

**Section 7**  
Environmental Review



# TOWN AND VILLAGE OF WILSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



## **SECTION 7.0 – ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Typically, the potential environmental impacts of a Comprehensive Plan are evaluated through a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). To meet this requirement, the Comprehensive Plan itself can be set up to represent a GEIS (see §272-a.8 of Town Law). This format enables the reviewers, the Lead Agency, Involved and Interested Agencies, and the public to review one comprehensive document that outlines plans for the future and the potential environmental implications of these plans. This section of the Wilson Comprehensive Plan is provided to assist with the environmental review for this document.

A GEIS, like any Environmental Impact Statement, includes a section on environmental setting. Section 3 of this Comprehensive Plan provides a review and analysis of the environmental setting of the Town and Village of Wilson as it exists now, and includes information on the following:

- Existing Land Use Patterns (3.1)
- Agriculture (3.1.1)
- Water Use and Navigation (3.1.2)
- Land Use Regulations and Other Relevant Plans and Studies (3.2)
- Socioeconomics (3.3)
- Environmental Resources (3.4)
- Government and Community Services and Resources (3.5)
- Transportation (3.6)
- Utilities and Infrastructure (3.7)

### **7.1 Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts**

The underlying purpose and a major goal of the Wilson Comprehensive Plan is to promote appropriate land use and avoid significant adverse environmental impacts in the Town and Village. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to properly guide growth in the community in order to lessen the potential negative impacts of future land use and development decisions.





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## ***Short Term, Long Term, and Cumulative Impacts***

Based on the environmental setting of the Town and Village of Wilson, the following should be considered with respect to protecting, minimizing or avoiding potentially significant adverse impacts to environmental resources.

### **7.1.1 Impacts on Land**

- The Town of Wilson remains largely rural and agricultural in nature, which is a characteristic that is valued by its residents. This rural, agricultural character should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts to the character of the community. Development should be encouraged in close proximity to the Village and/or in areas where public services are available to support it.
- The Town and Village of Wilson contain areas of hydric soils, wetlands, floodplains and creek corridors. These areas have been identified on maps in this report (see Section 3). These areas should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts to important natural resources.
- Some locations in the Town contain significant areas of mature woodland that should be protected to the greatest extent practicable to maintain the rural character of the Town and preserve areas of open space. These woodlands should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- There are large areas in Wilson where the soils are categorized as prime farmland or prime farmland when drained. These soils should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

### **7.1.2 Impacts on Water**

- Twelve Mile Creek, the east branch of Twelve Mile Creek, Hopkins Creek and tributaries of these waterways run throughout the community, discharging to Lake Ontario. These creeks are important for open space preservation, drainage, wildlife and fish habitat, and aesthetics, and should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The Twelve Mile Creek watershed should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts on water quality and groundwater resources.





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- There are areas of freshwater wetlands that are spread throughout the Town, in no significant pattern. Larger areas of State-designated wetlands are more common in the eastern half of the Town. There is also a large area of marsh, located inland of Tuscarora Bay, which has been designated as a New York State Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat. These wetland and habitat areas should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- All the 100-year and 500-year floodplains within the Town are located adjacent to the banks of Twelve Mile Creek and the east branch of Twelve Mile Creek. These floodplains should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- On-site septic systems are used to treat sanitary waste for a majority of residential properties in the Town. Proper maintenance of septic systems should be promoted in order to avoid or minimize potential impacts to surface and ground water resources.
- The Town of Wilson contains some areas of poorly drained soils. The environmental constraints associated with these soils should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

### **7.1.3 Impacts on Plant and Animal Habitats**

- The Town has large areas of open meadows, hedgerows, active and abandoned farm fields and woodlands, as well as wetlands and creek corridors (as noted above). These various habitat areas support many non-threatened and non-endangered plant, avian, and animal species. These areas provide important habitat for many resident and migrating species. These areas contribute to the rural character of the Town and Village and should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

### **7.1.4 Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources**

- A wide number of properties in the community are used for agricultural activity, including the keeping of horses, raising livestock and farm crops. Farming and agriculture are historic land uses in the Town and are important to the local economy. These areas should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.





