall visibility and viability of Wilton Center.

- Provide a high quality and safe pedestrian connection between the train station and Wilton Center – whether it is through completion of the planned pedestrian bridge, visible improvements to Ridgefield Road and its pedestrian approaches, or similar projects.
- Develop the NRVT/RiverWalk through Wilton Center and continue to work with property owners to secure riverfront easements.
- Enhance sidewalks and the streetscape along Danbury Road to create a sense of place that portrays “town center” character, thus fostering visual and mental connections with the Town Center and signaling arrival in a unique section of the corridor.
- Improve Town Center gateway signage, lighting and traffic calming on Danbury Road, and make similar gateway improvements at Danbury Road and Ridgefield Road. Signage should be scaled and illuminated properly so that it is visible to passing vehicular traffic.

Goal 2: Pursue context-sensitive economic development on Danbury Road

Issues and Trends:

Danbury Road has the necessary infrastructure in place to support higher density development, particularly in areas south of Olmstead Hill Road.

- In 2010, Danbury Road was widened to two lanes in each direction between Olmstead Hill Road and Wolfpit Road. Future widening is planned between Lambert Corner and Grist Mill Road.
- Traffic volumes on Danbury Road are much higher than on other roadways in Wilton and range from 18,500 vehicles per day in Georgetown to 30,300 vehicles per day in Lambert Corner. Traffic volumes on Danbury Road have been stable in South Wilton and Georgetown between 2010 and 2015. However, traffic volumes on the central portion of Danbury Road have increased significantly since the widening project was completed. Between Wolfpit Road and Olmstead Hill Road, traffic volumes increased by 20% to 30% between 2010 and 2015.
- Sewer and water service are available on Danbury Road south of Olmstead Hill Road to the Norwalk border.
- Since 2010, natural gas service has been extended to Wilton Center and River Road as well as all schools and the Comstock Community Center.
- The public indicated general support for higher-density development, including residential and mixed-use on Danbury Road south of Cannon Road in areas already served by water and sewer infrastructure.

Danbury Road has distinct segments, each with differing land use patterns, natural features, and historic resources. Future development should align with the unique features of each segment.

Norwalk to Wolfpit Road

- Already fully-developed with commercial retail, office, industrial and warehouse properties and an overall higher-density of housing than elsewhere in Town, the primary focus in this area may be supporting existing development or redevelopment for mixed-use and higher-intensity uses on Danbury Road. There is public support for commercial and mixed-use development in this area, including the highest levels of support for apartments and condominiums (though, still less than 50% support).
- The highest traffic volumes in the corridor occur in this section.
- Water, sewer, and natural gas service is available.
- Access management is a concern due to high peak traffic congestion and numerous commercial curb cuts.
- This section is capped by Lambert's Corner with its significant assemblage of historical structures and cottage commercial use, which is a protected historic district.
- Some areas of this section also abut or drain directly into the Norwalk River, making it important to address water quality, wetlands, conservation and flood issues proactively in assessing development strategies.



Wolfpit Road to Cannon Road

- Though highly-developed, the section has somewhat less intense uses and smaller properties than are found in the Norwalk-Wolfpit section to the south. This area has seen several redevelopment projects in recent years, including a new medical office complex, a new assisted-living facility and an approved 74-unit, mixed-use project at 300 Danbury Road as part of the “expanded” Wilton Center zone.
- The Commission should evaluate whether and how the expansion of the Wilton Center zone and village district design requirements should encompass more of this section of Danbury Road, particularly between Wolfpit Road and School Road.
- There is public support for commercial and mixed-uses; however, the public’s response is split on industrial and pure residential uses.
- This section also has numerous institutional uses, notably the Town government campus, schools, religious institutions, and the Wilton Historical Society.
- This area experiences high traffic volumes and is served by water, sewer, and gas infrastructure.

Cannon Road to Ridgefield Line

- This section is primarily zoned for low-density residential uses with some smaller commercial districts along Danbury Road, particularly to the north in the Georgetown area.
- Many historic properties are located on Danbury Road between Cannon Road and Georgetown. This section of Danbury Road also has a unique streetscape including mature trees and stone walls.
- There is public support for commercial and mixed-use development at the proper scale – less support for apartments here than on other sections of Danbury Road.
- Danbury Road becomes one lane in each direction in this area, with no plans to widen north of Olmstead Hill Road.
- There is a lack of gas and sewer infrastructure to support higher density development.



Objectives and Strategies:

2.1 *Plan and regulate for transition in development patterns along Danbury Road from more intense uses in the southern corridor to more rural patterns in the northern corridor*

The Town should perform a zoning mapping analysis to enhance distinct design character areas of the Danbury Road corridor and more strongly define senses of place.

- Re-evaluate the zoning map Town wide to meet the land use goals of this Plan.
- Perform a zoning review of the past and future impact of the Danbury Road widening on abutting property owners.
- Encourage compatible and context-sensitive design of commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family properties where appropriate.
- Explore alternatives to the current design review process, such as establishing an architectural review board with review over all commercial projects on Danbury Road and/or exploring expanded or new Village Districts on Danbury Road.
- Review “orphan” and indistinct buffer zones and consider consolidating zones within different segments of the corridor.
- Rezone the corridor with distinct segments to ensure compatible and desirable development.

Zoning Recommendations for South Wilton (Norwalk Line to Wolfpit Road):

- Allow more intensive commercial development, with potential for mixed-use.
- Consider incentives for parcel consolidation or small-scale development where appropriate.
- Promote better access management and curb cut consolidation by requiring easements over neighboring properties for access and egress, facilitating integrated site planning between multiple property owners.
- Promote pedestrian and biking improvements.
- Evaluate appropriate landscaped setbacks and enhance landscaping/ streetscape requirements.
- Consider zoning incentives for historic structure preservation (See Natural and Historical Environment Goal 4).

Zoning Recommendations for Central Wilton (Wolfpit Road to Cannon Road):

- Allow commercial, residential, and mixed-use development that emphasizes transit-oriented development, community, and village design character and connections to Wilton Center. Evaluate form-based zoning approaches.
- Establish landscaping, signage, and site design standards that help to define this section of Danbury Road as a part of, or a gateway to, Wilton Center.
- Promote better parking utilization, access management, and curb cut consolidation by reviewing parking requirements, requiring easements over neighboring properties for access and egress and incentivizing integrated site planning between multiple property owners.
- Consider zoning incentives for historic structure preservation (See Natural and Historical Environment Goal 4).

Zoning Recommendations north of Cannon Road:

- Maintain existing low-density, rural development patterns, except in approaches to and within the Georgetown node.
- Enhance the utility and clarity of Adaptive Use regulations that are often used in this area.
- Enable commercial and residential development at limited densities that can be supported by on-site infrastructure.
- Consider zoning incentives for historic structure preservation (See Natural and Historical Environment Goal 4).

Goal 3: Strengthen the economic viability of the Cannondale area while protecting its unique design and historical character

Issues and Trends:

Cannondale is poorly defined with no clear boundaries.

- There is no clear agreement on where Cannondale begins or ends. The Cannondale Historic District is large, but the Cannon Crossing Village District is small. The public survey shows that disagreement exists on whether Cannondale extends across Danbury Road.
- Zoning reflects historical development patterns rather than current market realities. Properties on Danbury Road are zoned for residential purposes while commercial uses are only permitted on Cannon Road, which currently lacks public utilities and has very low traffic volumes.
- Cannondale Village area is isolated from Danbury Road. There is a need for gateway signage, landscaping, and pedestrian access.



*Photo Credit: Google Maps
Cannondale contains numerous historic structures dating from the mid-19th century.*



Photo Credit: www.cannondalevillage.com

Cannondale has significant historic resources, but poor visibility, and the lack of infrastructure hurts the viability of commercial uses.

- Cannondale is listed as a National Historic District. The area also has unique streetscapes including winding roads, stone walls, meadows, and mature trees.
- There is no gas, water, or sewer service east of the rail line to serve existing or new commercial development.
- Currently, there are no sidewalk connections between Cannondale Village and Danbury Road, preventing easy access to uses and activities at Allen’s Meadows, the Riverbrook Regional YMCA, and nearby assisted living facilities; however, the NRVT is planned for this area.
- The area has Wilton’s second train station with a parking area that is well-used during commuting hours but is underutilized otherwise.
- While used and valued by neighborhood residents, Cannondale is not frequently visited by other Wilton residents – a majority of survey respondents visit Cannondale a few times per year or less frequently.
- Public survey responses indicate support for restaurants, seasonal attractions, and small-scale eclectic uses in the Cannon Crossing area as well as residential and office uses on Danbury Road.

Objectives and Strategies:

3.1 *Conduct a master planning process for Cannondale*

The first step to improving the viability of the Cannondale area is to conduct a Master Planning process that defines the extent of Cannondale and establishes a clear vision for its future. Regulatory and infrastructure improvements should stem from the recommendations of the Master Planning process.

- Define an appropriate boundary for Cannondale, which may include a broader tertiary area and expanded village district designation. Consider incorporating the Danbury Road corridor west and north of Cannon Road into the Cannondale planning area.
- Encourage mixed-use, residential, and commercial development of an appropriate scale and design, with possible form-based approaches, transit-oriented design, and historical preservation as central principles.
- Consider opportunities for enabling more seasonal events and activities in Cannondale. Explore using the train station parking area for weekend or off-peak events.
- Revise zoning to implement the Master Plan.
- Establish zoning incentives for preserving historic structures.
- Establish unique design guidelines for Cannondale that preserve historic character with input through the master planning process.
- Improve multi-modal connections to Danbury Road.
- Make gateway improvements on Danbury Road to identify, brand and promote the village.

Goal 4: Strengthen the Georgetown node through mixed-use, transit and pedestrian oriented development

Issues and Trends:

Intermunicipal cooperation and collaboration are key to a successful and integrated Georgetown Village. Development in the Wilton portion of Georgetown is tied to ongoing initiatives in Redding and Ridgefield.

- Georgetown spans the four municipalities of Wilton, Redding, Weston, and Ridgefield.
- The Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill in Redding is a significant opportunity for revitalizing Georgetown. Several iterations and generations of redevelopment plans have stalled due to environmental and tax issues. Redding is currently considering taking the property for back taxes.
- Recent Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) planning efforts in Ridgefield envision additional housing and commercial development in Branchville, possibly extending into Wilton.
- The Wilton public survey indicates very high support for residential and office uses in northern Georgetown and commercial uses in central Georgetown.

Georgetown has a strong identity and sense of place. However, there is a lack of consistency in design and infrastructure across municipal lines.

- The neighborhood includes two local historic districts and a national historic district. There are 144 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places in the village. Thus far, all are confined to Wilton and Redding. The State does not have a provision for a multi-town historic district, thus forcing the Towns to piecemeal state historic districts together.
- There is a lack of sidewalk connections between residential and commercial areas, notwithstanding a public desire for improved connectivity.
- The streetscape in the Redding portion of Georgetown has been recently improved with new intersection design, crosswalks, several restaurants, a bank and other neighborhood retail. This design is now visually inconsistent with adjacent areas in Wilton, disrupting a sense of place.
- The lack of sewer service in the Wilton section of Georgetown limits density of future development.
- A small water pollution control facility recently expanded in Redding to support future development at Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill. Larger scale and/or diversified development may help spread the costs of this upgraded facility.



The former Gilbert and Bennett School is owned by the Town of Wilton and currently houses the Gilbert & Bennett Cultural Center. Photo Credit: Pam Rouleau via the G&B Cultural Center

Objectives and Strategies:

4.1 Participate in a regional master planning process for the entirety of Georgetown

A collaborative Master Planning process will ensure an attractive and consistent village center that spans all four municipalities. The process should coordinate land use patterns and zoning regulations and ensure consistent streetscape, design, branding and infrastructure across town lines to yield the best uses for the Village and each town.

- Work in conjunction with neighboring municipalities to conduct a cohesive place-making planning process.
- Identify redevelopment and infill development opportunities that are not reliant on public sewer and water infrastructure expansion.
- Consider potential context-sensitive infill development on Town-owned property such as the former Gilbert & Bennett School in a manner that is consistent with its historic district designation and the findings of the Town's Property Portfolio Recommendations, issued in 2019.
- Identify place-making opportunities (signage, streetscape, wayfinding, pedestrian amenities, etc.) to brand and market Georgetown across municipal boundaries.
- Pursue grants and streetscape improvement projects jointly with other municipalities.
- Improve bike and pedestrian connections along Danbury Road and Route 57, which connect to the Branchville transit area and Main Street (Redding).
- Identify opportunities to partner with the NRVT.
- Modify zoning regulations to encourage pedestrian-scale development, with unique design guidelines per the Master Plan.
- Support and enhance the existing housing stock in Georgetown, which has a more diverse range of housing styles and price points compared to other parts of Wilton.

4.2 Support redevelopment of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill

The Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill in Redding provides a significant opportunity to revitalize Georgetown. While not within the Town boundaries, the appropriate redevelopment of this property will benefit the Wilton portion of Georgetown.

- Continue to monitor and participate in G&B Wire Mill redevelopment planning efforts to ensure positive impacts to Georgetown as a whole, and Wilton.
- Support speeding up environmental remediation efforts.



*Georgetown spans four municipalities and lacks consistent infrastructure and signage across town boundaries. The Redding portion of Georgetown (left) recently underwent streetscape improvements. However, those improvements did not occur in the Wilton section (right).
Photo Credit: Google Maps*

Goal 5: Enhance Wilton's transportation network for all modes and users

Issues and Trends:

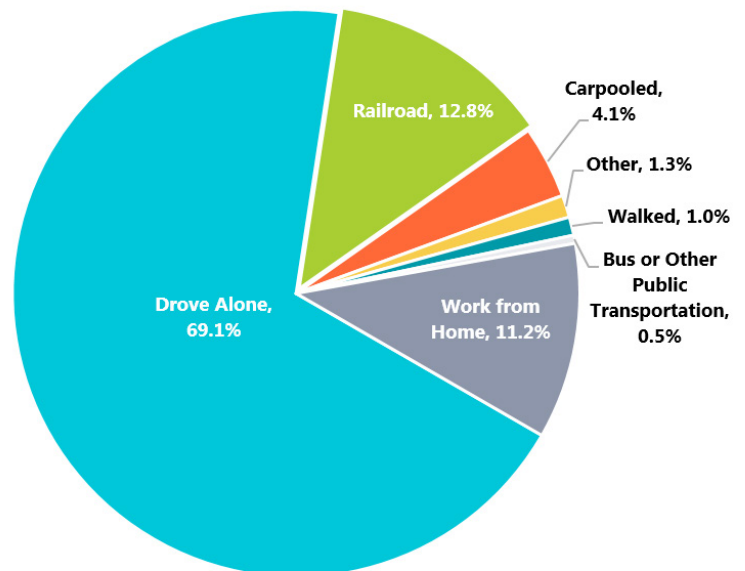
Wilton residents are increasingly using telecommuting and non-traditional work commute schedules. Most Wilton residents who commute are traveling longer distances to jobs and are using a range of travel modes.

- According to the 2016 ACS, Wilton is home to 8,362 employed residents. Over 11% of employed Wilton residents work from home, which is more than twice the State average. The remaining 7,429 residents commute.
- A majority of Wilton residents commute to jobs in Lower Fairfield County and New York City. Both Wilton and the region saw 2-3% population growth between 2010 and 2016, leading to increased overall public transportation usage.
- A growing number of Wilton residents are commuting to New York City. As of 2015, 17% of residents commute to New York City, a 28% increase since 2005.
- Wilton's average commute time increased from 33 minutes in 2011 to 38 minutes in 2016. Wilton's average commute time is 8 minutes higher than the County and 12 minutes higher than the State.
- About 70% of Wilton commuters drive alone to work.
- About 13% of Wilton commuters take the train to work. The number of Wilton residents who commute via rail has increased by nearly 70% over between 2011 and 2016. This is likely tied to the increasing number of New York City commuters.

Danbury Road is the principal north-south artery connecting Wilton to main commuting routes to the Merritt Parkway and Interstate 95. Additional context-sensitive improvements are planned for Danbury Road in the coming years.

