



City of Middletown

Department of Planning, Conservation & Development

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Middletown, CT 06457
www.MiddletownPlanning.com

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Middletown Planning & Zoning Commission

FROM: Marek Kozikowski, AICP, City Planner 

DATE: June 22, 2021

RE: **CGS 8-24 Referral (GS 8-24 2021-13)**
Acquisition of Land for Open Space and Passive Recreation
South Main Street- Majestic Oaks- Wilson Property

Proposal

The City of Middletown submitted a request for a favorable report for the acquisition of property totaling 83.2 acres located on the east side of South Main Street in the R-45 zone pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 8-24.

Property

The Majestic Oaks- Wilson Property ("the Property") is located directly west from the Guida Farm Conservation Area ("Guida") and is located within the Guida Farm Greenway 2020 Middletown Plan of Conservation and Development. Guida is a 99 ac open space preserve containing open fields, watercourses, wooded areas and an extensive passive recreational trail network. Together with area owned by the Middlesex Land Trust, this purchase would create a preserve close to 200 acres in Middletown. The Property is also adjacent to two undeveloped and forested properties located in Durham which total another 90 acres of unprotected open space. Ten acres of the subject property is located in Durham.

The Property provides opportunities for high-quality, passive recreational uses including but not limited to hiking, horseback riding, orienteering, birdwatching, letterboxing, and cross country skiing. The property has sufficient frontage on South Main Street (Route 17) to provide an off street parking lot for passive recreational users. The property has possible opportunities to connect to and extend the existing trail network at the Guida Farm Conservation area, which is an existing 99 ac open space preserve owned by the City of Middletown. Possible connections could be made using an existing access road to the City water tower. If connections cannot be made, the property itself has opportunities to provide its own trail network.

The property is in a core forest area. The vegetative growth in the understory includes but is not limited to ferns, moss, phragmites, great bulrush (*Scirpus calidus*), pryoia, and wildflowers that include yarrow, butter and eggs, clover and wild germanium. There are low growing vines, saplings, and shrubs that include winterberry, elderberry, and blackberry bushes. The tree

canopy consists of many older oak trees with at least at least 1.5-4' in diameter. Other tree species identified were birch, white birch, hickory black cherry and maple. The property provides very clear and open view to the west where Powder Ridge is visible. The ridgeline is visible in the distance.

While the Eastern Border fault itself is east of Guida, there are outcrops of the rocks that formed from the pebbles and cobbles tumbling down as the central part of the state formed into a major rift valley. These conglomerate outcrops are visible at Guida, east of Coleman Road, and where Maple Shade Road takes a sudden bend. Loose rocks of this type are also frequently found. It is likely that outcrops are located on the property but with much of the property being overgrown, underlying rocks are not visible.

In 2011 the Planning and Zoning Commission approved a preliminary 31 lot subdivision that included a new cul de sac road and conservation easement area on the subject property.

