

Branchville

Transit Oriented Development Plan Existing Conditions Summary

6/30/16



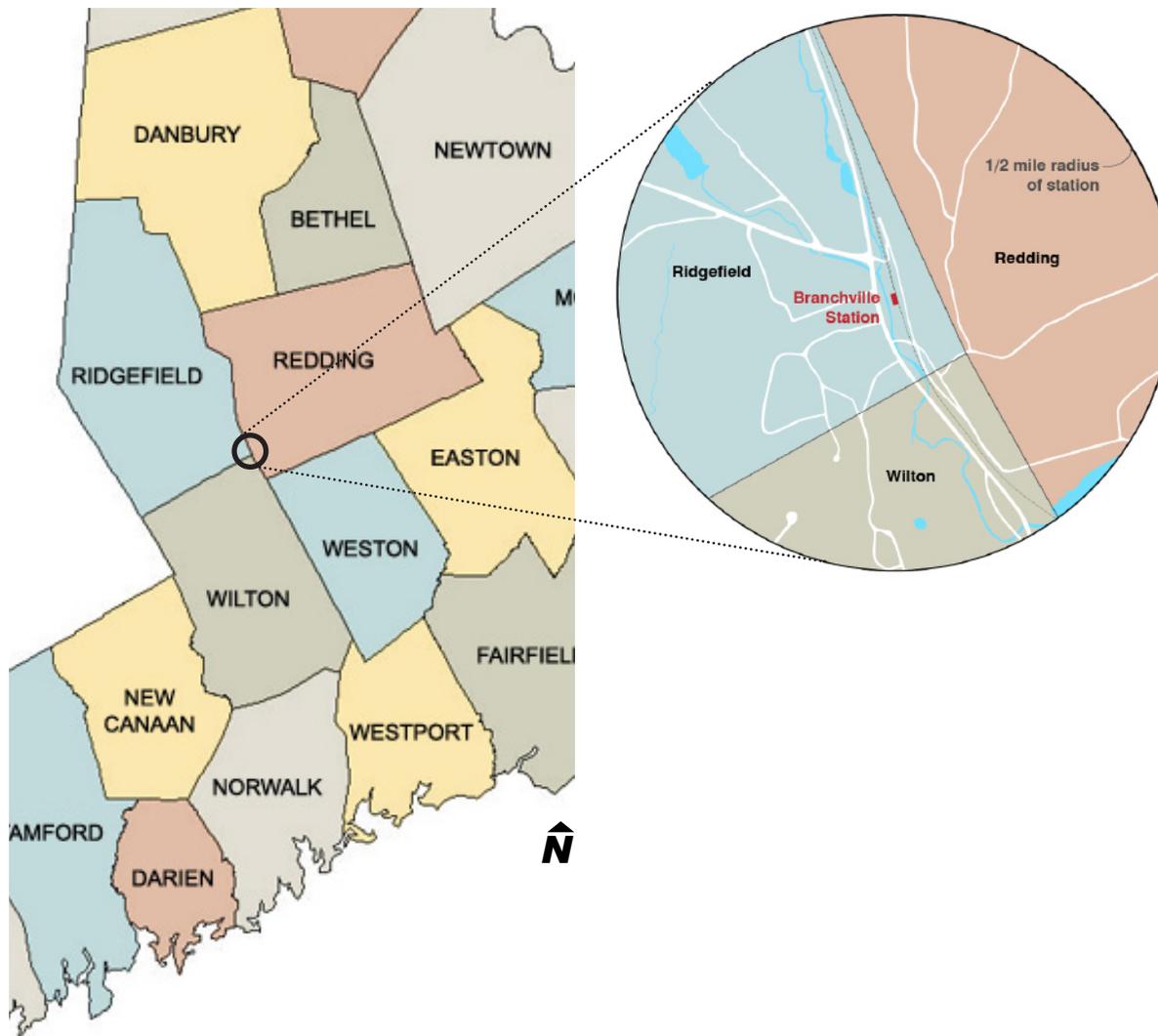
The Branchville Study Area

Branchville is located in the southeast corner of Ridgefield adjacent to the Towns of Redding and Wilton. The study area for this plan is within a half-mile radius of Branchville Station, with most of the efforts being focused within Ridgefield and areas in close proximity of the station. The half-mile station radius represents a typical study area for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plans, as this represents the area that is typically accessible within walking distance of a station. Due to the local topography and limited roadway network, the potential development area for Branchville is closer in proximity to the station than the half-mile extent.

Comprehensive Review of Existing Conditions

This existing conditions report documents multiple characteristics of the study area that are relevant to the planning for Transit Oriented Development in Branchville. These topic areas include:

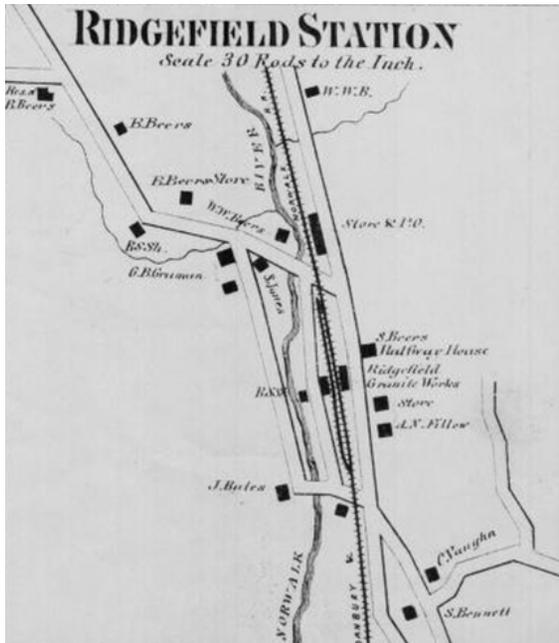
- Historic Resources
- Land Use
- Topography & Wetland Soils
- Flood Zones
- Hazardous Materials
- Threatened & Endangered Species
- Zoning
- Parcel Analysis
- Utility Infrastructure
- Transportation System
- Market Analysis



Historic Resources

History of Branchville

In the early 19th century, the southwest corner of Ridgefield, the area now known as Branchville, was largely rural. The Old Sugar Hollow Turnpike, a main highway that stretched from near the Danbury line south into Wilton, ran through the area connecting it with communities to the north and south; a segment of this alignment survives in the center of Branchville as West Branchville Road. In 1852, new access was provided to the area with the arrival of the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad. The new rail line paralleled the turnpike to the west as it traveled through Branchville. A passenger waiting room and ticket office were established in the home of Sherman Beers proximate to the tracks and the newly established station stop was termed Ridgefield Station. Residents who lived elsewhere in Ridgefield traveled to and from the new station by horse and buggy.



A.H. Beers, Map of Ridgefield Station, 1867

Source: Redding Historical Society

With the arrival of the railroad at mid-century, the character of the quiet community changed. Through the course of the second half of the 19th century, a small bustling town grew up in Branchville. Industry included a machinery factory and a quarry, the Ridgefield Granite Works. Both raw materials and finished goods could be shipped along the railroad to the port in Norwalk where they were loaded on ships to New York City. In addition, Branchville resident Abijiha Fallow established a mica mine which attracted geologists and mining companies to the area. As industry grew in Branchville, so too did services to support the workers and their families. An 1867 map shows the Branchville Granite Works, three stores, a halfway house, a post office and a collection of residences.

In 1870, the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad built a branch line from Branchville to the village of Ridgefield. At this time, the name of the station in Branchville was changed from the Ridgefield Station to the Branchville Station, reflecting its location at the end of the branch line. Passenger service to Ridgefield ran until 1925, while freight service on the branch line continued until 1964.

In the 1920's, Route 7 (Ethan Allen Highway) replaced the Old Sugar Hollow Turnpike as the primary vehicular thoroughfare. Commercial development sprung up along the new roadway, including Ancona's Grocery. Joseph Ancona emigrated from Sicily in 1912 with his father and brothers. They worked in the Gilbert & Bennett wire factory to the south of Branchville during World War I. Ancona opened his general store in 1920 with a soda fountain, dry goods, groceries, and a small gas pump, living in an apartment above the commercial space. He then expanded his business to include a liquor store, and in 1949 constructed a brick building to house a hardware store to the north of the grocery store at 51 Ethan Allen Highway. In the first half of the twentieth century, residential buildings were constructed along the side streets off of Ethan Allen Highway, such as Park Lane and Florida Road.

Several commercial establishments were constructed on the west side of Ethan Allen Highway south of Wilridge Road in the latter half of the twentieth century, thereby extending the commercial development beyond the Ancona block. When the hardware store wasn't successful, Ancona's Grocery moved from their original location north to the hardware store building at 51 Ethan Allen Highway. While the Ancona Grocery has closed, and the liquor store has moved to a parcel off of Branchville Road, the buildings that originally housed Ancona's Grocery and the Hardware Store remain and continue to serve commercial functions.

Buildings within the Project Focus Area

Research was undertaken at the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office in September 2015 to identify properties within the project's focus area that may be listed in the State or National Registers of Historic Places. One property within the focus area was identified as listed in the National Register. The Branchville Railroad Tenement is located at 14 West Branchville Road, south of the railroad station, near the intersection of West Branchville Road and Portland Avenue. The two-story, three bay wooden structure was constructed in the in 1850's as a boarding house for immigrants brought in to construct the Danbury-Norwalk Railroad. It is the only known building of this type in the town of Ridgefield and one of Branchville's few remaining Victorian Vernacular commercial structures. In the 1880's, the building's owner, Abijah Fallow, expanded the building to the north, added a two-story Victorian veranda on the building's west side, and renovated the interior in order to convert the property to a hotel. In 1905, the tenement was purchased by Italian Immigrant Pasquale DeBinigno who added a wing to the south and converted the structure to a three-family house with a saloon and grocery store on the ground level. The tenement was listed in the National Register in 1982. No additional properties within the focus area are listed in the State or National Registers. The J. Alden Weir Farm, also listed in the National Register,

Implications for Development

Federal, state and local regulations may guide changes to or the demolition of historic properties within the Branchville TOD focus area. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies consider effects to properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places when planning for their projects. In the event that federal funds are used for the implementation of the Branchville TOD Study, consultation would be required with the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office to determine if there are adverse effects to historic properties. This would include effects to the National Register-listed Branchville Railroad Tenement, as well as other properties that could be determined eligible for the National Register. In addition, federally-funded transportation improvements, such as the replacement of the Portland Avenue or Branchville Road Bridges, would require an evaluation of the use of historic properties in accordance with Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act.

In addition to federal historic preservation regulations, the municipalities each have their own regulations that pertain to the treatment of historic properties. There are no local historic districts within the project focus area and thus alterations to buildings within this area are not restricted, however there are specific procedures which guide demolition. In the Town of Ridgefield, the Building Department requires that applicants for demolition permits for all buildings send a certified letter to the Ridgefield Historical Society and the Ridgefield Historic District Commission notifying them of the demolition. The Town of Wilton has a 90-day demolition delay which the Wilton Historic District and Historic Property Commission may impose on the demolition of a property they determine has historic significance. Similarly, the Town of Redding has a 180-day demolition delay for properties the Demolition Delay Committee determines have historic value. Compliance with these regulations would be required for any demolition resulting from the implementation of the Branchville TOD Study. It is possible to halt demolition of a property listed in, or under consideration for, listing in the National Register through a provision under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act.



Historic Postcard of Branchville Railroad Station
Source: Redding Historical Society



Branchville Railroad Station
Source: FHI



Branchville Railroad Tenement (DeBenigno's Store), 1905
Source: Redding Historical Society



Branchville Railroad Tenement, 14 West Branchville Road
Source: FHI 2015



Ancona's Grocery, 41-49 Ethan Allen Highway
Source: Ridgefield Historical Society



39, 41-49, and 51 Ethan Allen Highway
Source: FHI 2015

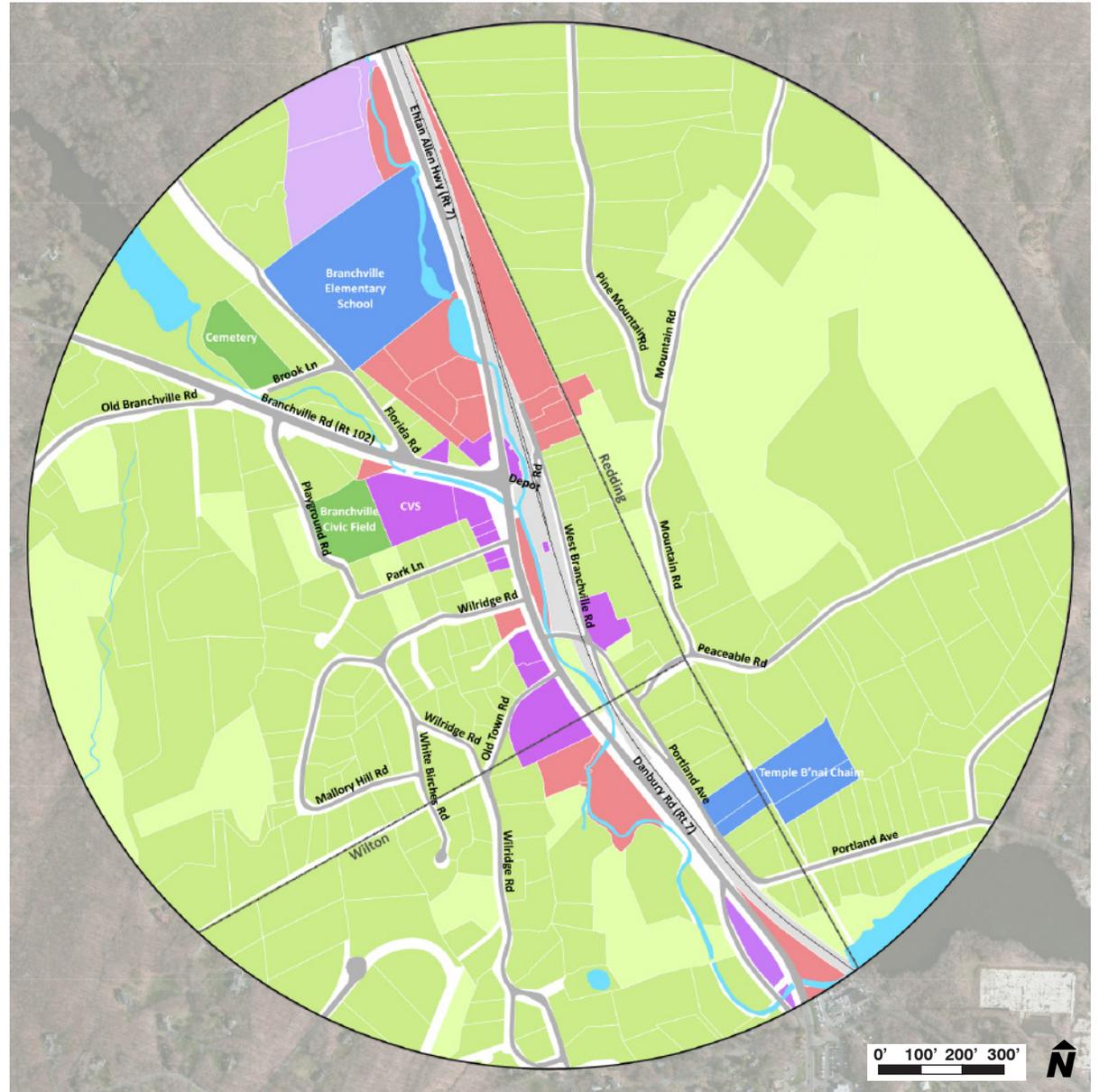
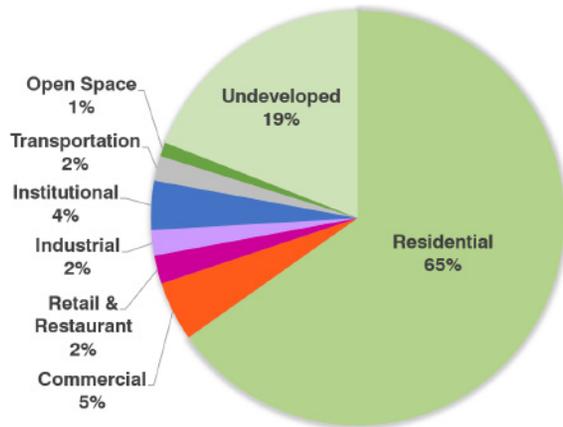
Land Use

The Branchville study area is largely comprised of low density residential development and undeveloped land in Ridgefield, Redding and Wilton. Commercial, retail and restaurant uses are primarily located along Route 7 and Branchville Road and at the northern end of West Branchville Road.

Institutional land uses in the area include Branchville Elementary School on Florida Road and Temple B'nai Chaim on Portland Avenue.

There are two open space parcels in the study area, a cemetery located on Brook Lane and a privately owned little league baseball field (Branchville Civic Field) located on Playground Road.

Industrial land uses are located on two sites north of Branchville Elementary School.



