



Status of Open Space in Ridgefield



**Prepared by the Ridgefield
Conservation Commission**

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Executive Summary

The Town of Ridgefield is approximately 1,080 acres short of its stated goal of 30 percent open space. Only 380 acres have been added to the open-space inventory in the last 20 years. In addition, the potential inventory of private land suitable for open space consideration has dropped by 40 percent in the last 7 to 8 years.

Today, the Ridgefield Conservation Commission has identified nearly 1,040 acres in Ridgefield that could be considered for inclusion in its open-space mission. It believes that unless aggressive and active measures are taken immediately, the Town will not realize its open-space goal.

1.0 Background

The Ridgefield Conservation Commission has reviewed existing and potential Ridgefield open space properties (Figure 1) to ascertain if the current accounting of such spaces is consistent with the *DEEP Comprehensive Open Space Acquisition Plan* (referred to as the *2016-2020 Green Plan*). Open space is defined by DEEP as:

Any area of undeveloped or relatively natural land, including forest land, land designated as wetland under section 22a-30, and not excluding farm land, the preservation or restriction of the use of which would:

- maintain and enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources,
- protect natural streams or water supply,
- promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches or tidal marshes,
- enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forest, wildlife preserves, nature reservations or sanctuaries or other open spaces,
- enhance public recreation opportunities, or
- preserve historic sites.

Open space does not mean undeveloped natural land or land with an unofficial passive recreational use. For land to be termed “open space”, it must be either preserved or protected. It is defined as follows:

- **Preserved Open Space** – An area of land that has been acquired and is used for open space purposes. Includes DEEP’s State Parks, State Forests, and Wildlife Areas, and Class I and II watershed land.
- **Protected Open Space** – Any area of land with a restriction that would limit its use to open space. Includes lands subject to conservation restriction, deed restriction, or certain reserved rights.

The results of this exercise are presented in the following summary tables. The commission discovered a slightly lower estimate of open space than previously thought. As shown in Table 1, total estimated open space in Ridgefield is 5,636 acres, or 25.2 percent of the Town’s 22,387 acres of land verses 5,800 acres or 26 percent, as stated on the Town website. Thus, the Town is 1,080 acres short of its stated 30 percent open-space goal of 6,716.

This report examines the history of open space in Ridgefield, recent developments, and the challenges that the Town faces to achieve its 30 percent open space goal.

