

DEVELOPMENT OPTION SCENARIOS

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The sites, planning strategies, and housing types that developers choose are governed by a series of factors including economics, governmental regulation, and the imagination (or lack thereof) of the developers and those reviewing their proposals. The long-term quality of life for the residents of Wakefield does not always set the standards for the development that takes place.

Having established a need for certain types of housing, and having documented existing patterns of development that have created a positive environment in many parts of Wakefield, the Housing Master Plan proposes four specific development scenarios to fulfill those needs while reinforcing the patterns that define Wakefield's character. Enhancing the quality of life in Wakefield while being realistic about economic and regulatory constraints is the goal of these proposals. Proposed changes to regulations and a list of programs to help overcome economic constraints follow in later sections of the Housing Master Plan.

Although these planning proposals are specifically tailored for their sites, they are intended to provide models for the development on a range of similar sites. For each site we have illustrated existing conditions. For the D1/D2 (Wiley Street) site the build-out allowable under current zoning is illustrated. The development proposals for all of the sites require some regulatory changes that are necessary in order to offer the strongest

possible planning solutions to a range of Wakefield needs. Density, defined by square footage of lot area per dwelling unit, is noted. Density classifications D1 - D4 allow comparisons to sites discussed in the Density and Neighborhood Studies portions of the Town Character section of this Master Plan and to Wakefield's Zoning Ordinance.

These models can be used to build a consensus around the enacting of changes in the Town's regulatory requirements. They can also provide physical models for development, suggesting the design and dimensional qualities that create strong communities balancing private and public good. The design approaches shown differ from much of the development that has taken place in Wakefield in recent years. However, these approaches have a lot in common with the traditional development that has given Wakefield its attractive small-town character, as well as progressive development in communities around the country that are tackling issues similar to those faced by Wakefield. These approaches are often called "smart growth" proposals in their emphasis on a comfortable pedestrian scale that leads to a reduction in regional sprawl.

Four detailed development scenarios, two on Wiley Street, one on North Avenue, and one at Colonial Point, are followed by additional development scenarios on other sites that are typical of those in Wakefield.