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- Large portions of the Town fall within a State designated Agricultural Districts that should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- Agricultural lands are considered an important part of the character of the Town of Wilson and should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid decreasing the viability of agriculture.
- Prime farmland soils or prime farmland soils when drained, are important agricultural resources. Development of these soils results in irreversible impacts. Areas with these important soils should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

### **7.1.5 Impacts on Aesthetic Resources**

- There are many aesthetic resources in Wilson, particularly in and around the Village and the waterfront, including historic structures, views of the lake and bay, areas of open space, woodlands, picturesque farmlands, cemeteries, churches, and parks, as well as the general the rural character of the community. These resources should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The aesthetic quality of development is important to the community and should be taken into consideration when making planning and development decisions for the central business district, the waterfront area and portions of State Route 425.

### **7.1.6 Impacts on Archaeological, Cultural, and Historic Resources**

- The Town and Village of Wilson contain historical and cultural resources, including variety of cobblestone structures, that are of significance and should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- There are certain churches, parks and cemeteries throughout the community that are deemed important cultural resources to the community that should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

### **7.1.7 Impacts on Open Space, Parks, and Recreation**

- There are numerous parks and recreational areas, including Tuscarora State Park, as well as important creek corridors, in the community that should be considered when





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making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

### **7.1.8 Impacts on Utilities**

- Niagara County Water District supplies public water to the Town and Village of Wilson. This should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts. In addition, consideration should be given to improvements to water infrastructure to address issues of high demand.
- The Village of Wilson owns and operates a wastewater treatment plant that services most of the village community. Currently, the unsewered portions of the Village and the Town utilize private septic systems to meet their sewer needs. Sewer issues and the availability of sewer infrastructures should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

### **7.1.9 Impacts on Transportation**

- The major routes through the Town of Wilson are State Route 425 (Wilson Cambria Road) and State Route 18 (Lake Road). State Route 93 and County Road 52 are also important travel routes in the community. Transportation issues should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid increasing demands on the transportation system or increasing potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive traffic.
- Facilities for pedestrians and bicycles in the Town and Village are limited. Improved connections between the waterfront and the Village are needed. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The Comprehensive Plan does not recommend any development patterns that would significantly alter transportation patterns in the Town or Village, but does recommend providing additional pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

### **7.1.10 Impacts on Energy**

- Potential energy impacts should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize unsustainable increases in the use of energy.





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### **7.1.11 Noise and Odor Impacts**

- Potential noise and odor impacts should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts on sensitive land uses without proper buffering or mitigation.

### **7.1.12 Impacts on Public Health**

- The public health, safety, and welfare of Town and Village residents should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

### **7.1.13 Impacts on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood**

- The populations of the Town and Village of Wilson have shown modest increases over the past two decades, with similar modest increases in population projected in the foreseeable future. The Comprehensive Plan does not propose any changes that would lead to increases in population or extreme changes in land use.
- The character of the Town is primarily rural and agricultural in nature and should be considered when making planning and development decisions so as to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
- The Comprehensive Plan's Goals and Objectives clearly indicate support for directing growth toward the areas of Town of Wilson that are located adjacent to the Village, and controlling the rate of growth in areas without services or along rural road frontages in order to protect rural character.
- The Comprehensive Plan identifies areas that are the most suitable for future growth at an appropriate pace and scale.

## **7.2 Adverse Environmental Impacts that Cannot be Avoided**

With or without the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town and Village of Wilson will continue to have new development activity that may potentially have impacts on the environment. There will be continuing pressure to subdivide agricultural lands for new building lots, particularly along existing street frontages. There will continue to be concerns about water quality, the waterfront and the viability and availability of sanitary septic systems. The growth of commercial development along Route 425 could threaten the economic viability of the Village if not planned properly.





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The adoption of this Plan and implementation of the suggested recommendations will allow the Town and Village of Wilson to better manage growth and development, reduce potential environmental impacts, and ensure better consideration of the environment in municipal decision making. All development actions taking place after the adoption of this Plan will be subject to the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process on a site-specific basis. Nothing contained in this document supplants the necessity to adequately review future actions. This Comprehensive Plan will be a resource that can be used to facilitate the review of proposed development actions.

### **7.3 Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan**

Most of the implementation recommendations outlined in this Plan will help to control and manage growth within the Town and Village of Wilson. Certain actions will act to encourage development in specific areas and redevelopment in targeted areas. These areas have been deemed to be the most appropriate locations for development. The Plan also discourages development in certain areas that are identified as more suitable for agricultural and low intensity uses or that contain environmentally sensitive resources. The Plan places importance on quality development that will enhance the overall character of the Town and Village.

