

As you may have heard, the Town has hired a planning consultant to develop a master plan for downtown Wilton Center. The Planning and Zoning Commission is looking for wide ranging community input, more than just the usual input of the business owners in the area. They had mentioned specifically that they wanted to include younger users of the Center area.

Typical questions might be: What do you like about the Center? What is missing from the Center? How much time do you spend there a week? What stops you from shopping or spending time there? Would a bike share program be of any interest? How would you improve the marketing of the Center?

EXEC BOARD NOTES:

Infrastructure:

- Lack of pedestrian areas - nice to have a plaza near the shops, or a plaza by Tusk & Cup or Starbucks
 - Currently people sit on a strip of sidewalk facing parked cars which isn't ideal
 - Marly's plaza is nice
- More flowers?
- Playground? Place for young families to congregate
- Better utilizing the gazebo lawn and Schenk's
 - Where concerts?
 - There should be a go-to place
- Kind of forget shops are there because they're all set below sea level
- Movie theater?? Convert into a bowling alley, laser tag, escape room(s)
- Book store

Town Beautification:

- currently town is very plain
- Flowers, string lights between telephone poles lining the main road through town center, decorated benches
- pops of color
- example: at one point (maybe still I forget) Ridgefield had dog statues painted by local artists around different areas of town; there was another town that had sculptures designed by little kids in an annual contest (Stamford I think) - generally add beauty & fun & appeal & uniqueness
 - people like to walk around and look at these and then they also advertise local artists
 - A success in Wilton - having the scarecrows designed by each business during the month of October, that's so fun and definitely draws me to town
- some sort of open space with greenery & pretty places to sit/do homework/have events

Events:

- Better advertising: maybe a big billboard right where people drive by to enter, advertising the upcoming events
- big sign off route 7 by the bridge which says wilton town center?
- Crafts fair a few times a year, food trucks, jewelry sales from Local Soul, flea market, themed days
- Music events!! like bands playing around town, maybe on weekends
- Moving the open veggie mart/weekly farmers market from the historical society into town to increase traffic
- Bid on a Basket Festival or other themed festivals
- Weekly outdoor summer concerts at central location (like Westport, Ridgefield, Redding)

Bike share:

- Having difficulty imagining where people will bike, what designated and nice places are there?
- Seems like the trail people take into town just ends at some point

OVERVIEW:

We go into other town centers but no one comes into ours... :(

general issues: lack of organization and nothing that draws people (especially in comparison to other towns). food is expensive, nowhere to sit so people go elsewhere; hard to go from place to place bc things are very far away from each other (i.e. shenck's island)

- Also town is very low set - below route 7, we don't drive through it
- Orem's is the only place that people from other towns ever really go to
- People say they're going to "Westport" or "New Canaan" but they go to "stop n shop" or "tusk and cup" - it's the difference between a town that allows aimlessness and wandering vs going to specific locations because there's nothing to really allow you to wander in Wilton - no real space to hang out

STUDENT SENATE NOTES:

Town Center

- The Exec Board is meeting with a consultant who is revamping Wilton Town Center.
 - don't have interesting stores or things to do
 - people rather drive extra 10 min to nearby towns
 - Everyone has the same mindset that they would rather go to ridgefield and westport - no other town has the mindset that they want to go to wilton
 - stores typically aren't open for more than a few years
 - not space targeted towards teens
 - Targeting it more towards teens
- What do you like about the Center? What is missing from the Center? How much time do you spend there a week? What stops you from shopping or spending time there? Would a bike share program be of any interest? How would you improve the marketing of the Center?

- town center is low and not on main road so people don't see
- a lot of just office space - change?
- other towns you can go and find random places to go - you don't necessarily need an agenda about what you're going to do
- What do people want to see?
 - more clothing stores
 - Less office space - more fun things to do
 - More small town feel - less small city field
 - Having little fun things around the town
 - Exciting factors
 - Having more common and open seating areas
 - open grassy areas
 - events in town/advertising
 - music at restaurants
 - crafts fairs
 - sidewalk sales
 - Farmers markets
 - decorating light posts for holidays/stores decorate
 - Schnecks island
 - boring, nothing to do and it's set back
 - nicely painted benches?
 - swings
 - only small path
 - Maintenance - making it look nicer
 - Not many people know about it
 - our town is ugly
 - town beautification
 - Beauty = more people and more appealing
 - people only enjoy river if on norwalk river
 - bike route next to river around town
 - maker fair outside
 - things in wilton library parking lot
 - people like trunk or treat
 - sidewalk art
 - more sidewalks in wilton in general
 - community e-bike system?
 - runners and walkers wouldn't like more bikers in norwalk river trail
 - most people in wilton already have bikes
 - winter festival
 - ice sculptures
 - need something connecting town and norwalk river trail
 - more continuity with trail
 - Making things more natural

- sculptures around town
- More flowers and nature
- Coin fountain
- Better lighting at night
- String lights - fairies
- Lanterns - fun lighting
- Making it more open and more approachable
- Open up the reservoir
- Outdoor art exhibition
- Snowman competition - different shops and businesses
- Adding stores that are unique to only Wilton, by adding these stores it may help bring people from other towns in. Doing this may also help boost other businesses (people going out to dinner, etc.)