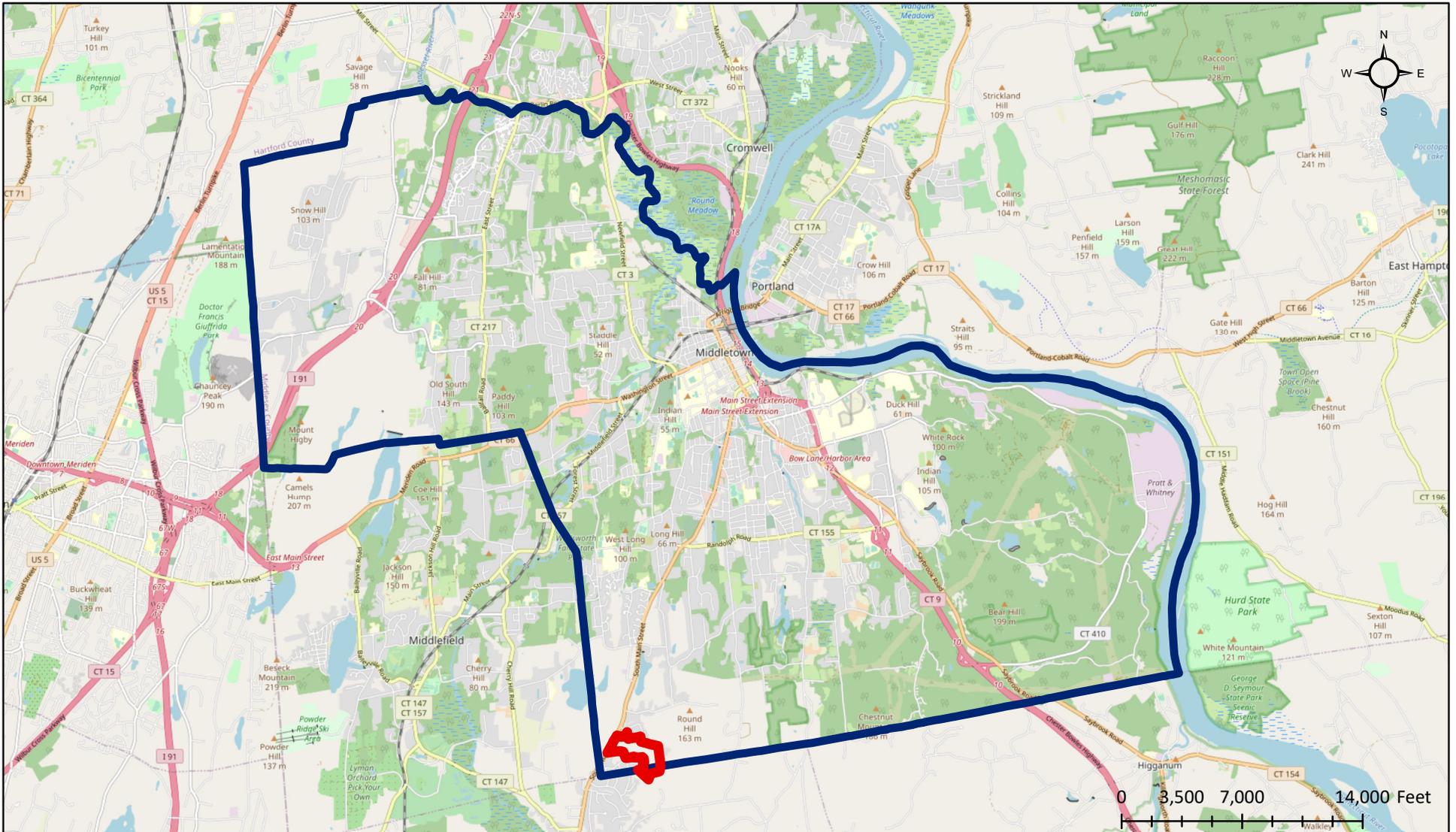
OSWA Grant

Through PCD Staff and the Commission on Conservation and Agriculture, the city submitted an Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) Grant application to the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). A grant of \$372,000 was awarded to the City for this acquisition pending verification of compliance with prior OSWA grant funded acquisition. Compliance reports were submitted and the City is awaiting a response from DEEP.

2020 Plan of Conservation and Development

The acquisition is consistent with the 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development in the following ways:

- Supports the goal to integrate parks, trails, and open spaces into an integrated unified green corridor system as it will protect and contribute nearly 83 acres to the Guida Farms Greenway.
- Supports the goal to preserving natural resources and open spaces, which includes of matured forested land containing a wetlands, small water bodies and vernal pools. The property ranked highly by the Open Space Acquisition Committee of the Commission on Conservation and Agriculture.
- Supports the goal of protecting and use of prime agricultural land as vast majority of the property has prime farmland soils and statewide important farmland soils.