### **7.4 Mitigation Measures**

It is the intent of this Comprehensive Plan to help reduce potential impacts that may be caused by future planning and development activities in the community. This can be accomplished by providing measures and techniques for guiding development that may occur, such as agricultural conservation programs, revised zoning or other development regulations, and other smart growth tools. Alternatively, the Plan can provide tools to help mitigate the potential cumulative impacts of development activities that alone may not result in adverse environmental impacts. This Comprehensive Plan suggests a number of techniques for guiding development in the Town and Village of Wilson and tools for minimizing potential impacts of development on the environment.

The following section discusses the recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan and the logic as to why and how they help mitigate potential impacts of future growth and development.





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### 7.4.1 Land Resources

- The Comprehensive Plan recommends new standards and guidelines aimed at directing development away from problematic or sensitive areas in the Town and towards areas where impacts to the environment will be reduced (closer proximity to the Village). Programs such as land conservation techniques, farmland protection measures, zoning revisions, and rural design guidelines are recommended.
- In general, the Comprehensive Plan supports new growth being focused around the Village of Wilson, and in established neighborhoods and corridors. It supports the preservation of prime agricultural lands for agricultural purposes, and generally directs growth away from these areas.
- The Comprehensive Plan supports the use of conservation farming techniques to protect sensitive farmland resources.

### 7.4.2 Water Resources

- The creeks and streams, wetlands, and floodplains within the Town and Village have been identified. Recommendations have been included in the Plan for improving their protection and enhancing their quality. Recommendations include land conservation techniques and rural design guidelines.
- The Comprehensive Plan promotes educating residents on groundwater protection and septic system maintenance to preserve the quality of surface waters and groundwater.

### 7.4.3 Air Quality

- The Comprehensive Plan supports increased buffering of industrial and commercial uses to minimize potential impacts on non-industrial and non-commercial uses.

### 7.4.4 Plants and Animal Resources

- Habitat areas, such as creek and stream corridors, wetlands, grass fields, and woodlots are important resource areas in the Town and Village. Targeting these areas for protection can minimize impacts to plants and animals in these areas, and preserve their viability as habitat.

### 7.4.5 Agricultural Land Resources

- The Comprehensive Plan contains a number of recommendations designed to protect agricultural land resources. Specifically, the Plan recommends coordination with State and County programs, support of State Agricultural Districts, development of a farmland





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protection plan, creation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee, land conservation techniques, zoning changes, rural development guidelines, and other programs that will help preserve agricultural land uses in the Town.

- The Comprehensive Plan contains a number of recommendations designed to promote the viability of agriculture. Specifically, the Plan recommends support for locally grown produce and other programs that will improve the viability of agriculture.

### **7.4.6 Aesthetic Resources**

- The Comprehensive Plan includes a number of recommendations to preserve and enhance the important aesthetic resources of the Town and Village, such as rural design guidelines and zoning revisions, the use of incentive zoning, enhanced development and streetscaping in the central business district, and by promoting the use of “gateways” that define entrances into the Town and Village.

### **7.4.7 Archaeological, Cultural, Historic Resources**

- The Comprehensive Plan recommends strategies aimed at protecting archaeologically, culturally, and historically sensitive areas in the Town and Village. Programs include land conservation techniques, zoning changes and rural design guidelines.

### **7.4.8 Open Space, Parks, and Recreation**

- The Comprehensive Plan targets important open space areas for protection/preservation.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends strategies aimed at protecting open space, parks, and recreational areas in the Town and Village.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends zoning changes to establish minimum green/open space for all non-residential and non-agricultural development.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town consider potential opportunities for owning or assisting with the operations and maintenance of Tuscarora State Park.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends developing a system of connecting greenways and multi-use trails that offer recreational opportunities, as well as improved connectivity between the downtown, the waterfront and the State Park.

### **7.4.9 Critical Environmental Areas**

- There are no designated critical environmental areas in the Town of Wilson.





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### **7.4.10 Utilities**

- The Comprehensive Plan recommends instituting water lateral restrictions to protect viable farmland from development pressures and to focus development to preferred growth areas. This will help preserve the rural character of the Town.

### **7.4.11 Transportation Resources**

- The Comprehensive Plan does not recommend any development patterns that would significantly alter transportation patterns or impact highway capacity in the Town.
- Transportation in the Town and Village is highly dependent upon the automobile. This Plan proposes to increase opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle transportation.

### **7.4.12 Energy**

- The Comprehensive Plan encourages sustainable (green) development and growth.