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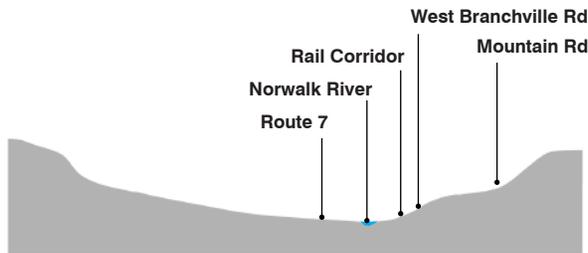
Land Use

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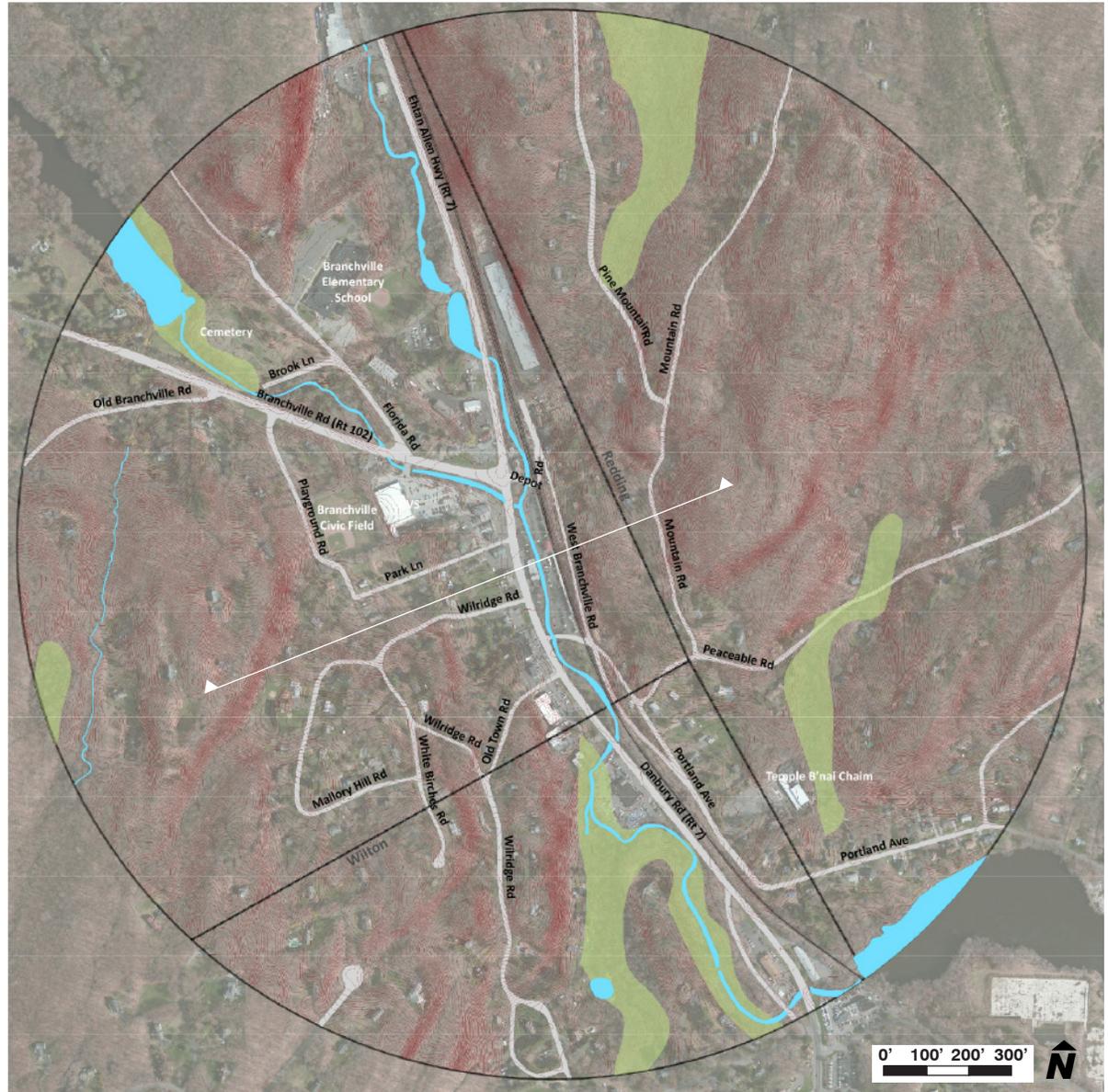
Topography & Wetland Soils

Branchville Station and the surrounding commercial area occupy a narrow valley along the Norwalk River. The topography to the east and west of the station is relatively steep and has consequently limited the density of development in those areas.

Inland wetland soils are present in the Branchville area, with the greatest share of those areas located in Redding and Wilton. In Ridgefield, wetland soils are located west of Florida Road and at the western edge of the study area. In Redding, wetland soils are present near Pine Mountain Road and Peaceable Road. In Wilton, wetland soils are located along the Housatonic River and east of Wilridge Road. These locations are based on state level soils mapping and have not been delineated in the field. As such, these areas may not contain wetland soils and there may be wetland soils within the study area that are not identified by this map.



Section view of Branchville's topography
2x vertical exaggeration



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- Inland Wetland Soils
- 2' Contours

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Flood Zones

Much of the Route 7 and Branchville Road corridor in Branchville rests in the floodplain and/or floodway.

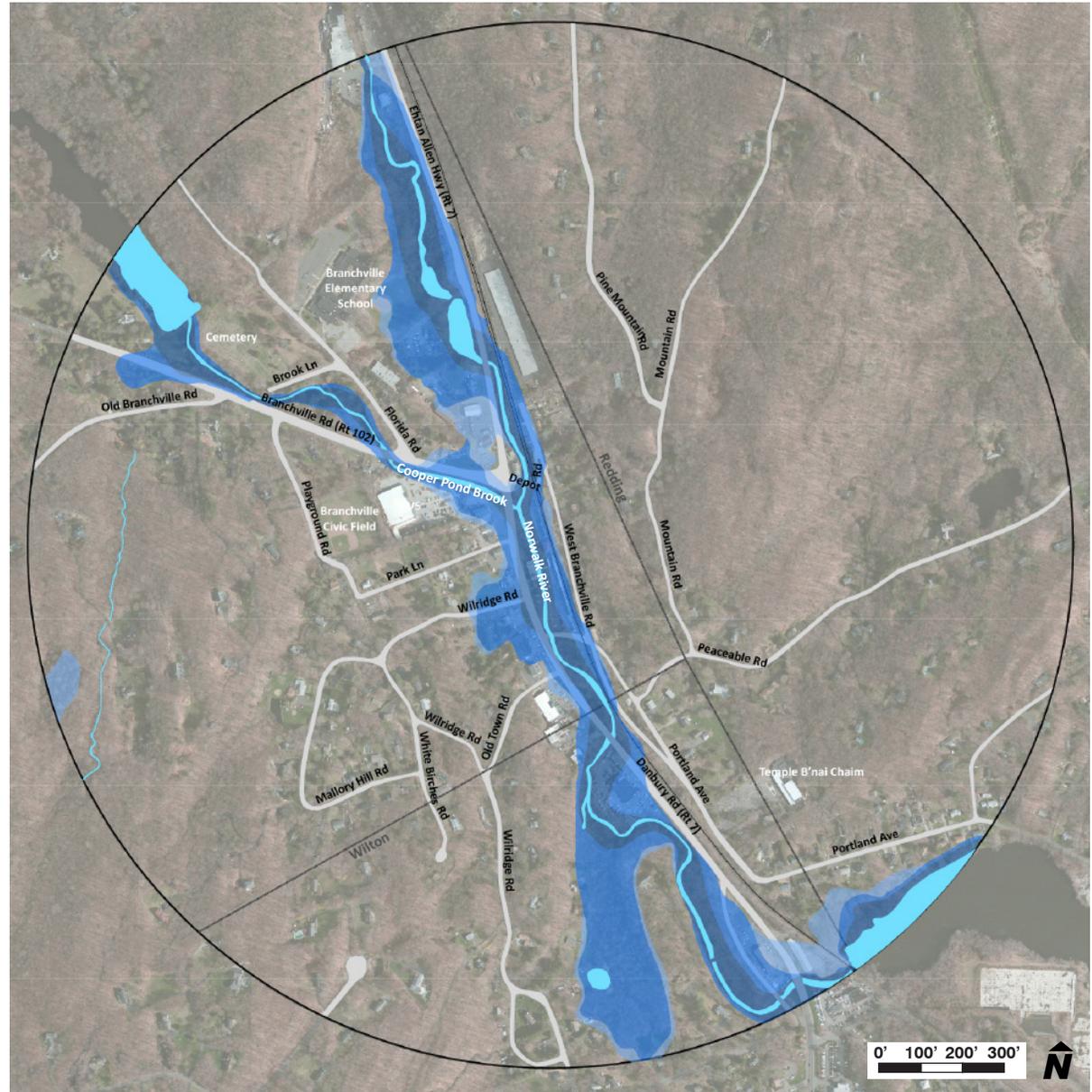
The floodway is comprised of the channel of the Norwalk River and Cooper Pond Brook and the parts of the floodplain adjoining those channels that are reasonably required to efficiently carry and discharge the flood water or flood flow of a river or stream. There are a number of buildings and businesses, such as Precision Brake Works, in Branchville that are located within, or in close proximity to the floodway. Future development within this area will be highly restricted.

Zone AE is the flood insurance rate zone that corresponds to the 100 year floodplain (1% chance of annual flooding). The train station and platform and much of the development on the west side of Route 7 is within this zone. Development within zone AE is possible, but floodplain building codes and insurance requirements restrict the type of development that is feasible in these areas.

Branchville also has areas that are within the 500 year floodplain (0.2% chance of annual flooding). The 500 year floodplain is the least restrictive flood zone. Businesses within the zone include the Little Pub and adjacent businesses.



Recent flooding on Norwalk River near Train Station
Photo courtesy of Ralph Baskin



Flood Zones

- Legend**
- Floodway
 - Zone AE (100 Year Floodplain)
 - 0.2% Flood Chance (500 Year Floodplain)

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Hazardous Materials

Background

The findings of this preliminary hazardous materials screening and evaluation are not intended to substitute for more detailed studies, such as an American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM)-compliant Phase I Environmental Site Assessment or subsurface soil and groundwater investigations. This screening is meant to identify low, medium, and/or high risk properties as a guide for identifying potential contamination in the study area. Further technical and more detailed investigations may be required to determine the existence of oil and hazardous materials (OHMs) prior to property acquisitions, utility relocations, and construction of project elements. The identification of a site in this report does not conclusively confirm that the property has hazardous waste/material contamination, but rather that it has the potential to contain OHMs. There may be additional sites with contamination issues that have not been identified in this screening due to noncompliance with regulations or incomplete regulatory/historical information.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) regulate the handling, storage, generation and use of OHMs. USEPA and CT DEEP maintain records of known hazardous materials release sites and enforce specific guidelines for the treatment and removal of OHMs at these sites.

Methodology

A records review of various federal and state environmental listing databases was conducted for the study area in August 2015. Environmental Record Search (ERS) produced a database report detailing hazardous material release sites identified within the study area boundaries. The environmental databases reviewed include, but are not limited to:

- National Priority List (NPL);

- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Information System (CERCLIS);
- No Further Remedial Action Plan (NFRAP);
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA);
- Federal Brownfield;
- Emergency Response Notification System (ERNS);
- State Sites-Open and -Closed;
- State/Tribal Solid Waste Landfills (SWL);
- State/Tribal Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST);
- State/Tribal Underground Storage Tanks/Aboveground Storage Tanks (UST/AST);
- State/Tribal Brownfields; and
- Facility Registry Index (FINDS).

The ERS report is described below.

A visual inspection of the study area was conducted on August 20, 2015 to identify potential sources of hazardous waste/materials. The inspection was conducted from the street and none of the subject properties were accessed. No on-site testing or assessment was conducted as part of this inspection.

File reviews at the Town of Ridgefield and Town of Wilton were conducted August 20, 2015 on the hazardous material sites ranked as high risk (described below). The file reviews were conducted at the Building Department, Health Department and Fire Marshal for both Ridgefield and Wilton.

Each release site was assigned a high-medium-low risk ranking relative to the possibility of encountering OHMs. The high-medium-low risk site designations are based upon review of the various federal and state environmental listing databases contained in the ERS database report that identifies hazardous material release sites within the study area. Based upon the release database and details of the reported release, the risk assignment was made. High risk sites included sites that have current or historical use as auto repair/dealerships, are listed as LUST (which

have documented evidence of contamination), and/or have current or historical use as drycleaners. Low risk sites have releases with closed cases, small quantities of released hazardous materials, store or transport hazardous materials, or have activities that do not contribute to soil/groundwater contamination.

Existing Conditions

The review of state and federal environmental database records revealed evidence of numerous recognized environmental conditions (RECs), which are potential sources of OHMs. These RECs require further investigation in the form of soil and/or groundwater sampling and analysis, to determine if the properties identified may impact the study area.

The ERS report identified 29 hazardous material sites in the study area. The hazardous material sites are scattered throughout the study area, however, the majority are located in the vicinity of Ethan Allen Highway. The release sites located within the “Focus Area” – the most likely area for potential Transit Oriented Development surrounding the Branchville train station, have been identified and explained in Table 1 and shown in Figure X. The ERS report identified 15 hazardous material sites in the Focus Area.

The visual inspection did not reveal additional properties with potential sources of OHMs in the study area. Based on the visual inspection, one of the properties listed in the ERS report was removed from the list of sites, as the location was incorrectly mapped in the report. Town of Ridgefield water pollution facility (Site ID 9) is located at 901 Ethan Allen Highway, which is outside of the study area.

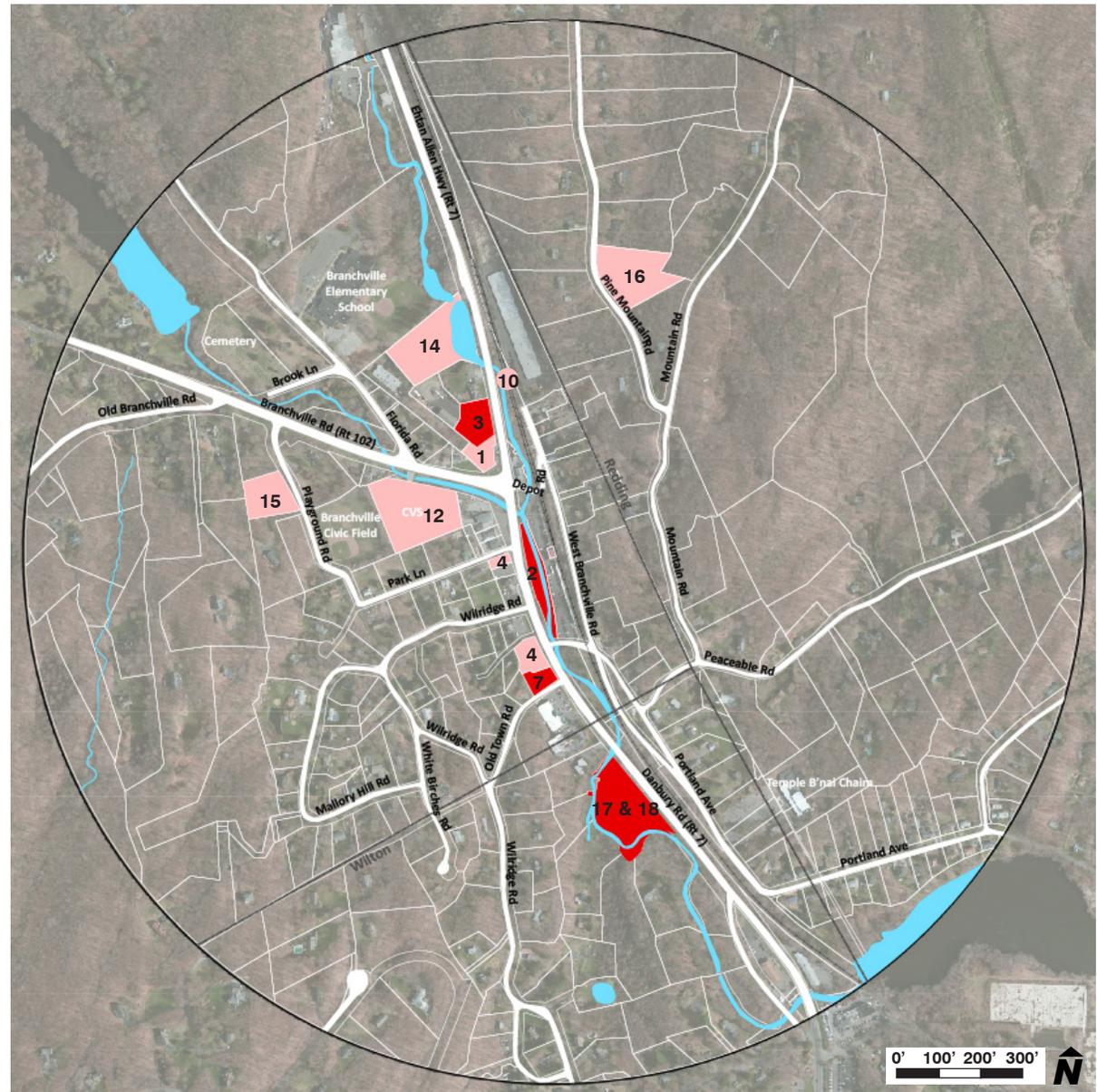
Based upon the environmental database review and visual inspection, each release site was assigned a risk ranking (low, medium, or high) relative to the possibility of encountering OHMs. See Table 1 for these rankings.

The file reviews of the high risk sites conducted at the Town of Ridgefield and Town of Wilton revealed the following:

- Precision Brakeworks/Getty Petroleum at 32 Ethan Allen Hwy, Ridgefield: No files at the Building, Health or Fire Departments relative to hazardous materials.
- My cleaners: No files at the Building, Health or Fire Departments relative to hazardous materials.
- Keans Autoworks, LLC/Branchville Service and Oil Company: No files at the Building, Health or Fire Departments relative to hazardous materials.
- Wilton Maintenance Garage/Georgetown Jeep Eagle: No files at the Building, Health or Fire Departments. Conversations with Peter Berstein, Georgetown Deputy Fire Marshal, revealed that the Fire Department only has records from 2011. Marshal Berstein stated that there have been several interested buyers for the Georgetown Jeep Eagle property, but all were not interested in purchasing based upon the extensive hazardous material issues at the property. He also said that this site has had multiple hazardous material releases throughout the years. Additional environmental issues have also occurred, including the filling of a perennial watercourse at the rear of the property. Conversations with Wilton town employees revealed that this site is well known as having many hazardous material issues throughout the years.

Potential Impacts

Potential impacts from hazardous waste/materials were evaluated based on the type of release, materials released and the proximity of the release site to the Focus Area. Table 1 identifies the number of high, medium, and low risk sites within the Focus Area.