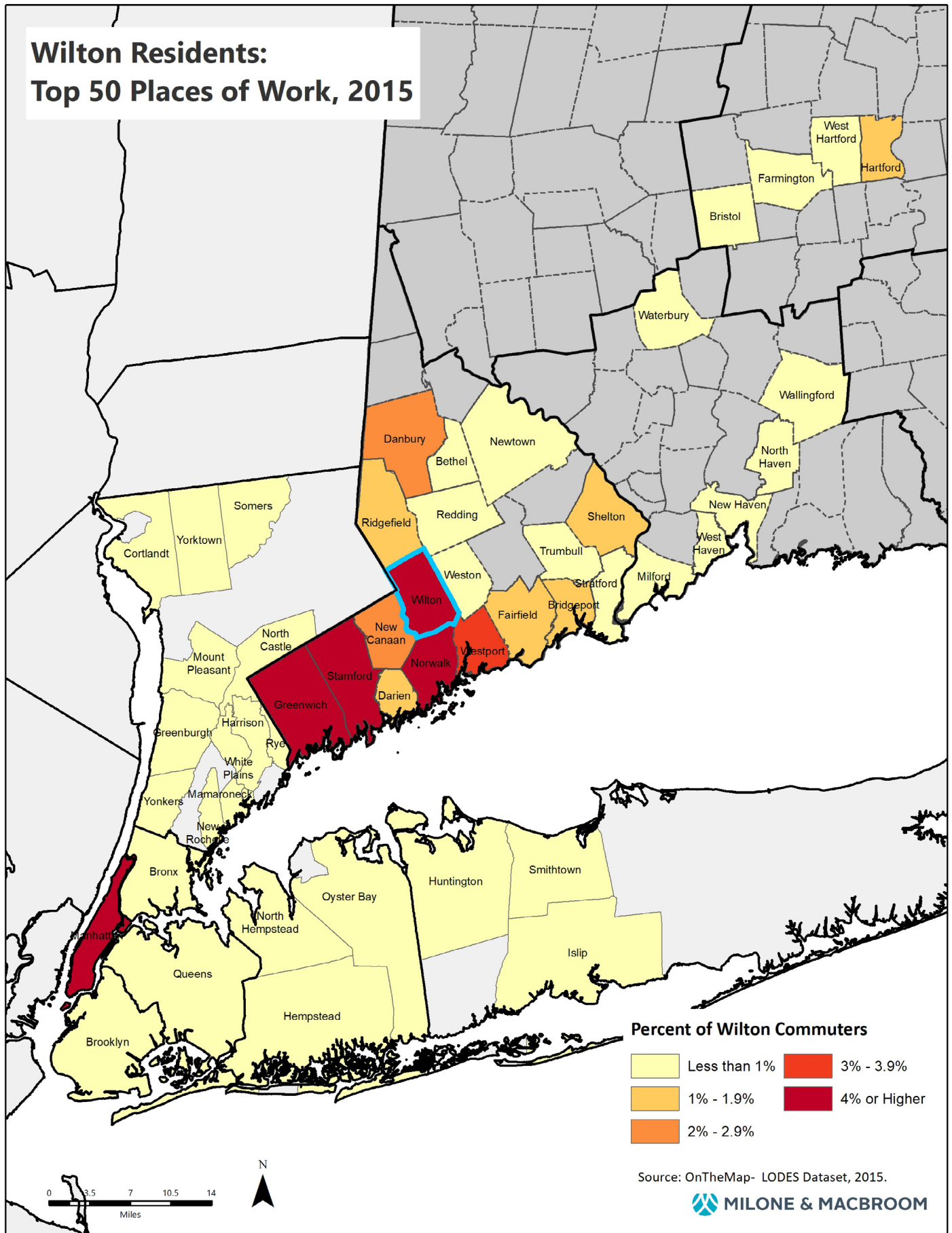
- In 2010, Danbury Road was widened to two lanes in each direction between Wolfpit Road and Olmstead Hill Road. There are long-term plans to widen Danbury Road to two lanes in each direction between Route 33 and Grist Mill Road.
- Lack of lane continuity and suboptimal traffic signal systems and timing on Danbury Road in central and southern Wilton cause traffic congestion during peak commuting hours and a suboptimal travel experience for residents and regional travelers, even at off-peak times.
- Intersection improvements are planned by CT DOT for Danbury Road at Grumman Hill Road.
- The highest *crash rates* on the unsignalized intersections and driveways are in southern Wilton. The highest *number of crashes* occur at signalized intersections on Danbury Road, including School Road, Sharp Hill/Wolfpit Roads, and Kent Road/Kensett Avenue.

Travel Mode to Work Wilton Residents: 2012-2016



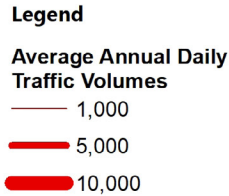
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: 2012-2016; Table B08301

Wilton Residents: Top 50 Places of Work, 2015

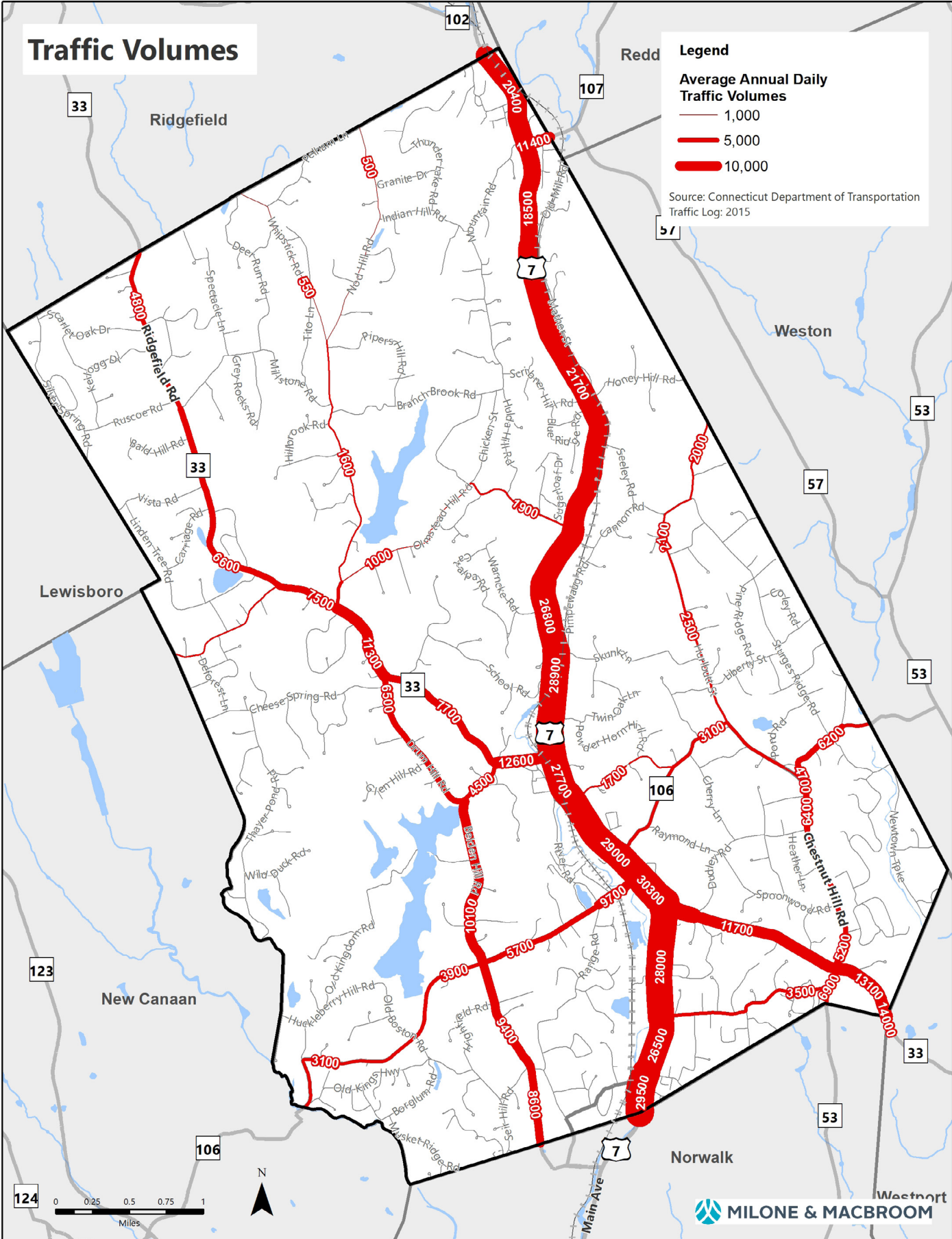


This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.

Traffic Volumes



Source: Connecticut Department of Transportation
Traffic Log: 2015

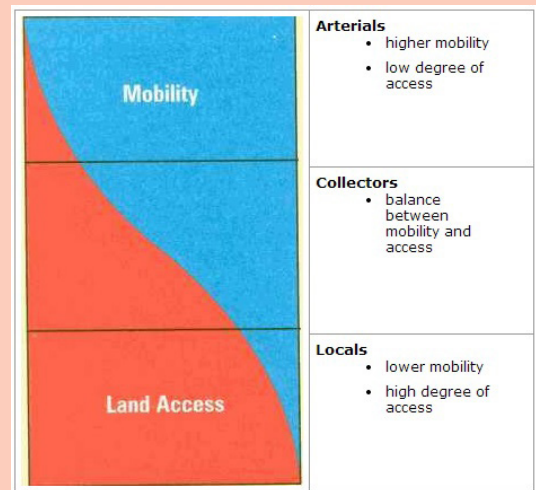


This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.



Functional Classification

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT-DOT) uses a hierarchical system that groups roads into different categories. Roadways with a higher functional classification prioritize mobility (ease of movement) while local roads prioritize accessibility (interactions with surrounding land uses).



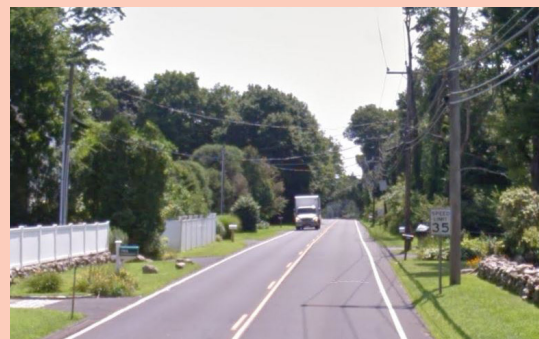
Source: Rhode Island DOT

Principal Arterial is the highest functional roadway classification in Wilton and encompasses the Danbury Road/Route 7 corridor. Principal Arterials connect interstates and expressways to activity and population centers and are multilane and medium speed. The Danbury Road/Route 7 corridor in Wilton has traffic volumes ranging from 18,500 to over 30,000 vehicles per day.



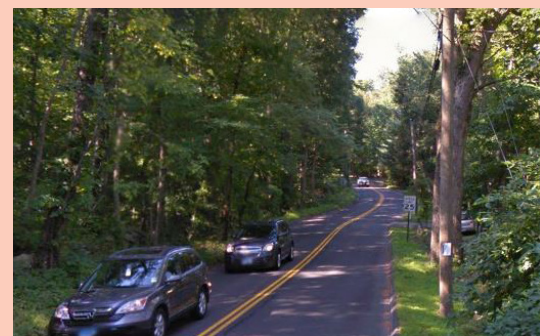
Principal Arterial

Minor Arterial is the second highest functional roadway classification in Wilton. Roads in this class are also major commuting corridors. Minor arterials have lower mobility and higher land access than principal arterials. Minor arterials include Ridgefield Road (Route 33), Westport Road (Route 33), Drum Hill Road, Chestnut Hill Road (Route 53), School Street (Route 57), and New Canaan Road (Route 106). Traffic volumes range from 3,000 to over 11,000 vehicles per day.



Minor Arterial

Collectors are the second lowest functional roadway classification. Collectors provide greater access to surrounding land uses and generally connect arterials to surrounding residential neighborhoods. Examples of collector roads in Wilton are Wolfpit Road, Grumman Hill Road, Old Highway, Olmstead Hill Road, Nod Hill Road, DeForest Road, Cannon Road, and Hurlbutt Street. Traffic volumes are generally less than 3,000 vehicles per day.



Collector

Local Roads are the lowest functional roadway classification. Local roads have the highest degree of access to surrounding land uses. Local roads are single lane and low speed, resulting in the lowest mobility. Local roads have the lowest traffic volumes at less than 1,000 vehicles per day.

The local and State roadway network connects Wilton’s residential neighborhoods to major roadways and also contributes to the identity of the Town’s rural areas.

- The Town of Wilton maintains 127 miles of roadways. The State separately maintains Danbury Road and Route 33, Route 53, and Route 106.
- The Local Road Restoration Program began in 2013 and uses bonding to expand local road maintenance and resurfacing. Since the program began, the Town has more than doubled the number of miles of road that it improves each year.
- Wilton’s local roadway network is consistent with its low-density rural character, with low traffic volumes, narrow lanes, stone walls, winding curves, and gently rolling terrain.
- Several roads have been designated as Local Scenic Roads. For more information, see Natural and Historic Environment Goal 4.

The potential State plan for, and effect of, new tolls on highways is uncertain. However currently proposed plans could have adverse effects on Wilton’s commutability, in terms of increased costs and traffic on local roads.

- The State has proposed and is evaluating several different tolling plans, most recently suggesting electronic tolling on I-95, I-84, and the Merritt Parkway, potentially at or near the Route 7 connections. Tolls on these roads will increase commute costs and could drive traffic onto local roads, including Route 33, Route 106, and Route 53, as well as secondary traversing roads such as Belden Hill Road, Drum Hill Road, Cheese Spring Road, Cannon Road, and Deforest Road. This is especially true with the increased use of GPS and travel applications by commuters, which often direct travel to local roads to avoid tolls and traffic on major roads and highways.

Outside of Wilton Center, pedestrian and biking infrastructure is limited.

- There is a lack of sidewalks along Danbury Road south of Wolfpit Road and north of Olmstead Hill Road. There are also no sidewalks in Cannondale or Georgetown. Sidewalks are required for new development on Danbury Road, but gaps remain in front of older or undeveloped properties, and the high number of curb cuts in some southern sections of Danbury Road inhibit pedestrian travel even where sidewalks exist.
- With the exception of River Road, Wilton Center lacks sidewalk connections to its surrounding residential neighborhoods and few, if any, designated bike paths exist outside of the NRVT.
- The Town also lacks a direct pedestrian connection between Wilton Train Station and Wilton Center, other than traversing the Route 33 bridge sidewalk alongside traffic. The in-progress pedestrian bridge project should address this issue.

The Danbury Branch Line and Norwalk Transit District connect Wilton to Lower Fairfield County, Westchester County, and New York City. Upgrades are being made to the Danbury Branch Line; however, service remains notably limited.

- The Danbury Branch Line is a 23.6-mile, single-track, non-electrified rail line connecting the New Haven Line in South Norwalk north to Danbury, with two stations in Wilton (Wilton Center and Cannondale). Notably, ridership on the Danbury Branch Line decreased by 3.1% from 2016-2017. The decrease in ridership on the Danbury Branch and the increase in Wilton residents commuting by rail suggests that a greater number of Wilton residents are driving to stations on the New Haven line, most notably South Norwalk Station, as Wilton survey responses indicate.
- Wilton residents are more likely to use the South Norwalk station than the Wilton and Cannondale stations. More frequent service, ease of parking, and direct trains were cited by the public in surveys as the most common reasons for using South Norwalk Station.
- Wilton's employers also rely on rail service. Employers in the corporate offices on Danbury Road and Route 33 run a shuttle bus to and from the South Norwalk Station for their employees. There is no direct rail service to business centers in White Plains and some desired connections within Fairfield and Westchester Counties require multiple transfers.
- CTDOT recently installed a signal system, centralized train control, and a passing siding on the Danbury Branch.
- Ongoing improvements to the Danbury Branch include installation of positive train controls and upgrades to the Danbury Dock Yard in South Norwalk.
- Cannondale Station and Wilton Station were both renovated in the last decade, though both stations are owned by the State and have few, if any amenities and retail in the immediate vicinity.
- Wilton Train Station has 251 parking spaces and Cannondale Station has 141 spaces; both stations' parking areas are nearly at capacity, with 95-97% occupancy, which is higher occupancy than occurs at South Norwalk and Merritt 7 stations and is even higher than occurs on nearby New Haven Line stations at Westport/Saugatuck, East Norwalk, and Darien. Wilton's stations are two of only three train stations in Fairfield County that are free and do not require parking permits.
- The Wolfpit Road Park and Ride has 52 parking spaces remains underutilized, with only 25% parking capacity used.
- Norwalk Transit District operates an hourly bus route between Wilton Center and Central Norwalk. The 7-Link bus runs the length of Danbury Road and connects to Danbury and Norwalk. Outside of the Danbury Road corridor, bus transit service is limited.
- CT DOT is contemplating expansion of the parking area and extension of platforms at Cannondale Station to accommodate longer trains.

The Norwalk River Valley Trail will provide a critical north-south route for pedestrians and bicyclists and will serve as both a transportation link and recreational amenity.

- The Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) is a planned 33-mile multi-use trail connecting Danbury to Norwalk.
- Sections of the NRVT have been built in Wilton from Wolfpit Road to Skunk Lane. On-street segments have been built along River Road in Wilton Center and through the school campuses.
- Existing segments of the trail run in the "Super 7" expressway right-of-way.
- The NRVT in Wilton is well-used, with an average of 5,713 trail users per month in 2017.

Objectives and Strategies:

5.1 *Improve traffic flow and safety on Wilton roads*

Wilton's local roadway network connects residential neighborhoods to major State roads. Improvements should continue to be context sensitive and compatible with the Town's rural character.

- Continue to implement the Road Restoration Program.
- Continue to implement a full suite of traffic calming measures, including education, engineering, and enforcement.
- Complete intersection safety evaluations and improvements on Route 106 at Belden Hill Road and other State road intersections identified on the Transportation Plan.
- Identify congested or problematic intersections of Town roads and strategize on possible improvements that the Town could implement.
- Partner with Eversource to minimize storm-related damages impacting vehicles flow and safety.
- Consider incorporating transportation demand management criteria into site plan and/or special permit reviews of large traffic generator facilities.

5.2 *Ensure that improvements to regional road networks, Danbury Road especially, align with the Town's land use goals (see zoning/ land use suggestions for Danbury Road above)*

Danbury Road is the commercial and commuting artery of Wilton. As discussed in Goal 2, Danbury Road has distinct segments that vary in character and intensity of development. It is crucial that transportation infrastructure aligns with the land use and development goals for the corridor.

- Support traffic calming, complete streets/ place-making amenities in focus areas, including the commercial core north of the Norwalk line, the Town Center area, around Cannondale, and through Georgetown.
- Support the widening of Danbury Road between Grist Mill Road and Route 33 to two lanes in each direction, with sidewalks.
- Complete intersection improvements at Grumman Hill Road.
- Work with CT DOT to incentivize and divert traffic off local roads and onto State roads, primarily Danbury Road. Identify congested/problematic intersections on State Roads and strategize on possible improvements. Also work with CT DOT and WestCOG to make traffic flow enhancements, including improvement of Intelligent Transportation Systems with better traffic signal systems and timing.
- Encourage the appropriate road infrastructure for our community in each area of Danbury Road.
- Continue to monitor the status of the Super 7 Expressway, and support development of the NRVT in the right-of-way, as appropriate. Discuss potential future changes in State ownership, use, and/or disposition of the Super 7 Expressway land and other State-owned land.
- Support improvements to the Main Avenue and Route 15 interchange in the City of Norwalk while carefully assessing potential impacts to local roads.

5.3 *Improve bike and pedestrian linkages throughout Wilton, especially connecting neighborhoods to Wilton Center/ villages and other commercial areas, schools, active and passive recreation areas, and the NRVT*

Wilton's topography, rural development, and roadway design have resulted in limited current or potential bike and pedestrian infrastructure on most local roads. However, there are opportunities to improve multi-modal options, including regional plans being proposed by WestCOG. Significant progress has been made in planning and building the NRVT over the last five years. Additional opportunities exist to better integrate the trail by building bicycle and pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighborhoods.