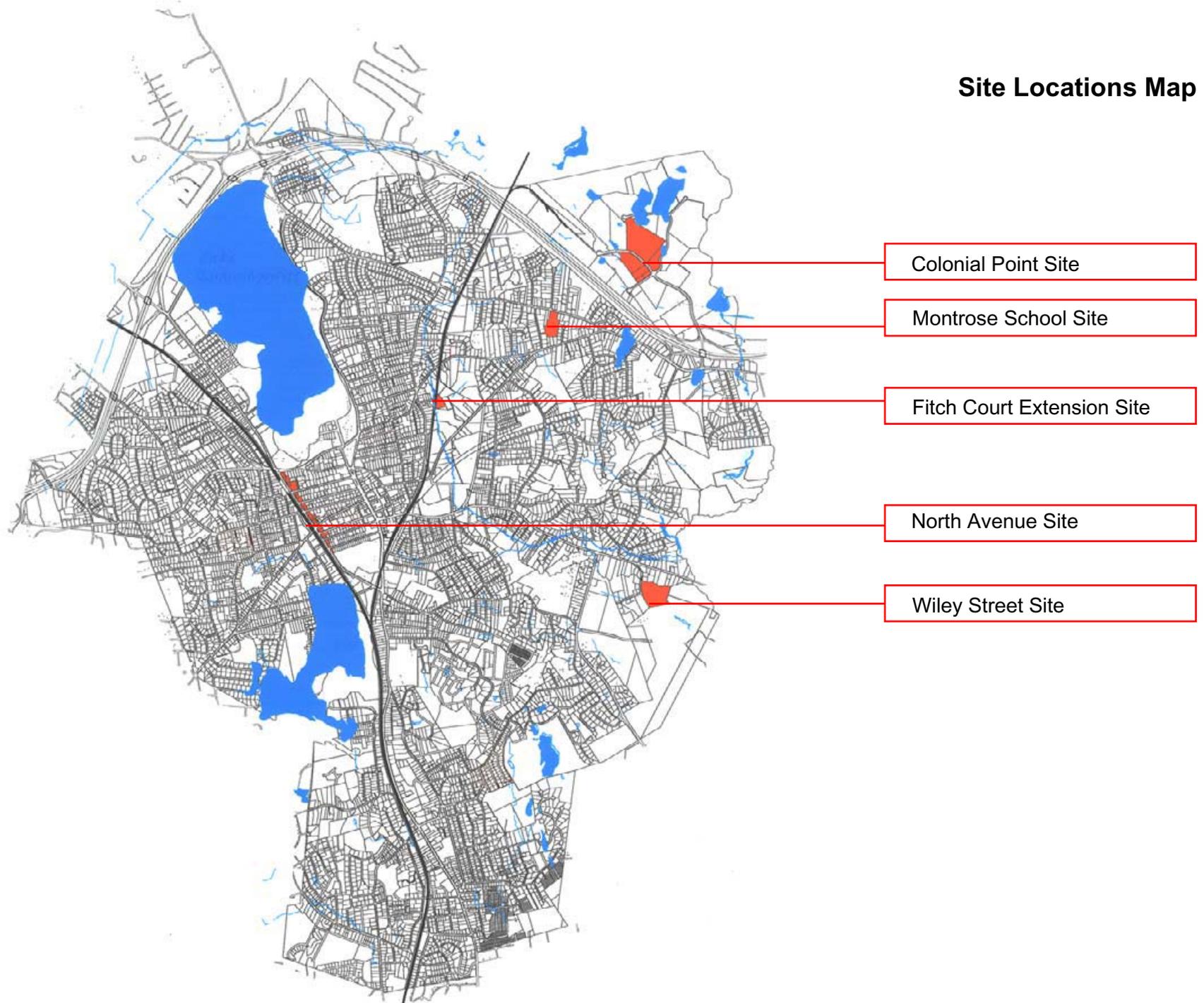


THE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN MODELS:

- D1 – a set of recommendations for a new single family cluster ordinance modeled on Conservation Subdivision Design or CSD, intended to replace the current Cluster bylaw;
- D2 – an attached single-family version of D1 that is meant to fit in well with existing neighborhoods and provide new affordable housing;
- D3 – a mixed use housing and retail concept modeled on traditional New England main street development and intended for use along North Avenue near the commuter rail station downtown, and on Main Street, both downtown and in Greenwood;
- D4 – a medium density, mid-rise model for additional development on the Colonial Point housing site in Edgewater Office Park, and perhaps at other locations that have yet to be identified.

The conceptual models have been designed to fit on specific sites in Wakefield. These sites are shown on the Site Locations Map. However, the models are more than specific site solutions. They are more generally intended as illustrations of design principles and planning approaches that should be implemented in Wakefield in order to direct and encourage private development toward the best interests of the Town.

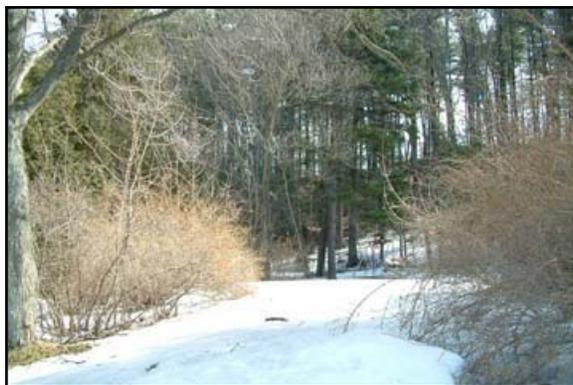
Site Locations Map





The Mill river provides an attractive open space towards which a development could be oriented if properly protected.

*Wiley Street site in winter:
Wakefield's wooded hillsides are natural assets that are well worth preserving.*