Majestic Oaks- Wilson Property Overall Municipal Map

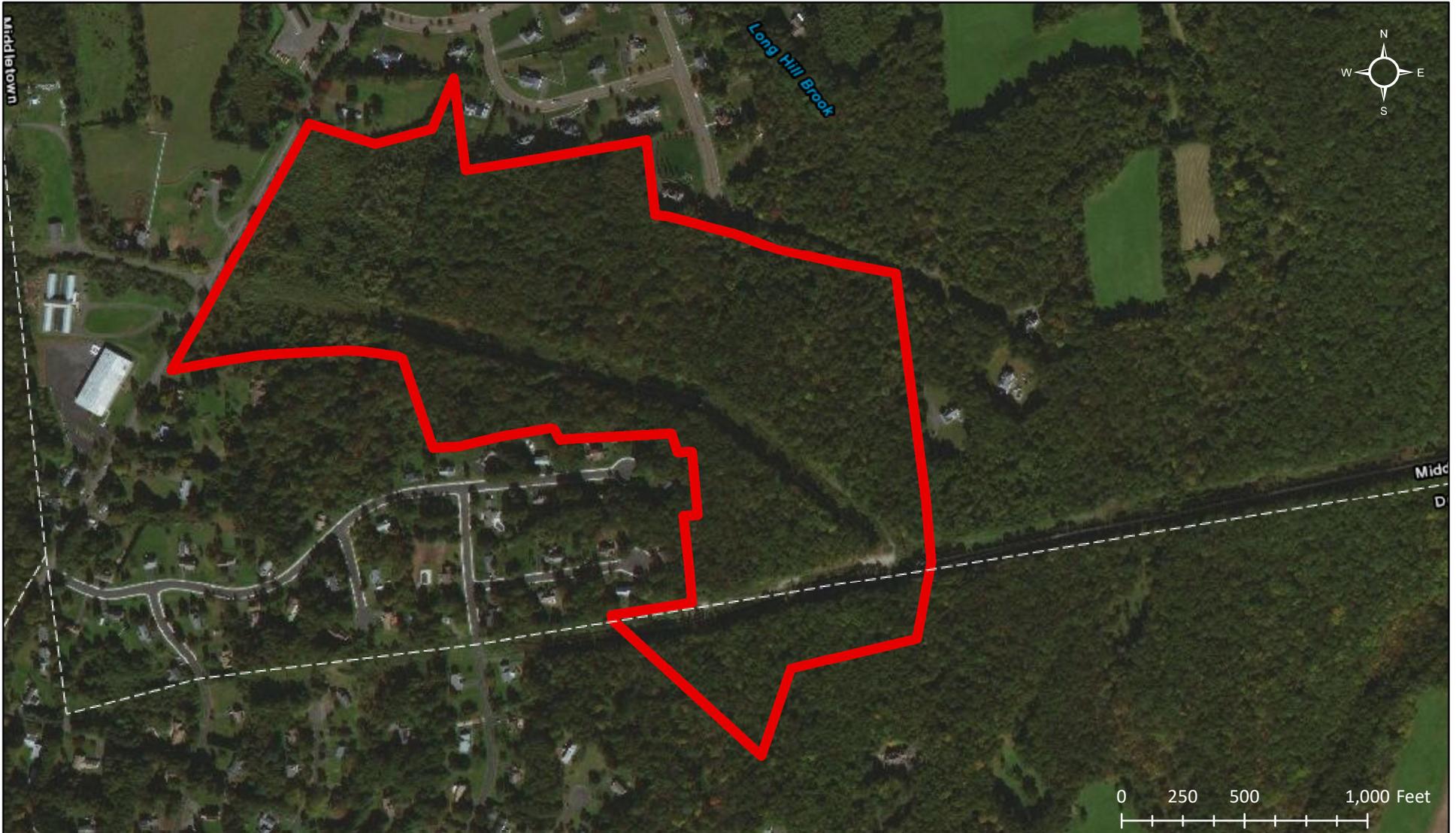
City of Middletown, CT

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June 2020

-  Majestic Oaks - Wilson Property
-  Municipal Boundary

Source:
(c) OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA



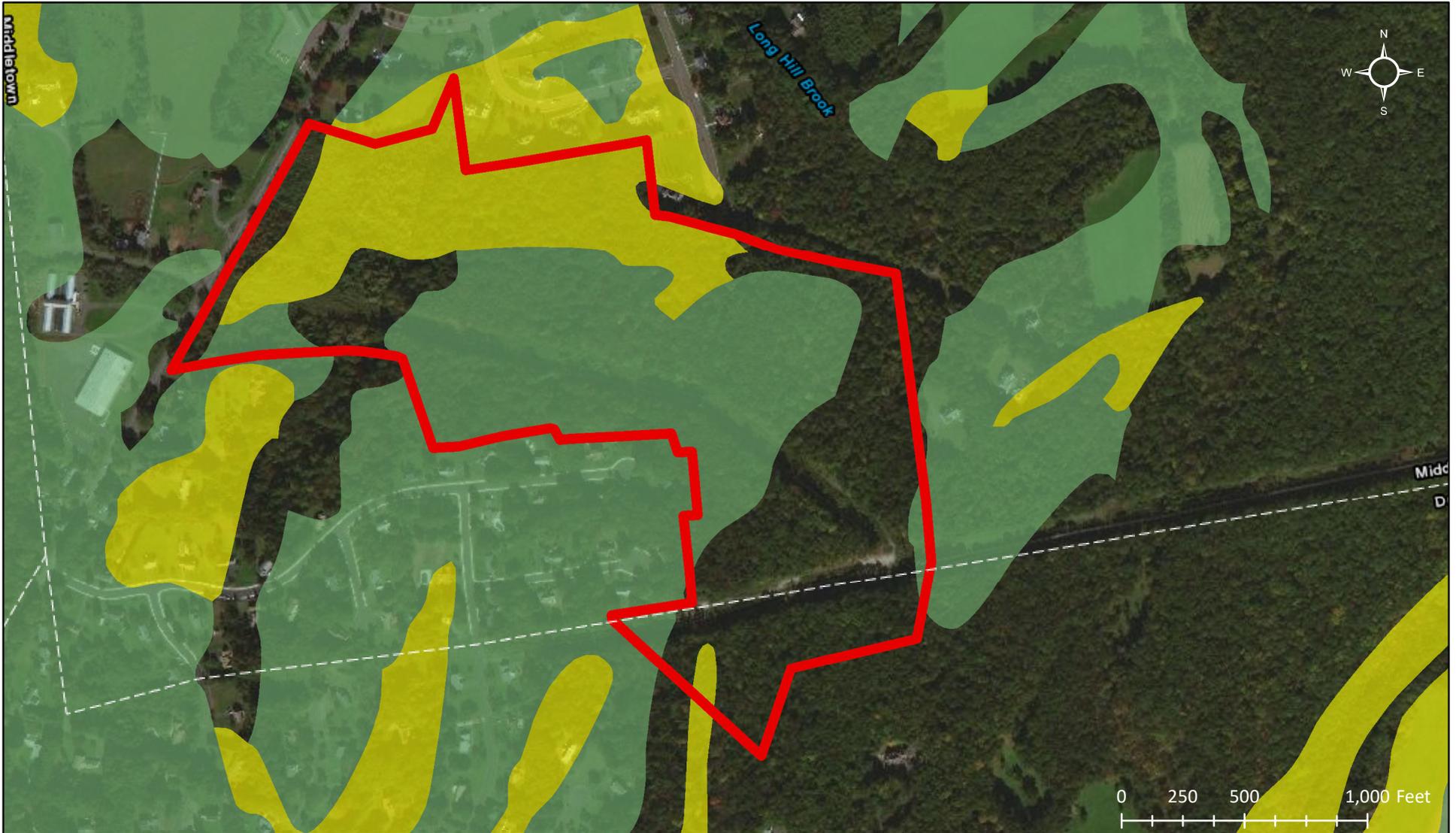
**Majestic Oaks- Wilson Property
Aerial Imagery Ortho-photo Map**

Property Boundary

 Majestic Oaks - Wilson Property

**City of Middletown, CT
Department of Planning, Conservation & Development
June 2020**

Source:
ESRI, Maxar, Geo Eye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Aibus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community,
ESRI, HERE, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap Contributors, and the GIS user community.