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- High Risk
- Low Risk

Sites with Potential Contamination

Site	Site Name	Address	Database	Description of Release(s)	Risk
1	37 Ethan Allen Highway	38 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	SDWIS-US	Coliform in public water system	Low
2	Precision Brakeworks/Getty Petroleum	32 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	CPCS-CT, Dealers-Repairers-CT, FRS-US (2), LUST-Closed-CT, Manifest2-RI, Manifest-CT (3), RCRA-SQG-US, Sites-Closed-CT, UST-CT	Haz mat transporter and generator, Petroleum contamination to soil - case closed (USTs & LUSTs - 4 USTs removed), #2 fuel oil spill (unknown quantity), Auto dealer/repair, Coliform and nitrate in public water system	High
3	59 Ethan Allen Highway	59 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	SDWIS-US	Coliform, nitrite and nitrate in public water system	Low
4	Computrol, Inc.	15 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	Manifest-CT, RCRA-NON-US, Prop-Trans-CT, Hist-SDAD-CT, FRS-US	Haz mat transporter, Solvent storage	Low
5	Branchville Oil Company/CT Bulk Transport/	61 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	Sites-Closed-CT (2), FRS-US	40 gallons #2 fuel oil spilled - case closed, 20 gallons #2 fuel oil spilled - case closed	Low
6 & 8	Branchville Mica Mine	No address	MRDS-US (2)	N/A	Low
7	My cleaners	9 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	Hist-Cleaners	Possible solvent contamination	High
10	Norwalk River	In front of 71 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	ERNS-US	Release in river from vehicle in water, no further details	Low
11	Keans Autoworks, LLC/Branchville Service and Oil Company	63 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	FRS-US, Dealers-Repairers-CT, UST-CT	Auto dealer/repair, Possible petroleum contamination (5 USTs removed)	High
12	Anconas Market/Anconas Wine and Liquors	720 Branchville Road, Ridgefield, CT	SDWIS-US (2)	Tetrachloroethylene, 1,1-Dichloroethylene, nitrates, nitrites, coliform in public water system	Low
13	Emergency Response	79 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	Manifest-CT	Haz mat transporter	Low
14	Brandstrom Instruments, Inc./Brandstrom Industries/Connecticut Light & Power	85 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT	FRS-US, ERNS-US, Sites-Closed-CT (2), Hist-SDAD-CT	20 gallons of oil from pole transformer, Waste oil in dumpster (unknown quantity) - case closed,	Low
15	SAA	19 Playground Road, Ridgefield, CT	Sites-Closed-CT	50 gallons of #2 fuel oil leaked from truck - case closed	Low
16	No name	14 Pine Mountain Road, Redding, CT	Sites-Closed-CT, ERNS-US	10 gallons of transformer oil released - case closed	Low
17 & 18	Wilton Maintenance Garage/Georgetown Jeep Eagle	1039 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT	UST-CT, Manifest-CT, FRS-US, Sites-Closed-CT, Hist-Auto Dealers (3), RCRA-NON-US,	2 USTs with no removal information, Haz mat transporter and generator, 6 gallons of hydraulic oil released - case closed, Auto dealer/repair	High

Sites with Potential Contamination

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Further Investigation Required

Additional investigations for the presence of OHMs would be required to determine if mitigation would be necessary under the proposed alternatives.

For release sites that are ranked as low risk for potential impact, an updated review of agency files, environmental databases and public records should be revisited to determine if changes have occurred since the report was prepared. Further investigation, beginning with site-specific ASTM-compliant Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) should be conducted at all high risk rated properties prior to the installation or construction of the project elements. Phase 1 ESAs should be completed for any properties that will be acquired as part of the project. If RECs are confirmed at these properties, further investigation in the form of subsurface soil and groundwater investigations and laboratory testing may be recommended. Any mitigation requirements would depend upon the extent and nature of the hazardous waste/materials found, the construction activity proposed and the intended uses of the site.



Site 2: Precision Brake Works, 32 Ethan Allen Highway



Site 11: Keans Autoworks, 63 Ethan Allen Highway



Site 7: My Cleaners, 9 Ethan Allen Highway



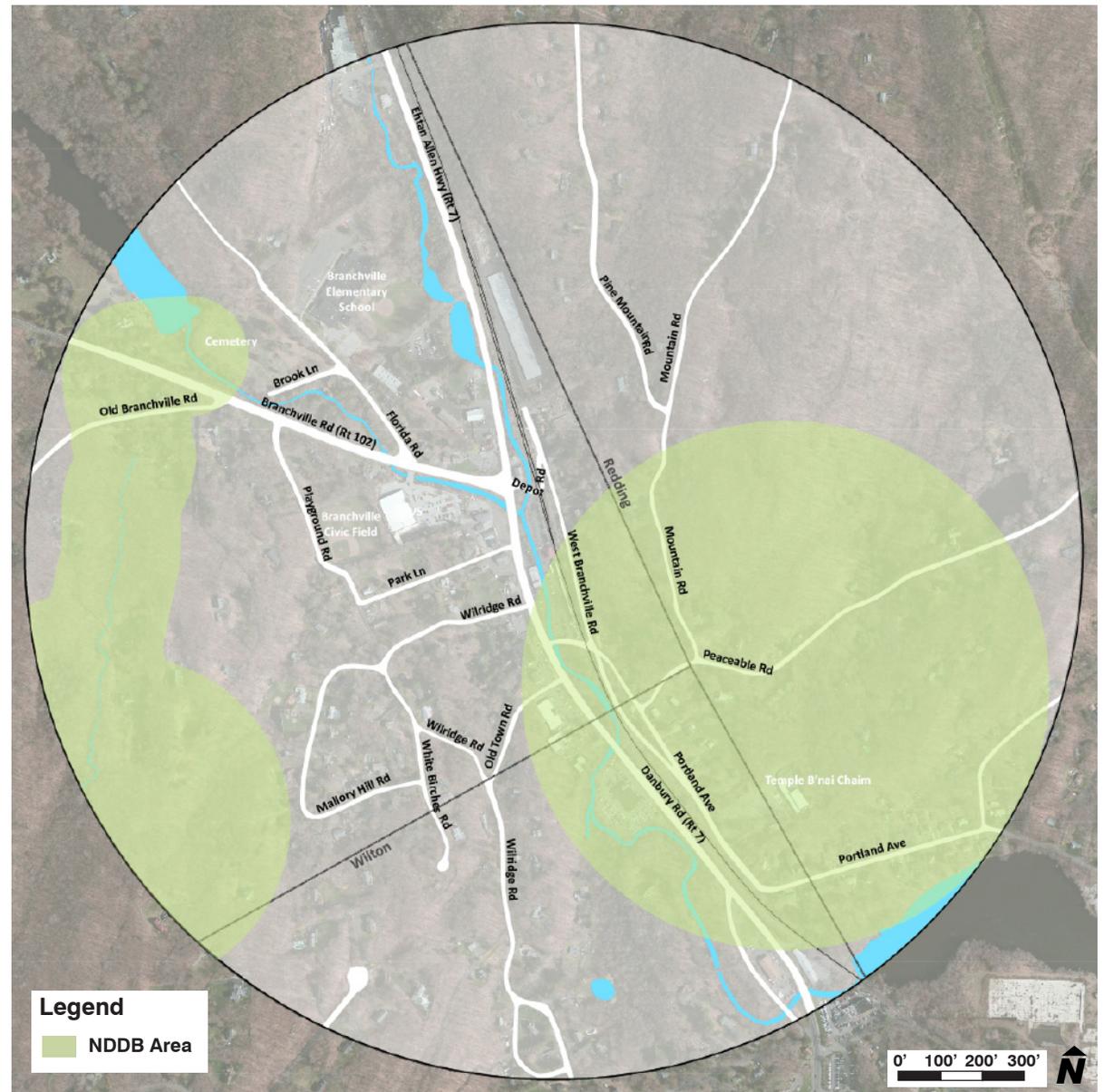
Site 17&18: 1039 Danbury Road, Wilton

Threatened and Endangered Species

Threatened and endangered species are mapped and regulated through the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). Mapped Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) areas are locations where a state listed plant or animal species has been confirmed, or where these species' habitats have been observed. There are two mapped NDDDB areas located in the study area: in the southeast portion and west-southwest portion.

Properties located within the mapped NDDDB areas have the potential to impact the state's rare plants, animals or significant natural communities.

Before starting construction on or acquiring properties within mapped NDDDB areas, a Request for NDDDB State Listed Species Review must be completed. This NDDDB review is required as part of many of CT DEEP's permits, including inland wetlands and waterways, stormwater and flood management. The CT DEEP review response will detail which species may be impacted, and may include requirements such as time of year restrictions on construction, or avoidance of sensitive habitat areas.



Threatened and Endangered Species

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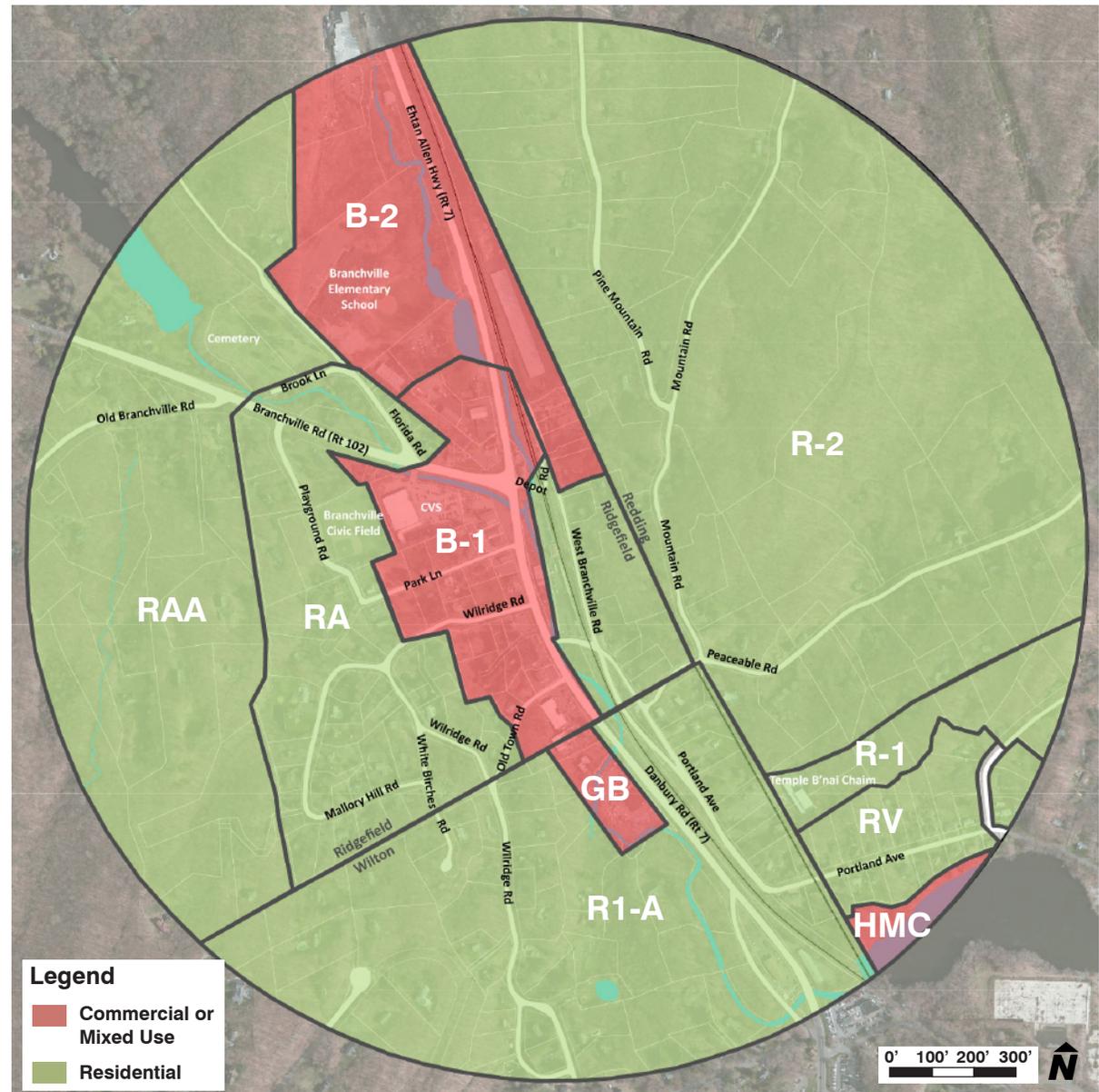
Zoning

The specifics of what is permitted or not in each of the zones that now govern land use in Branchville is important to understand for this study. As those standards are administered, they can, in their current language, either facilitate or constrain TOD from forming. An overview of existing zoning conditions in Branchville is provided here. The following map shows the zoning districts that encompass the study area in Branchville, while Table 2 provides details on what these zoning districts allow and how they regulate development.

Critical elements of zoning that impact the opportunity for TOD include:

- Mixed-use potential – Mix of residential and non-residential uses on the same lot
- Density potential - Density at 8 or more dwelling units per acre and/or potential for substantial area of a lot to be dedicated to building space
- Site design to promote walking – Requirements for sidewalks – use of street frontage for sidewalks, and pedestrian path connections to adjacent land uses
- Parking requirements – Flexibility in the location, volume, and design of required parking
- Multimodal access – Requirements for connections to transit, pedestrian ways, as well as by bicycle

The zoning map indicates that the zoning adjacent to Route 7 is primarily for business or commercial uses while the areas east and west of the Route 7 corridor are predominantly intended for single-family residential uses. These zones generally do not permit a mix of residential and non-residential uses on the same lot. Yet, the B-1 zone which covers the core of Branchville where Route 7 meets Branchville Road offers the most flexibility for development to meet other essential TOD features among the zoning districts in the study area.



Zoning

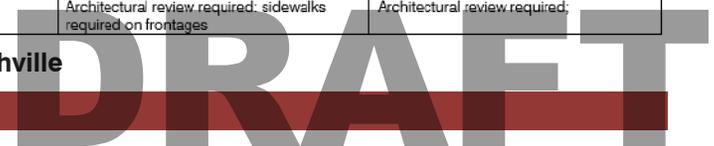
Today's residential zones in Branchville call primarily for low density development of single family homes on one acre or more. Home occupations are permitted as a special use. Not only must single residences sit on one acre or more, but they must be situated such that 90 percent of the lot is set aside for the yard and no more than 10 percent for the footprint of the home. Greater area can sometimes be dedicated to the building footprint by Special Permit. Residences can be up to 2.5 stories in height. Consequently, the RA and RAA residential zones that encompass the existing areas of homes east and west of the core of Branchville have the effect today of keeping the character as it currently exists with single low-profile homes and do not support a transition towards TOD. A notable exception to this is the language in the regulations that encourages adaptive reuse of historic structures.

The commercial B-1 and B-2 zones offer more flexibility for land use than that of the RA and RAA zones. That is, they are intended for a variety of retail, office, dining, and service uses. Lots can be as small as 10,000 square feet, or ¼ of an acre, allowing different uses on adjacent lots to be nestled close to one another. In the B-1 zone, buildings can cover up to 90 percent of a lot. These provisions create an opportunity for high density on a single lot and/or among a collection of adjacent parcels. Still, the B-1 and B-2 zone regulations do not permit mixing of different uses on the same lot or mixing residential uses with non-residential uses such as apartments on the second floor of a building with retail on the first floor. They do support some other features of TOD in addition to high density including flexibility in parking requirements, requirements for sidewalks, and limits on drive-thrus. Businesses which employ a drive-thru are auto-oriented and tend to discourage walking or use of transit by patrons.

Overall, the existing zoning in Branchville provides only limited support for TOD. Additionally, there are very limited specific site design requirements that could regulate the overall form of development; drive the how the character of individual sites form. As such, the existing zoning district language for Branchville is not configured to promote strengthening of the sense of place that is desired for the village.

Zones	RAA	RA	B-1	B-2
Allowed Uses	Conservation; Agriculture; SF residences; Group home; Equestrian	Conservation; Agriculture; SF residences; Group home; Equestrian	Retail store; Shopping center on a minimum of two (2) acres; Service establishment or personal service establishment; business, professional, or medical office; bank; Sit-down restaurant; food retail / serving establishment (such as a bakery, delicatessen, ice cream parlor, or coffee shop) with seating for fewer than fifteen (15) customers; pre-existing single family detached dwelling that conforms to the area and bulk requirements of the R-20 Zone; accessory uses to uses located on the same lot; Seasonal farmers' market; fitness center / exercise facility / dance studio / facility for education in the arts	Service or personal service establishment; Business, professional, or medical office; Bank; Sit-down restaurant; Offices for executive, administrative and data processing activities; A pre-existing single family detached dwelling that conforms to the area and bulk requirement of the R-20 Zone; Accessory uses when located on the same lot; Seasonal Farmers' Market; Ancillary retail sales of goods directly related and clearly incidental to the principal commercial use
Accessory Uses	Home based business; parking; Day Care; w-site plan approval, dwelling unit (affordable/senior); Home occupation	Home based business; parking; Day Care; w-site plan approval, dwelling unit (affordable/senior); Home occupation	Same as above	Same as above
Special Permit Uses	Accessory dwelling unit; Adaptive reuse of historic dwelling; government; B&B, education; Day Care	Accessory dwelling unit; Adaptive reuse of historic dwelling; government; B&B, education; Day Care	Added floor area; government uses; public parking and recreation facilities; drive-through's; Food retail / serving establishment (such as a bakery, delicatessen, ice cream parlor, or coffee shop) with seating for more than fifteen (15) customers; automobile-related/gas stations; Bowling alley/similar; Group day care; nonprofit/ education/religious/philanthropic uses; funeral home; commercial kennel/veterinary; Indoor theater; Hotel/Motel/Inn	Added floor area; government uses; public parking and recreation facilities; F&D facilities; Manufacture of optical goods and similar; Contractor yards; Warehouse storage; drive-through's; Group Day Care/day care center; Bowling alley/similar; Group day care; nonprofit/ education/religious/philanthropic uses; funeral home; commercial kennel/veterinary; Indoor theater; Hotel/Motel/Inn; pre-existing motor-vehicle related uses
Residential Density Permitted	1 unit per 2 acres	1 unit per acre	NA	NA
Minimum Lot Size	2 acres/1.4 ac non-wetland; note - regularity factor	1 ac./0.8 ac. non-wetland; note - regularity factor	10,000 SF	10,000 SF
Lot Coverage	7% (SP - 140% of lot coverage on lot < 1 acre/not to exceed FAR)	10% (SP - 140% of lot coverage on lot < 1 acre/not to exceed FAR)	90%	25%
FAR	5,850 to 2 acres plus 6% of over 2 acres (accessory structures and gov. uses excluded)	4,200 SF to 1 acre plus 6% of over 1 acre (accessory structures and gov. uses excluded)	NA	75%
Lot Frontage	200 ft.	100 ft.	50 ft.	50 FT
Setbacks	35 all sides	25 all sides	None - but 3 ft. if provided	None - but 3 ft. if provided
Max. Height (except cupola, spire, belfry)	45 ft./2.5 stories	40 ft./2.5 stories	Maximum Average - 40 ft.	Maximum Average - 40 ft.
Parking	2 spaces per dwelling unit	2 Spaces per dwelling unit	Shared use reduction; off-site parking on adjoining lot allowed by SP; deferred spaces allowed; fee-in-lieu of parking with SP	Shared use reduction; off-site parking on adjoining lot allowed by SP; deferred spaces allowed; fee-in-lieu of parking with SP
Landscaping	Any SP use; Requires Landscape Architect; Landscape buffer along property line	Any SP use; Requires Landscape Architect; Landscape buffer along property line	Required; Requires Landscape Architect unless waived; Includes parking; buffer where meets residential; depth of the landscape buffer and the density of plant materials shall be determined by the Commission	Required; Requires Landscape Architect unless waived; Includes parking; buffer where meets residential; depth of the landscape buffer and the density of plant materials shall be determined by the Commission
TOD Factors present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed Use - limited Parking reductions - none Density potential - none Connectivity requirements: walk paths may be required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed Use - limited Parking reductions - none Density potential - none Connectivity requirements: walk paths may be required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed Use - none Parking reductions - yes Density potential - limited Connectivity requirements: sidewalk required on street frontage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed Use - none Parking reductions - yes Density potential - limited Connectivity requirements: Sidewalks may be required
Other Notes			Architectural review required; sidewalks required on frontages	Architectural review required;

