

**Branchville TOD  
Report of Meeting  
Task Force Meeting #8  
6/7/16**

**Attending**

Rudy Marconi (First Selectman), Jon Chew (WestCOG), Francisco Gomes (FHI), Dave Goldenberg (Resident), Julia Pemberton (Redding), Alex Karsanidi (Ridgefield EDC), Gene Nazarro (Property Owner), Magdalena Fincham (Resident), Betty Brosius (Town Planner), Joanne Meder (Incoming Town Planner), Michael Andreana (Pullman & Comley)

**Discussion**

Francisco Gomes of FHI led the discussion and provided an overview of the agenda. Francisco began by reviewing Tighe & Bond's Wastewater Collection and Infrastructure Analysis. Francisco highlighted the report's findings noting that the use of the little league field would only accommodate 7,000 gallons per day of wastewater flow. This assessment was based upon soil and percolation test data provided by Joe Ancona at the previous task force meeting. Tighe & Bond's initial assessment of the ball field site was promising and suggested a much higher treatment capacity (approximately 50,000 gpd) if pretreatment for nitrogen levels was provided. Further analysis of the site with the soil and percolation data revealed that travel time for effluent from the leaching area to the Cooper Brook is insufficient (less than 21 days). Given the limitation of 7,000 gallons per day, pretreatment of waste would not be necessary; a conventional community system with privately owned septic tanks and a common leaching area at the ballfield would be the recommended approach. With a 7,000 gpd treatment limit, development would be limited to approximately 60 two-bedroom units.

Michael Andreana of Pullman & Comley spoke about the State's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) legislation and the opportunities that it might present to Branchville. Michael emphasized that the creation of a TIF would potentially incentive development and revenue generated by additional property tax within the district could be directed towards infrastructure enhancements or towards developers and private property owners. Ms. Meder asked if the allocation could be changed from year to year, Michael responded that the terms are fixed at the beginning. Mr. Karsanidi asked what the opposition would be to a TIF, Michael responded that it can be political and that residents and voters could oppose giving back any portion of tax revenue. Mr. Nazarro asked how project revenues are determined, Michael responded that an analysis is typically performed for proposed developments to determine the potential assessed value of the development. Michael also stated that it is usually best to have a prospective developer in place prior to the implementation of a TIF district, he also stated that it would be possible to establish the "framework" of a TIF and get many of the elements in place prior to implementation of a TIF.

Francisco reviewed the preferred development scenario and explained that the preferred scenario was based upon public input via the charrette, survey, stakeholder meetings, and task force meetings. Francisco explained that the development scenario is broken into multiple development "blocks" that would allow development in smaller pieces that is compatible with existing and future development. The development scenario seeks to maximize housing choice, enhance pedestrian circulation and access to the train station, provides for a mixture of building uses, and manages parking while meeting parking demand. Francisco noted that a full build-out of the preferred development scenario would require the

provision of sewer service in the project area. The preferred scenario would accommodate up to 274 townhouse units, 217 apartment units, and 68,000 sf of commercial space at densities that would allow the creation of an Incentive Housing Zone assuming sewer service were provided. Francisco said that it may be feasible to target a core area of development near the ball field that could be serviced by a community septic system at that location, but that it would likely not be feasible to accommodate development from the east side of Route 7 with a community system at that site.

Francisco said that the next steps for the development scenario are to develop architectural prototypes and styles that would be recommended for zoning and design guidelines. Sam Gardner from GWG architects, a member of the project team, is working on that and is expected to have that content available soon.

Francisco provided an overview of the market analysis preliminary findings conducted by AMS. As expected the initial analysis suggests that residential development is most feasible for Branchville in addition to a limited amount of retail/restaurant (fast casual) development. The office market is weak although it was noted by Ms. Fincham that quality office space is hard to find in Ridgefield. Francisco said that the preferred development scenario is compatible with the initial findings of the market analysis. Francisco reminded Task Force members that AMS had been reaching out to property owners in the area to conduct interviews and that their cooperation in this effort would be beneficial.

Francisco provided an update, supplied by Town Engineer Charlie Fisher, that the Portland Avenue Bridge is eligible for an 80% federal match for reconstruction. Reconstruction of the bridge at a new location across from Old Town Road would be eligible for the funding. The project would cost approximately \$4.3 million. Mr. Fisher is in the process of coordinating with CT DOT to explore options and next steps for a funding request.

The next task force meeting is scheduled for early September, date to be determined. Francisco will email the task force regarding potential meeting times and will distribute project content as it is developed via email prior to the next meeting.

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