Farmland Soils

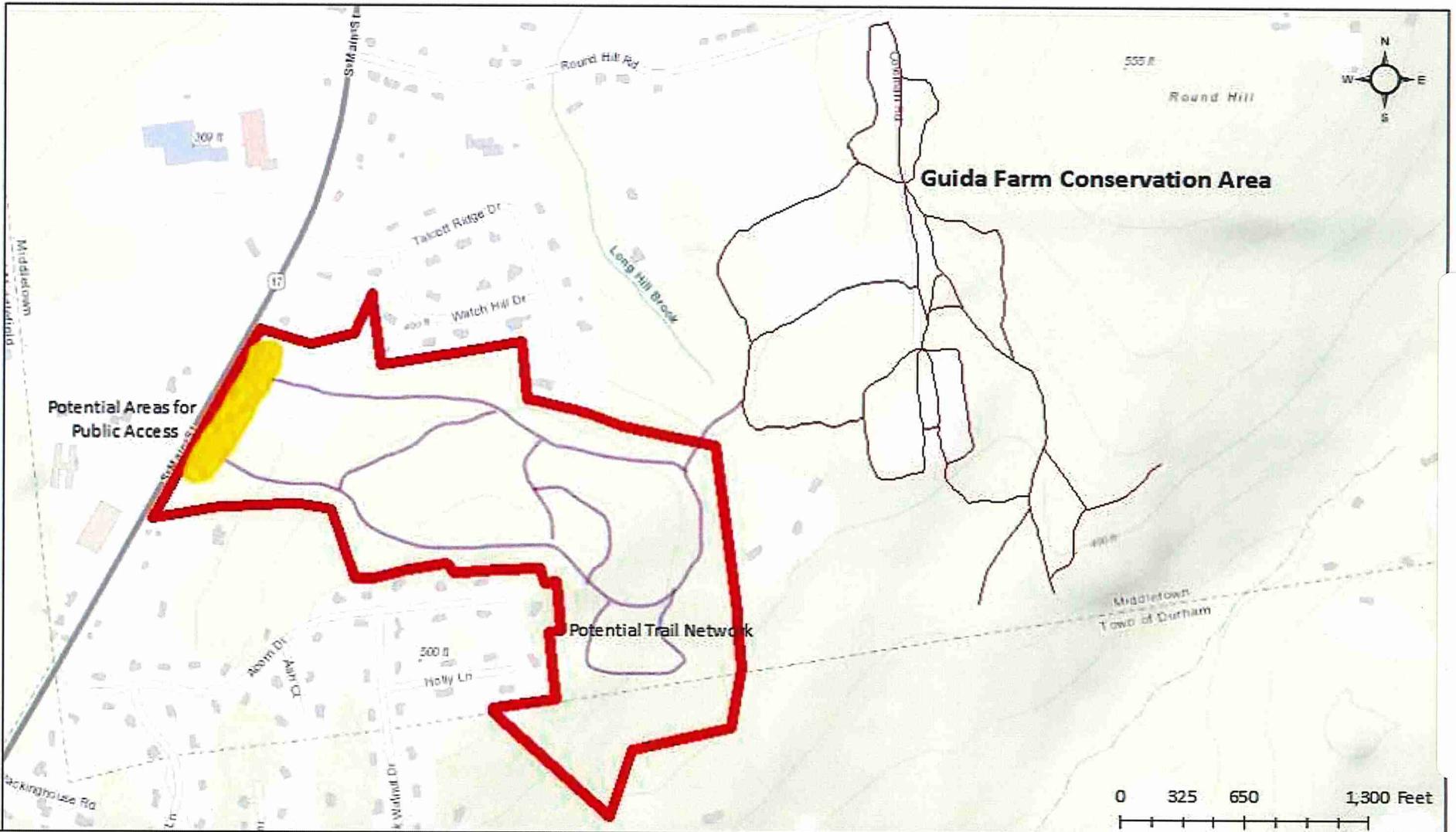
- Prime Farmland Soils
- Statewide Important Farmland Soils
- Locally Important Farmland Soils
- Majestic Oaks - Wilson Property

**Majestic Oaks- Wilson Property
Farmland Soils Map**

**City of Middletown, CT
Department of Planning, Conservation & Development
June 2020**

Source:
Farmland Soils interpretation for the Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database for the State of Connecticut.
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 03.22.2007