Ridgefield Zoning Districts in Branchville



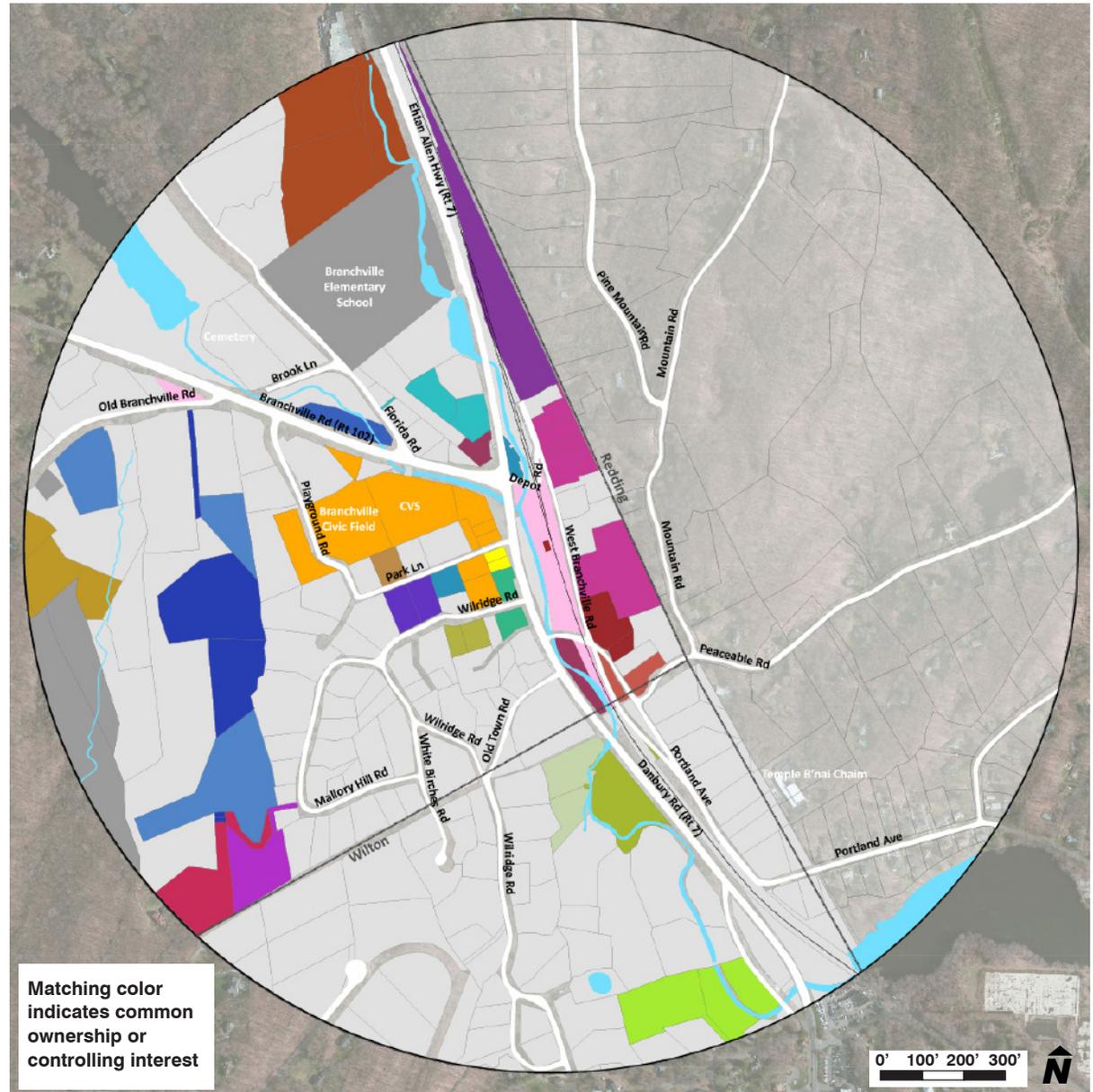
Parcel Analysis

An analysis of property ownership in the study area indicates that a number of properties are held by a small number of owners with more than twenty property owners holding more than one property in the station area.

These ownership patterns suggest the potential for property assemblage that could facilitate development in the study area. Furthermore, the parcel ownership patterns can be used in producing development scenarios for the study area, with potential development extents and connections between developments reflecting parcel ownership.

Key parcel ownership patterns include the Ancona's Liquors and CVS plaza, adjacent Route 7 fronting retail, and the Branchville Little League field on Playground Road. To the east of the station, a number of parcels along West Branchville Road have common ownership suggesting the potential for coordinated development on this side of the station.

Parcel ownership was not analyzed for Redding due to a focus of the TOD district towards Ridgefield and Wilton. A cursory review of Redding properties indicates mostly single family properties that are individually owned.



Parcel Analysis

Utility Infrastructure

Water Service

Water Service in the TOD area is provided by Aquarion Water Company. Aquarion reports that a 16" water main is located in Danbury Road (Route 7) which extends up to Branchville Road (Route 102). The 16" main then continues westerly up Branchville Road to provide water service to Ridgefield Center.

Gas/Electric/Telephone Service

- Eversource Energy provides three phase electrical service
- Yankee gas confirmed that gas service to the project area is not available
- Frontier Communications provides telephone/internet service

Wastewater Infrastructure

There are three existing wastewater treatment plants located within three miles of Branchville.

1. South Street Wastewater Treatment Facility
2. Route 7 Wastewater Treatment Facility
3. Georgetown Wastewater Treatment Facility

The three wastewater treatment plants each have positive and negative aspects associated with them.

1. South Street

The South Street WWTP is located on South Street, east of the downtown business district. The treatment plant provides service to Sewer District No. 1, which includes downtown Ridgefield and the residential areas surrounding the downtown area. The Town is currently undergoing preparation of a Wastewater Facilities Plan for this facility, which includes the design and construction of an eventual upgrade of the plant. Therefore, it is feasible to assume that capacity for the Branchville area would be available at this plant when the treatment facility is upgraded.

There are two potential routes to connect the Branchville area to this plant. The first is to extend south from the existing sanitary sewer mains on Sunset Lane, and then follow the Ridgefield Rail Trail

to Route 102, and then southeasterly along Route 102 to the Branchville area.

The second option is to extend south from the existing sanitary sewer mains in Prospect Ridge Road, and then continue along Route 102 southeasterly to the Branchville area. Connection to the South Street plant would require the construction of 2.8 to 3 miles of sanitary sewer force main, at an estimated cost of \$4.4 million to \$6.3 million. The Sewer District would also need to be expanded to incorporate the Branchville area.

2. Route 7 Treatment Plant

The Town of Ridgefield owns and operates a second treatment plant located on Ethan Allen Highway (U.S. Route 7) behind the medical office building. This plant treats sewage generated by Sewer District No. 2, which includes a majority of the businesses along U.S. Route 7 north of Great Pond Road. Treatment capacity at this plant is fully allocated, and the facility cannot accept any new flows unless the plant is expanded or existing flow capacity reallocated to the Branchville area. Service could be extended to the Branchville area by construction of a force main from the plant 3.4 miles southward along U.S. Route 7. Estimated cost of this extension is \$7.3 million. The Sewer District would need to be expanded to incorporate the Branchville area.

3. Georgetown Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Georgetown WWTP is located slightly over a mile from the Branchville area, and offers by far, the shortest connection length. The connection would be extended north from the Georgetown WWTP, up along North Main Street to Church Street, and then northerly along U.S. Route 7. The cost of this connection is estimated to be \$2.5 million.

Treatment capacity at this plant is also fully allocated, and the facility cannot accept any new flows unless the plant is expanded or existing flow capacity reallocated to the Branchville area. Additionally, since the plant is located in Redding, an intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Redding would be required.

On-Site Disposal Feasibility

Soil Suitability

Initial screening of the soil types in the project area at the start of this project was based solely upon a review of information included in the NRCS Soil Survey.

Soils in the study area include Ridgebury, Saco and Rippowam soils which are poorly drained and typically found in wetland areas. Ridgebury soils are typically found on slopes between 0 to 8 percent. This component is on depressions on uplands. The parent material consists of coarse-loamy lodgment till derived from gneiss, granite, and/or schist. Depth to a root restrictive layer, densic material, is 14 to 32 inches. The natural drainage class is poorly drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is low. Available water to a depth of 60 inches (or restricted depth) is moderate. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. A seasonal zone of water saturation is at 3 inches during the months of January, February, March, April, May, November and December. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 10 percent.

Hinckley soils are found on both sides of U.S. Route 7 south of Route 102, as well as at the intersection of Route 102 and Playground Road. The Hinckley component makes up 40 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 3 to 15 percent. This component is on eskers on valleys, kames on valleys, outwash plains on valleys, terraces on valleys. The parent material consists of sandy and gravelly glaciofluvial deposits derived from granite and/or schist and/or gneiss. Depth to a root restrictive layer is greater than 60 inches. The natural drainage class is excessively drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is very low. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 5 percent.

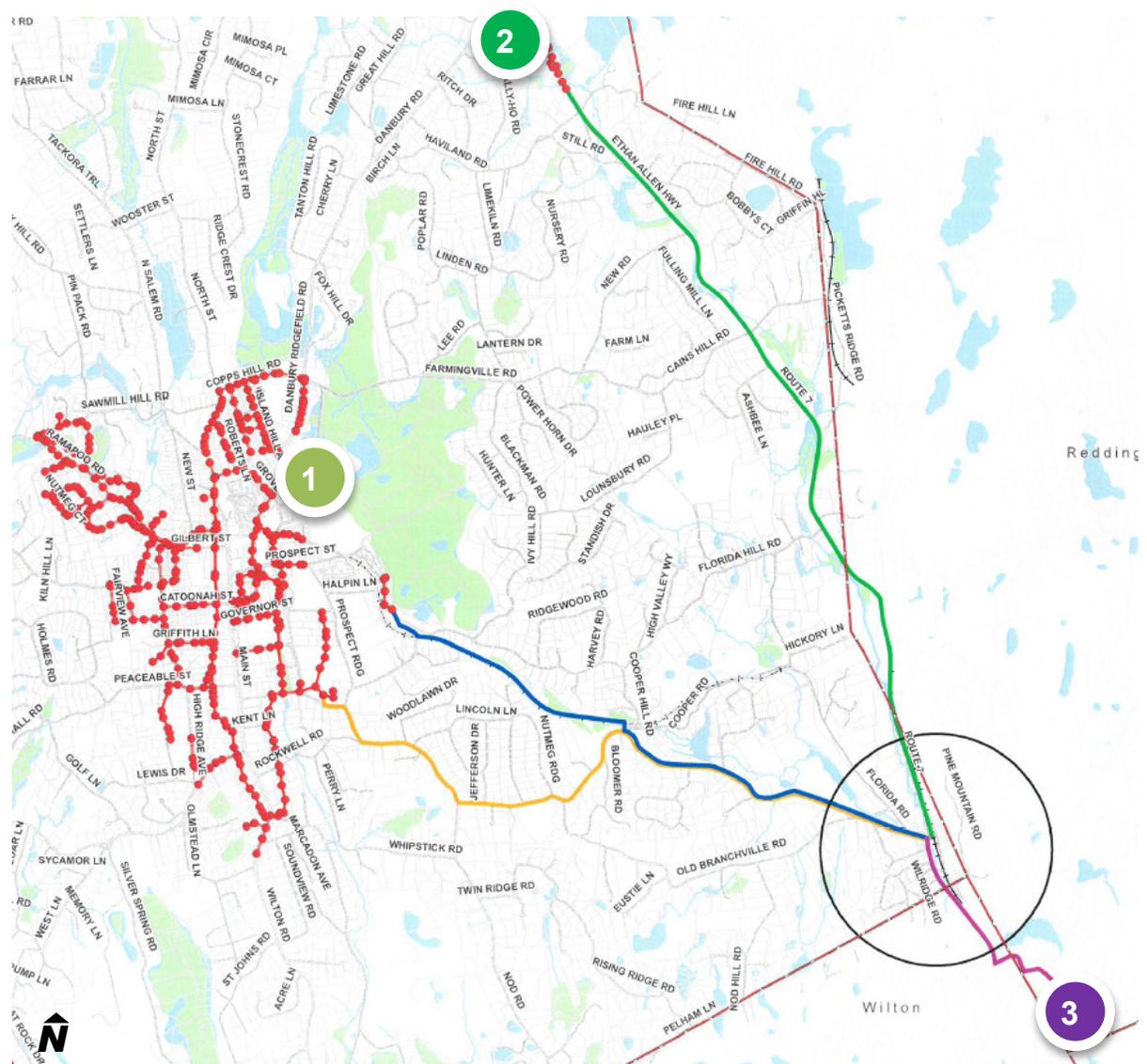
Udorthents, soils whose composition is unknown because of fill deposition, but are generally well draining occur at the Route 102 / U.S. Route 7

intersection, dividing the two pockets of Hinckley soil described above. The little league field behind the CVS was mentioned by the First Selectman as a site that was believed to have suitable underlying materials. The Udorthents component makes up 50 percent of the map unit. Slopes are 0 to 25 percent. This component is on urban land. The parent material consists of drift. Depth to a root restrictive layer is greater than 60 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is low. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is moderate. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded or ponded.

The balance of soils in the project area are Charlton – Hollis complex soils, which are loamy and rocky, with shallow bedrock depths and bedrock outcrops.

Reviewing the soil survey in greater detail reveals that the soils most suitable for subsurface disposal are Hinckley soils. These soils are classified as a loamy sand, and fall into Hydrologic Soil Group A, which is well-drained. However, potential issues of concern also exist in these areas specifically in regards to the depth to groundwater and depth to bedrock. Shallow groundwater and/or bedrock in these areas may preclude the use of subsurface systems. It may be necessary to raise the grade by bringing in suitable fill material to create the clearances needed for subsurface disposal. The initial review concluded that soils in the area were generally limited for subsurface sewage disposal. However, during meeting with the Town, the study team was informed that there are pockets of suitable soil in the area. Additionally, discussions with the Health Department revealed that there are no known failing septic systems in the area.

The TOD study team was provided with soil testing results for a septic system feasibility study that was conducted at the Little League field, which is within the band of favorable Hinckley soils described above. The testing revealed that there was no groundwater, but the minimum depth to ledge was 67 inches. Additionally, the percolation rate of the underlying soils was 1 inch in 20 minutes.



Sewer Connection Options

Additional Soil Testing Requirements

Prior experience with Charlton soils indicates that they are often poorly suited for groundwater discharge systems. Conversely, udorthents are generally defined as areas where the existing soils have been disturbed and fill materials have been imported to overlay the virgin substrate material.

If potentially suitable parcels are found for either type of on-site system, the soils would need to be tested for depth to groundwater to evaluate the seasonal high groundwater elevation. Additionally, the hydraulic conductivity of the soil would also need to be evaluated.

Flow Distribution

The basic objective of flow distribution is to uniformly distribute the septic tank effluent to the infiltrative surfaces of the leaching system so as to maximize the volumetric renovative capacity of the soil. However, there is considerable debate as to whether the distribution should be by means of gravity flow to the various units of the leaching system or by means of a pressure distribution system (PDS). In the latter case, this would require the use of septic tank effluent pumping stations or dosing siphons. The arguments on both sides of this issue appear persuasive. The use of pressure distribution for individual residential subsurface soil absorption systems is arguable because of problems resulting from probable lack of maintenance by individual residence property owners. However, for large systems where the system is extensive and system maintenance is required as part of the permit issued for such systems, pressure distribution may be warranted. The extent of the need for uniform flow can only be known after the soil capacities are evaluated, and effluent totals are known.

It is also important to know the source of the flow that will be generated, and the volume of effluent that will be generated by the sources.

Regulatory Requirements

Package Treatment Plant: Discharges exceeding 5,000 gpd are subject to review and approval by of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Community Septic Systems: A Permit Application for Wastewater Discharges from Subsurface Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems is required from CTDEEP. The application includes a fee and public notice requirements, and basic background information on the applicant. The source and volume of effluent must be identified, and potential storage of toxic and hazardous substances must be inventoried. Additionally, pollutant loading and groundwater mounding analysis must be provided to determine compliance with effluent limitations.

Permit conditions for both systems will also include monitoring and maintenance requirements, scaled to the size and scope of the system.

Groundwater Mounding Analyses: CTDEEP regulations require that a three foot vertical separation be provided between the bottom of the subsurface wastewater absorption system and the groundwater mound as a result of the wastewater discharge.

Downgradient Sensitive Receptors: CTDEEP Guidance for Design of Large-Scale On-Site Wastewater Renovation Systems requires that a travel time of 56-days be provided between the subsurface wastewater absorption system (SWAS) and sensitive receptors (e.g. the outer limit of the cone of depression of a public drinking water supply well, a surface water body used, or intended to be used, as a source of public drinking water supply, a private drinking water supply well serving an individual residence, or an impoundment used for aquaculture) and a 21-day travel time be provided to all other points of concern. The Norwalk River is classified as Surface Water Quality Class B. Class B designated uses are habitat for fish and aquatic life and wildlife and recreation.

Cooper Pond Brook is Class A, which designated uses include habitat for fish and other aquatic life and wildlife and recreation, and potential drinking water supplies. Travel times to these receptors will require further detailed study.