- Create and implement a complete streets program.
- Install energy efficient street lights where appropriate.
- Improve bike/pedestrian connections to Wilton Center (consider appropriate connections during Master Planning process as discussed above).
- Work with WestCOG to implement regional on- and off-road biking facilities and planning, particularly on State routes and State and local routes connecting Wilton with Westport and Norwalk and to the shore.
- In any major road reconstruction project, consider opportunities for bike lanes, sidewalks, and other pedestrian/bike improvements.
- Support the construction of additional sidewalks throughout Town in areas that are proximate to village centers, community facilities, commercial districts, and the Norwalk River Valley Trail.
- Work with the NRVT to plan for enhanced connections to the trail from neighborhoods through signage, sidewalks and/or bike lanes.
- Seek opportunities to develop and promote more walking trails in active and passive recreation areas through public-private partnerships and/or grant opportunities.
- Incorporate universal design techniques in pedestrian improvements where practical.

5.4 *Promote better transit options, service and increased use*

Wilton residents and employers rely on local and regional transit service for employment, shopping, and leisure trips. Improvements in local and regional transit infrastructure will better position Wilton to attract new residents and businesses.

- Work with CT DOT, WestCOG and the Southwestern Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (SWRMPO) to implement the 2019 Long-Range Transportation Plan and recommend local and regional improvements to all transit service. Support these organizations' efforts to enhance multimodal transportation strategies, including improving pedestrian and biking connections within Wilton and to and from neighboring municipalities.
- Continue to support improvements to the Danbury Branch and New Haven Rail Lines, including electrification, improved signal systems, and the double tracking of the Danbury Branch to Wilton. These investments can help reduce travel times and improve system reliability.
- Support DOT improvements to Cannondale Station to accommodate longer trains and increase parking, along with potential complementary transit-oriented development of the surrounding areas. Support development of a Georgetown Station.
- Continue to monitor State tolling plans and their potential local effect on local road traffic and safety. The imposition of highway tolls will increase the urgency of making improvements to rail service and traffic lanes, capacity, and signal optimization on Danbury Road.
- Work with CT DOT, Norwalk Transit and major employers, shopping centers, and other stakeholders to advertise and enhance bus service routes and stops to and from Wilton villages, train stations and major business centers (i.e., ASML) and provide amenities such as shelters, benches, lighting, and trash receptacles at bus stops. Modify the zoning regulations to require or incentivize the provision of bus shelters, incorporating appropriate design.
- Continue to encourage alternative transportation and commuting methods, including ridesharing, off-peak work scheduling, and telecommuting. Consider bike sharing opportunities, particularly in village centers and along Danbury Road and NRVT.
- Maintain and enhance transportation options for the elderly and the disabled. Evaluate seasonal Town shuttles connecting to beaches, parks, shopping, and entertainment destinations in neighboring communities, particularly for senior residents.

Goal 6: Improve and maintain Town-owned facilities and services in a fiscally prudent manner

Issues and Trends:

The Town has made significant investments in Town facilities over the last decade.

- Wilton is one of 17 municipalities to maintain an AAA Moody's bond rating, indicative of the Town's strong financial standing.
- The Town has completed several major capital projects over the last decade, including a renovation to the Comstock Community Center, renovations to the Wilton Public Library, and a major renovation and addition at Miller-Driscoll School.
- The current level of bonded debt is \$5,044 per capita – primarily for capital improvements. This is the highest level in recent memory due to the major capital investments that the Town has made over the last decade. This is among the highest of peer towns, but lower than Westport and New Canaan.
- A majority of public survey respondents indicate that the quality and appearance of Town facilities is important for quality of life, meeting the needs of residents, and attracting new residents.



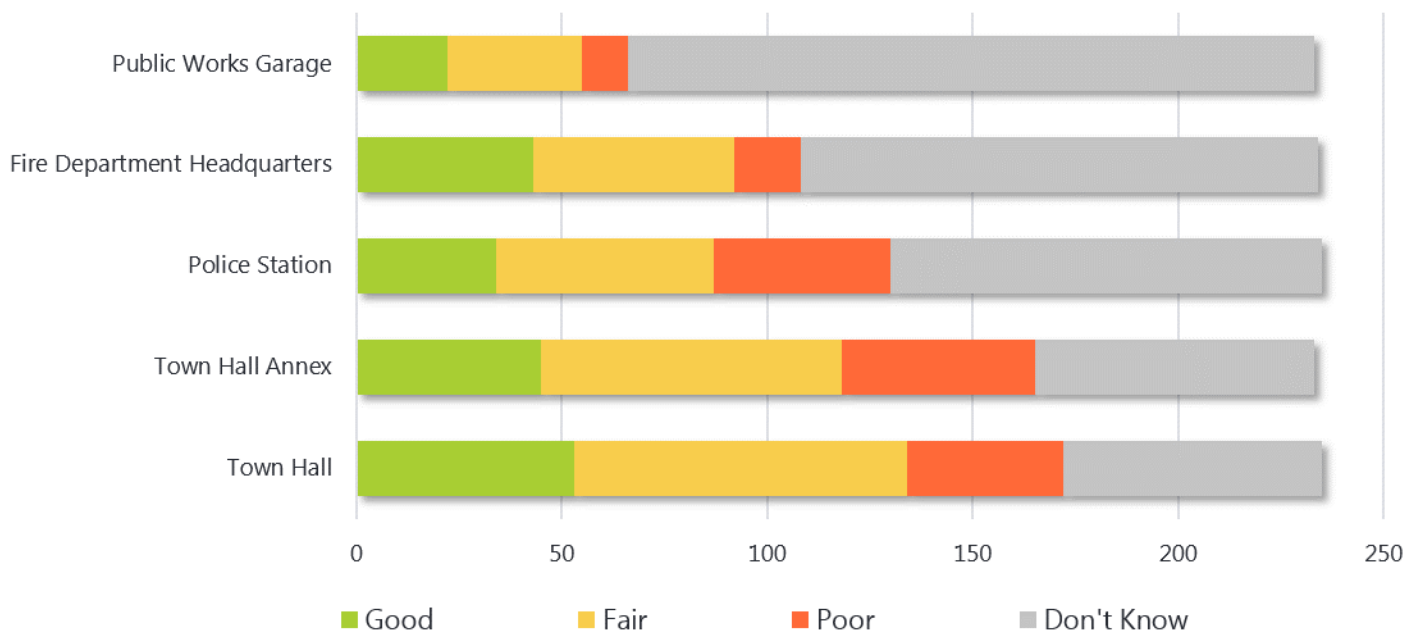
The Town of Wilton has made significant investments in community facilities over the last decade, including renovations and additions to Miller-Driscoll School (top), renovation of the Comstock Community Center (bottom left) and a renovation of Wilton Public Library (bottom right)

Photo Credits: Wilton Public Schools (top), Town of Wilton (bottom left), and TSKP Studios (bottom right)

The Police Station Building and Town Hall Campus have several major deficiencies that need to be addressed.

- The police station headquarters was built in 1974, and minimal upgrades have been made to the building since then. Major issues include:
 - Noncompliance with multiple State and federal requirements;
 - Inadequate, mostly original infrastructure;
 - Since the station was built, the size of the department has almost doubled, leading to overcrowding and a loss of operational and functional space;
 - Inadequate firearms training facility and storage;
 - Inadequate lavatories and locker rooms; and
 - Inadequate space based on employee gender.
- A large portion of the community is unaware of the deficiencies at the police station and Town Hall campus. Public survey results indicate that nearly half of respondents “didn’t know” the condition of the police station building.
- The Town is simultaneously exploring deficiencies in Town Hall and annex buildings and opportunities to relocate some Town departments to other facilities.
- The Town has approved funds for initial studies, surveys, architecture, and professional services for the Police Station and Town Hall campus and has established a Building Committee to oversee the process.
- More recent regional and state policy initiatives promote regional shared services, such as dispatch services.

How would you rate the condition of the following town facilities:



Many residents are unaware of the condition of the Police Station building, as indicated in POCD Mini-Survey #4

Wilton's parks and recreational facilities are valued amenities and are critical to quality of life. Recent improvements to Wilton's parks and recreational facilities include:

- Sections of the Norwalk River Valley Trail completed between Lambert Corner and Skunk Lane, and shared-use path segments completed on River Road in Wilton Center;
- Replacement of the turf playing surfaces at Stadium Field and Lilly Field;
- Resurfacing the tennis courts at the high school;
- Renovation of Comstock Community Center;
- Improvements to the Norwalk River frontage in Wilton Center, including Chess Park; and
- Planned future improvements to Schenck's Island and Merwin Meadows Park as recommended by the SIMM Committee.
- The Town of Wilton also has a generous philanthropic community and many park and recreational improvements have been built as a result of successful private fundraising efforts.



The Town of Wilton has made several investments in recreational facilities, including turf replacement at Fujitani Stadium and Lilly Fields and reconstruction of the High School tennis courts.

Photo Credits: Dant Clayton (left), and Town of Wilton (right)

Objectives and Strategies:

6.1 *Complete the evaluation of the Wilton Police Department (WPD) building and Town Hall*

The Town is evaluating the need to expand the police station, address deficiencies at other Town Hall campus buildings, and better utilize space in the Comstock Community Center. At the same time, the State is promoting regionalization policies for certain Town services, including police and fire. If completed, this project will likely be the most significant Town capital project over the next decade, and should improve the functionality of the Police and other departments while optimizing space in Town facilities.

- Continue the work of the WPD and Town Hall Campus building committee, taking State and regional policy into account.
- Consider public safety service needs via staff/department reviews in evaluating new development.
- Continue to engage the community on the existing conditions, needs, and deficiencies of the WPD and Town Hall campus buildings, including the need for an improved board and commission meeting space that can accommodate public attendance and facilitate hearings, presentations, and discussions.

6.2 *Maintain Town buildings and assets in a state of good repair, while improving utility, resiliency and sustainability*

Many other projects will be needed over the next decade to keep facilities in a state of good repair, maintain the quality of Town services, reduce building operating/energy costs, and improve resiliency.

- Coordinate Town facilities planning with public school facilities planning.
- Complete upgrades to Fire Station 2.
- Continue ongoing maintenance of other Town and school facilities.
- Continue to implement cost-effective energy efficiency and/or projects to improve the resiliency of Town buildings and the municipal fleet.
- Consider Town-owned real estate in meeting the housing, conservation, or economic development objectives of this Plan, as appropriate.

6.3 *Explore voluntary local and regional opportunities to save costs and improve services and facilities where appropriate and fiscally prudent*

- Explore more regional and lower- or shared-cost approaches to municipal services that produce better services, reduce the need for services, and/or lower costs. Examples may include regional transfer station/waste management, increased at-home recycling and composting programs, reduction of town waste programs, and shared arrangements with neighboring towns.
- Continue to maintain public safety and reasonable response emergency response times throughout the Town.
- Evaluate changes in the recycling market and recycling technologies in terms of their impact on operations cost and feasibility, including by participating in regional and State policy discussion on how to address such changes.
- Evaluate the feasibility, community impacts, and cost implications of regional police, fire, EMS, waste management, and other services, as appropriate.

6.4 *Improve and maintain recreational facilities*

The Town should continue to work with athletic leagues, the business community, and community organizations to provide high quality recreational amenities for residents.

- Conduct a Town-wide parks and recreation needs assessment and prioritize future enhancements. Continue coordination between the Schools, Parks and Recreation, Board of Selectmen, private recreation providers, and neighboring Towns to maximize the ability to meet recreation needs with existing facilities.
- Continue to pursue a diverse range of funding mechanisms for recreational enhancements including grants, private fundraising, and public/private partnerships.
- Continue to evaluate and work on Schenck's Island and Merwin Meadows upgrades via public/private partnerships.
- Identify preferred routes and complete NRVT connections to Wilton village centers, schools, and community facilities along or near trail, considering security needs at schools and available funding sources.
- Pursue opportunities for providing additional playgrounds around Town not associated with school buildings.

Goal 7: Maintain safe and efficient public utility services and infrastructure

Issues and Trends:

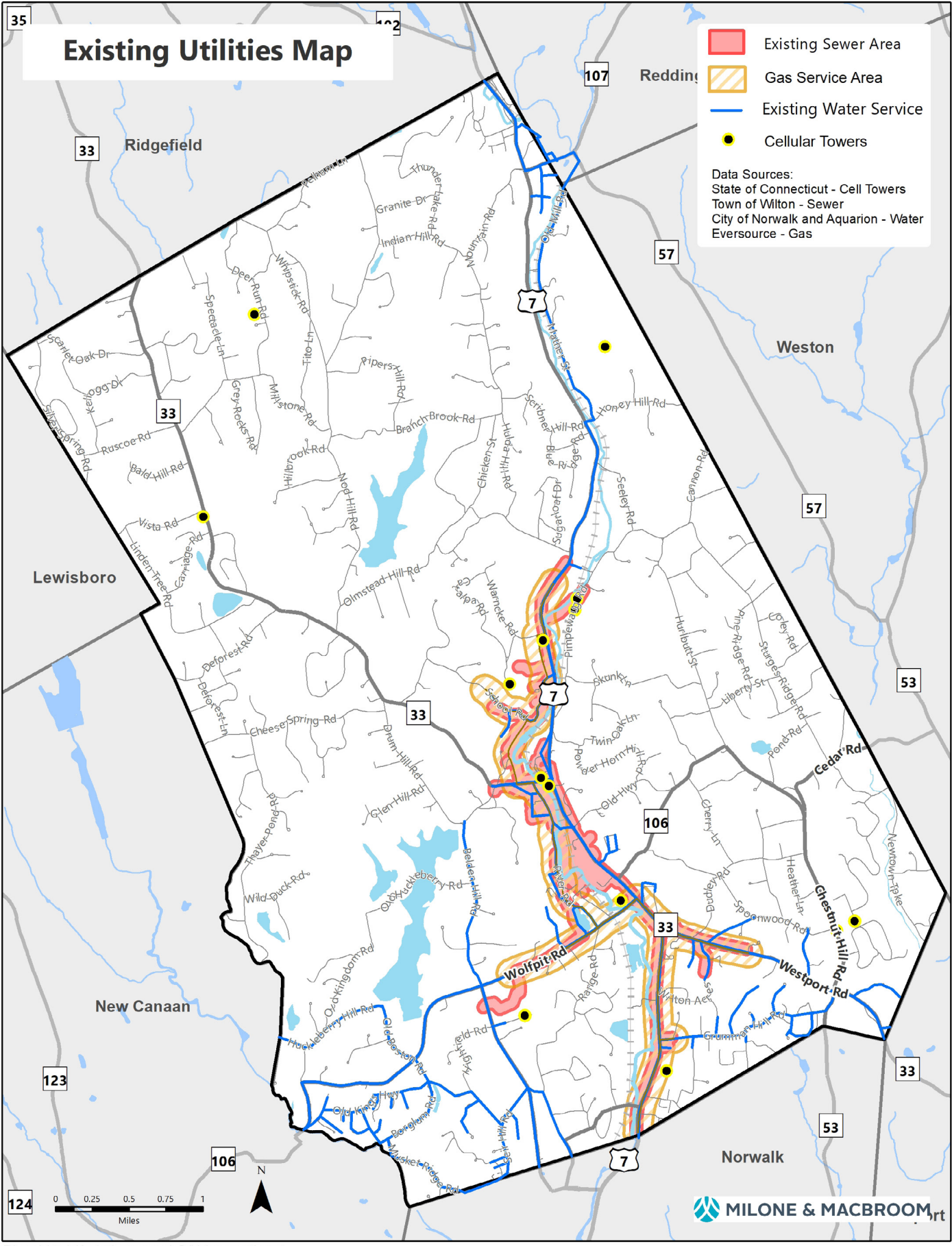
Water and sewer infrastructure are presently adequate to support future economic development opportunities on Danbury Road south of Olmstead Hill Road and in Wilton Center.

- Sewer service is available on Danbury Road south of Olmstead Hill Road and along portions of Wolfpit Road and Westport Road.
- The following sewer extension have been completed since 2009:
 - Miller-Driscoll school in 2013 to address septic issues;
 - School Sisters of Notre Dame campus in 2014 to address septic issues; and,
 - Station Road in 2016 to support the Wilton Commons development on Danbury Road.
- Wilton sends its sewerage to the City of Norwalk treatment plant. Wilton's contract limit with the City of Norwalk of 0.65 million gallons per day compares well to its current average usage of 0.5 million gallons per day. The existing contract is believed to have adequate capacity to meet the Town's needs over the next ten years.
- Water service is provided by Aquarion and the Norwalk 2nd Taxing District. Service is available along the entirety of the Danbury Road corridor as well as the Westport Road area and in the Silvermine neighborhood.
- The community generally supports water and sewer extensions to reduce reliance on well and septic systems for environmental health purposes. However, public infrastructure extensions that result in an unwanted increase in density or changes in permitted uses are not supported.