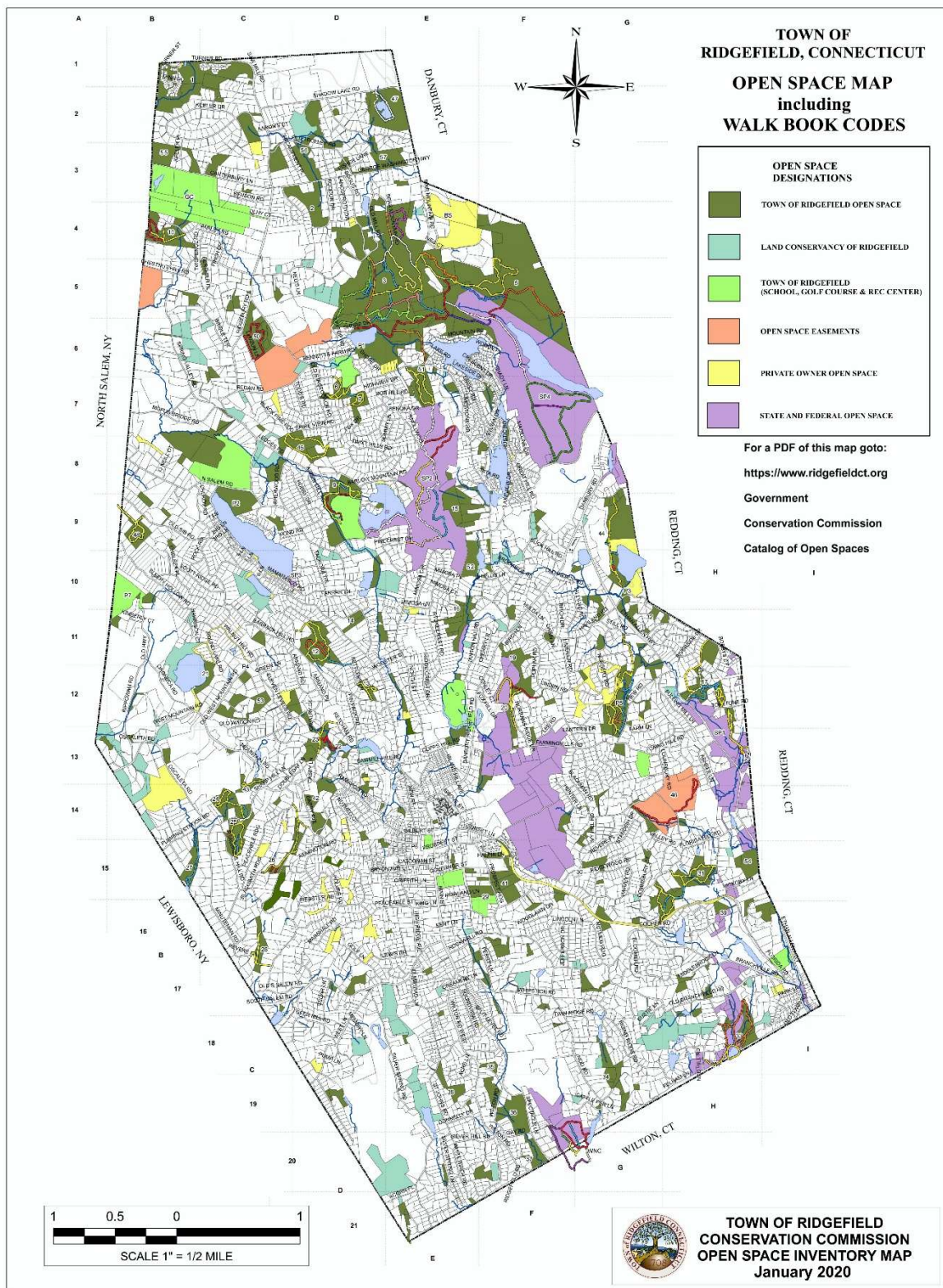


Figure 1

Key to 2020 Open Space Map

February 9, 2020

Town-Owned Open Space	Acres		Acres
1 Turner Hill/Ridgebury Farms	94	51 Liebowitz Knapp Sanctuary	31
2 Scodon	35	52 Taylor's Pond	29
3 Hemlock Hills	385	53 Lynch Brook Road	24
4 Lake Windwing (also see P1)	63	54 Hickory Lane	21
5 Pine Mountain	313	55 Keeler Court	37
6 Peterson Gorge	16	56 Old Trolley	50
7 Ridgebury Slope	14	57 George Washington Highway	25
8 Sherwood Refuge	12	Other Owned	491
9 Kiah's Brook/Titicus Preserve	54		
10 Sarah Bishop	39	Town Conservation Easements	305
11 Berthier Equestrian Trail	3		
12 Levy Park	46	Parks	
13 Barrack Hill Refuge	9	P1 Lake Windwing	39
14 High Pastures	8	P2 Richardson Park	29
15 Limestone Preserve	50	P3 Martin Park	29
16 Ridgefield Brook (Stonecrest)	33	P4 Sachem Hill	4
17 Bobby's Court	34	P5 Aldrich Park	52
18 Topstone Preserve	9	P6 Ballard Park	5
19,20 John Soluri Preserve (town-owned)	45	P7 Sturges Park	53
21 Round Pond Preserve	11		
22,23 Mar-Joy Pond/Casey Lane	36	Land Conservancy Open Space	702
24 West Mountain Refuge:Reed	27		
25 West Mountain Refuge:McManus	28	State and Federal Open Space	
26 Blacksmith Ridge	34	SP1 Norwalk River Env Study Area	10
27 Colonial Heights	19	SP2 Seth Low Pierrepont State Park	311
28 Peaceable Refuge	16	SP3 Lake Mamanasco Boat Launch	2
29 East Ridge Preserve	11	SP4 Bennetts Pond State Park	460
30 Ivy Hill Road	8	WF Weir Farm (State)	19
31 Florida Refuge	63	WF Weir Farm Federal	37
32 The Knolls	7	WNC Woodcock Nature Center (in town)	61
33 Nod Hill Refuge	30	John Soluri (state portion)	28
34 Comstock Court (Nod Road)	26	Great Swamp	350
35 Old Spectacle Lane	4	Floodplains and Other	139
36,37 Spectacle Swamp/Silvermine Ridge	62		
38 Table Rock	14	Privately Owned Open Space	
39 Whitbeck Preserve	5	Aquarion Water Co.	69
40 Jill's/Jones Trail	8	Eversource	25
41 Prospect Ridge	34	Boy Scouts of America	52
42 Remington Woods	26	Homeowner's Associations	189
43 West Mountain:Green	9		
44 Laurelwood/Great Pond Area	56	Open Space Summary	
45 Old Stagecoach/Ledges	38	Town of Ridgefield	3,182
46 Brewster Farm (in easements)	0	Land Conservancy	702
47 Shadow Lake	59	State and Federal	1,417
48 Old Sib	21	Privately-Owned Open Space	335
49 Lakeview Drive	1.0	Total	5,636
50 McKeon Farm	43		