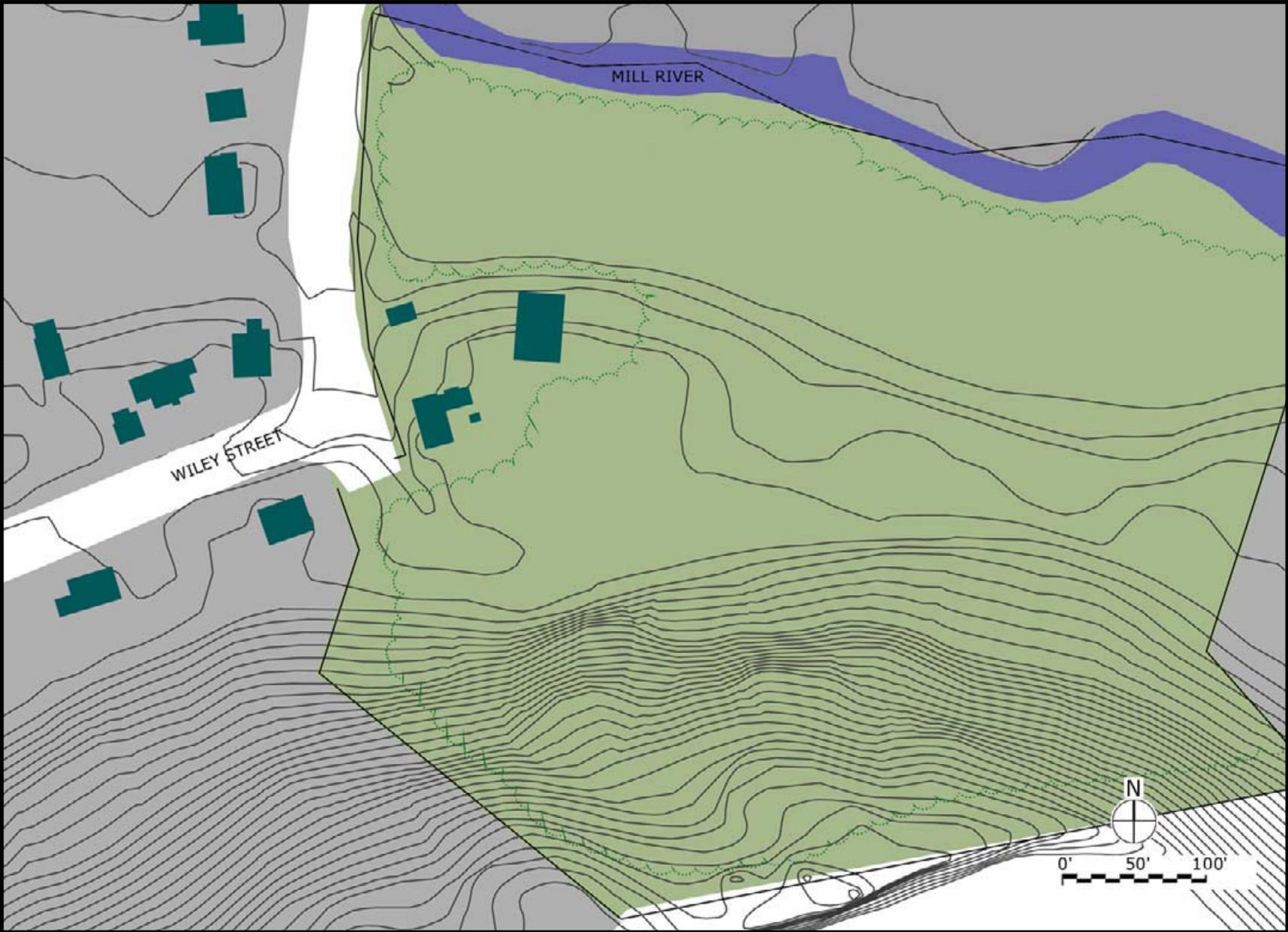
EXISTING CONDITIONS

The tract of land that the D1 concept model is illustrated on is an 8.5 acre parcel off Wiley Street in the East Side/Woodville neighborhood. The property is bounded by the Mill River to the north, Breakheart Reservation to the east, and the Vocational Technical High School ball fields to the south. Like many of Wakefield's undeveloped parcels, it is also dominated by both wetlands and steep hillside. Despite this, it had been targeted for development, and engineering plans had been developed and submitted for a twelve unit large lot subdivision. However, the MDC intervened and purchased the property, preserving it as open space.

This parcel was chosen for the design of the D1 concept model because it is an excellent example of the environmental and visual sensitivity of the remaining open spaces in Wakefield, sites that are at a high risk of being developed. At the same time, the illustrated D1 proposal is only conceptual because the site is now permanently protected. The choice to design for a permanently undevelopable site reinforces the point that the Master Plan is not actively proposing development on any sites in Wakefield. Rather, it is proposing best practices for development that others may propose, now and in the future.

Wiley Street existing conditions include:

- Connection to an existing residential street on one end, and connection to open space and the Mill River on the other sides.
- A limited zone of relatively flat, dry land.
- Steeply sloping areas on one side of the flatter area, developable with additional expense and with extensive clear cutting, blasting, and altering of the existing topography.
- Wetlands on the other side of the flatter area, offering scenic views as well as development constraints due to flooding and drainage concerns.



Wiley Street - Current Zoning

SITE DESCRIPTION

Site 24, Map 40
8.55 Acres, 372,506 sq.ft.
Zone – SR Single Residence



Houses scattered along a road often lack a comfortable sense of community and pedestrian scale.



Insensitive development on steeply sloping sites can result in damage to a once attractive landscape.