Existing Utilities Map

- Existing Sewer Area
- Gas Service Area
- Existing Water Service
- Cellular Towers

Data Sources:
 State of Connecticut - Cell Towers
 Town of Wilton - Sewer
 City of Norwalk and Aquarion - Water
 Eversource - Gas

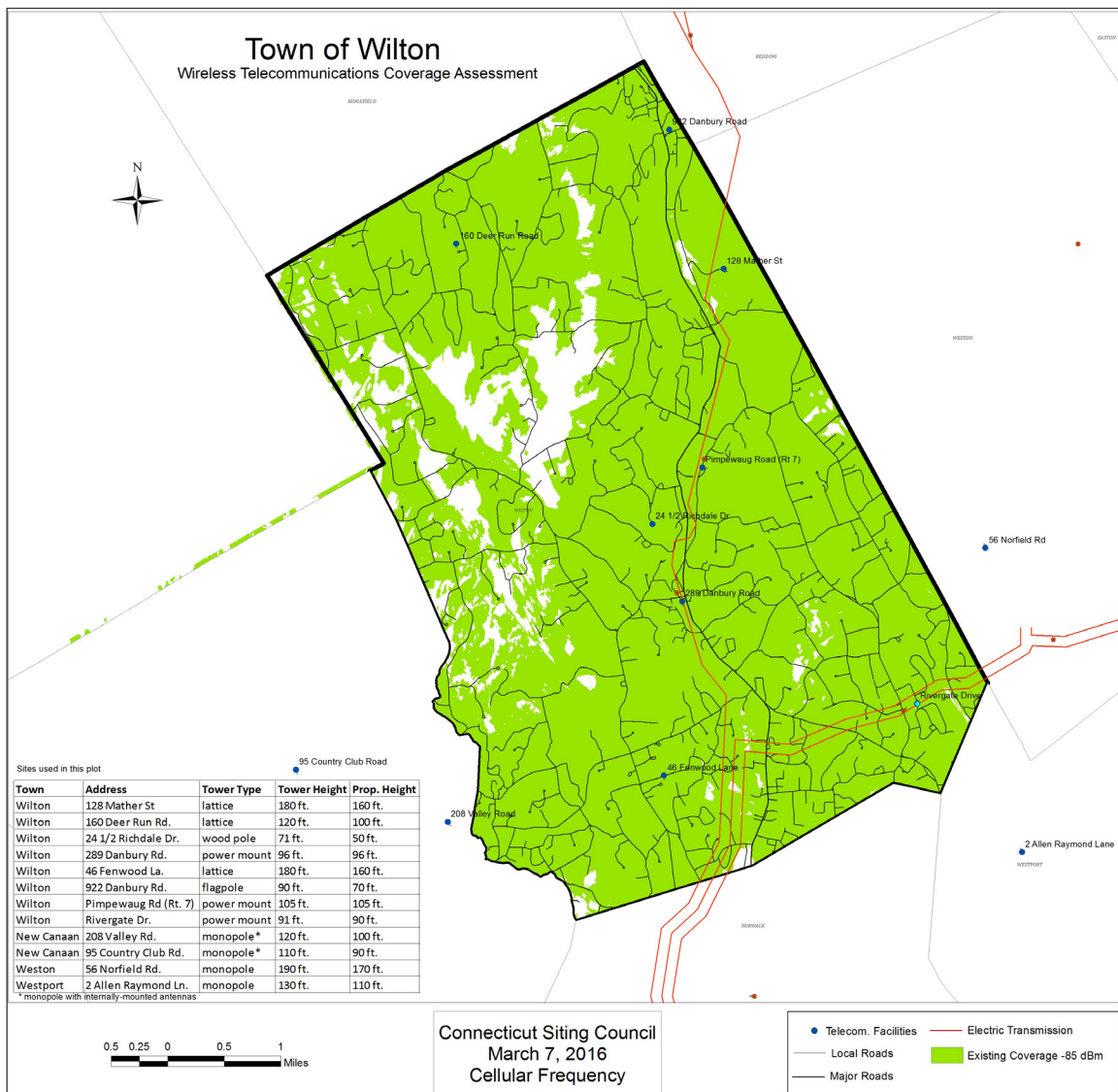


This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.



Telecommunications infrastructure plays a critical role in the 21st century economy, particularly for teleworking and entrepreneurial businesses located in a geographically dispersed Town like Wilton.

- Wilton has a large and growing entrepreneurial and “work from home” population. As of 2016, over 11% of residents worked from home. Robust and reliable telecommunications infrastructure is essential to support this population.
- Reliable telecommunications infrastructure is equally critical for performing everyday life activities, conducting online commerce and ensuring public safety, particularly in being able to contact emergency services and Town authorities at all times, but especially during storms and other emergencies.
- About 30% of survey respondents rated cellular service as “poor” in their area of residence.
- Suboptimal cellular service is present in nearly all parts of Wilton. However, Northwest Wilton had the highest number of respondents rating cellular service as “poor” and Southeast Wilton and Wilton Center had the highest number of respondents rating service as “good.”
- Wilton already has an extensive set of zoning regulations addressing wireless tower location and installation requirements. Most towers are currently located on or near Danbury Road.
- Residents are generally supportive of additional cell towers so long as aesthetic, health, or other concerns can reasonably be addressed.



Objectives and Strategies:

7.1 Ensure water and sewer policies reflect land use goals

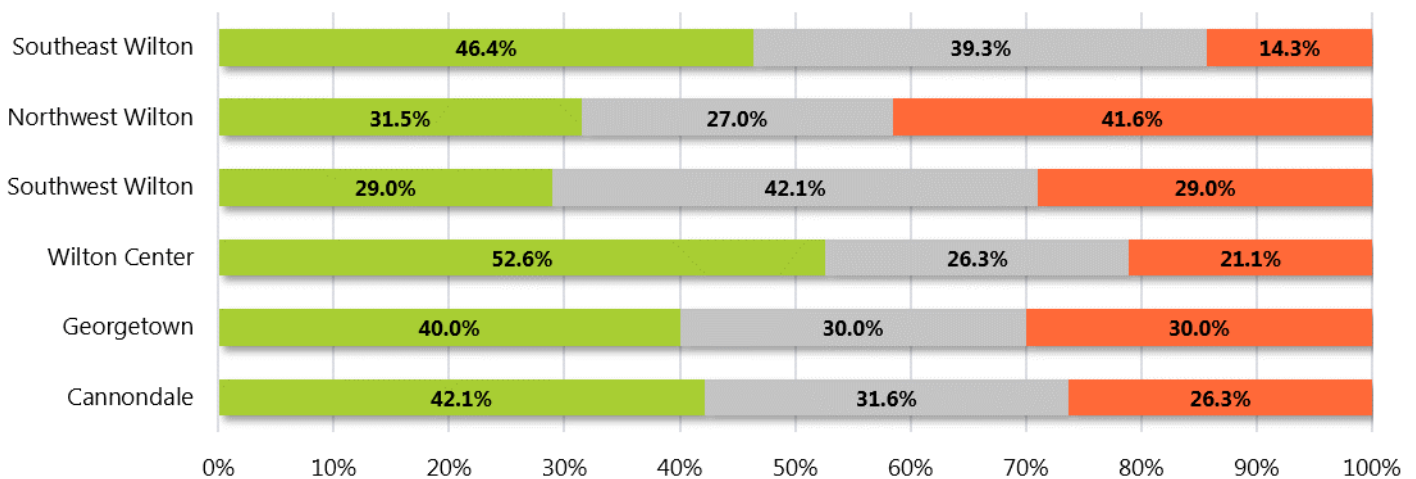
Wilton should continue to ensure that its water and sewer policies align with its land use goals. New infrastructure is expensive to build and maintain, and new development should be steered to areas that are already served or relatively easily expanded so that existing infrastructure can be used more efficiently.

- Update and maintain a Water and Sewer Plan for the Town.
- Evaluate opportunities to increase density within and on the margins of existing sewer and water service areas.
- The land use goals and objectives of this plan call for redevelopment and intensification of development in already served and nearby areas; therefore, extensions of sewer or water lines to currently unserved areas should be limited to those that address risks to environmental and/or public health, or are requested by the property owners of a certain area in accordance with the recommendations of this Plan and the Town Water and Sewer Plan.
- The Town should continue to support upgrades to the Norwalk wastewater treatment facility.

7.2 Provide infrastructure to support modern economic, workplace, and technological needs

- Work with telecommunications providers and property owners to improve and upgrade high-bandwidth, reliable internet and cellular service throughout Town, including evaluation of 5G wireless, public Wi-Fi, and/or fiber buildouts, among other newer technologies, starting in Wilton center and along Danbury Road. Ensure proper consideration of viewsheds, the aesthetic environment, and health concerns, consistent with state and federal requirements.
- Identify Town-owned land that could be used by telecommunications and/or cellular providers.
- Work with utility providers to promote the expansion of natural gas service.

Cell Service Rating by Area of Residence



Source: POCD Mini Survey #4

■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Coverage mapping provided by the Connecticut Siting Council (previous page) shows gaps in cellular coverage, particularly in Northwestern Wilton. This aligns with feedback received during the POCD Mini Survey #4, where 41.6% of respondents in Northwest Wilton rated their cellular service as "poor."



Photo Credit: Wilton Economic Development Commission

7: Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan illustrates the proposed pattern of conservation and development for the Town of Wilton over the next ten years. It recommends the most appropriate locations for and relationships between major land uses, including mixed, residential, commercial, and industrial uses as well as conservation priorities. The Future Land Use Plan is both a narrative and graphic presentation of the Town's vision for the future.

The Future Land Use Plan focuses largely on existing land use and development patterns, environmental and natural features, physical features, current and potential zoning designations, and planning analyses conducted as part of the overall drafting of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Relationship between Future Land Use and Zoning

The Future Land Use Plan presents an overall vision of the types and locations of different land uses throughout the Town as well as a basis for potential zoning changes. It differs from the Town's zoning regulations in that it is meant to inform and guide, not regulate, future development. The key to successful future development is the creation of zoning regulations, design guidelines, and implementation strategies that explicitly outline and promote the goals, objectives, and strategies of this Plan and their manifestation in Wilton's Future Land Use vision.

Future Land Use Plan

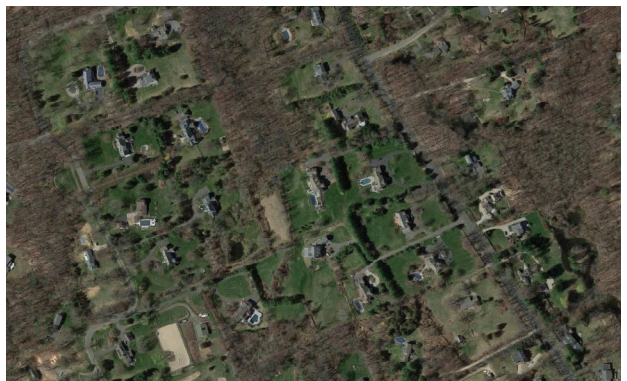
The Future Land Use Plan contains ten "land-use" categories that are depicted on the map on the following page and described in the ensuing pages. Due to the generalized nature of the Future Land Use Plan, there may be individual properties within a given area whose use differs from the Future Land Use Plan or properties that may serve more than one use.

Residential Rural Density – Rural residential areas are found in northern and central Wilton and will continue to comprise a majority of the Town’s land area. These areas contain detached single-family residences on lots of 2 acres or more and are served by well water and on-site septic systems. Rural residential areas also contain extensive natural resources including forests, wetlands, riparian corridors, ridgelines, and open space. Much of the area is within a public water supply watershed, which means that lands drain directly into a public drinking water supply. Due to limited public infrastructure, including smaller public roads, lack of water, sewer or gas service, and the prevalence of sensitive environmental resources in this area, 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.



Residential Rural Density

Residential Low Density – Low-density residential areas are found in the southwestern and southeastern neighborhoods in Wilton as well as in northern Wilton on the outskirts of Georgetown. These areas are comprised of single-family homes on lots generally ranging from 1 acre to 2 acres. Many low-density residential areas are served by public drinking water as opposed to wells. All new residential developments should be on lots that can accommodate subsurface on-site waste disposal. Sewer extension should only be considered for existing developments where they are requested by the community or needed for public health purposes.



Residential Low Density

South Wilton – South Wilton encompasses the area along Danbury Road from Lambert Corner south to the Norwalk Line and serves as the southern gateway to the community. South Wilton contains the most commercial and highest-density and intensity land uses within Town. This area of Town is served by public water and sewer infrastructure, and contains a mix of uses including retail, office, light industry, and multi-family residential uses. Due to its mixed-use character, the Town should focus its efforts on mixed-use redevelopment of existing commercial areas, particularly those in or along gateway areas, access management, pedestrian improvements, landscaping, and signage improvements so that this area develops in a cohesive and attractive manner. Due to the availability of infrastructure and proximity to highways, South Wilton is one of the Town’s priority development areas. Nonetheless, efforts should be made to protect



South Wilton

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

Cannondale Node – There is no clear or consistent definition for the Cannondale Node, and for the purposes of the Future Land Use Plan, the area remains vaguely defined geographically, pending further evaluation by the Town. The Town should conduct a Master Planning process to properly define the extents of the Cannondale Node. Once this is done, the Town should align its land use policies to encourage mixed-use, residential, and commercial development of an appropriate scale and design that is transit-oriented in nature, given access to Cannondale Train Station. Densities should be lower than the Greater Wilton Center area and should align with the gradual decrease in density north of Cannon Road. Parts of Cannondale are currently served by, or have relatively easy access to, public water and sanitary sewer infrastructure as well as natural gas.



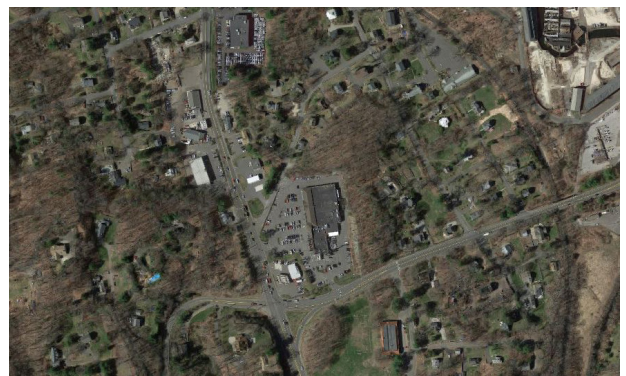
Cannondale Node

Route 7 Transition – The Route 7 transition area is a small commercial node located between Cannondale and Georgetown. The area contains a mix of commercial and light industrial uses, including a high concentration of adaptive use of historical or architecturally significant residential buildings. It is not served by sewer infrastructure, limiting future development potential. This area should maintain its low-intensity uses with an emphasis on improving aesthetics through the enhancement of adaptive use regulations and more consistent signage and landscaping across all properties.



Route 7 Transition

Georgetown Village – Georgetown Village covers the moderate intensity node located in north Wilton. Commercial uses are concentrated along Danbury Road and Redding Road. Residential densities of 2 to 3 units per acre are found on the adjacent streets such as New Street, Church Street, and Own Home Avenue. Georgetown is served by public water service, but not sanitary sewer. The future of Georgetown is linked to the future of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill in neighboring Redding, and somewhat to the future of Branchville in neighboring Ridgefield. The Town should seek opportunities to master plan for Georgetown in cooperation with these neighboring communities. Future development should be of moderate intensity, with commercial uses concentrated on Danbury Road and Redding Road and residential uses concentrated on the adjacent streets. Georgetown should continue to provide housing choices in a range of styles, sizes, and price points. Infrastructure improvements should be done in a coordinated manner with neighboring municipalities to ensure a cohesive and consistent village across Town boundaries.



Georgetown Village

Open Space – This category shows the locations of existing protected open space, and unprotected open spaces that the Town should consider protecting in the future if being proposed for development. Existing protected open space includes municipal, State, and federal parks and open space, land trust properties, and conservation easements. Unprotected open space includes the Route 7 expressway right-of-way and water utility lands.

Community Facilities – This category shows the locations of existing Town facilities, including public school buildings, Town Hall, Wilton Public Library, the former Gilbert & Bennett School, and the Transfer Station.

Development Overlay Areas – The Future Land Use Plan depicts Village Centers that correspond with Wilton Center, Cannondale, and Georgetown. Master Planning efforts should be conducted for each village center in order to better define geographic extents and determine the desired mix, density, and design of future development. The Cannondale and Wilton Train Stations are also shown, as future housing development should be transit-oriented and steered toward locations within walking distance of the train stations.

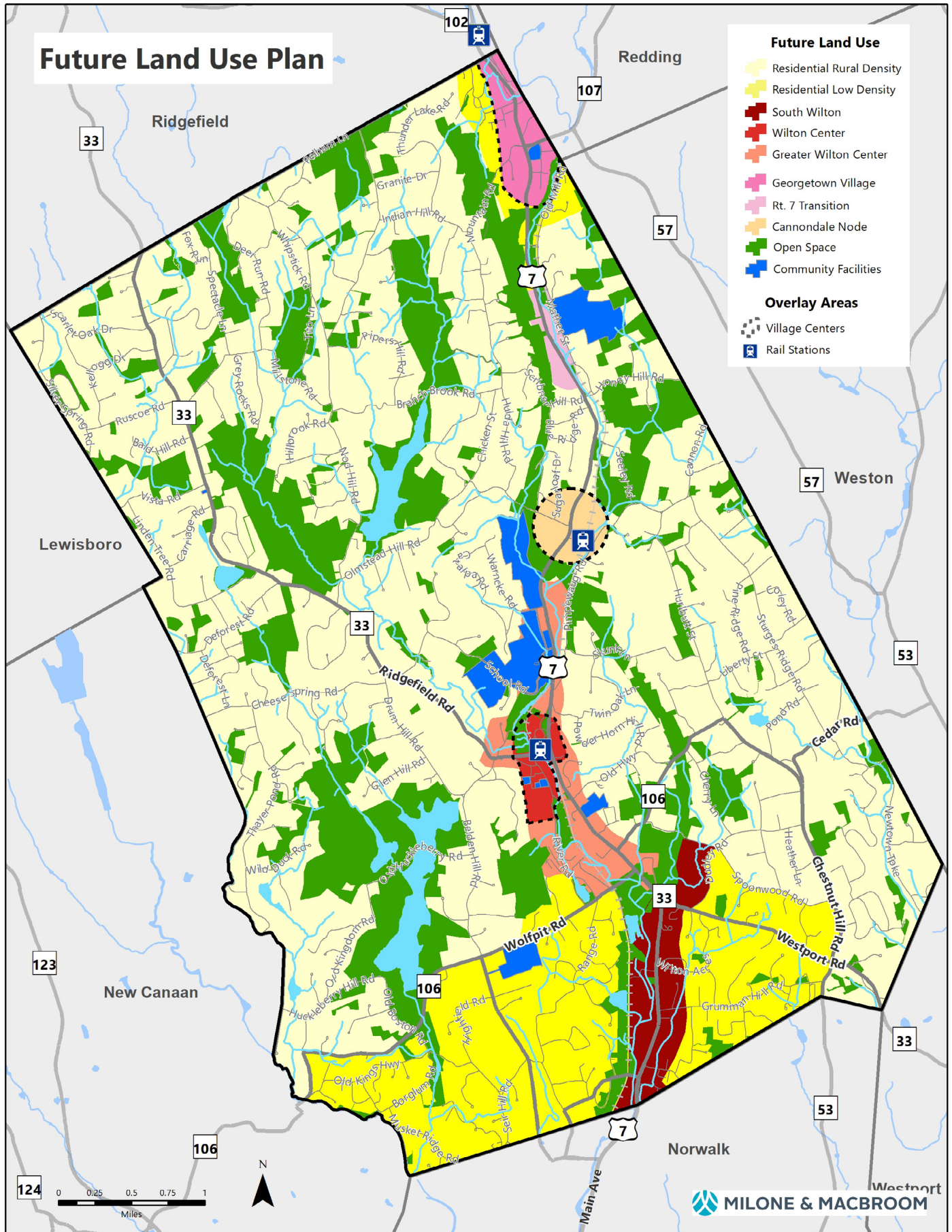


Open Space



Community Facilities

Future Land Use Plan



Future Land Use

- Residential Rural Density
- Residential Low Density
- South Wilton
- Wilton Center
- Greater Wilton Center
- Georgetown Village
- Rt. 7 Transition
- Cannondale Node
- Open Space
- Community Facilities

Overlay Areas

- Village Centers
- Rail Stations

This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.