Location

Any community septic system or package treatment plant must be located where groundwater and bedrock is relatively deep, soils are generally gravelly and permeable, and a sufficient distance away from wetlands and watercourses such that transport of pollutants is minimized and minimum travel times are achieved.

Sites with Best Potential

The sites with the best potential based upon our secondary screening are those properties located in Udorthents or Hinckley soils areas. Priority should be given to Town-owned properties for further exploration. After a review of Town owned parcels within the vicinity of the TOD area, the only Town parcel meeting this requirement is at Branchville Elementary School.

Two additional privately owned large parcels that can also be considered for potential sites are the existing Little League field, and the parcel immediately north at 34 Playground Road. The Little League field provides more separation distance to watercourses, although the soils may be more suitable on the 34 Playground Road parcel.

A further review of each site determined that the Branchville Elementary School is located too close to the Norwalk River, and the parcel north of the little league field is too close to Cooper Pond Brook. Therefore, the only feasible site was determined to be the Little League field.

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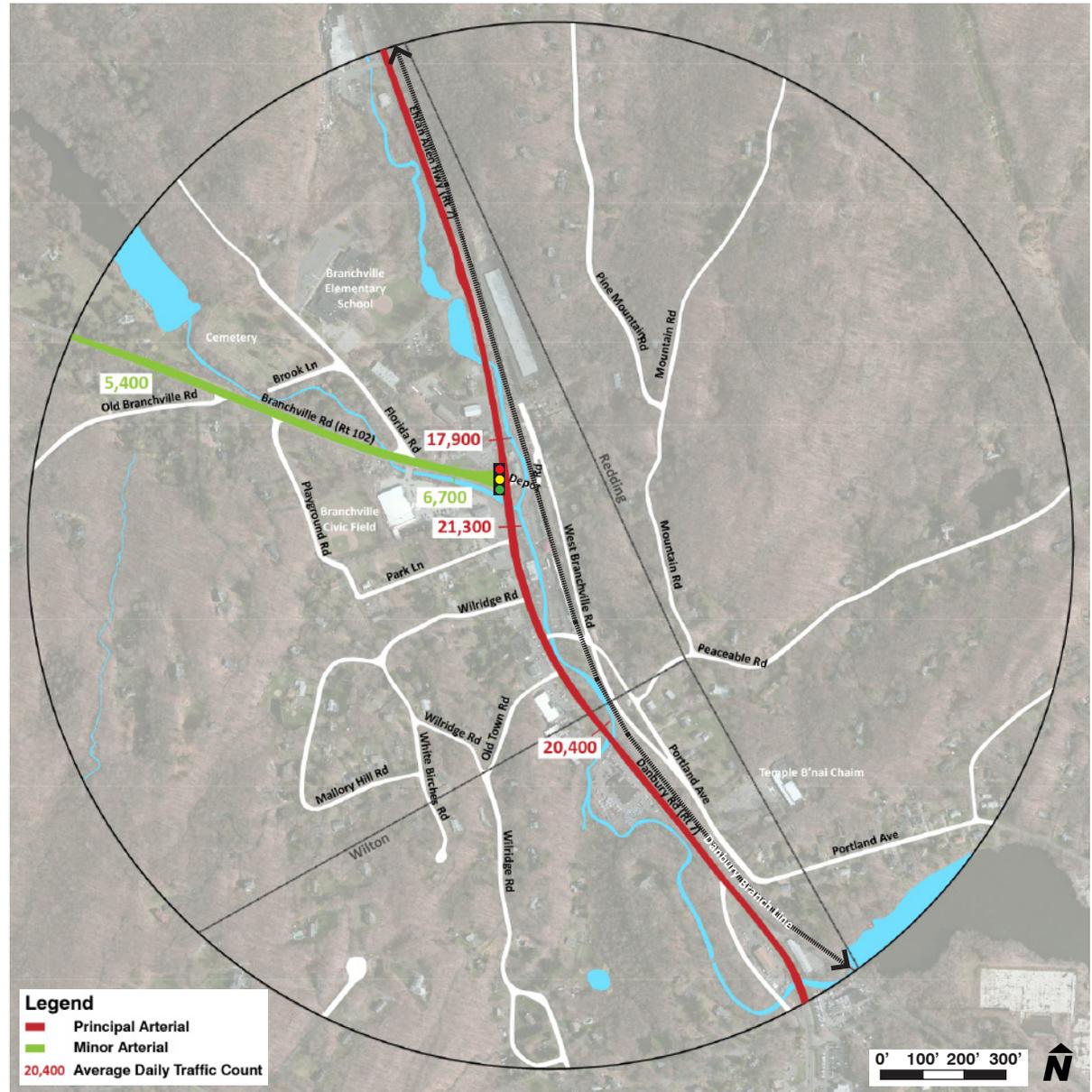
Transportation System

As a small village in a narrow river valley, Branchville's transportation infrastructure is relatively limited. The Ethan Allen Highway (Route 7) provides a north/south connection to Danbury to the north and Wilton and Norwalk to the south. Branchville Road (Route 102) provides an east/west connection between Branchville and Ridgefield Center. The rail corridor also provides a regional connection from north to south and parallels Route 7 along much of its route between Danbury and Norwalk.

Transit

Branchville's rail corridor, which is serviced by Metro North's Danbury Branch Line, extends north/south through the study area. The branch line has approximately 28 departing trains per weekday and provides service from Danbury to South Norwalk with connecting service to New York City. The average trip length is one half hour and to South Norwalk and 1.5 hours to Grand Central Station. Departures begin at 5:54 am on weekdays with the last southbound train departing at 10:52 pm. Arrivals begin at 8:11 am with the last arrival at 11:13 pm. Headways are approximately one half hour for southbound trains during the morning peak and approximately 45 minutes for northbound arriving trains during the afternoon peak. Train headways range from 1.5 to 2 hours in off-peak hours. Service is significantly reduced on weekends with 11 trips per day and 3 hour headways.

Branchville is also serviced by the Housatonic Area Regional Transit (HART) 7 Link route. The bus route provides eight weekday trips (no weekend trips) in each direction on Route 7 between Danbury and Norwalk and has a stop on Route 7 near Branchville Station. Danbury trips take 25 minutes while Norwalk trips take 45 minutes.



Road Network

Roadways

Route 7, a state route and principal arterial, is the “Main Street” of Branchville, carrying an average of 17,900 to 21,300 vehicles per day. Route 102, also a state route and minor arterial, meets Route 7 in Branchville at Depot Road. Route 102 carries an average of 5,400 to 6,700 vehicles per day and connects Branchville to Ridgefield Center.

Local roads in Branchville are generally narrow, steep, and winding. Florida Road provides a connection to Branchville Elementary School, while Depot Road and Portland Avenue provide connections to the train station.

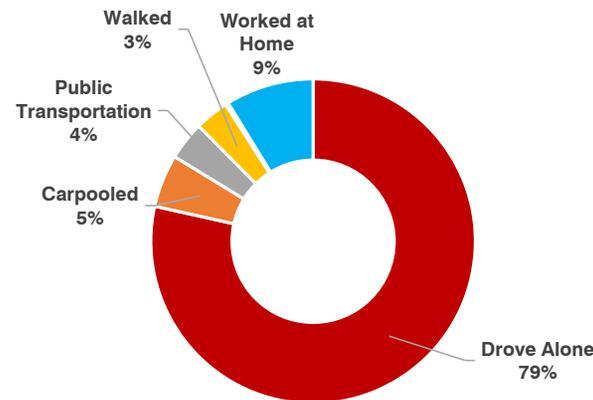
Commuting Patterns

The 2013 Census Longitudinal Origin-Destination Employment Statistics indicate that 412 people commute to a workplace within a half mile radius of the station area. Additionally, only 216 people commute from the station area to surrounding towns. The top origins of commuters who work in the station area include Danbury, Ridgefield, Norwalk, Stamford, and Bridgeport. The top destinations for commuters who live in the station area include Ridgefield, Stamford, Danbury, Norwalk, and Westport. With the presence of Metro North rail stations in these communities, Branchville Station provides a strategic connection for commuters.



Commuting Patterns of Workers to and from Branchville Station Area (Top 5 origins/destinations)		
Inbound Commuters From	#	%
Danbury	56	13.5
Ridgefield	37	8.9
Norwalk	29	7.0
Stamford	19	4.6
Bridgeport	8	1.9
Outbound Commuters To	#	%
Ridgefield	28	12.8
Stamford	25	11.5
Danbury	21	9.6
Norwalk	21	9.6
Westport	7	3.2

Transportation to Work ACS 2010-2014 Ridgefield, CT



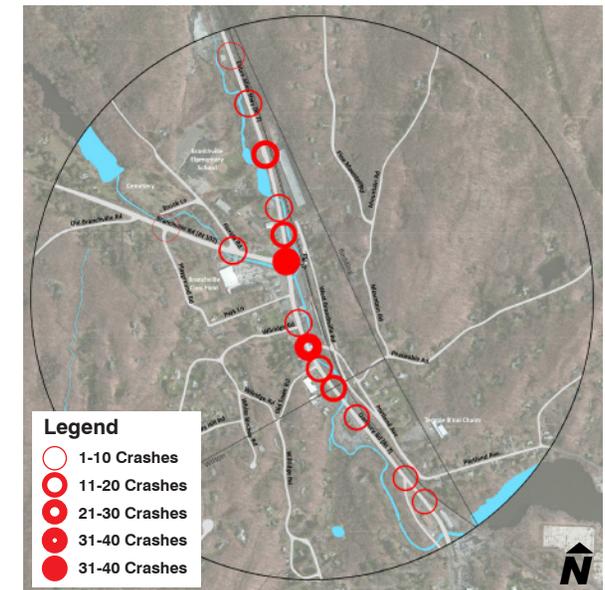
Crash History

Auto crashes in the study area are concentrated on Route 7 with the Route 102 and Portland Avenue intersection having the greatest frequency of crashes.

A total of 153 crashes were recorded in the study area over a four year period between 2010 and 2013. Of those crashes, 33 resulted in injuries with no fatal crashes reported. Of the 33 injury crashes, 21 occurred at the Route 7/102 intersection.

Most crashes were rear-end crashes, with “following too closely” being the primary contributing factor. This crash type is typical of areas that experience traffic congestion and long traffic queues at intersections. Injury crashes were most often turning movement crashes attributed to failure to grant right of way.

No bicycle or pedestrian crashes were reported over the four-year period.



Auto Crashes 2010-2013

Source: CT Crash Data Repository

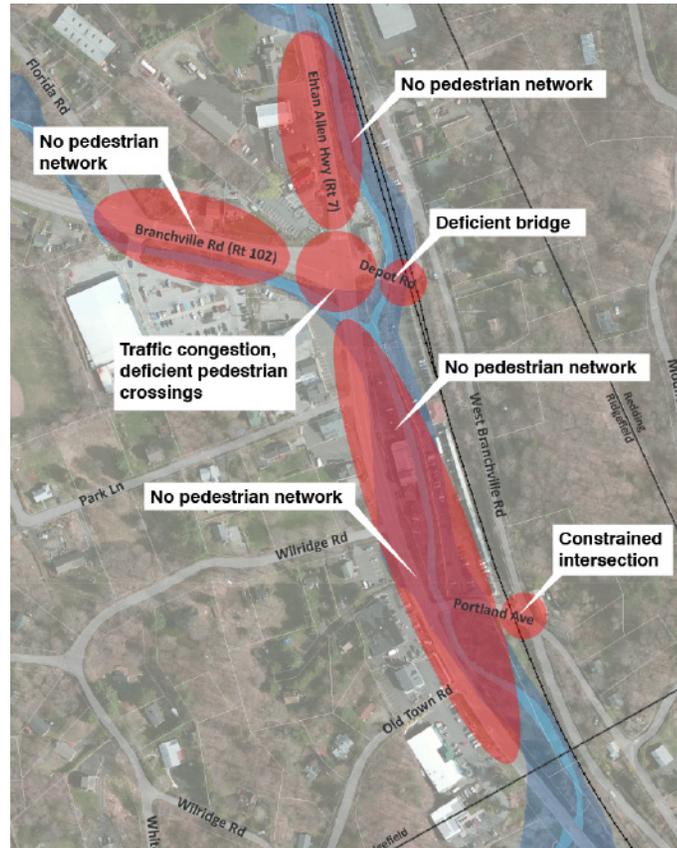
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Infrastructure Deficiencies

The Branchville area experiences significant peak hour traffic congestion at the Route 7/102 intersection. Much of this congestion is related to the lack of southbound queuing lanes for turning traffic and issues related to station access at Depot Road.

The Depot Road Bridge is a narrow, ageing structure, which does not allow for concurrent operation of traffic in both directions. The Connecticut DOT has considered closing this bridge to automobile traffic if improvements can be made to the Portland Avenue station entrance.

As a whole, the most significant transportation infrastructure deficiency in the study area is the lack of pedestrian facilities. With a few exceptions, there are almost no sidewalks in the study area. Additionally, marked crosswalks across Route 7 and Route 102 are limited and lack basic infrastructure such as curb ramps, pedestrian phases, and pedestrian signal heads.



Transportation Infrastructure Deficiencies



Depot Road Bridge

Narrow bridge, lacks sidewalks and is insufficiently wide to carry traffic in both directions at the same time



Sidewalk at Subway/My Cleaners

One of the few sidewalks in the Branchville study area



Crosswalk at Route 7 and 102

Pedestrian crossings at Route 7 are limited, in this example the crossing lacks curb ramps and does not have a dedicated pedestrian phase or pedestrian signal heads.

Station Access and Peak Hour Traffic

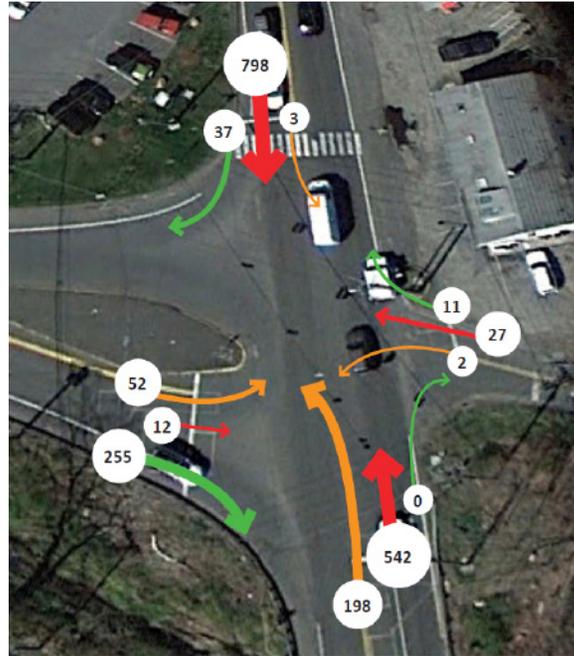
Branchville Station is accessed from the west at two locations: Depot Road and Portland Avenue. The Depot Road entrance meets Route 7 at the Route 102 intersection. This is the only signalized access to the station area. Portland Avenue meets Route 7 about 1/4 mile south of the Route 102 intersection and is an unsignalized intersection.

Peak hour traffic at both intersections overwhelmingly favors through movements. The northbound approach to Route 102, however, experiences a strong left turn movement, with approximately 25% of traffic taking a left onto Route 102 in the AM peak hour. Most travel to the station at this intersection comes from eastbound Route 102 traffic. A small amount of southbound traffic (six vehicles in the peak hour) turns left onto Depot Road to access the station. These queuing vehicles often cause delay for southbound traffic. PM peak hour traffic exiting the station area via Depot Road is evenly split between right turning traffic onto Route 7 and through traffic to Route 102, a small number of vehicles turn left onto Route 7.

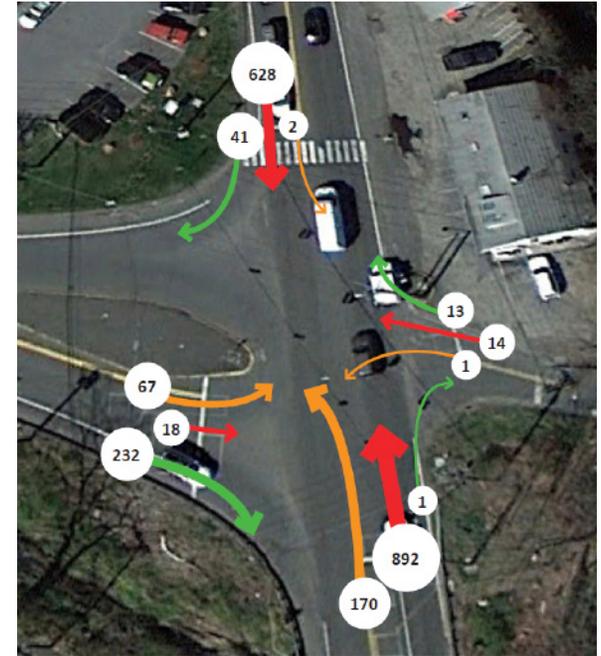
While the turning movements into Depot Road and Portland Avenue are relatively low during the peak hour, turning movements are potentially higher at off-peak hours such as earlier in the morning and later in the evening due to the schedule of departing and arriving trains.

The Portland Avenue intersection accommodates the most significant share of peak hour traffic to the station area during both the AM and PM peaks. This intersection also processes most of the exiting traffic from the station area during both peaks.

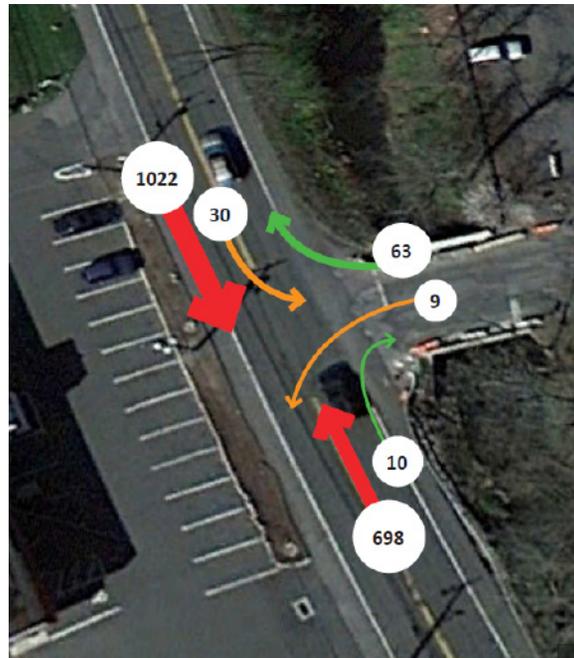
This peak hour turning movement data would suggest the potential for the enhancement of traffic operations and reduction of peak hour traffic congestion via improvements to, and modifications of, traffic flow at both intersections.