Source:
ESRI, Maxar, Geo Eye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Aibus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community,
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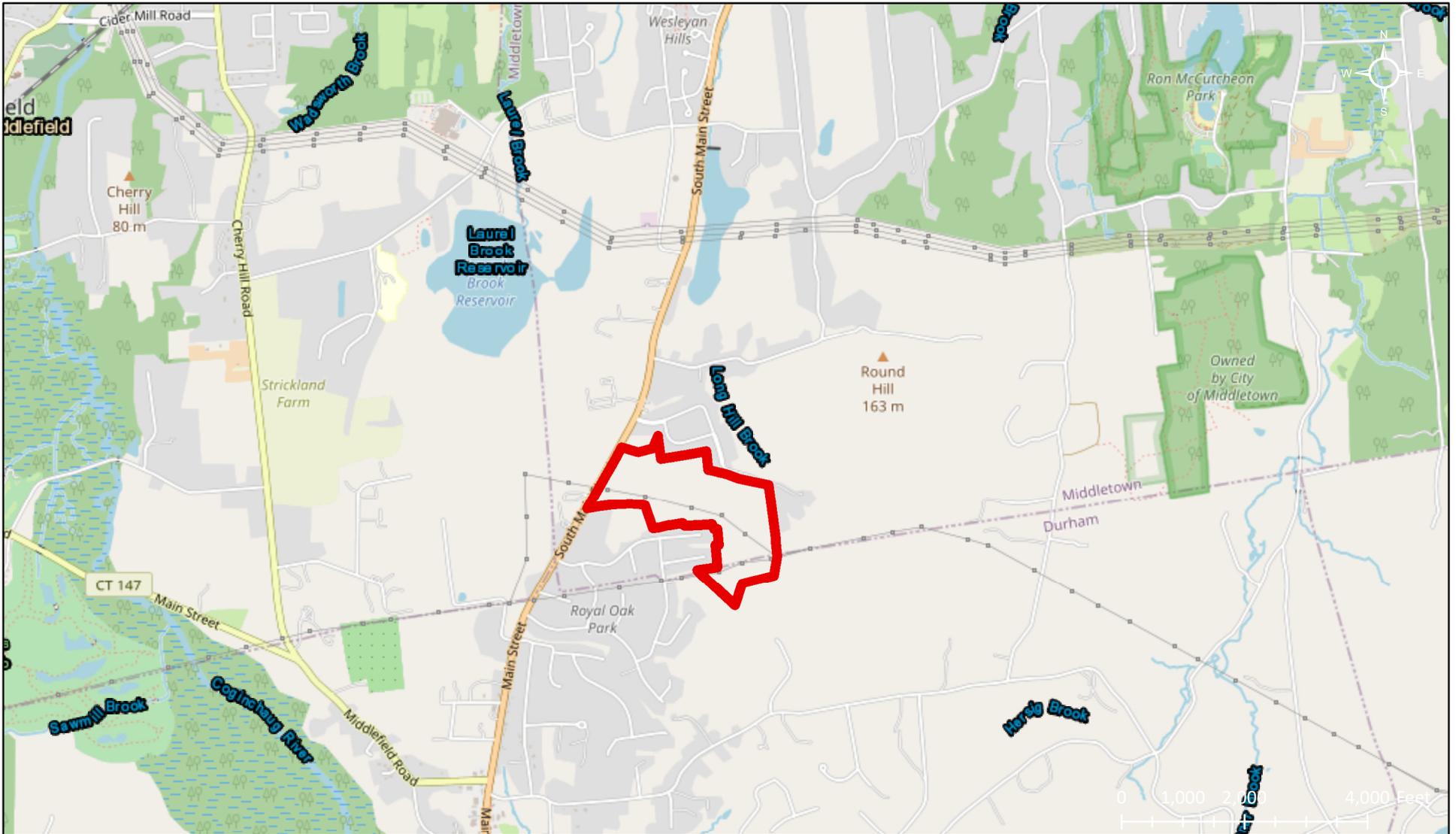


**Majestic Oaks- Wilson Property
Potential Public Access and Recreational Resources Map**

**City of Middletown, CT
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June 2020**

- Guida Farm Conservation Area Trail Network
- ▭ Majestic Oaks - Wilson Property

Source:
ESRI, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBraz, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community.



**Majestic Oaks- Wilson Property
Road Feature Map**

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Property Boundary

 Majestic Oaks - Wilson Property

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