Conservation Priorities Plan

The Conservation Priorities Plan map and represent the Town's conservation priorities over the next decade and align with the open space criteria that were described in Chapter 4. The following areas are depicted on the Conservation Priorities Plan:

Riparian Corridors are located along Wilton's many streams and rivers, including the Norwalk River, Comstock Brook, Bryant Brook, Parting Brook, and Huckleberry Hills Brook. Riparian corridors are priority conservation areas and protect water quality, control flooding, filter stormwater runoff, reduce erosion, and restore ecologically important areas.

Natural Resource Constraints include wetlands, flood zones, waterbodies, ridgelines, and steep slopes. Properties with significant natural resources should be considered for future open space protections.

The Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) offers an opportunity to create a continuous open space corridor and trail network that spans the Town and connects to neighboring municipalities. During the next decade, the Town and local and regional organizations will continue to build new segments of trail. The Town should identify a preferred route for the trail north of Olmsted Hill Road and work with local and regional organizations to identify grant funding opportunities.

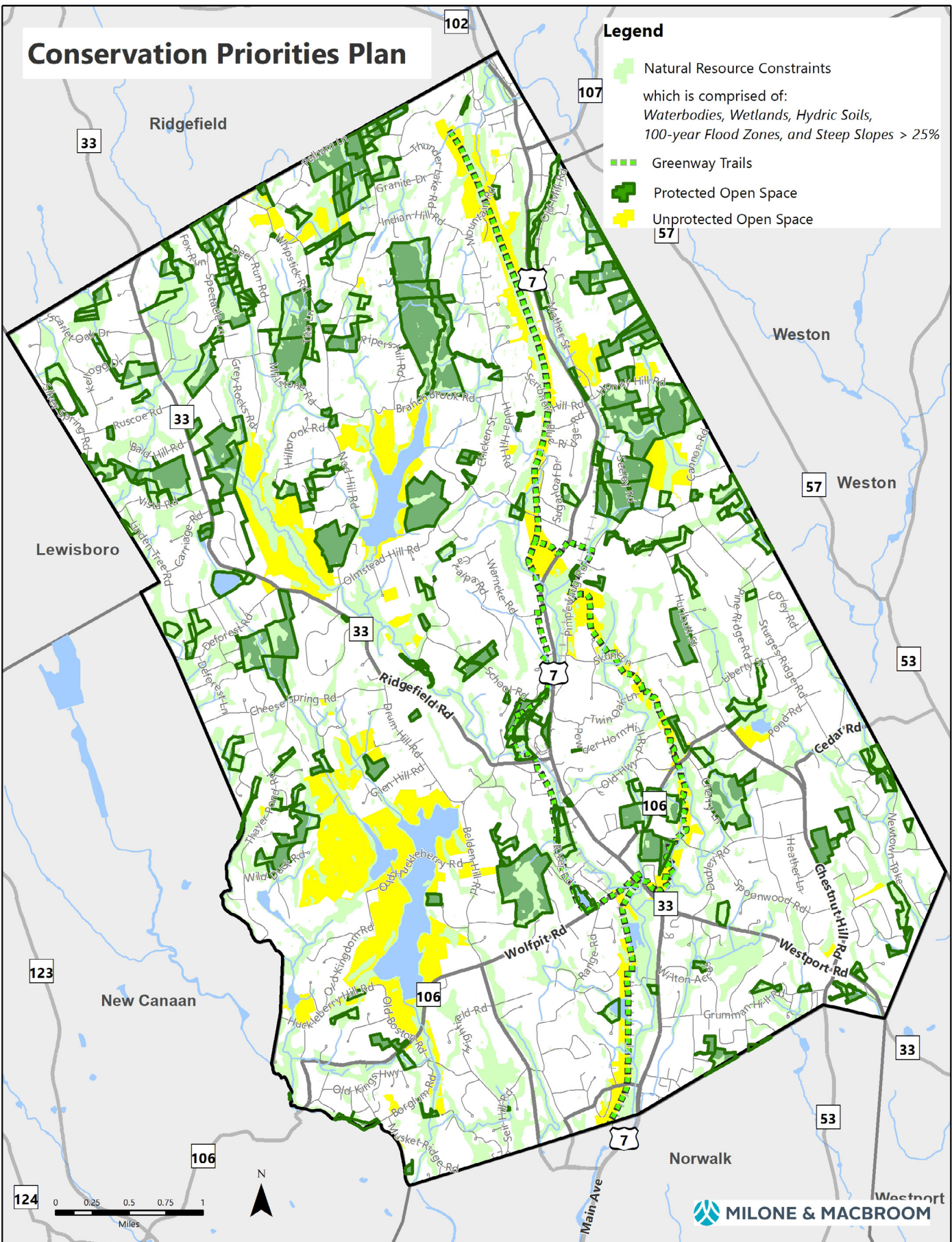
Unprotected Open Space includes water utility lands, P.A. 490 properties, and the Route 7 Expressway right-of-way (ROW). These lands currently function as open space, and provide habitat, protect natural resources, and provide recreational opportunities for residents in certain instances. These properties should be considered for formal protection if they are under threat of development.

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.

Conservation Priorities Plan

Legend

- Natural Resource Constraints
which is comprised of:
*Waterbodies, Wetlands, Hydric Soils,
100-year Flood Zones, and Steep Slopes > 25%*
- Greenway Trails
- Protected Open Space
- Unprotected Open Space



This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.



Sewer Service and Avoidance Areas

As per CGS Section 8-23, municipal plans of conservation and development adopted after July 1, 2015 must identify the general location and extent of areas served by the existing sewerage system, areas where sewer systems are planned, and areas where sewers are to be avoided. Wilton's existing sewer system is provided via contract with the City of Norwalk and serves the southern part of Town, primarily higher-density developments along Route 7 from Norwalk to Olmstead Hill Road, some properties on Route 33 in closest proximity to Danbury Road, and all of Wilton Center. The Town has historically extended sewers to serve community facilities, address public health concerns or to support appropriate development projects on the fringe of the existing sewer service area. Over the last ten years, the following sewer extensions were completed:

- 2011 – Miller-Driscoll School
- 2014 – School Sisters of Notre Dame
- 2016 – Station Place/Wilton Commons

Wilton's Sewer Plan contains four categories which are described below and depicted on the map on the following page:

Primary Sewer Avoidance – Sewers should not be extended due to the presence of critical natural resources and a public water supply watershed, and due to a desired rural density residential pattern in these areas.

Other Sewer Avoidance/Septic Management Area – The primary intent is to continue to use private septic systems in these areas. Future development should be on lots large enough to accommodate on-site septic systems. Sewer extensions should only be considered in areas where requested by the community or areas with documented septic issues where sewer service is needed for public health purposes.

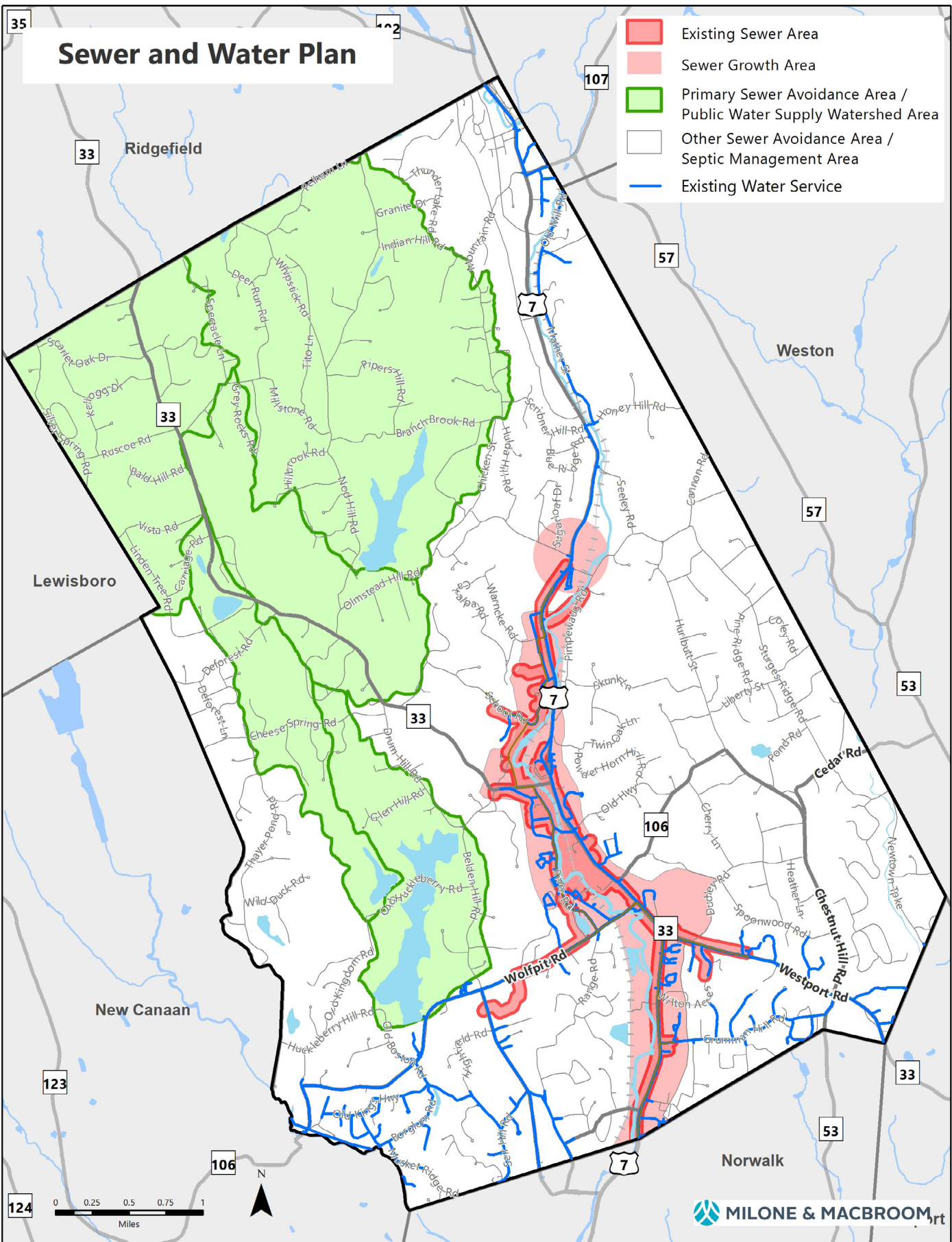
Sewer Service Area – These are areas that are currently served by sanitary sewer lines.

Sewer Growth Areas – Sewer extensions should be considered on the fringes of the existing sewer service area in order to support the development goals of the Plan. Sewer Growth Areas align with the following Future Land Use Plan areas:

- South Wilton
- Greater Wilton Center
- Wilton Center
- Cannondale Node

Sewer and Water Plan

- Existing Sewer Area
- Sewer Growth Area
- Primary Sewer Avoidance Area / Public Water Supply Watershed Area
- Other Sewer Avoidance Area / Septic Management Area
- Existing Water Service



This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.



Consistency with State and Regional Plans

CGS Section 8-23 of the also requires that local POCDs consider the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan and note any inconsistencies. While a draft update to the State Plan was completed in 2018, it has not yet been adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly. Therefore, the 2013-2018 State Plan was reviewed. Generally, Wilton’s plan is consistent with the State’s six growth management principles as described in the following table.

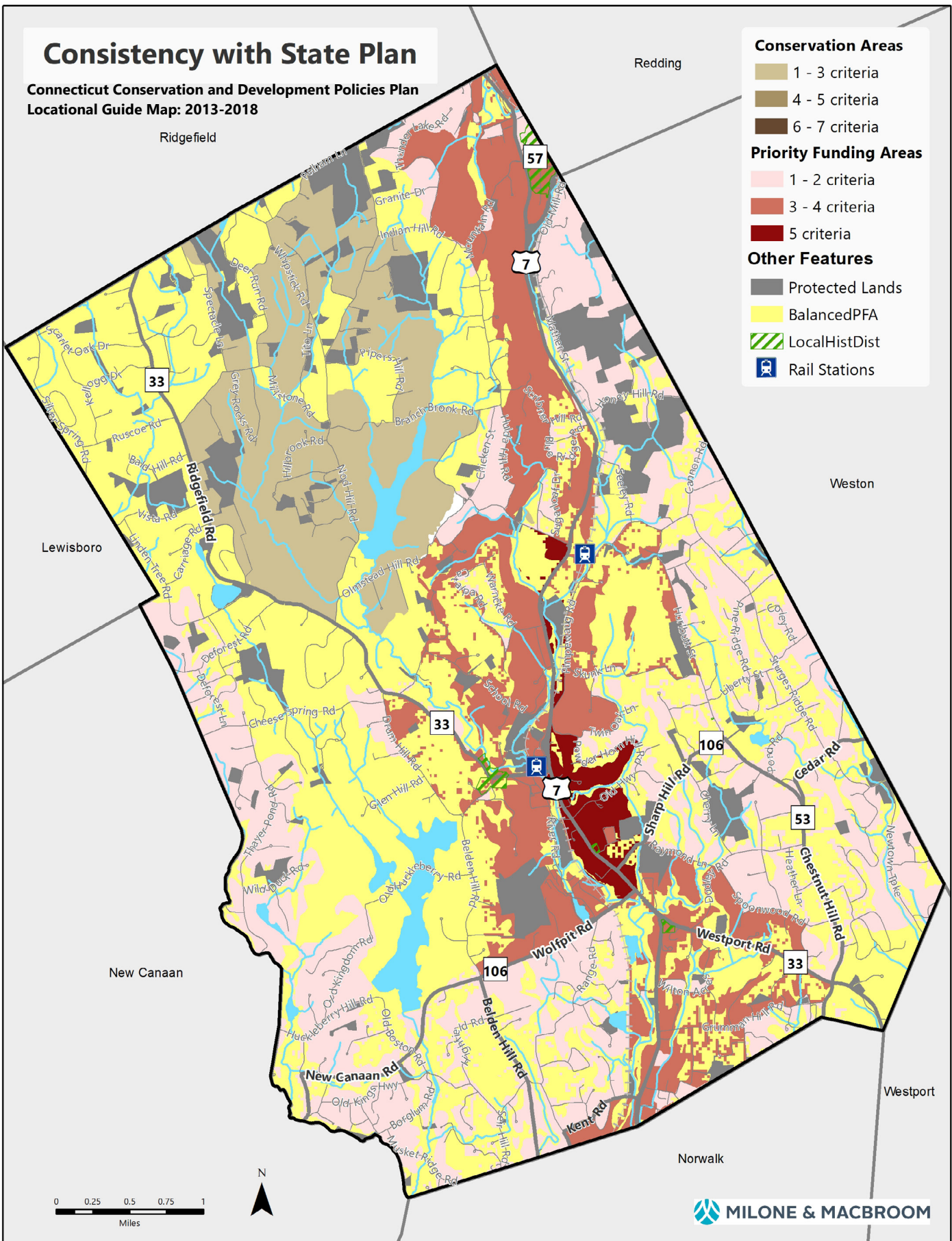
State of Connecticut Growth Management Principals	Wilton POCD Consistency Analysis
1. Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure	Wilton’s POCD prioritizes development in areas with existing sewer and water infrastructure, particularly along Danbury Road and in Wilton Center.
2. Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs	The Plan recommends evaluating ways to make the zoning regulations less restrictive for appropriate multi-family developments. In addition, the Plan contains several action items to develop housing options for all life stages, particularly young adults and seniors.
3. Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options	The Plan calls for the concentration of higher density development in areas served by many transportation modes including sidewalks, bus, and rail. The Plan also calls for the expansion of the Norwalk River Valley Trail that will connect with neighboring Towns.
4. Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands	The conservation priorities of this plan are natural resource protection, the protection of riparian corridors, and the Norwalk River Valley Trail. In addition, the Plan calls for the protection of cultural landscapes through design guidelines, historic preservation, and scenic road designations.
5. Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety	The Plan prioritizes conservation measures within public water supply watersheds. The Plan also encourages low-impact development and other innovative stormwater management techniques as a means of improving water quality.
6. Promote Integrated Planning across all Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional, and Local Basis	Wilton’s POCD encourages participation in regional and statewide efforts, particularly on issues that cross town boundaries such as greenways, economic development, water quality, and transportation.

The State Plan classifies land into priority funding areas, protected lands, conservation areas, and balanced priority-funding areas. These land use categories are shown on the following “Locational Guide Map.” Overall, the Locational Guide Map aligns well with the Future Land Use Plan in this POCD. Priority development areas identified in the Wilton POCD are generally recognized in the State’s plan as priority funding areas, including the village centers and Danbury Road. Because the State uses larger Census Block Groups as the building blocks of its Locational Guide Map, the State’s priority funding areas spill over into the adjacent low- and rural-density residential areas. Wilton’s Future Land Use Plan contains a higher level of detail and concentrates development within the village centers and on the properties directly fronting Danbury Road while largely preserving the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Balanced priority funding areas recognize both conservation and development objectives, whereas priority funding areas are generally supportive of development. It should be noted that the proposed 2018-2023 Locational Guide Map significantly converts balanced priority funding areas in rural and low-density residential areas to conservation areas, which better corresponds with the objectives of this POCD. The State’s priority conservation areas are concentrated within the public water supply watershed.