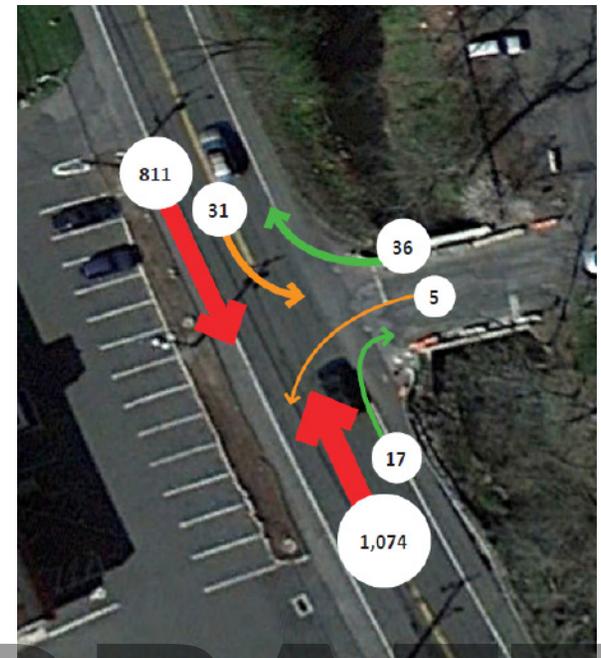
Route 7/102 Peak Hour AM (7:45-8:45 am)



Route 7/102 Peak Hour PM (5-6 pm)



Route 7/Portland Avenue Peak Hour AM (7:45-8:45 am)



Route 7/Portland Avenue Peak Hour PM (5-6 pm)



Parking Supply

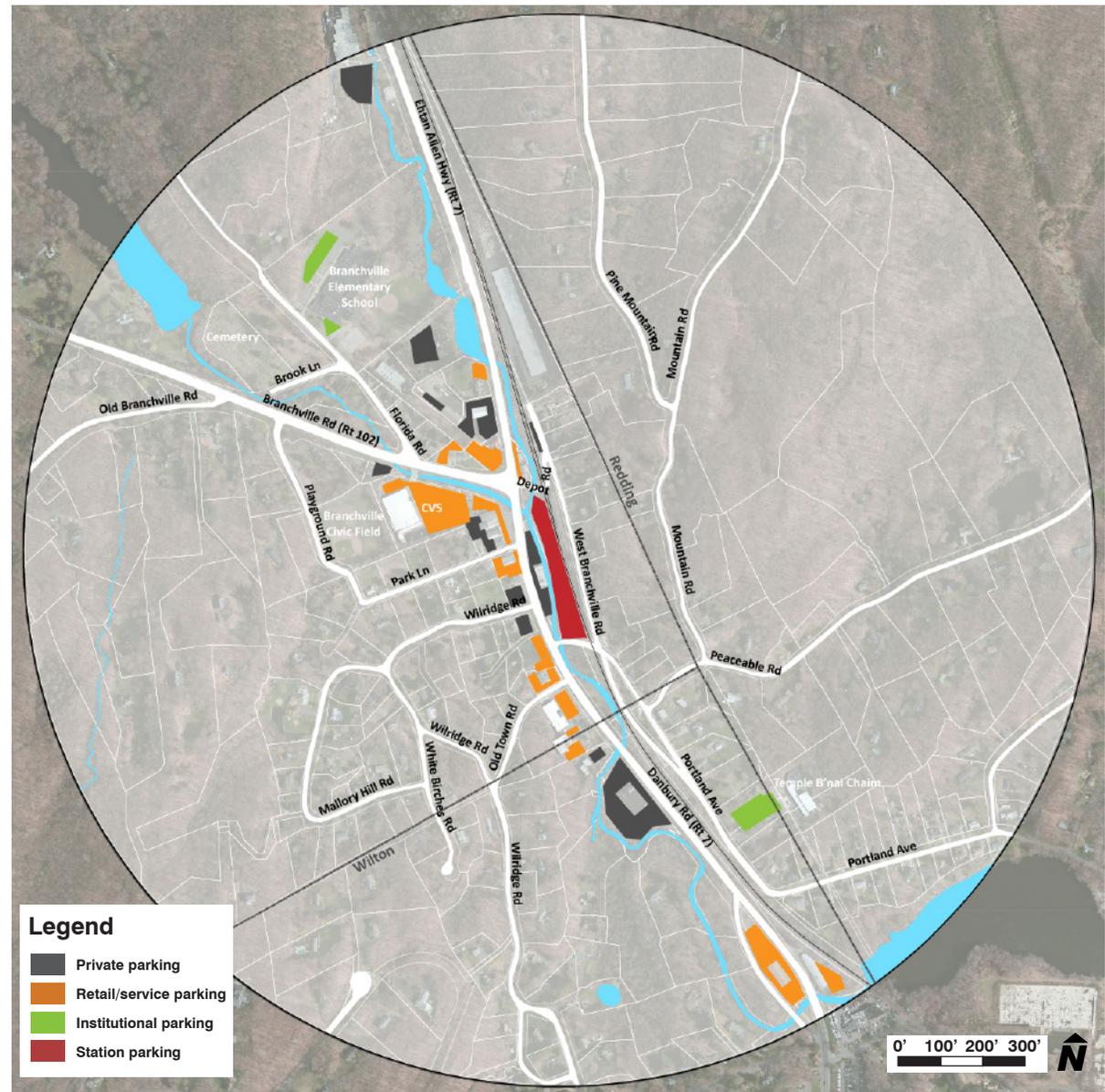
Parking supply in Branchville is distributed along Route 7 and is comprised of approximately 30 separate (excluding residential) lots. The largest parking areas in the study area include the Branchville Station lot, CVS/Ancona's Plaza lot, Branchville Elementary School, Temple B'nai Chaim and the former Jeep Dealership in Wilton.

In total, there are approximately 1,200 parking spaces in these non-residential parking lots. All parking is specific to use, with no signed shared facilities or municipal lots other than the train station lot.

The station lot is managed by the Ridgefield Parking Authority and has 130 commuter spaces that are reserved for permit holders and 15 daily parking spaces. On average, the lot is less than 80% utilized.

One of the few shared-use parking agreements is between Weir Farm and the Branchville Elementary School. Weir Farm, which is west of the study area, has a limited amount of on-site parking and therefore utilizes the Branchville Elementary School lot for off-site parking on weekends.

Parking within Branchville is generally sufficient to meet the needs of most businesses, the one exception being the Little Pub at the corner of Route 102 and Route 7. Patrons of the pub often park across the street in the CVS lot on busy evenings. The most significant issue surrounding parking is the lack of pedestrian and auto connectivity between lots. Due to the lack of connectivity, it is difficult for business commuters or patrons to park once and make trips to destinations on foot. Instead, business patrons often move vehicles from lot to lot, adding to traffic congestion in the area.



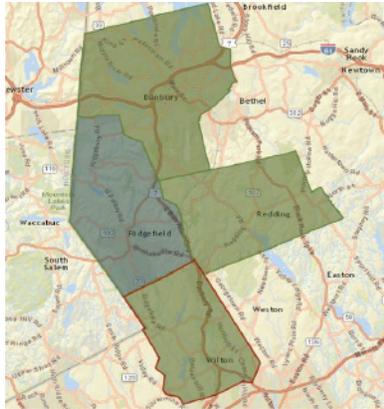
Parking Supply

Market Analysis

Trade Areas

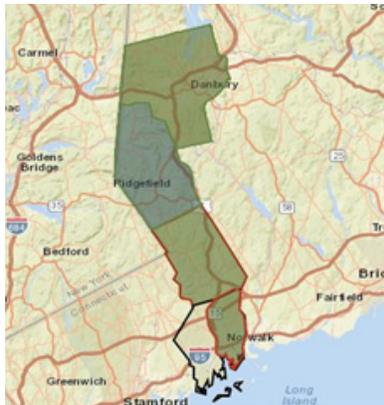
Defined Trade Area – Retail & Office

As part of the Real Estate Analysis, a Trade Area has been defined for the retail and office market which best represents the competitive marketplace for Ridgefield and Branchville. In addition to Ridgefield, the Study Area includes Danbury, Wilton – and in the case of Retail, Redding is added. Further submarket real estate analysis centered on the Route 7 corridor from Branchville to Cannondale. (Refer to map at left)



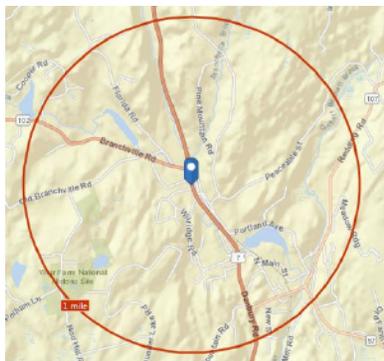
Defined Trade Area – Housing

A Trade Area for housing was defined for Ridgefield and Branchville as part of the Real Estate Analysis which best represents the competitive marketplace for the town and village. In addition to Ridgefield, the Study Area includes Danbury, Wilton and East Norwalk (Route 7). (Refer to map at left)



Defined Market Area – Branchville TOD Area

In order to evaluate demographic-economic profile of the Branchville area for Transit Oriented Development, a 1 mile radius was defined for the area centered at the axis of 35 Ethan Allen Highway (Route 7) – located across from the Branchville Train Station. This area encompasses Branchville business district and surrounding Ridgefield community as well as portions of Georgetown, consisting primarily of residential. Note: A ¼ mile radius area – essentially Branchville Business District - was defined for evaluating area of development potential.



Office Market

According to CoStar Group, a national provider of real estate information, Ridgefield’s leasable office market amounts to 815,000 square feet. Office inventory in the town varies considerably ranging from conventional office primarily serving professional services, small businesses, non-profit, and legal and financial service market to corporate headquarters and executive office space.

The vast majority of the leasable office space in Ridgefield, or 80%, is found in the Ridgefield Center area including lower Danbury Road. Much of this space, or 41%, is located in newer properties built since 1980. The newest office building in the Ridgefield Center area is a 19,600 sf mixed use property at 159 Danbury Road built in 2015. The property includes both office and residential, with the later representing mix of one and two bedrooms. Office space in this building is renting at \$30.00 per sf annually (triple net lease).

A second smaller office node in Ridgefield is situated around or near the intersection of Route 7 and Route 35. This area supports a total of 145,000 sf office much of it linked to a 60,000 sf medical office building located at 901 Ethan Allen Highway.

Below is a summary of key market highlights on the office market in Ridgefield, Branchville and surrounding area.

Ridgefield Region Office Market

Office Inventory – Ridgefield Region

The office market in the Ridgefield region is considerable totaling over 8.6 million sf. If the office inventory located on Route 7 -Merritt Parkway submarket were included, the total would jump to 11.7 million sf making it second only to Stamford in size (19.7 million). Ridgefield is a minor player within the regional office market accounting for 9.4% of the office market, but in absolute numbers, it supports a sizeable base given town size of 815,000 sf.

Ridgefield Region Office Market Inventory

Market	# of Properties	Total Inventory (sf)
Ridgefield	65	815,574
Danbury	252	5,337,452
Wilton	119	2,478,462
Total	436	8,631,488

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Office Vacancy - Region

Vacancy within the region appears mostly manageable ranging from 7.1% in Ridgefield to 14.6% in Danbury. However, a total 1.1 million square feet is on the market with an average lease-up time of 20 months. In Ridgefield, the lease-up time is shorter averaging 15 months. Meanwhile, over last five years, there has been little change in regional vacancy which has been moving sideways over-under 14% since 1st quarter 2012.

Vacancy Rate

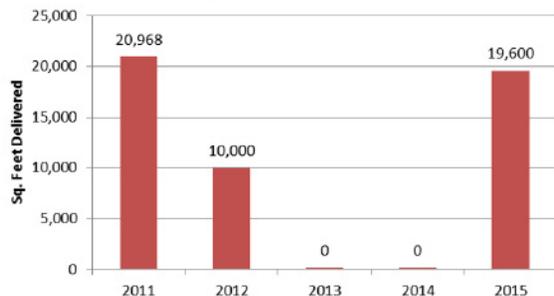


Source: CoStar Group

Office Inventory Growth - Region

The lack of inventory growth has helped keep office vacancy in the region somewhat stabilized even as the economy remains sluggish. Over last five years, 51,000 sf has been added to inventory amounting to a 0.6% increase in supply, indicative of low investment demand for new construction. By contrast, in the years 2006 to 2010 a total of 371,200 sf was added.

Inventory Growth Trends - Regional Office

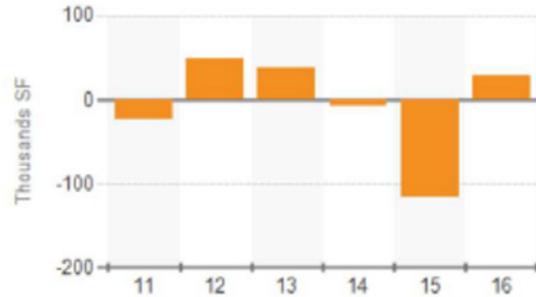


Source: CoStar Group

Office Absorption Trends - Region

Data on office absorption is showing a net loss over the last five years. In other words, more space has become vacant than absorbed placing added pressure on vacancy.

Net Absorption



Ridgefield Local Office Market

Inventory - Local Office

In evaluating the local office market, we looked at Ridgefield and two submarkets: the Route 7 corridor extending from Branchville to Cannondale (Wilton) and the Village of Branchville. With respect to the latter, there is very little inventory that falls into the category as office with only 5 properties identified totaling 22,170 sf.

Vacancy and Lease Rate Trends - Local Office

Office vacancy within Ridgefield and Branchville-Georgetown-Cannondale submarket are at relatively low with reported rates of 7.6% and 8.6%, respectively. Vacancy data was unavailable for the properties in Branchville, though it appears roughly 5,000 sf is on the market which would translate into a 16% vacancy, a rate somewhat exaggerated by the small number of properties.

Some indications of an improving office market occurring locally are noted in a five year analysis of vacancy rates. In Ridgefield, vacancy has dropped from a high of 11.6% in 2011 to its current level of 7.1%. Branchville-Georgetown-Cannondale peak occurred in 2012 with 9.3% vacancy that has since fallen to 8.6%.

Building Configuration & Market Base - Local Office

Building Configuration diverges considerably within the three submarkets. In Ridgefield nearly 30% of all properties, or 19 properties, are in buildings 15,000 sf or more, a size tailored towards accommodating traditional office users.

By comparison, in the Branchville-Georgetown-Cannondale submarket only one property exceeds 15,000 sf – represented by a mixed-use retail-office property of 17,000 sf – of which the upper second-story space consisting of 8,000 sf is office (notably - half is used as dancing studio). Two-thirds of Branchville-Georgetown-Cannondale's office inventory is found in properties under 5,000 sf indicative of a smaller scale – retail service orientation of this market.

In the Branchville Village TOD submarket only five properties were identified representing a mix of office and mixed use properties with office. Four of the properties fell under 5,000 sf and one consists of 8,500 sf of office in a retail-office building.

Ridgefield Local Office Market Inventory

Market	# of Properties	Total Inventory (sf)
Town of Ridgefield	65	815,574
Rt 7 Branchville-Cannondale	48	281,882
Branchville (0.25 mile radius)	5	22,173

Source: CoStar Group

Ridgefield Local Office Market Vacancy & Lease Rate

Market	Vacancy Rate	Average Lease Rate (\$/sf)
Town of Ridgefield	7.1%	\$27.26
Rt 7 Branchville-Cannondale	8.6%	\$23.47
Branchville (0.25 mile radius)	N/A	\$18.00

Source: CoStar Group



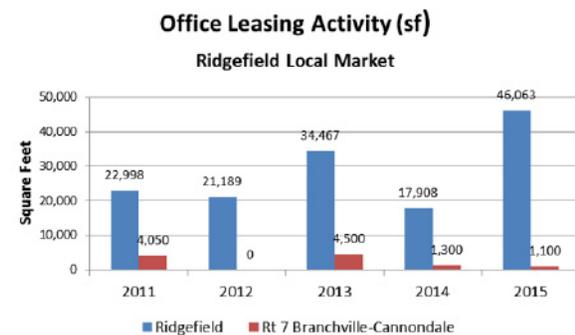
Leasing Activity – Local Office

Lease-up of office space in Ridgefield over the last five years has been surprisingly significant given size of market base in town. Since 2011, a total of 142,625 sf has been leased, representing an average of 28,525 sf a year. On an annual basis, the lease-up amounts to 3.5% absorption of inventory. Much of Ridgefield's office leasing is focused on properties within or on periphery of Ridgefield Center and along Danbury Road. It is largely driven by demand from traditional office employment sectors. These include professional services, finances, real estate, information, business services and management and more recently, healthcare.

Leasing activity in Branchville-Georgetown-Cannondale submarket, on the other hand, has been very light for the period 2011-2015. On average, the Branchville-Cannondale submarket leased just under 2,200 square feet a year, representing a small 0.01% annual lease-up of its market base.

While the broader Ridgefield office market caters to more traditional office sectors (professional services, finance, ect), the Branchville Rt7 office market base is mostly tailored to smaller retail oriented office use – proxies or substitutes to office - where walk in demand is a component. Instead of job growth which normally anticipates office demand, this market generally responds to changes in population which for the region has been somewhat muted over the past decade.

No leasing activity associated with office was identified for Branchville in last five years.



Retail Market

The retail market in the Ridgefield region is considerable amounting to over 8.2 million square feet, or 59 sf ft per capita. Within this market, Ridgefield supports a sizeable retail base relative to its population size and suburban location amounting to 1.02 million square feet, or 40.3 sf ft per capita. Wilton's retail nearly equals Ridgefield in size with 920,000 sf (49 sf per capita), while Redding's retail market is miniscule at 90,700 sf (10 sf per capita). Danbury dominates the market with 6.1 million sf, representing one of the larger urban retail markets in the state.

Ridgefield Regional Retail Market

Retail Inventory – Region

Ridgefield's regional retail market (Ridgefield, Danbury, Wilton, and Redding) consists of 8.2 million square feet. Danbury accounts for 75% of the market (6.2 million sf) followed by Ridgefield at 1.01 million sf and Wilton with 920,000 sf. Redding was included in this survey in light of its small business base in Georgetown. Total retail in Redding is estimated at 90,700 sf, essentially all in Georgetown.