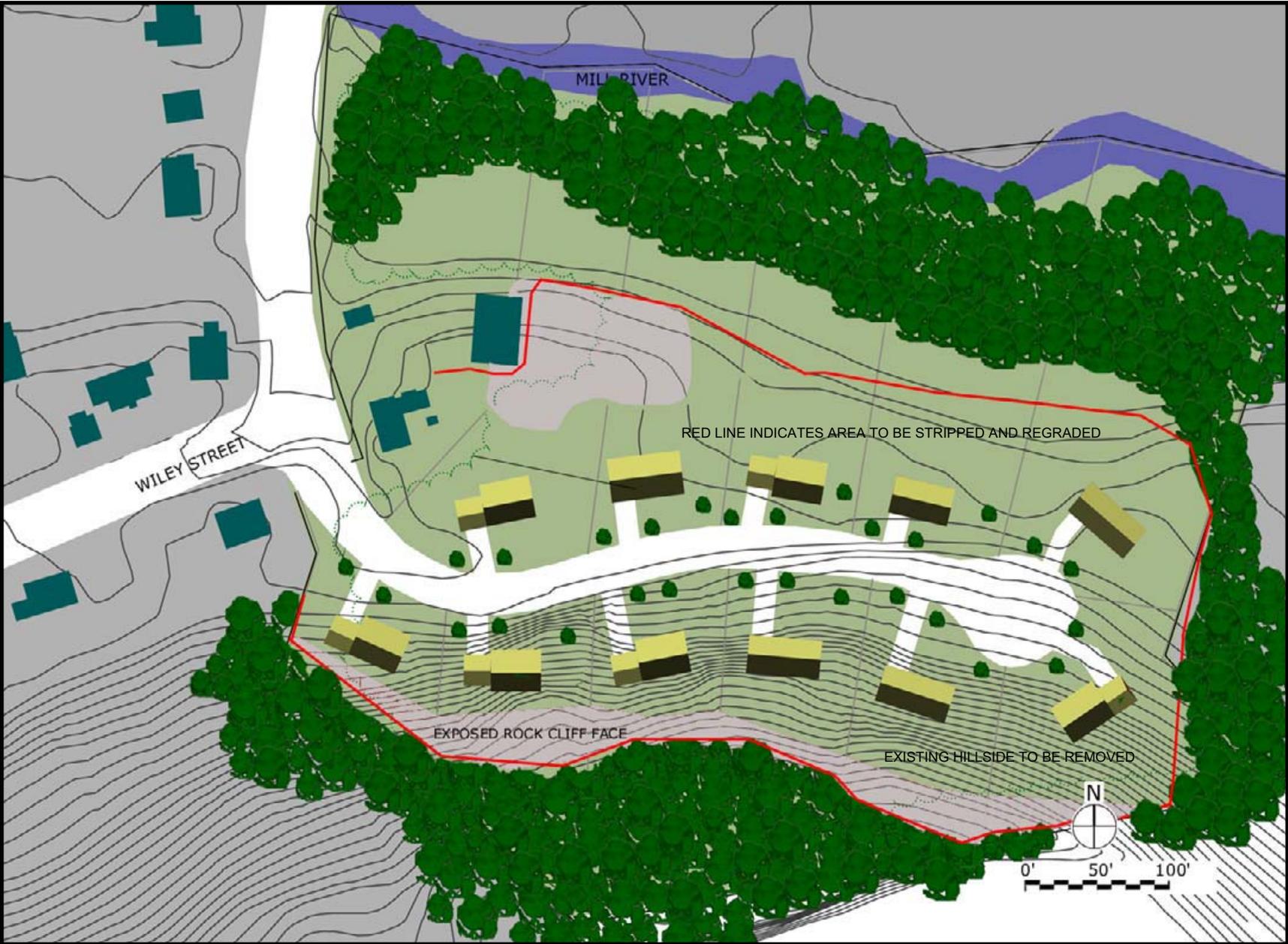
PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

New subdivision of single family lots between 12,516 and 43,000 sq. ft. as per developer's recent application to city under the current zoning requirements.

- Average lot 24,000 sq.ft.
- House footprint 2,000 sq.ft.+
2 – 3 car garage for each house.
- 1.4 units per (total) acre.
- Would require significant cut and fill to create level building sites.
Requires clear cutting of extensive portions of the site along with substantial blasting, removal of bedrock, and alteration of topography.
- Would require significant storm water retention and other wetlands engineering.

PUBLIC BENEFITS

- 12 new houses for buyers at upper income level.
- Tax revenue (offset by cost of municipal services).
- No public open space or affordability benefits provided other than paved cul-de-sac.





Large lot development requires clearing and regrading of extensive land areas.

Current zoning does not always encourage preserving landscape features.



IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS – LEGAL

- No change from current zoning required.
- Given the limited usable area between the flood zone and the steep slope, this site is inappropriate for large lot development. A slope ordinance would prevent the most environmentally damaging cut and fill on these kinds of sites. Changes in zoning requirements would encourage Conservation Subdivision Development instead of large lot development.

IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS – ECONOMIC

- Changing economic conditions affect desirability and feasibility of this kind of development proposal.
- Requirements for other development options change the economic context for subdivision development.