The most recent Regional Plan of Conservation and Development was developed for the Southwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) in 2006. SWRPA has since integrated into the larger Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG). A new Regional Plan is currently in development. However, the 2006 Plan will remain in effect until a new Plan is adopted. 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. When available, the Town should review the new Regional Plan and update its consistency analysis, if needed.

Consistency with State Plan

Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan
Locational Guide Map: 2013-2018



This map is intended for planning purposes only. Delineations may not be exact.

Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM)



8: Implementation

The following tables are a summary of the goals, objectives and strategies of this Plan. The Implementation Plan is meant only as a guide for the various boards and commissions responsible for implementation. Refer to Chapters 4 through 6 for additional detail. The Implementation Plan lists the lead and support entities responsible for executing each particular action items. In addition, it notes a timeframe for completion. Ongoing efforts are marked with an “O” in the Implementation Plan. Short term actions (marked with an “S”) are those that should be implemented within the first year. Short term actions include those that are less complex, or higher-priority items that need to be completed prior to other actions. Medium-term actions (marked with an “M”) are likely to be completed within 1 to 5 years while Long-term actions (marked with an “L”) are those that are likely to be completed in years the last five years of the POCD horizon.

Implementing Agencies

Entity Key	Abbreviation
Ambler Farm	AF
Aspetuck Land Trust	ALT
Board of Education	BOE
Board of Finance	BOF
Board of Selectmen	BOS
Conservation Commission	CC
Council on Public Facilities	CPF
Environmental Affairs Department	EAD
Economic Development Commission	EDC
Historic District and Properties Commission	HDPC
Inland Wetlands Commission	IWC
Legislators	Leg
Land Trusts	LT
Norwalk River Valley Trail	NRVT
Norwalk River Watershed Association	NRWA
Plan Implementation Committee	PIC
Parks and Recreation Department	P&R Dept.
Private property owners	PPO

Parks & Recreation Commission	PRC
Planning and Zoning Commission	PZC
Planning and Zoning Department	P&Z Dept.
Town Campus Study Committee	TCSC
Trout Unlimited	TU
Village District Design Committee	VDDC
Wilton Water Commission	Water Comm.
Wilton Energy Commission	WEC
Weir Farm	WF
Wilton Garden Club	WGC
Wilton Go Green	WGG
Wilton Health Department	WHD
Wilton Historical Society	WHS
Wilton Land Conservation Trust	WLCT
Woodcock Nature Center	WNC
Wilton Police Department	WPD
Water Pollution Control Authority	WPCA
Zoning Board of Appeals	ZBA

Potential Funding Sources for Implementation

[Small Town Economic Assistance Program \(STEAP\)](#)

[Local Capital Improvement Program \(LOCIP\)](#)

[Main Street Investment Fund](#)

[Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program \(LOTICIP\)](#)

[CT Recreational Trails Program](#)

[Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program](#)

[State Water Resources Grants](#)

[Farmland Preservation Program](#)

[Responsible Growth & Transit Oriented Development Grant Program](#)

[Sustainable CT \(various funding sources\)](#)

Natural and Historical Environment

Goal 1: Conserve and Enhance Open Space and Greenways

Objective 1.1. Manage existing open space to maintain and enhance high quality environmental and recreational benefits				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.1.1	Coordinate between various land holders/managers, Town departments and volunteer groups to prioritize maintenance issues and responsibilities. Consider conducting an annual coordination session, perhaps as part of the POCD implementation committee process recommended later in this Plan, to coordinate on work plan priorities, opportunities for resource sharing, etc.	BOS	All town departments	O
1.1.2	Update, maintain, and promote local open space trail maps in user-friendly formats for the public.	CC	WLCT, ALT	S
1.1.3	Significantly improve the function and appearance of existing trails and open spaces as a high-quality amenity and educational space through public-private partnerships.	CC	EAD, WNC, AF, WF, WLCT, ALT, TU, NRWA, NRVT, WGC, P&R Dept.	O
1.1.4	Continue public education and stewardship efforts through public-private partnerships.	CC	EAD, WNC, AF, WF, WLCT, ALT, TU, NRWA, NRVT, WGC, P&R Dept.	O
1.1.5	Continue to educate eligible property owners on the use of the PA-490 tax assessment program to encourage the maintenance of the forests and open space lands that contribute to Wilton's overall character.	Assessor	P&Z Dept.	O

Natural and Historical Environment

Objective 1.2. Acquire open space that complements existing holdings in an appropriate and fiscally-prudent manner				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.2.1	Work with regional governance bodies like WestCOG and local conservation groups to help establish criteria to identify properties that would benefit the Town if conserved.	EAD	CC, PRC, P&R Dept., WNC, AF, WF, WLCT, ALT, TU, NRWA, NRV, WGC	S
1.2.2	Maintain strong relationships with land trusts to facilitate partnerships in preservation.	EAD	CC, PRC, P&R Dept., WNC, AF, WF, WLCT, ALT, TU, NRWA, NRV, WGC, PPO	O
1.2.3	Develop landowner relationships and monitor properties of interest.	EAD	CC, PRC, P&R Dept., WNC, AF, WF, WLCT, ALT, TU, NRWA, NRV, WGC, PPO	O
1.2.4	Explore a range of funding mechanisms for open space preservation, which may or may not include acquisition.	EAD	P&Z Dept., BOF, BOS, CC, WHS	O
1.2.5	Monitor State policy and planning, including with regard to the "Super 7" right-of-way; discuss possible Town strategies to address future land use, acquisition, and development that is consistent with Town goals.	EAD	P&Z Dept., BOF, BOS, CC	O
1.2.6	Evaluate development of a Stewardship Policy for conservation easements and restrictions held by the Town.	CC, EAD	BOS	M
1.2.7	Evaluate existing conservation subdivision regulations and explore increased density and flexibility of design, ensuring quality open space is conserved, while also ensuring that the regulations are viable, attractive to developers, and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Evaluate impacts on the environment, health, and natural resources as part of endorsing the establishment of these developments.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S

Natural and Historical Environment

Objective 1.3. Create a River Walk and accessible greenway system throughout Wilton				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.3.1	Develop a River Walk in Wilton Center between Schenck's Island, the Train Station area, and Merwin Meadows. The River Walk should be evaluated as part of the Wilton Center Master Plan.	PZC	NRVT, P&Z Dept., P&R Dept., EAD, BOS	L
1.3.2	Complete the NRVT and west side loop trail.	NRVT	P&Z Dept., P&R Dept., EAD, BOS	O
1.3.3	Identify a preferred NRVT route in northern Wilton, including locations for parking areas.	NRVT	P&Z Dept., P&R Dept., EAD, BOS	M
1.3.4	Install proper signage on the NRVT.	NRVT	P&Z Dept., P&R Dept., EAD, BOS	M
1.3.5	Secure easements along the Norwalk River, State Right-of-Way, and utility land, as necessary.	NRVT	P&Z Dept., P&R Dept., EAD, BOS	M
1.3.6	Assist in applying for and acquiring grant funding for construction of segments.	BOS	NRVT, P&R Dept.	S
1.3.7	Continue to monitor parking at trailheads and identify additional parking locations, as needed. Encourage the use of existing parking lots for trail users through arrangements with property owners on Danbury Road or in Wilton Center.	CC	NRVT	O
1.3.8	Encourage sidewalk connections to the NRVT from major roadways and adjacent development.	PZC	P&Z Dept., BOS, NRVT	O
1.3.9	Continue to support the development of NRVT segments in neighboring municipalities.	BOS	NRVT	O

Natural and Historical Environment

Goal 2: Protect Wilton’s abundant natural resources

Objective 2.1. Improve stormwater drainage systems and reduce stormwater runoff and non-point-source pollution to mitigate stormwater drainage effects and preserve and improve water quality				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
2.1.1	Continue to implement the Town’s stormwater management plan (SWMP) in accordance with its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit, which employs Low Impact Development techniques and Best Management Practices to mitigate impacts on water quality, such as pet waste, impervious cover runoff, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and illegal discharges. The SWMP also seeks to educate property owners and the public on pollutant sources, how to prevent or reduce pollutant discharge to waterways, and the effects of pollutants on waterways.	DPW	EAD, NRWA, WGG	O
2.1.2	Require DPW and/or expert engineering review of all projects with potentially significant stormwater, flood zone, or floodway impacts. Evaluate how to improve and facilitate Town engineering review processes.	P&Z Dept.	PZC, EAD, DPW	S
2.1.3	Incorporate aquifer protection, low-impact development, and other stormwater best management practices into Town facility upgrades and Town road projects.	EAD	DPW	S
2.1.4	Encourage aquifer protection and stormwater best management and low impact development practices in new development (including pervious pavement and other methods), as appropriate.	PZC	P&Z Dept., EAD	M
2.1.5	Develop a strategy for existing property owners to reduce and improve the quality of stormwater runoff, including how to address site change applications.	CC	PZC, EAD	M
2.1.6	Explore zoning or financial incentives (fee reduction) for existing property owners that reduce and/or improve the quality of stormwater runoff.	PZC	P&Z Dept., EAD	S
2.1.7	Educate residents and businesses on stormwater and pollutant impacts (salt, pesticides, fertilizers, etc.).	CC	NRWA, WGG, EAD	O

Natural and Historical Environment

Objective 2.2. Monitor water resources and promote water conservation				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
2.2.1	Develop a strategy to limit future water diversion projects in Wilton to protect existing and future drinking water sources and the health of the aquifers in Wilton and the Norwalk River. This strategy should monitor, evaluate, and recommend appropriate action on water usage, diversion, pumping and well drilling permits and programs proposed by regional and/or State agencies.	WHD	BOS, Water Comm.	S
2.2.2	Implement municipal water use and drought management policies, including reviewing Sustainable CT recommendations, developing a policy on using efficient fixtures in Town facilities, formalizing a drought communications plan, and adopting a drought ordinance. Continue to educate residents on well water issues, usage, testing, and best practices, including how well water usage can impact neighbors during periods of drought.	WHD	BOS/ Water Comm., EAD NRWA, WGG	O
2.2.3	Work with the Town and State health departments to continue to understand well water quality and resource issues on a neighborhood, Town, and regional basis.	WHD	BOS/ Water Comm., EAD, NRWA, WGG	O
2.2.4	Consider partnering with a local conservation group to educate the community on water conservation.	EAD	NRWA, WGG	S
2.2.5	Evaluate requiring reports on estimated water usage, area well depth, and area well yield studies for new developments proposing to use wells.	P&Z Dept.	EAD, NRWA, WHD	S
2.2.6	Encourage upgrades and expansion of public water utility systems where appropriate, particularly in areas with impaired surface or ground waters, low-yield wells, approved higher-intensity or commercial uses, or where requested by users.	Water Comm.	P&Z Dept., EAD	S
2.2.7	Evaluate Wilton Water Commission and other established boards' potential role in establishing oversight and policy over water resources.	BOS	Water Comm.	M

Natural and Historical Environment

Objective 2.3. Protect and enhance wildlife				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
2.3.1	Encourage the creation of greenways and backyard wildlife habitat through efforts such as the Pollinator Pathway Initiative.	CC	EAD, PRC, P&R Dept., WNC, AF, WF, WLCT, ALT, TU, NRWA, NRVT, WGC, PPO	O
2.3.2	Continue to manage nuisance species and the deer population, which negatively impact trees and shrubs, habitats, other wildlife, and the health of residents and their pets.	CC	BOS, BOF, EAD	O
2.3.3	Implement the actions recommended by Sustainable CT to Facilitate Invasive Species Education and Management.	PRC	CC, IWC	S
2.3.4	Protect areas identified in DEEP's natural diversity database.	CC	PZC, P&Z Dept., P&R Dept., EAD	S
2.3.5	Continue fish bypass and dam removal efforts on the Norwalk River, as appropriate.	NRWA	BOS, EAD, TU	O

Objective 2.4. Conserve and enhance habitats				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
2.4.1	Create a healthy and aesthetically welcoming view of the Norwalk River along River Road and Danbury Road by eradicating invasive species and replanting with species that are native to the Northeastern United States. Open 'windows' of scenic views of the river and the park behind it; maintain these conditions following best practices for riparian buffers through regular healthy methods of eradication of invasive regrowth.	CC, IWC	EAD, NRWA, TU, NRVT	S
2.4.2	Require native plants when a landscaping plan is required for a project per zoning regulations. Encourage native plant use, even when a landscaping plan is not required.	PZC	P&Z Dept., CC	S
2.4.3	Educate the public on the benefits of greenways, wetlands, riparian buffers, and native plants.	CC, IWC	NRWA, TU	O
2.4.4	Continue to support efforts to eradicate invasive plants along the Norwalk River and other waterbodies.	CC, IWC	NRWA, TU	O

Natural and Historical Environment

Objective 2.4. Conserve and enhance habitats				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
2.4.5	Continue to implement Wilton Center Tree Plan and consider expanding the initiative to other parts of Town, including other villages and along Danbury Road. Develop a private sponsor and a maintenance plan for trees and significant shrubs in the Town Center and along the major roads. Include in the maintenance plan the need to address known diseases and likely demise of trees. Recommend replacement species in keeping with the long-term planting plans of the Wilton Tree Committee.	EAD	CC, DPW	O
2.4.6	Encourage tree and shrub plantings in any required vegetative buffers along Danbury Road to utilize the "right tree, right place" best practices. This ensures that the proper tree species are selected based on environmental factors, including proximity to buildings and utility poles.	EAD	PZC, P&Z Dept., DPW	O
2.4.7	Minimize forest fragmentation	CC	WLT, ALT	O

Goal 3: Continue to lead the State in energy conservation and resiliency, waste reduction, sustainability, and public health

Objective 3.1. Encourage sustainable waste management practices				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
3.1.1	Continue to reduce waste generated at Town facilities and schools through initiatives such as the Zero Waste Challenge.	EAD	BOE, CC, WGG	O
3.1.2	Continue to participate in household hazardous waste collections and statewide product stewardship initiatives.	DPW	EAD, WGG, and PPO	O
3.1.3	Educate residents and businesses on available waste reduction strategies and programs.	DPW	EAD, CC, WGG	O
3.1.4	Support coordinated efforts and local, regional, State, and national policies that encourage recycling, improve its efficiency and reduce its cost, including clean recycling.	DPW	EAD, CC, WGG	O

Natural and Historical Environment

Objective 3.2. Promote energy efficiency and resiliency				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
3.2.1	Support the Energy Commission and related initiatives to study and improve energy efficiency and resiliency.	BOS	WEC, BOF, DPW, P&Z Dept.	O
3.2.2	Identify preferred locations for electric vehicle charging stations and pursue opportunities for construction, particularly when privately funded or installed.	WEC	PZC, P&Z Dept. EAD	S
3.2.3	Provide 70% of municipal and school building energy needs through rooftop solar and virtual net meters. Continue to incorporate cost-effective renewable energy and energy efficiency upgrades to Town-owned buildings and properties and continue to explore renewable energy opportunities with neighboring Towns.	BOS	DPW, WEC	O
3.2.4	Promote economically feasible efficiency and resiliency improvements at key Town buildings and parking lots (for both public and private properties) through the use of backup power supplies, solar energy/heating systems, and micro grids where cost effective.	BOS	DPW, P&Z Dept., WEC	O
3.2.5	Explore zoning incentives for incorporating energy efficiency designs and upgrades, including solar access and orientation for residential development, net zero energy designs, public electric vehicle charging stations, and renewable energy sources for development projects.	PZC	P&Z Dept., EAD, WEC	M
3.2.6	Update the Town Energy Plan and establish renewable energy goals for 5, 10, and 20 years from 2019.	WEC	EAD	M
3.2.7	Implement recommendations from the Hazard Mitigation Plan.	DPW	BOS, BOF, P&Z Dept, EAD	S-L

Objective 3.3. Market Wilton's achievements in energy conservation, waste reduction, sustainability, and public health to prospective businesses and residents				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
3.3.1	Continue to participate in the Sustainable CT program and pursue certification based on desired and completed actions that are compatible with this Plan and community input.	EAD	WGG, CC, PZC, WEC, BOS	O
3.3.2	Continue to support local commissions and organizations that help achieve sustainability goals.	EAD	WGG, CC, PZC, BOS, WEC	O
3.3.3	Incorporate Wilton's sustainability accomplishments in economic development marketing brochures.	EDC	BOS, BOF, EAD, WEC, WGG	S
3.3.4	Collaborate with other organizations that offer funding and/or technical assistance to help bolster the Town's reputation as a leader in energy conservation, waste reduction, sustainability, and public health.	EAD	WEC, WGG	O

Natural and Historical Environment

Goal 4: Preserve Wilton's Rural Character, Historic Resources, and Cultural Landscapes

Objective 4.1. Preserve Wilton's historically important structures and cultural heritage				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
4.1.1	Pursue a variety of incentives to preserve historic structures in redevelopment scenarios, from tax abatements to zoning incentives (e.g. density bonuses, parking reductions, redevelopment, and relocation). Work with the Historic District and Historic Properties Commission, local property owners and local developers to determine appropriate incentives.	PZC & HDPC	P&Z Dept., WHS	S
4.1.2	Become a Certified Local Government to have a designated partnership with the State Historic Preservation Office and become eligible for additional grant funding for historic preservation activities.	HDPC	BOS	S
4.1.3	Add a historic preservation layer to Wilton's GIS system, including Local Historic Districts as well as individual properties listed on the historic house survey (Historic Resource Inventory) so that all boards and commissions can understand the current location of important historical resources.	P&Z Dept.	HDPC, WHS, PZC	S/O
4.1.4	Consider modifying the Town's demolition delay ordinance/administrative process to ensure reasonably sufficient time for review and possible action, including possibly extending the delay from 90 days to 180 days.	BOS	HDPC	O
4.1.5	Expand or create new local historic districts or properties, as appropriate, based on neighborhood values and property owner support.	PPO	HDPC, WHS	S-L
4.1.6	Maintain Town-owned historic structures in a state of good repair.	DPW	HDPC, BOS, BOF	O
4.1.7	Improve coordination and communication between the Planning & Zoning Commission and Historic District and Historic Properties Commission.	PZC & HDPC	P&Z Dept.	S
4.1.8	Revisit adaptive use regulations to permit more flexible use and development while still preserving key historical features, elements, and design character.	PZC	P&Z Dept., HDPC, WHS	S
4.1.9	Provide a budget for the Historic District and Historic Properties Commission to mail information to owners of structures in local historic districts, create signage for marketing local historic districts and historic markers for Town-owned buildings that are listed in the Historic Resource inventory.	BOF	HDPC, WHS	S
4.1.10	Develop landowner relationships and monitor historical properties of interest.	BOF	HDPC	S