Danbury functions as the retail center for the region, led by Danbury Fair Mall (1.2 million sf), but both Ridgefield and Wilton have developed a strong retail core designed to serve both local needs of its residents and a broader demand that pulls from the region.

Ridgefield Center in particular offers a diversified mix of national-regional retail outlets, locally-owned stores, numerous boutique stores and shops, businesses catering to personal services and needs, coupled with a lively casual dining and restaurant base.

Ridgefield Region Retail Market Inventory

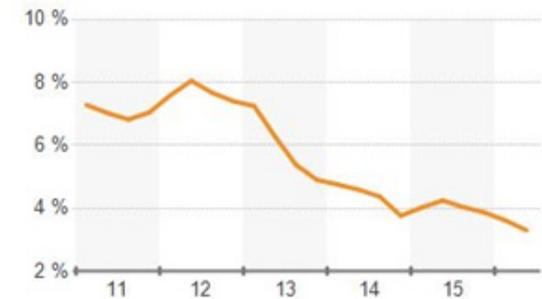
Market	# of Properties	Total Inventory (sf)
Ridgefield	97	1,019,984
Danbury	385	6,170,180
Redding	15	90,783
Wilton	78	920,397
Total	575	8,201,344

Source: CoStar Group

Retail Vacancy - Region

Although initially hit hard by the recession, retail vacancy has been on a downward trajectory for the region over the last five years as shown in the graph below. In 1st quarter 2016, retail vacancy stood at 3.2% down from a peak of 8% in 2012. In Ridgefield, retail vacancy for 2016 was even lower at 2.5%, essentially full occupancy.

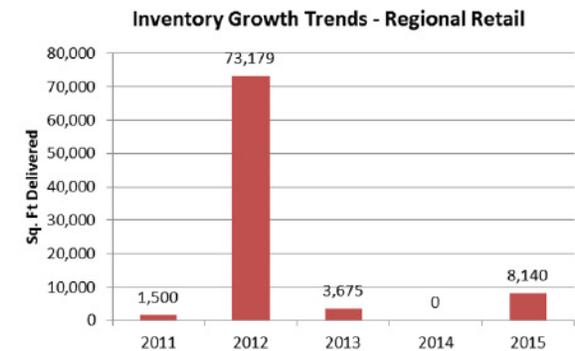
Vacancy Rate



Source: CoStar Group

Retail Inventory Growth - Region

The one area of notable softness in the retail market within the region is observed in lack of new delivered space over the last five years, or indeed since 2007, outside of 70,000 sf in 2012.



Source: CoStar Group

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Retail Absorption Trends – Region

Net absorption in retail, on the other hand, has been positive over last five years in the region with the exception of 2015 when it was essentially flat (leased space equaled vacated space).

Net Absorption



Source: CoStar Group

Ridgefield Local Retail Market

Local Retail Market Inventory

On the local level, we examined market conditions for retail within the same submarkets identified for the office market. They include:

- Ridgefield
- Route 7/Branchville -Georgetown-Cannondale
- Branchville Village

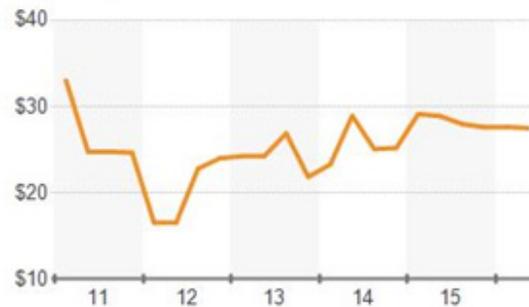
As noted earlier, Ridgefield supports a well-established retail base of 1.0 million square feet. Over 80% of this retail is concentrated in Ridgefield Center and area just north of the downtown. Smaller retail nodes in Ridgefield are found in Branchville and at the junction of Route 7 and Danbury Road.

As a matter of market definition, Branchville and Georgetown function as a single market thus the submarket – Branchville/Georgetown-Cannondale. This retail base consists of 278,500 sf. The Branchville TOD area is a subset of this market and supports 71,500 sf.

Local Retail Market - Vacancy & Lease Rates -Local

Similar to the region overall, vacancy rates are low ranging from 2.5% in Ridgefield to 4.9% in Branchville TOD. Asking rents for retail are relatively high averaging between \$22.43/sf (Branchville-Cannondale) to \$27.91/sf (Ridgefield) and have been rising steadily by as much as 8% annually since 2012.

NNN Asking Rent Per SF



Source: CoStar Group

Leasing Activity - Local

Strong leasing activity and low vacancy over the last five years has helped push up lease rates particularly in Ridgefield. Overall in the past five years, Ridgefield witnessed lease-up of retail space equaling nearly 100,000 sf. Not surprisingly, Branchville-Georgetown-Cannondale and Branchville TOD posted much smaller totals of 24,200 sf and 12,500 sf, respectively. (Refer to chart on leasing trends at right)

Inventory Growth – Local

Similar to what was observed for the region, the local market has yet to witness much new inventory growth over the last ten years. As can be seen in chart below neither Branchville TOD nor the Route 7 Branchville-Cannondale submarkets recorded any new growth from 2006-2015. Meanwhile, Ridgefield Center – Danbury Rd reported only a modest 30,600 sf gain over this time span, an expansion of inventory of only 3.3%.

Ridgefield Local Retail Market Inventory

Market	# of Properties	Total Inventory (sf)
Town of Ridgefield	97	1,019,984
Rt 7 Branchville-Cannondale	43	278,479
Branchville (0.25 mile radius)	10	71,542

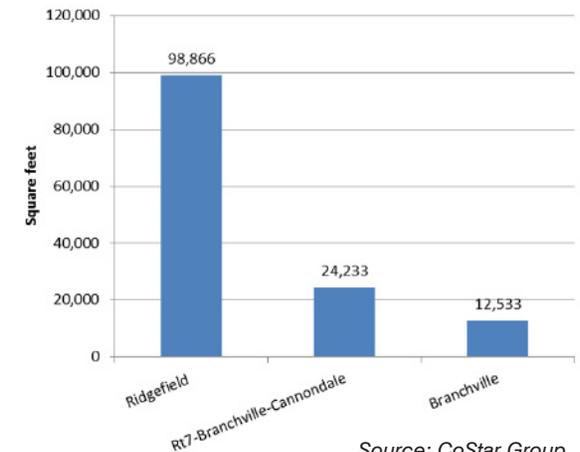
Source: CoStar Group

Ridgefield Local Retail Market Vacancy & Lease Rate

Market	Vacancy Rate	Average Lease Rate (\$/sf)
Town of Ridgefield	2.5%	\$27.91
Rt 7 Branchville-Cannondale	4.4%	\$23.43
Branchville (0.25 mile radius)	4.9%	\$24.20

Source: CoStar Group

Total Retail Leasing - (2011-2015)



Source: CoStar Group

Housing Market

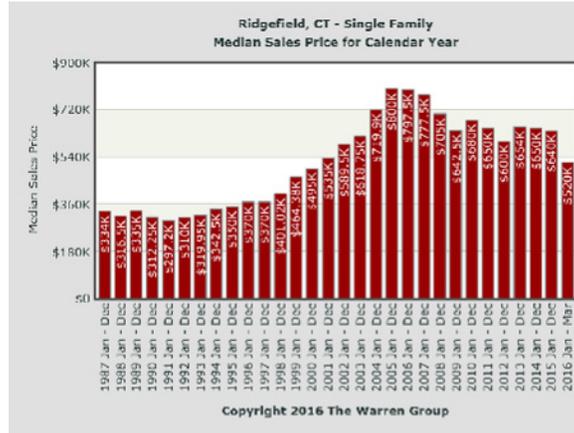
The Ridgefield housing market is over 80% single family, but in the last 15 years the town has seen an increase in the number of multi-family housing proposals targeting both condo and rental housing. Much of the rental housing that has come before the town has been in the form of applications under the state affordable housing statute 80-3g which shifts the burden of proof for denial on the town, and only in cases of health and safety. In response to the flurry of proposals, Ridgefield was successful in gaining a moratorium from the state on affordable housing proposals via 80-3g for a period of 4 years through 2018.

Price support for new housing in Ridgefield is strong though in terms of ownership the market has yet to fully recover from the housing collapse of 2007. Resales on recently constructed condos, however, have hit as high as a \$700,000 – though most fall within the \$550,000+ range. Meanwhile, rents in new Ridgefield apartments range from \$1850 to \$2975/month (net). Nationally, new rental housing has been on a five year boom, though in Connecticut most of the development has been relegated to its economically stronger cities of Stamford, Danbury, Norwalk and New Haven. In Ridgefield, most rental housing that has come before the town for approval is modest in size ranging from 8 to 20 units.

Ridgefield Ownership Housing Trends

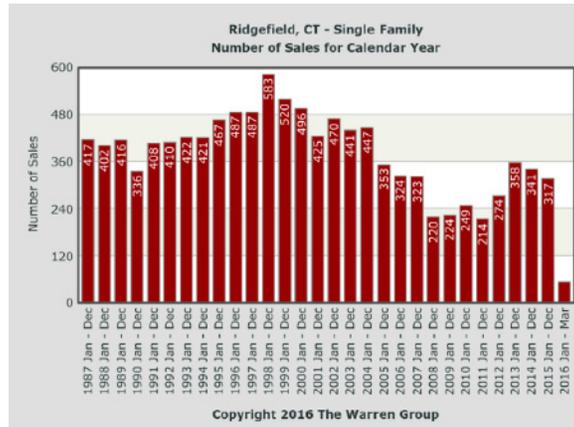
Single Family Market- Pricing Trends

While home values in Ridgefield fell less on a percentage basis than most area towns in the aftermath of the housing collapse, they have yet to recover to pre-recession levels. In 2015, median sales price for a single family home in Ridgefield was \$640,000, 20% below peak value attained in 2005. On the plus side, home values in town appear to have stabilized since 2012, though price appreciation has been minimal in recent years.



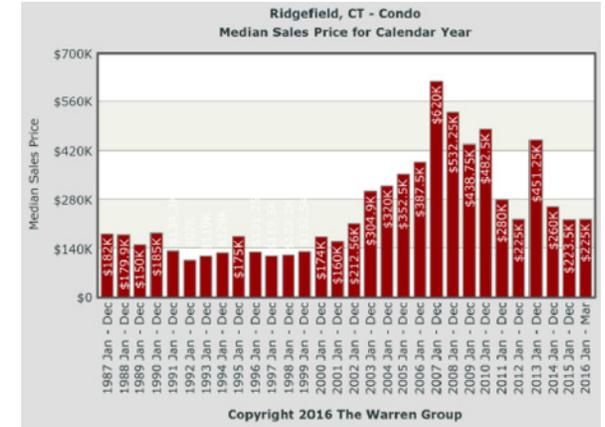
Single Family Market- Sales Volume Trends

Single Family Sales volume in Ridgefield hit bottom in 2008, though from an historical perspective, sales have been dropping steadily since 1998. Meanwhile, signs of a rebound in sales emerged in 2012-2014 that eclipsed pre-recession levels, only to be followed by two years of decline. Even at its height in 2013, sales volume was still well below annual sales totals achieved 1987-2004.



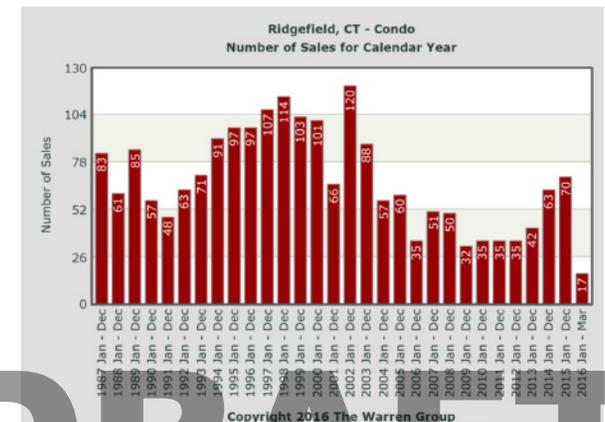
Condo Market-Pricing Trends

Median condo price in Ridgefield for 2015 was surprisingly low at \$223,500, but is largely shaped by resales from two older condominiums in town of 1970's vintage, Fox Hill Village and Casagmo, which together account for more than 600 units. In contrast, the newly built 73-unit Regency in Ridgefield town-homes (2008) on Danbury Road is recording resales exceeding \$700,000.



Condo Market-Sales Volume Trends

Meanwhile, condo sales volume has picked up in Ridgefield with 70 units in 2015, well above the pre-recession level of 51 units in 2007 and the most since 2003.



Regional Rental Housing Trends

In order to obtain a broader understanding of the market dynamics affecting the rental housing market in Ridgefield, rental housing data was collected among towns/cities in the following Eastern Fairfield County submarket region.

Vacancy Rates-Region: Year to date vacancy in the region for 2015 stood at 7.5% compared to 7.7% for Fairfield County. Prior to 2015, vacancy averaged closer to 5%. According to forecasts, vacancy will continue to be elevated through much of the remaining decade. (Refer to chart on following page for vacancy trends since 2011).

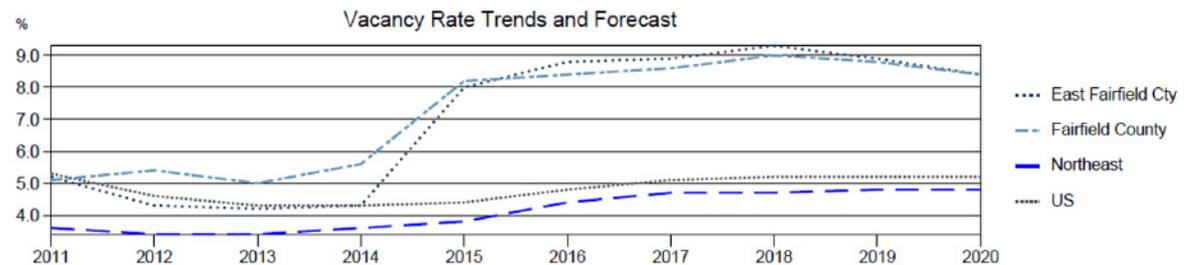
Rent Growth-Region: Eastern Fairfield County experienced a strong 5.6% rent growth in 2015, double the rate of growth achieved over the past three years (2.6% annually). Much of the growth is associated with new rental housing coming on line. Projections for Eastern Fairfield County call for rent hikes to drift down to 2.0% annual by 2018.

Asking Rents-Region: Asking rents for a two bedroom unit averaged \$1,645/m in the Eastern Fairfield County market area. This compares to \$2,281/month for same bedroom type in Fairfield County overall.

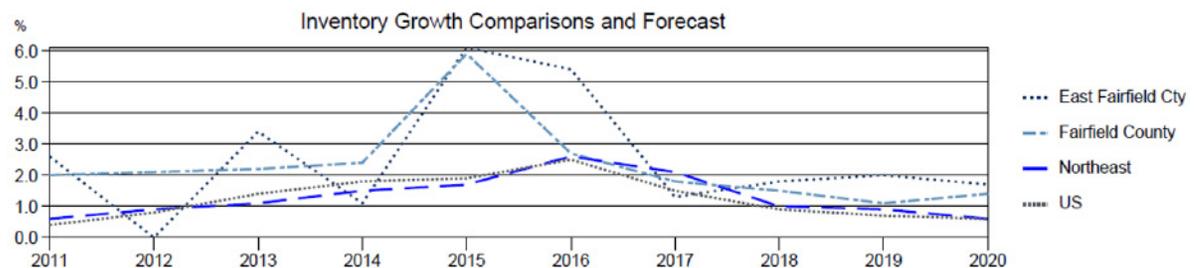
Inventory Growth-Region: Rental housing inventory expanded by 6.1% in the region in 2015 reflecting a surge in new construction of apartments that occurred in the region. Over the last three years a more modest growth rate of 3.5% annually has been the norm. It is expected that the inventory growth will moderate even further over the next five years to 2.4% annually as potential over-supply in high end rentals becomes a factor.



Housing region



Source: REIS Data



Source: REIS Data

Local Rental Housing Trends

Ridgefield's Rental Market is Small, but Expanding: Ridgefield's rental market consists of 18% of total occupied housing, or 1,605 units (2015). Although small, the rental base has been expanding rising from 1,235 units in 2000 to its present base, a 29% increase. Projections for 2020, however, indicate flat growth for rental in large part due to impact of a 4-year moratorium the town received from the state on 80-3g affordable housing proposals.

Ridgefield's Rental Profile Weighted towards Single Family: Ridgefield's private non-subsidized rental market is varied in product type though most rentals in town are associated with single family homes (32%) reflective of the corporate executive-base market that resides in town. The balance of the rental market is distributed between condo rentals (26%), professionally managed rental apartments (12%), and multi-family homes (14%). Much of the managed apartment supply is new with a sizeable share built in last 10 years. Governmental-assisted housing accounts for nearly 16% of Ridgefield's rental market, a sizeable share for a wealthy suburban community. Not included in the rental breakout below is privately owned and managed Ridgefield Crossing, a senior housing community with 123 units. (Refer to table below)

Ridgefield Rental Housing by Type

Rental Housing Type	Share
Market Rate Rentals	83.9%
Managed Apartments	11.8%
Multi-family	13.9%
Condo	25.8%
Single Family	32.4%
Government Assisted Housing	16.1%

Source: CoStar Group

Rental Market in Ridgefield Tight at 1.2% Vacancy: According to US Census/ACS survey, rental vacancy in town is tight reflecting near full occupancy at a rate of 1.3%. Fairfield County is nearly double, but also low at 2.4% for 2015. Typically in such tight markets, rent rate growth begins to rise which previously averaged 2.5% annually in last four years.

Active Rental Housing Development in Ridgefield: Most under 80-3g Affordable Housing Act: Ridgefield has seen a number of rental housing projects that have come on line in the last decade under Connecticut's 80-3g Affordable Housing legislation. These include Terraces at Ridgefield (now named Ridgefield 619) at 619 Danbury Road with 50 units, 593 Main Street (16 units), 159 Danbury Road Apartments (12 units) -part of a mixed-use residential-commercial property, and Governor House at 76 Governor St (16 units). The town, however, recently applied to the state for a moratorium on 80-3g proposals which was granted. The moratorium will run through 2018.