### **7.4.13 Noise and Odor**

- The Comprehensive Plan supports increased buffering of industrial and commercial uses to minimize potential impacts on non-industrial and non-commercial uses.

### **7.4.14 Public Health**

- The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

### **7.4.15 Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood**

- The Comprehensive Plan contains a number of provisions designed to protect the rural and agricultural character of the Town and Village. These include land conservation techniques, farmland protection measures, zoning changes, and rural design guidelines, guidance regarding placement and extension of utility infrastructure, and protection of important features.
- The Comprehensive Plan identifies areas adjacent to the Village of Wilson for increased residential density and for possible senior and multi-family housing.
- The Comprehensive Plan encourages non-retail commercial and light industrial development along the Route 425 corridor, in the Wilson Station area.
- The Comprehensive Plan encourages retail and other commercial development with enhanced aesthetic appearance in the Village central business district, in Wilson Station and in the Wilson Harbor area.





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- The Comprehensive Plan proposes the consideration of lateral restrictions within areas served by public water to preserve the rural/ agricultural character of the Town and minimize development pressure on viable farmland.
- Recommendations in this Plan will help manage growth and target it to appropriate areas, thereby minimizing negative impacts to the character of the Town.

### **7.5 Evaluation of Alternatives**

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, alternatives for helping the Town and Village achieve their goals and objectives were evaluated. These recommendations and implementation alternatives were evaluated for not only their desired results, but also for their potential impact to the environment, the needs of local residents, private property rights, quality of life, and the vitality of the community.

It must be noted that long-term recommendations have not been thoroughly evaluated in this section. These actions are optional, designed to be considered only when circumstances within the Town and/or Village indicate a need for more creative or aggressive techniques, for example, if the Town is seeing greater levels of growth pressure or where recommendations are not achieving the desired results.

The "No Action" alternative was considered. Under the "No Action" scenario, the Town and Village would not have a Comprehensive Plan document to guide growth and development, properly plan for the community's vision, protect important community and environmental features, and preserve the character of the area.

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will enable the Town and Village of Wilson to address issues of land and water resources; community character; aesthetic resources; environmental features; waterfront resources; plant and animal habitats; archaeological, cultural, and historic resources; open space, parks, and recreation; agriculture; economic development; utilities; and transportation issues in a more effective manner. It forms the basis for zoning and other changes to Town and Village regulations and helps guide future decisions regarding important issues such as infrastructure and public spending.





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The proposed Comprehensive Plan more effectively allows the Town and Village of Wilson to achieve their goals and vision, and provides greater protection to the environment than the continuance of present trends under the No-Action alternative.





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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A Summaries of Public Meetings

- Meeting Summary – March 15, 2010
- Meeting Summary – July 20, 2010

### *THE FOLLOWING ARE INCLUDED IN A SEPARATE DOCUMENT:*

### Appendix B Rural Development Guidelines

- Rural Development Guidelines
- Rural Guidelines – Preserving Rural Character
- Greenway Guide – Fitting in the Landscape
- Growing Greener – Conservation Subdivision Design

### Appendix C Hamlet Design Guidelines

- Hamlet Design Guidelines
- Building Form Guidelines
- Dark Sky Lighting Plan Guidelines
- Dark Sky Society – Good Lights
- Mixed Use Citizens Guide
- Brookhaven Hamlet Center Overlay District
- Clarence Hollow Overlay District
- Elma Center Overlay District
- Route 62 Eden Hamlet Overlay District

### Appendix D Access Management Principles

### Appendix E Agricultural Protection Regulations

- Town of Evans Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Town of Evans Agricultural and Open Space Zoning District
- Town of Evans Right –to-Farm Law Regulations
- Ag. And Farmland Protection programs



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## Appendix F Sample Design Standards for Commercial Development

- Town of Lockport Architectural and Design Review Code
- Town of Lockport Design Guidelines for Commercial Site Plans
- Town of Evans Draft Highland Derby Commercial Overlay District Regulations
- Town Law 261-b Incentive Zoning
- Types of Zoning Codes

## Appendix G Incentive Zoning

## Appendix H Water Quality Protection

- Cornell Cooperative Extension – “Your Septic System” Publication
- NYSDEC “Use Less Toxic Products” Publication
- Non-Point Source Pollution Flier – Things You Can Do To Prevent Stormwater Pollution
- The Clean Water Book (excerpts)

## Appendix I SEQR Environmental Review Documentation

- SEQR Lead Agency Notice and Full Environmental Assessment Form
- SEQR Negative Declaration