Natural and Historical Environment

Objective 4.2. Promote and market Wilton's historic assets				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
4.2.1	Install signage at historic districts and properties.	HDPC	PPO	M
4.2.2	Continue to educate the public and owners of historic structures on available funding opportunities and historic preservation resources.	HDPC	WHS	O

Objective 4.3. Protect scenic roads and rural landscapes				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
4.3.1	Expand the local scenic road program, as appropriate, to ensure maintenance and improvements do not impair scenic qualities.	BOS	DPW	M
4.3.2	Strengthen stonewall guidelines/regulations - consider incorporating specific recommendations pertaining to stone walls into any design guidelines developed.	PZC, CC	HDPC, DPW	M
4.3.3	Continue to support the PA-490 tax assessment program and educate eligible property owners on the program.	Assessor	P&Z Dept., CC, WHS	O

Objective 4.4. Continue to support and promote cultural organizations and institutions				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
4.4.1	Continue to support cultural, social, and intellectual programming at the Wilton Public Library.	Library	BOS, BOF	O
4.4.2	Consider establishing a local or multi-town arts council to better coordinate, market and promote historical, rural, arts and cultural tourism in Wilton, as part of a larger region.	EDC	BOS, WHS	O
4.4.3	Continue to support other Town cultural institutions and organizations through partnerships and collaboration, including through Townwide events and programs like Ambler Farm Day, the Summer Concert Series, street events, street fairs, arts and craft shows, farmers markets, regional and national sport events, and holiday parades and strolls.	EDC		O

Human and Economic Environment

Goal 1: Continue to increase housing options to benefit the shared interests of the Town’s residential and commercial communities

Objective 1.1. Increase the Availability of Multi-Family Housing and Smaller Housing Units				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.1.1	Encourage smaller-scale, lower cost, and/or multi-family housing, whether as transit-oriented, stand-alone, or mixed-use development, to serve the entire Wilton community, including younger working age and older populations whose housing and affordability needs overlap and for whom access to transit and services is important. Target this housing in Wilton Center, Georgetown, train station areas, and Danbury Road south of Cannon Road.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S
1.1.2	Increase permitted residential density in the village centers and along Danbury Road where development capacity and supportive infrastructure is available or appropriately expanded.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S
1.1.3	Consider denser, yet compatible housing opportunities in abutting transition areas, including condominiums and smaller single-family homes.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S
1.1.4	Consider requiring more meaningful fiscal impact statements with multi-family development applications to ensure a balance between meeting housing needs and maintaining high-quality Town services.	PZC	P&Z Dept., BOF, BOS	S
1.1.5	Consider regulatory incentives, including density, floor-area-ratio, setback and/or bulk adjustments, for use of green building techniques in new multi-family development, to lower overall costs and reduce environmental impacts.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	M
1.1.6	Consider regulatory incentives for new multi-family/mixed-use development that provides dedicated car-share parking, and pedestrian and bicycling amenities; evaluate and revise parking requirements for existing and new uses along Danbury Road.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	M
1.1.7	Maintain, but improve the clarity and utility of, accessory dwelling unit zoning regulations as a means of increasing housing variety and attaining smaller housing units.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	O

Human and Economic Environment

Objective 1.2. Diversify the price points of Wilton's housing stock				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.2.1	Evaluate requiring a set aside of 10-20%, or greater, of all units as affordable, consistent with CGS §8-30g requirements, community needs, and market conditions, in any new residential and/or mixed-use development, including mixed-use residential development in the Wilton Center (WC) zone. Evaluate regulatory incentives for greater set-asides, including density, bulk, and setback requirements, among others, with appropriate protections for public health and safety, historical asset protection, and environmental resources protection.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S
1.2.2	Encourage legislative changes to CGS §8-30g to better address community concerns about public health and safety arising from overaggressive design, intensity of use, and overdevelopment, particularly where the community already has zoning regulations promoting meaningful affordable housing development and has demonstrated a history of achieving affordable housing goals.	BOS, Legislators	PZC, P&Z Dept.	S
1.2.3	Explore tools and incentives to retain existing affordable units with expiring affordability covenants.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S
1.2.4	Explore establishing an advisory housing committee panel of local and regional experts to evaluate the housing needs of all segments of the community.	BOS	P&Z Dept.	S
1.2.5	Consider use of a housing trust fund and/or a payment in-lieu-of affordable units system to fund the construction, rehabilitation, or repair of affordable housing, but generally favor mandatory set asides in commercial districts.	BOS, BOF	PZC, P&Z Dept.	M
1.2.6	Consider using Town-owned properties to meet housing needs, as feasible and appropriate.	BOS	PZC, P&Z Dept.	M/L
1.2.7	Promote energy efficiency in new housing as a means of reducing overall housing utility costs.	WEC	PZC	O
1.2.8	Support education of the community on the means and importance of having a diverse housing stock.	P&Z Dept.	PZC, BOS	O

Human and Economic Environment

Objective 1.3. Promote universal design techniques (ensuring the built environment is accessible to anyone regardless of age, disability, etc.)				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.3.1	Consider implementing regulatory incentives for universal design in new housing and improvements to Town facilities.	PZC, BOS	DPW, BOF	M
1.3.2	Strive for ADA accessibility in outdoor recreation facilities even where not required, such as on the Norwalk River Valley Trail.	NRVT	P&R Dept., DPW	O

Objective 1.4. Support and maintain households at various life-cycle stages				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.4.1	Continue to implement and support a variety of assistance and cultural programming through the Senior Center, Parks & Recreation, Library, and Social Services.	BOS	BOF	O
1.4.2	Continue to implement and promote the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief program.	BOF	BOS	O
1.4.3	Promote and support groups and agencies that provide a variety of assistance and recreational programs, such as Stay at Home Wilton, Trakside, etc.	BOF	BOS	O

Goal 2: Preserve and protect Wilton's established rural and lower-density residential neighborhoods

Objective 2.1. Implement policies and regulations to better preserve and protect existing residential neighborhoods while balancing the need for growth and a greater variety of housing types.				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
2.1.1	Review and revise regulations to ensure adequate buffering between higher density commercial/mixed-use/multi-family areas and adjacent residential neighborhoods.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S
2.1.2	Maintain current densities in rural residential areas.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	O
2.1.3	Avoid sewer extensions in unserved rural residential areas, except in areas with widespread desire and need, and/or significant septic failures, and/or environmental concerns.	WPCA	EAD, PZC	O
2.1.4	Explore the potential for additional historic districts, if and as desired by the neighborhood.	HDPC	PPO, WHS	O
2.1.5	Study appropriate development criteria for the transition areas between zones, particularly those within the existing sewer service area and those adjacent to higher density zones.	PZC	P&Z Dept., WHS	M

Human and Economic Environment

Goal 3: Enhance the strength and diversity of the local economy and its connections to the region

Objective 3.1. Brand and market Wilton as a preferred location for businesses in targeted clusters				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
3.1.1	Support EDC efforts to market to business clusters that already have a presence in, or are appropriate for Wilton's existing workforce, development scale, and business mix. Target clusters identified in the EDC's 2014 Strategic Plan include: healthcare, professional and technical services, marketing/marketing research, film/performing arts, retail, and other entrepreneurial "clean energy" organizations.	BOS, BOF	EDC	O
3.1.2	Promote Wilton's talented workforce, education systems, quality of life, and character (landscape, historic resources, etc.) in marketing the Town to businesses. This includes both amenities within Wilton as well as those within the larger region, which are accessible to Wilton residents.	EDC		O

Objective 3.2. Support the redevelopment of underperforming commercial properties				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
3.2.1	Conduct an expert-assisted zoning analysis that assesses potential barriers to reuse of underperforming commercial properties, and consider amendments to regulations to improve redevelopment potential. This should include evaluating form-based zoning approaches, permitted uses relative to market conditions, as well as dimensional and parking requirements, among other considerations.	PZC	EDC, P&Z Dept.	M
3.2.2	Evaluate targeted changes to zoning regulations that enable greater utility from as-of-right and special-permitted uses in commercial districts; consider making certain special-permitted uses as-of-right.	P&Z Dept.	EDC, Assessor, BOF	M
3.2.3	Consider potential tax and grant incentives for improvements and/or redevelopment. Implement and market the most appropriate incentives.	EDC	BOF, PZC, WHS	M

Human and Economic Environment

Objective 3.3. Balance modern economic development with the need to preserve the Town's original and unique character				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
3.3.1	Conduct an expert-assisted joint PZC/ HDPC process to explore zoning incentives (setbacks, density bonus, etc.) and potential form-based zoning strategies for the reuse, preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, reconstruction, and/or relocation of historic structures.	PZC & HDPC	EDC, P&Z Dept.	M
3.3.2	Conduct a joint PZC/ EDC process to explore changes to sign regulations to ensure the appropriate balance between business-friendliness and aesthetic quality.	PZC & EDC	P&Z Dept.	S
3.3.3	Consider ways to reduce parking requirements in light of current and impending changes in transportation technology such as car sharing and other vehicular innovations. Interim steps towards reduced overall parking requirements may include: enabling deferred construction or pervious parking of some proportion of spaces, encouraging shared parking arrangements, and providing regulatory incentives for bike, pedestrian, and car-share amenities.	PZC	P&Z Dept., EDC	M/L

Objective 3.4. Support existing businesses				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
3.4.1	Update signage regulations with business and community input. Updates should balance business needs with community aesthetic and safety considerations.	PZC	EDC, P&Z Dept.	M
3.4.2	Work collaboratively with the Chamber of Commerce to establish a business visitation program to identify issues and opportunities.	EDC	Chamber of Commerce, BOS	S
3.4.3	Consider co-locating Town permitting departments (building, planning & zoning, Town clerk) in a centralized location as the Town implements its Town-wide Facilities Plan.	BOS		M/L
3.4.4	Continue to work with public and private landowners and utilities to encourage improvements to telecommunications infrastructure, particularly wireless and fiber that enable high-bandwidth uses and applications.	PZC	EDC, P&Z Dept., PZC	M
3.4.5	Consider developing business center amenities (such as a high-speed wireless infrastructure and internet infrastructure) at the Wilton Public Library or other town buildings to support the town's large and growing "work from home" population.	BOS	Library	M
3.4.6	Consider developing a co-working or "makerspace" (like in Danbury and New Milford) at a publicly accessible location, perhaps Comstock or the Wilton Public Library or other town building, to support entrepreneurship and new locally owned businesses.	Library	BOS	M

Human and Economic Environment

Objective 3.3. Balance modern economic development with the need to preserve the town's original and unique character				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
3.4.7	Assess the Town's zoning regulations and identify any potential regulatory barriers that impact the Town's growing work-from-home population.	PZC	EDC, P&Z Dept.	M

Goal 4: Continue to cultivate and maintain a high-quality school system under local control

Objective 4.1 Continue prudent community control and cost-effective investment in school facilities and programming to maintain and enhance Wilton Public Schools' attractiveness to current and prospective residents and businesses.				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
4.1.1	Continue local control over educational facilities and programming investment while exploring voluntary cost-saving or program-enhancing measures on a local and regional basis.	BOE	BOS, BOF	O
4.1.2	Address proposed State restrictions over the installation and use of artificial turf fields, including by considering alternatives and sharing knowledge of and promoting safe and environmentally-friendly design and materials use for athletic field upgrades.	P&R Dept.	BOE	S

Human and Economic Environment

Goal 5: Foster community engagement, coordination, and a culture of self-governance

Objective 5.1. Upgrade town systems and processes for land-use matters				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
5.1.1	Support continued maintenance and improvement of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and data.	P&Z Dept.	Assessor	O
5.1.2	Explore ways to improve the land-use permitting and decision-making process through the use of electronic/online applications, forms, communications, public notices, live streaming of meetings, etc.	P&Z Dept.	BOS, BOF	M/O
5.1.3	Identify ways to improve coordination, responsiveness, and responsibility delegation among land-use boards.	P&Z Dept.	PZC, CC, IWC, HDPC	S/O
5.1.4	Evaluate the land-use permitting process and identify ways to create a more efficient, simple, and cost-effective process, including: - Better application, hearing, and timing coordination between boards and commissions, staff, and the public; and - Improving the pre-application process to ensure all boards, commissions and staff provide meaningful and efficient review early in the application process, and that requirements for approval are clearly communicated to applicants.	PZC, P&Z Dept.	EDC, CC, IWC, HDPC, WHS	S
5.1.5	Revisit procedures for staff and expert/peer review of land use matters, especially for drainage, traffic, and flood zone issues.	P&Z Dept.	PZC, EAD, DPW	S/O

Objective 5.2 Promote community engagement, civic-mindedness, and self-governance				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
5.2.1	Conduct transparent decision-making processes across all boards, commissions, and departments to foster community trust.	All boards and commissions	All town departments	O
5.2.2	Value and encourage community participation in planning and policy decisions – consider public input alongside technical analyses.	All boards and commissions	All town departments	O

Human and Economic Environment

Objective 5.3. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
5.3.1	The PIC should be comprised of boards and commissions who participated in the JWG process. This includes members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Education, Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Energy Commission, Historic District and Historic Properties Commission, Inland Wetlands Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Water Commission, Water Pollution Control Authority, and Zoning Board of Appeals. Member committees and organizations should select their own representatives to the Committee.	PZC	BOE, BOF, BOS, CC, EDC, WEC, HDPC, IWC, PARC, WC, WPCA, Water Comm., ZBA	S
5.3.2	The PIC's initial meeting should establish the priority and realistic timing for pursuing and achieving goals in the Implementation Plan. The priority and timeline of goals may change in light of shifting economic, demographic, policy, and data trends or real-world conditions	PIC		S
5.3.3	The PIC should meet at least semi-annually to provide updates on progress made by various agencies, coordinate actions for which the PIC is the responsible entity, and report in advisory capacity to the Planning and Zoning Commission.	PIC		S-L
5.3.4	The PIC may consider holding biannual public forums to track POCD progress and gather additional community input.	PIC	WHS	S-L
5.3.5	The PIC should monitor and evaluate significant planning data and policy developments and adjust objectives and implementation accordingly. Important upcoming developments currently include the releases of updated State and Regional Plans of Conservation and Development, transportation plans, water plans, and the 2020 United States Census, all of which are expected to occur in the next two years. The PIC should also monitor and evaluate significant state legislative and agency actions that will affect the Plan's goals and objectives.	PIC		

Built Environment

Goal 1: Strengthen Wilton Center as a vibrant economic, residential, recreational, and cultural hub for the community and region

Objective 1.1. Improve the vibrancy, visual quality, and cohesion of Wilton Center while supporting new and existing businesses by planning for residential, commercial, and mixed-use development				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.1.1	<p>Conduct a professional, inclusive and transparent master planning process to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the bounds of Wilton Center, taking the train station and existing expansion of the Wilton Center zone across Danbury Road and recent approval of the mixed-use development at 300 Danbury Road into account; 2. Explore the market opportunities for residential and commercial development and/or redevelopment, especially the potential for mixed-use and multi-modal, transit-oriented development that has more destination and experiential retail options serving a larger regional market beyond the Town’s boundaries. Mixed-use development can include a range of uses and designs, including those without a residential component (such as retail and office) or required ground-level retail space; 3. Using case-studies and possible form-based zoning approaches, assess property owners’ and the community’s desired design, form, and intensity of future redevelopment and development, including gateway and streetscape design, building architecture, height, bulk, and setbacks, parking – including at street, below-street-level or municipal garages, river access, civic/green space, historical preservation, and natural resources protection; 4. Evaluate water quality, wetland, riverbank flood zone, and floodway impacts caused by higher density or intensity development that features Wilton Center’s riverfront; enable development strategies and regulations to address those impacts; 5. Develop a plan that reflects market realities and a proactive approach for development or redevelopment according to the community’s vision, and that takes into consideration several ongoing initiatives, including further development of the NRVT, enhancements to the Town Green, Schenck’s Island/ Merwin Meadows improvements, Chess Park, River Walk, and the train station/Wilton Center pedestrian bridge; and 6. Plan for roadway, rail, pedestrian, water, sewer, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure improvements, to the extent possible, which will facilitate achieving redevelopment and development objectives. 	PZC	All town departments	S

Built Environment

Objective 1.1. Improve the vibrancy, visual quality, and cohesion of Wilton Center while supporting new and existing businesses by planning for residential, commercial, and mixed-use development

Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.1.2	Investigate regional or State programs to help fund planning, especially for transit-oriented development.	P&Z Dept	PZC, EDC	S
1.1.3	Identify the preferred administrative vehicle for implementing the Master Plan. Potential options may include form-based zoning, enhanced village district design review, revised village district boundaries and/or design guidelines, and/or an architectural review board for areas outside the village district.	PZC	P&Z Dept., BOS	M
1.1.4	Implement regulatory changes/incentives per the recommendations of the Master Plan.	PZC	All town departments	M/L
1.1.5	Pursue infrastructure improvements per the recommendations of the Master Plan.	BOS	DPW	L

Objective 1.2. Better connect Wilton Center to Danbury Road, the Train Station, and the Norwalk River

Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
1.2.1	Provide a high quality and safe pedestrian connection between the train station and Wilton Center – whether it is through completion of the planned pedestrian bridge, visible improvements to Ridgefield Road and its pedestrian approaches, or similar projects.	P&Z Dept	BOS, BOF, DPW	S
1.2.2	Develop the NRVT/RiverWalk through Wilton Center and continue to work with property owners to secure riverfront easements.	NRVT	PZC, P&Z Dept.	L
1.2.3	Enhance sidewalks and the streetscape along Danbury Road to create a sense of place that portrays “town center” character, thus fostering visual and mental connections with the Town Center and signaling arrival in a unique section of the corridor.	DPW	CT DOT, BOS, PZC, ARB	M
1.2.4	Improve Town Center gateway signage, lighting and traffic calming on Danbury Road, and make similar gateway improvements at Danbury Road and Ridgefield Road. Signage should be scaled and illuminated properly so that it is visible to passing vehicular traffic.	BOS	DPW	S