Proposed Housing for 306 Units Moving Forward: Ridgefield's largest proposed housing project is the Eureka V development calling for 306 units off Bennett's Farm Road and Route 7. The project dates back to 2002 and has been part of a long running lawsuit between developer and town over eminent domain and density issues. The town has approved a concept plan for the project as an affordable housing development under 80-3g. At this point it is not known if units will be rental or ownership. Developer is presently in process of gaining access to sewer and water capacity for its project.

2.7% of Ridgefield Housing Base is Defined Affordable: According to State DECD as of 2015, Ridgefield has a total of 256 affordable units which count towards the threshold for the Affordable Housing Appeals Act. Nearly 70% of the units tabulated are designated as governmental-assisted units, with the remainder associated with rental assistance (3), low interest government mortgages (15), or deed-restricted units (59).

Survey of Rents in Study Area Reveal Strong Price Support: A survey of rental housing in the Ridgefield Area that includes Ridgefield, Wilton and the Route 7 region of Norwalk reveals strong rent support for new construction rental with one and two bedroom units averaging \$1,759/month and \$2,522/month respectively. Average rents in Ridgefield among surveyed complexes are somewhat below Wilton and Norwalk, but reflect in large part older product – specifically associated with condo rental. Two bedroom rents at newer apartments in Ridgefield average \$1875/m at Ridgefield 619, \$2,162/m at Island Hills Apartments and \$3,260/m at 85 Governor House (rent includes heat and hot water). Below are tables providing summary of rental housing survey in study area Rentals of single family homes were not included as part of the MLS survey.

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Local Rental Housing – Summary of Rental Market Survey

- A survey of professionally managed market rate apartments in the 4-town trade area identified 27 apartment complexes. Thirteen properties were identified in Ridgefield.
- In Ridgefield, two bedroom rents in managed apartments averaged \$2,425/month, with rents ranging from \$1850 at Woodgate on Danbury Road to \$3450/m (includes H&HW) at 86 Governor, a new 20-unit rental complex targeted for occupancy July 2016. Condo rentals averaged \$2375/m for a two bedroom unit, while two bedroom rents in multi-family homes averaged \$1686/month.
- Overall in the 4–town competitive trade area, apartment rents for two bedrooms average \$2,450/month, with averages ranging from \$1719/month in Danbury to \$3297/m in Wilton. As noted above, two bedroom rents in complexes surveyed in Wallingford averaged \$2,375/month.
- All four markets in the trade area have witnessed the construction of new market rate rental housing in last decade that include six in Ridgefield (includes one mix-use), three in Danbury, one in Wilton and four in Norwalk-Route 7 submarket.
- As expected, the more affordable rental product in the region was found in multi-family units, principally in Danbury which averaged \$1,101/m and \$1375/m respectively, for a one and two bedroom unit. Overall in the region, averages calculated to \$1263/m (1 BR) and \$1659/m (2BR).

Ridgefield Rental Housing by Type

Town	Number of Complexes	One Bedroom Units			Two Bedroom Units		
		Average Rent	Average Size (sf)	Rental Cost per sf	Average Rent	Average Size (sf)	Rental Cost per sf
Ridgefield	13	\$1,527	816	\$1.92	\$2,425	1,174	\$2.03
Danbury	6	\$1,470	898	\$1.64	\$1,719	1,157	\$1.49
Wilton	3	\$2,043	886	\$2.48	\$3,297	1,415	\$2.32
Norwalk-Rt 7	5	\$1,965	852	\$2.45	\$2,357	1,159	\$2.15
Average		\$1,751	863	\$2.12	\$2,450	1,126	\$2.00

Source: Internet, Property Managers, Real Estate Ads & Journals, Craigslist

Multi-Family Housing Rental Summary - Ridgefield Trade Area

Town	Number of Units	One Bedroom Units		Two Bedroom Units	
		Average Rent	Average Size (sf)	Average Rent	Average Size (sf)
Ridgefield	17	\$1,366	700	\$1,686	995
Danbury	61	\$1,101	739	\$1,375	1,166
Wilton	124	\$1,322	730	\$1,799	1,187
Norwalk-Rt 7	2	N/A	N/A	\$1,775	1,200
Average		\$1,263	723	\$1,659	1,137

Note: Multi-family refers to privately owned 2-4 unit home

Source: CT MLS

Condo Housing Rental Summary - Ridgefield Trade Area

Town	Number of Units	One Bedroom Units		Two Bedroom Units	
		Average Rent	Average Size (sf)	Average Rent	Average Size (sf)
Ridgefield	35	\$1,591	900	\$2,375	1,478
Danbury	114	\$1,137	719	\$1,675	1,346
Wilton	170	\$1,606	777	\$2,056	1,226
Norwalk-Rt 7	28	\$1,588	698	\$2,531	1,311
Average		\$1,481	774	\$2,159	1,340

Source: CT MLS

Market Analysis Conclusions

Office Market TOD Potential

Market data collected to date on the Office Market suggests very little potential for development within the Branchville TOD study area. While, vacancy levels regionally and locally have dropped since peaks during recession they still remain elevated. Moreover, there appears to be little investment appetite for new office and virtually none for speculative space, with the possible exception of medical office.

In terms of Branchville TOD opportunity, much of what is marketed or used as office tends to be service-based and would fit easily into a retail building format. It was observed, however, that there is a notable lack of representation in conventional office sectors supporting legal, real estate, and accounting-finance in Branchville to the extent these sectors service a more service-oriented market – i.e. households or other businesses.

While service based office is in abundance in Ridgefield Center – and noted further south on Route 7 in Wilton, these businesses if located in Branchville offer potential for meeting more localized niche requirements, while at same time being close to rapid transit if needed. However, as it is highly unlikely that any conventional office would be developed in Branchville over a 5-7 year timeframe to accommodate such use – the inclusion of such businesses, would likely rely on vacancies in existing commercial space or possibly conversion of an existing property.

Office Market Opportunity- Branchville

Based on factors related to competition and tepid market environment, we anticipate only minor office growth potential in the Branchville TOD area totaling no more than 1,000 to 2,250 sf. It is expected that office demand in Branchville will principally be tied to businesses in independent-based legal, financial, real estate, and medical/allied health related sectors linked to local demand. All of these sectors are commonly found in commercial districts and could

be accommodated in Branchville. They are also underrepresented or absent in the business mix of the village.

With the current market environment ill-suited for supporting investment in new construction for office in Branchville, it is further expected that any office growth that emerges in the village will be absorbed in vacant space or as component of a property conversion or as part of a new mix-use project.

Retail Market TOD Potential

A stronger case can be made for retail growth within the TOD area given tight vacancies locally and high household income base in the trade area. However, a number of market and locational factors are likely to constrain opportunity for retail in Branchville.

Heading the list is low population density in a 1-2 mile radius, coupled with low population growth, though drive-by traffic from residents and non-residents alike are providing support of local businesses in Branchville according to local anecdotal data. Area competition is also a factor with Ridgefield Center-Danbury Road - 4 miles distance - containing nearly 800,000 sf of retail, while Route 7 south to Cannondale adds another 200,000 sf.

Lack of buildable sites with direct frontage to Route 7 appears to be another constraint – with essentially no viable locations on east side of Route 7 in the TOD area and only small infill options on the west side. Expanded options are noted on a number of side streets, but most retailers considering Branchville would want the visibility from Route 7.

On the other hand, capacity for parcel assemblage appears favorable with land ownership among commercial properties in the hands of a few owners. Strong traffic counts in the Branchville area are also supportive of retail growth. Meanwhile, a survey of the business district reveals low vacancy with only one vacant ground floor commercial space identified located at 37 Ethan Allen Highway. This space formerly housed the La Piazza and Wine Bar which closed in 2014.

One area of opportunity for growth in Branchville was identified in fast and prepared food and casual dining options in the village which would benefit both from local demand and connection to rapid transit, as well as its location along a highly traveled corridor. Additional opportunity for retail-commercial is identified among businesses catering to convenience based goods and services based on retail gap data reflecting additional capacity for growth in the district.

Retail Market Opportunity – Branchville

Based on the research undertaken of the retail/service/commercial market in Ridgefield and more specifically the Branchville trade area, it is estimated that from 2,500 to 7,500 additional sf could be supported in the Branchville district over a five-six year period depending on configuration (freestanding, infill or mixed use). As noted previously, much of this would likely be in the form of convenience based retail and services (some niche oriented), and would include full and limited service dining and take-out designed to serve a local-based and drive-by market.

As a side note, we also observed the presence of a market niche in the Branchville area that could represent an expansion opportunity oriented towards the building trades and home improvement market that included a hardware store, equipment rental, stone and marble wholesaler, specialty glass, and cabinetry. This sector is also well represented in fair numbers further north on Ethan Allen Highway outside of village.

While demand data indicates support for additional retail in Branchville, growth in retail supply in Branchville is likely to be constrained by investment reticence in new construction unless anchored by a high grade credit tenant. High commercial rents in the area – though Branchville is more competitive than other nearby districts – could also become an impediment to growth with only businesses capable of achieving high sales per square feet likely to be interested in space.

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Housing Market TOD Potential

Probably as no surprise, the strongest market opportunity for development in the Branchville TOD area is linked with housing. This is the case for both ownership and rental, though latent demand is deepest for rental.

Condo Housing Market

Market factors in support of condo development include lack of new product in town which is dominated by two complexes built in the early 1970's comprising nearly 600 units – many rented. Most of these units, many one bedrooms, resale in the \$250,000 range, while median sales price for a condo in Ridgefield for 2015 was \$223,500 according to Warren Group.

However, a better test of price support for condos was noted in sales at Regency at Ridgefield built in 2008 – all townhouses- which sold at prices \$550,000+ with recent listings topping \$700,000. Condo opportunity is also enhanced by Ridgefield's high ranking as a residential location. Additionally, condo demand in town is benefiting from growth in the 55+ household market which is expected to expand by 43% between 2010–2020 in Ridgefield. As this market ages, senior households will be looking for opportunities in town to downsize.

While demographics, solid price support, dearth of newer product, and a desirable town location suggests an opportunity for condo housing in Branchville, a number of constraints impact on development potential in the village.

One such issue is that regionally-locally the condo market is still on the mend following the housing collapse of 2007 and subsequent financial crisis. Sales volume has started to pick up in Ridgefield but sales prices have yet to revive to post recession levels with price levels still down by 42% since 2006. Again part of this impacted by lack of new product, but nevertheless reflects continued weakness.

Branchville is also not perceived as a competitive location for condo, with areas closer to Ridgefield

Center deemed more favorable and marketable for ownership housing. Areas closer to the center have the additional benefit of access to public sewer that simplifies development.

Rental Housing Market

A more persuasive argument can be made for rental housing in the TOD area where proximity to the train station represents a stronger market advantage over condo and should help with rent support. Even without the connection to the train station, data on housing rents in the area appears quite strong locally with two bedrooms ranging from \$1875 to \$2900/m (net) . Anecdotal data on lease-ups in a number of newer properties in town also suggest strong demand. Demographics also favor rental housing with highest growth rates projected among young adults 20-35 years over the next five years in Ridgefield.

Regionally the data on rental housing continues to be favorable, as it has been for almost the past eight years. Rent rate growth lifted to 5.6% in 2015 following three years at 2.5%. New inventory has also begun to hit the regional marketplace expanding by 6.1% in 2015. One cautionary note is this inventory growth has led to an increase in vacancy that is projected to remain above 5% through the end of the decade.

Overall vacancy in Ridgefield for rental continues to remain very low at under 2% despite the spate of rental housing projects in recent years-most under the state's affordable housing act 80-3g. An estimated 100 rental units have been approved and built under the regulation, the largest represented by Terraces at Ridgefield (now Ridgefield 619), but most sized between 8 to 16 units. Another 30+ units have been built as 100% market rate.

One other very sizeable housing project approved under 80 3g, but unbuilt, is the conceptually approved 306-unit Eureka Development located in north Ridgefield, which has been mired in a lawsuit with the town for over a decade. Given legal and infrastructure issues (no public sewer or water), it is not known when and if this project will move forward, or to what degree it will include rental, if any.

In terms of Branchville, household growth town-wide point to potential demand of as much as 250 units by end of decade of which 50 to 75 units would represent demand for rental housing. Regional latent demand for rental housing and shifts in household tenure could push that figure as high as 150 units. Key market groups for new rental in Ridgefield include both empty nesters and a burgeoning 20-34 age group that is showing up in local demographics, the later a likely prime candidate for any rental housing that might be proposed in Branchville.

Housing Market Opportunity – Branchville

Rental housing represents the strongest development opportunity for Branchville, both in terms of market and location. While depth of market and absorption potential would largely be defined by the target market, based on results of a market penetration analysis covering a broad market base it is estimated that up to 20 to 50 units could be envisioned for the target Branchville TOD area in a 5-6 year period, assuming issues related to sewer or septic capacity are resolved.

Summary of Development Potential

Of the three market sectors analyzed, the most conservative development scenario is projected for office given subdued condition of the market and constraints in future demand for the foreseeable future due to economy, though select options for small-scale legal, finance, real estate, health care related businesses is possible given how underrepresented they are in the district.

Development opportunities for Retail/Service/Dining in the target area appear to be moderately positive. However, scale of such development will be affected by level of economic growth locally and regionally, as well as success in identifying latent demand for goods and services in an area presently underserved. It is expected that much of the retail-commercial will be in the form of convenience-based services and food services – though it was also observed the village has

formed a market niche in building trades and home improvement which may represent an opportunity for further expansion.

Rental housing represents the most viable real estate sector for development in the TOD area based on market strength and advantages inherent with proximity to train station. This sector is also seeing the strongest investment interest from local and regional developers most likely to consider Branchville. New housing in the Branchville could take the form of infill, rehab conversion or new construction and be either stand alone or mixed use. Moreover, both market-rate and mixed income scenarios could be envisioned. In either case, enhancement of conditions along Route 7 would immeasurably enhance marketability.

Below is a summary chart of development potential over a five year period targeted for the Branchville TOD area based on the forgoing analysis of market conditions and market depth within select market sectors in the region, town and targeted TOD area.

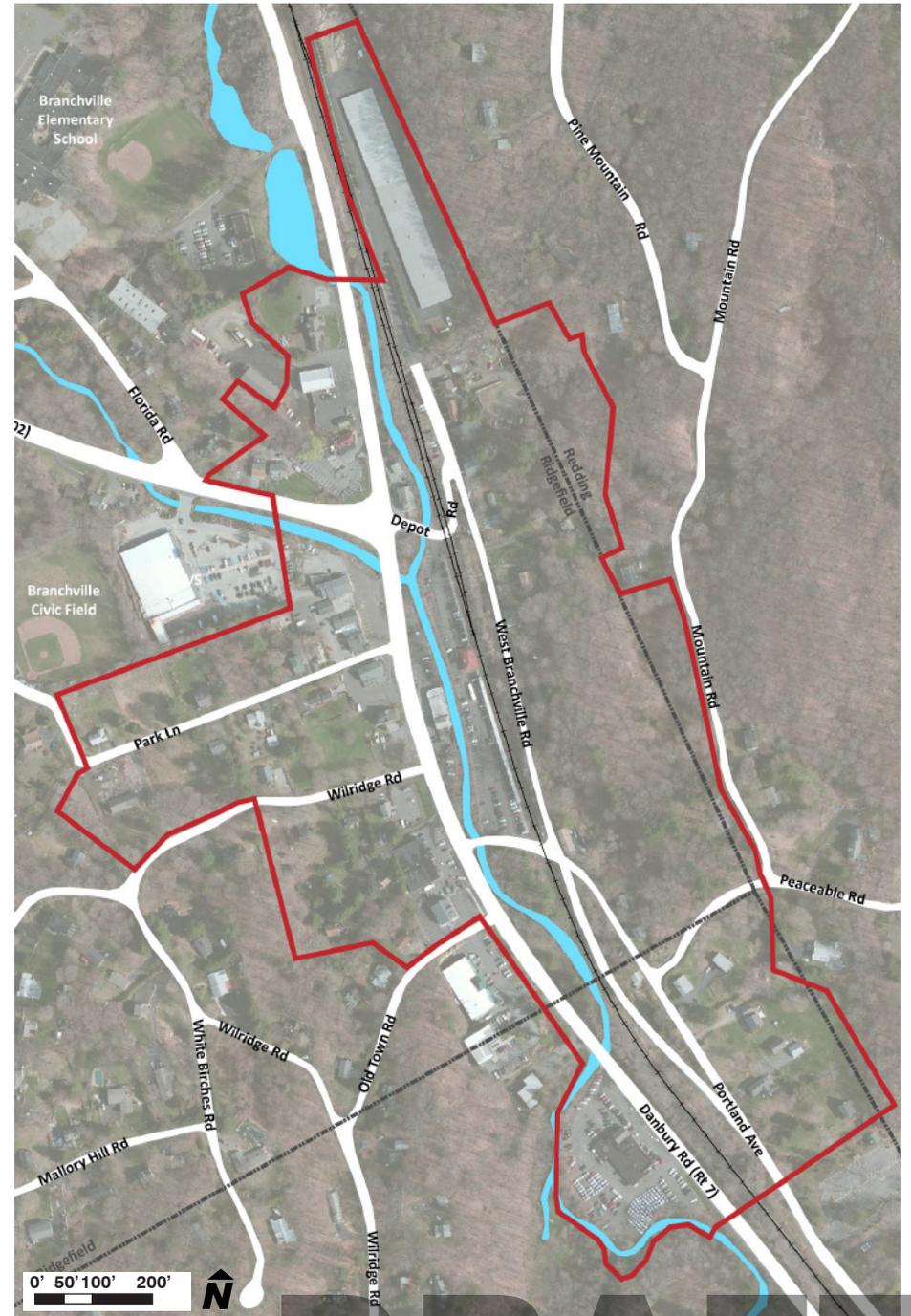
Market Sector	Development potential under existing conditions
Office	1,000-2,250 sf
Retail-Services-Food	2,500-7,500 sf
Housing (rental)	20-50 units

Recommended TOD Focus Area

The recommended TOD focus area is comprised of approximately 54 acres (including rights-of-way and other non-developable areas) in proximity of Branchville Station. This area was identified based upon the preceding existing conditions analysis and represents the area that has the greatest susceptibility to change.

Most of the 54 acres are located in Ridgefield, but the recommended focus area includes Wilton and Redding. The area per town is as follows:

- Ridgefield: 40 acres
- Redding: 4 acres
- Wilton: 10 acres



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Recommended TOD Focus Area