Built Environment

Goal 2: Pursue Context-Sensitive Economic Development on Danbury Road

Objective 2.1. Plan and regulate for transition in development patterns along Danbury Road from more intense uses in the southern corridor to more rural patterns in the northern corridor				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
2.1.1	Re-evaluate the zoning map Town wide to meet the land use goals of this Plan.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S
2.1.2	Perform a zoning review of the past and future impact of the Danbury Road widening on abutting property owners.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S
2.1.3	Encourage compatible and context-sensitive design of commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family properties where appropriate.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	O
2.1.4	Explore alternatives to the current design review process, such as establishing an architectural review board with review over all commercial projects on Danbury Road and/or exploring expanded or new Village Districts on Danbury Road.	PZC	VDDC, BOS	S
2.1.5	Review "orphan" and indistinct buffer zones and consider consolidating zones within different segments of the corridor.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	M
2.1.6	Rezone the corridor with distinct segments to ensure compatible and desirable development.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	M
2.1.7	<p>Zoning Recommendations for South Wilton (Norwalk Line to Wolfpit Road):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow more intensive commercial development, with potential for mixed-use. • Consider incentives for parcel consolidation or small-scale development where appropriate. • Promote better access management and curb cut consolidation by requiring easements over neighboring properties for access and egress, facilitating integrated site planning between multiple property owners. • Promote pedestrian and biking improvements. • Evaluate appropriate landscaped setbacks and enhance landscaping/ streetscape requirements. • Consider zoning incentives for historic structure preservation (See Natural and Historical Environment Goal 4). 	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S

Built Environment

Objective 2.1. Plan and regulate for transition in development patterns along Danbury Road from more intense uses in the southern corridor to more rural patterns in the northern corridor				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
2.1.8	<p>Zoning Recommendations for Central Wilton (Wolfpit Road to Cannon Road):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow commercial, residential, and mixed-use development that emphasizes transit-oriented development, community, and village design character and connections to Wilton Center. Evaluate form-based zoning approaches. • Establish landscaping, signage, and site design standards that help to define this section of Danbury Road as a part of, or a gateway to, Wilton Center. • Promote better parking utilization, access management, and curb cut consolidation by reviewing parking requirements, requiring easements over neighboring properties for access and egress and facilitating and incentivizing integrated site planning between multiple property owners. • Consider zoning incentives for historic structure preservation (See Natural and Historical Environment Goal 4). 	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S
2.1.9	<p>Zoning Recommendations north of Cannon Road:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain existing low-density, rural development patterns, except in approaches to and within the Georgetown node. • Enhance the utility and clarity of Adaptive Use regulations that are often used in this area. • Enable commercial and residential development at limited densities that can be supported by on-site infrastructure. • Consider zoning incentives for historic structure preservation (See Natural and Historical Environment Goal 4). 	PZC	P&Z Dept.	S

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Goal 3: Strengthen the economic viability of the Cannondale area while protecting its unique design and historical character

Objective 3.1. Conduct a master planning process for Cannondale				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
3.1.1	Define an appropriate boundary for Cannondale, which may include a broader tertiary area and expanded village district designation. Consider incorporating the Danbury Road corridor west and north of Cannon Road into the Cannondale planning area.	PZC	HDPC, P&Z Dept., WHS	S
3.1.2	Encourage mixed-use, residential, and commercial development of an appropriate scale and design, with possible form-based approaches, transit-oriented design, and historical preservation as central principles.	PZC	P&Z Dept., WHS	S
3.1.3	Consider opportunities for enabling more seasonal events and activities in Cannondale. Explore using the train station parking area for weekend or off-peak events.	EDC	P&Z Dept.	S
3.1.4	Revise zoning to implement the Master Plan.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	M/L
3.1.5	Establish zoning incentives for preserving historic structures.	PZC	HDPC, WHS	M/L
3.1.6	Establish unique design guidelines for Cannondale with input through the master planning process that preserve historic character with input through the master planning process.	PZC	HDPC, VDCC, ARB	M
3.1.7	Improve multi-modal connections to Danbury Road.	PZC	HDPC, P&Z Dept., BOS, CT DOT	L
3.1.8	Make gateway improvements on Danbury Road to identify, brand and promote the village.	PZC	HDPC, P&Z Dept., BOS, CT DOT, ARB	L

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Goal: 4 Strengthen the Georgetown node through mixed-use, transit and pedestrian oriented development

Objective 4.1 Participate in a regional master planning process for the entirety of Georgetown				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
4.1.1	Work in conjunction with neighboring municipalities to conduct a cohesive place-making planning process.	PZC	BOS, P&Z Dept., WestCOG	M
4.1.2	Identify redevelopment and infill development opportunities that are not reliant on public sewer and water infrastructure expansion.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	M
4.1.3	Consider potential context-sensitive infill development on Town-owned property such as the former Gilbert & Bennett School in a manner that is consistent with its historic district designation and the findings of the Town's Property Portfolio Recommendations, issued in 2019.	BOS	PZC, P&Z Dept.	M
4.1.4	Identify place-making opportunities, (signage, streetscape, wayfinding, pedestrian amenities, etc.) to brand and market Georgetown across municipal boundaries.	PZC	EDC, P&Z Dept.	M
4.1.5	Pursue grants and streetscape improvement projects jointly with other municipalities.	DPW	BOS, EDC, PZC, P&Z Dept., WestCOG	O
4.1.6	Improve bike and pedestrian connections along Danbury Road and Route 57, which connect to the Branchville transit area and Main Street (Redding).	DPW	BOS, BOF, CT DOT	L
4.1.7	Identify opportunities to partner with the NRVT.	BOS	NRVT, P&Z Dept.	S
4.1.8	Modify zoning regulations to encourage pedestrian-scale development, with unique design guidelines per the Master Plan.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	L
4.1.9	Support and enhance the existing housing stock in Georgetown, which has a more diverse range of housing styles and price points compared to other parts of Wilton.	PZC	P&Z Dept.	O

Objective 4.2. Support redevelopment of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
4.2.1	Continue to monitor and participate in G&B Wire Mill redevelopment planning efforts to ensure positive impacts to Georgetown as a whole, and Wilton.	EDC	PZC, BOS	O
4.2.2	Support speeding up environmental remediation effort.	EAD	BOS, CC, IWC, WGG,	O

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Goal 5: Enhance Wilton's transportation network for all modes and users

Objective 5.1. Improve traffic flow and safety on Wilton roads				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
5.1.1	Continue to implement Road Restoration Program	DPW	BOS, BOF	O
5.1.2	Continue to implement a full suite of traffic calming measures, including education, engineering, and enforcement	DPW	WPD, PZC, P&Z Dept.	O
5.1.3	Complete intersection safety improvements on Route 106 at Belden Hill Road and other state road intersections identified on the Transportation Plan	DPW	CT DOT, WestCOG, BOS	O
5.1.4	Identify congested or problematic intersections of Town roads and strategize on possible improvements that the town could implement	DPW	CT DOT, WestCOG, BOS	S
5.1.5	Partner with Eversource to minimize storm-related damages impacting vehicles flow and safety	DPW	CT DOT, WPD	L/O
5.1.6	Consider incorporating transportation demand management criteria into site plan and/or special permit reviews of large traffic generator facilities	PZC	DPW, P&Z Dept.	S

Objective 5.2 Ensure that improvements to regional road networks, Danbury Road especially, align with the Town's land use goals (see zoning/ land use suggestions for Danbury Road above)				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
5.2.1	Support traffic calming, complete streets/ place-making amenities in focus areas, including the commercial core north of the Norwalk line, the Town Center area, around Cannondale, and through Georgetown.	DPW	BOS, WestCOG, P&Z Dept.	O
5.2.2	Support the widening of Danbury Road between Grist Mill Road and Route 33 to two lanes in each direction, with sidewalks.	BOS	WestCOG, P&Z Dept., DPW	O
5.2.3	Complete intersection improvements at Grumman Hill Road.	DPW	BOS, WestCOG	M
5.2.4	Work with CTDOT to incentivize and divert traffic off local roads and onto state roads, primarily Danbury Road. Identify congested/problematic intersections on state roads and strategize on possible improvements. Also work with CT DOT and WestCOG to make traffic flow enhancements, including improve Intelligent Transportation Systems with better traffic signal systems and timing.	DPW	BOS, WestCOG	M/O
5.2.5	Encourage the appropriate road infrastructure for our community in each area of Danbury Road.	DPW	BOS, WestCOG	O

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Objective 5.2 Ensure that improvements to regional road networks, Danbury Road especially, align with the Town's land use goals (see zoning/ land use suggestions for Danbury Road above)

Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
5.2.6	Continue to monitor the status of the Super 7 Expressway, and support development of the NRVT in the right-of-way, as appropriate. Discuss potential future changes in State ownership, use, and/or disposition of the Super 7 Expressway land and other state-owned land.	BOS	PRC, PZC	L
5.2.7	Support improvements to the Main Avenue and Route 15 interchange in the City of Norwalk.	BOS	WestCOG	O

Objective 5.3 Improve bike and pedestrian linkages throughout Wilton, especially connecting neighborhoods to Wilton Center/ villages and other commercial areas, schools, active and passive recreation areas, and the NRVT

Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
5.3.1	Create and implement a complete streets program.	DPW	P&Z Dept., BOS	M
5.3.2	Install energy efficient street lights where appropriate.	DPW	WEC, BOS	S
5.3.3	Improve bike/pedestrian connections to Wilton Center (consider appropriate connections during Master Planning process as discussed above).	DPW	CT DOT, WestCOG, BOS, P&Z Dept.	M
5.3.4	Work with WestCOG to implement regional on- and off-road biking facilities and planning, particularly on State Routes and state and local routes connecting Wilton with Westport and Norwalk and to the shore.	DPW	CT DOT, WestCOG, BOS	O
5.3.5	In any major road reconstruction project, consider opportunities for bike lanes, sidewalks, and other pedestrian/bike improvements.	DPW	PZC	S
5.3.6	Support the construction of additional sidewalks throughout Town in areas that are proximate to village centers, community facilities, commercial districts, and the Norwalk River Valley Trail.	DPW	BOS, WestCOG, NRVT	O
5.2.7	Work with the NRVT to plan for enhanced connections to the trail from neighborhoods through signage, sidewalks and/or bike lanes.	DPW	NRVT	O
5.2.8	Seek opportunities to develop and promote more walking trails in active and passive recreation areas through public-private partnerships and/or grant opportunities.	EAD	CC, ALT, NRWA, WLCT	O
5.2.9	Incorporate universal design techniques in pedestrian improvements where practical.	DPW	NRVT	O

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Objective 5.4. Promote better transit options, service and increased use				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
5.4.1	Work with CT DOT, WestCOG and the Southwestern Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (SWRMPO) to implement the 2019 Long-Range Transportation Plan and recommend local and regional improvements to all transit service. Support these organizations' efforts to enhance multimodal transportation strategies, including improving pedestrian and biking connections within Wilton and to and from neighboring municipalities.	BOS	WestCOG	O
5.4.2	Continue to support improvements to the Danbury Branch and New Haven Rail Lines, including electrification, improved signal systems, and the double tracking of the Danbury Branch to Wilton. These investments can help reduce travel times and improve system reliability.	BOS	WestCOG	O
5.4.3	Support DOT improvements to Cannondale Station to accommodate longer trains and increase parking, along with potential complementary transit-oriented development of the surrounding areas. Support development of a Georgetown Station.	BOS	WestCOG	O
5.4.4	Continue to monitor State tolling plans and their potential local effect on local road traffic and safety. The imposition of highway tolls will increase the urgency of making improvements to rail service and traffic lanes, capacity, and signal optimization on Danbury Road.	BOS	WestCOG	O
5.4.5	Work with CT DOT, Norwalk Transit and major employers, shopping centers, and other stakeholders to advertise and enhance bus service routes and stops to and from Wilton villages, train stations and major business centers (i.e., ASML) and provide amenities such as shelters, benches, lighting, and trash receptacles at bus stops. Modify the zoning regulations to require or incentivize the provision of bus shelters, incorporating appropriate design.	EDC	BOS, PPO	O
5.4.6	Continue to encourage alternative transportation and commuting methods, including ridesharing, off-peak work scheduling, and telecommuting. Consider bike sharing opportunities, particularly in village centers and along Danbury Road and NRVT.	EDC, PZC	NRVT	O
5.4.7	Maintain and enhance transportation options for the elderly and the disabled. Evaluate seasonal Town shuttles connecting to beaches, parks, shopping, and entertainment destinations in neighboring communities, particularly for senior residents.	Social Services	BOS	O

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Goal 6: Improve and maintain Town-owned facilities and services in a fiscally prudent manner

Objective 6.1 Complete the evaluation of the Wilton Police Department (WPD) Building and Town Hall				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
6.1.1	Continue the work of the WPD and Town Hall Campus building committee, taking State and regional policy into account.	BOS	WPD, TCSC	O
6.1.2	Consider public safety service needs via staff/department reviews in evaluating new development.	BOS	WPD, TCSC	S-L
6.1.3	Continue to engage the community on the existing conditions, needs, and deficiencies of the WPD and Town Hall campus buildings, including the need for an improved board and commission meeting space that can accommodate public attendance and facilitate hearings, presentations and discussions.	BOS	WPD, TCSC	O

Objective 6.2. Maintain Town buildings and assets in a state of good repair, while improving utility, resiliency, and sustainability				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
6.2.1	Coordinate town facilities planning with public school facilities planning.	BOE, BOS	BOS, BOF	O
6.2.2	Complete upgrades to Fire Station 2.	Building Committee	Fire Commission	S
6.2.3	Continue ongoing maintenance of other town and school facilities.	BOE, DPW	BOS, DPW	O
6.2.4	Continue to implement cost-effective energy efficiency and/or projects to improve the resiliency of town buildings and the municipal fleet.	WEC	BOS, DPW	O
6.2.5	Consider town-owned real estate in meeting the housing, conservation, or economic development objectives of this Plan, as appropriate.	BOS	PZC, EDC	O

Objective 6.3. Explore voluntary local and regional opportunities to save costs and improve services and facilities where appropriate and fiscally prudent				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
6.3.1	Evaluate the feasibility, community impacts, and cost implications of regional police, fire, EMS, waste management, and other services, as appropriate.	BOS		O
6.3.2	Explore more regional and lower- or shared-cost approaches to municipal services that produce better services, reduce the need for services, and/or lower costs. Examples may include regional transfer station/waste management, increased at-home recycling and composting programs, reduction of town waste programs.	DPW	DPW, BOS, EAD, WGG	S
6.3.3	Continue to maintain public safety and reasonable response emergency response times throughout the Town.	WPD, Fire Commission	BOS	O

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Objective 6.3. Explore voluntary local and regional opportunities to save costs and improve services and facilities where appropriate and fiscally prudent

Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
6.3.4	Evaluate changes in the recycling market and recycling technologies in terms of their impact on operations cost and feasibility, including by participating in regional and State policy discussion on how to address such changes	DPW	BOS	S

Objective 6.4. Improve and maintain recreational facilities

Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
6.4.1	Conduct a Town-wide parks and recreation needs assessment and prioritize future enhancements. Continue coordination between the Schools, Parks and Recreation, Board of Selectmen, private recreation providers, and neighboring Towns to maximize the ability to meet recreation needs with existing facilities	P&R Dept.	BOE, PRC, BOS	S
6.4.2	Continue to pursue a diverse range of funding mechanisms for recreational enhancements including grants, private fundraising, and public/private partnerships	P&R Dept.	CC, NRVT	O
6.4.3	Continue to evaluate and work on Schenck's Island and Merwin Meadows upgrades via public/private partnerships	PRC	P&R Dept.	M
6.4.4	Identify preferred routes and complete NRVT connections to Wilton village centers, schools, and community facilities along or near trail, taking into account security needs at schools and available funding sources	NRVT	BOE, PRC	M
6.4.5	Pursue opportunities for providing additional playgrounds around Town not associated with school buildings	PRC	P&R Dept.	M

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Goal 7: Maintain safe and efficient public utility services and infrastructure

Objective 7.1. Ensure water and sewer policies reflect land use goals				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
7.1.1	Update and maintain a Water and Sewer Plan for the Town.	WPCA	PZC, P&Z Dept.	M
7.1.2	Evaluate opportunities to increase density within and on the margins of existing sewer and water service areas.	PZC	WPCA, P&Z Dept.	M
7.1.3	The land use goals and objectives of this plan call for redevelopment and intensification of development in already served and nearby areas; therefore, extensions of sewer or water lines to currently unserved areas should be limited to those that address risks to environmental and/or public health, or are requested by the property owners of a certain area in accordance with the recommendations of this Plan and the Town Water and Sewer Plan.	WPCA	PZC, P&Z Dept.	O
7.1.4	The town should continue to support upgrades to the Norwalk wastewater treatment facility.	WPCA	BOS	O

Objective 7.2. Provide infrastructure to support modern economic, workplace, and technological needs				
Index	Strategy	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe
7.2.1	Work with telecommunications providers and property owners to improve and upgrade high-bandwidth, reliable internet and cellular service throughout Town, including evaluation of 5G wireless, public Wi-Fi, and/or fiber buildouts, among other newer technologies, starting in Wilton center and along Danbury Road. Ensure proper consideration of viewsheds, the aesthetic environment, and health concerns, consistent with state and federal requirements.	EDC	BOS, PZC	O
7.2.2	Identify Town-owned land that could be used by telecommunications and/or cellular providers.	EDC	BOS, PZC	S
7.2.3	Work with utility providers to promote the expansion of natural gas service.	EDC	BOS, DPW, PZC	O

Appendices

Appendix A: Joint Working Group Presentations

Appendix B: POCD Mini Survey Results

Appendix C: Telephone Survey Results