Table 1
Town of Ridgefield
Open Space Summary

December 10, 2019

Category		Acres	
Town of Ridgefield			
	Owned	2,666	
	Parks	211	
	Conservation Easements	305	
	Subtotal	3,182	
Land Conservancy of Ridgefield			
	Owned	532	
	Easements	170	
	Subtotal	702	
State and Federal Lands		1,417	
Private Open Space			
	Homeowner's Associations	189	
	Other	146	
	Subtotal	335	
Total of all categories		5,636	acres, %= 25.2
Total Town Area = 35 square miles, or 22,387 acres		6,716	acres, %= 30.0
Shortage from Goal =		1,080	acres
NOTE: Web site now says 5,800 acres or 26 percent			
NOTE: Open Space does NOT include the following (and other properties):			
Schools			
Golf Course (180 acres)			
Recreation Center (48 acres)			
Cemeteries (TOR of 30 acres and private of 34 acres)			
Restricted private open space such as Silver Spring Country Club (296 acres)			

2.0 Current Status of Open Space

The current status of open space in Ridgefield was undertaken through an extensive review of the Town Grand List of Properties and other sources as described below. This analysis developed the data shown in Table 1 and the following subsections.¹ It is important to note that not all parcels that might appear to be open space can be considered open space as previously explained.

2.1 Town of Ridgefield Open Space

Town of Ridgefield open space (owned or easements) is estimated to be:

	Acres
Owned	2,666
Parks	211
Conservation Easements	305
Total	3,182

These numbers were primarily derived from an analysis of the Town Grand List of properties plus a review of the Town Tax Assessor maps. Our Master List of Town-Owned Properties with roughly 400 properties totals about 2,877 acres. Our list of numbered properties shows 57 properties. The numbers correspond to those in the Ridgefield Walk Book (#1 to #51) plus a few new ones (#52 to #57).

Conservation easements were developed from a review of the Tax Assessor Maps. Note that the Brewster Farm of 108 acres is included in this number.

Parks were counted as follows:

	Acres
Lake Windwing	39
Richardson Park	29
Martin Park	29
Sachem Hill	4
Aldrich Park	52
Ballard Park	5
Sturges Park	53
Total	211

2.2 Land Conservancy Open Space

Land Conservancy properties total 532 acres owned and 170 acres of easements for a total of 702 acres as determined from our Master List of Town Open Space Properties and the Land Conservancy web site.

2.3 State and Federal Open Space

State and federal open space were counted as follows:

¹ Certain table data may not add up exactly due to numerical rounding.

Acres

Norwalk River Env. Study Area	10
John Soluri (State portion)	28
Seth Low Pierrepont State Park	311
Lake Mamanasco Boat Launch	2
Bennetts Pond State Park	460
Weir Farm (State, in Ridgefield)	19
Weir Farm (Federal)	37
Woodcock Nature Center (Ridgefield portion)	61
Great Swamp	350
Floodplains	117
Other Small Properties	22
Total	1,417

1.4 Privately-Owned Open Space

Privately-owned open space includes the following:

	Acres
Homeowners Associations	189
Aquarion Water Co.	69
Eversource (CL&P)	25
Boy Scouts of America	52
Total	335

Open space owned by homeowners associations were derived from a review of the Tax Assessor Maps and review of the Town Grand List. However, the acreage assigned for privately-owned open space does NOT include the following parcels as they do not meet the DEEP definition of open space:

	Acres
Great Pond Club	33
Silver Spring Country Club	296
Private Cemeteries	34
Boy's Club	8

1.5 Other Town Properties

In addition, none of the following town-owned properties were included as open space as they too do not meet the DEEP definition of open space:

	Acres
Town Cemeteries	30
Community Center	5
Ridgefield Rec Center	48
Schools	NA
Golf Course	180
Schlumberger	30

As a result of this analysis and cross checking by multiple commissioners, the commission has a high confidence in the accuracy of 5,636 acres as meeting the rigorous definition of open space as defined by DEEP.

3.0 History of Property Open Space Increases (2000-2019)

3.1 Town Property

The vast majority (>90 percent) of what is considered open space in Ridgefield was in place prior to 2000 and only about 300 acres has been added to the roster of town-owned open space in the last 20 years (this includes just town-owned properties). This included property acquired through Planned Residential Development (PRD), subdivision of development properties, town purchase, and land donations (Figure 2, Tables 3 and 4).

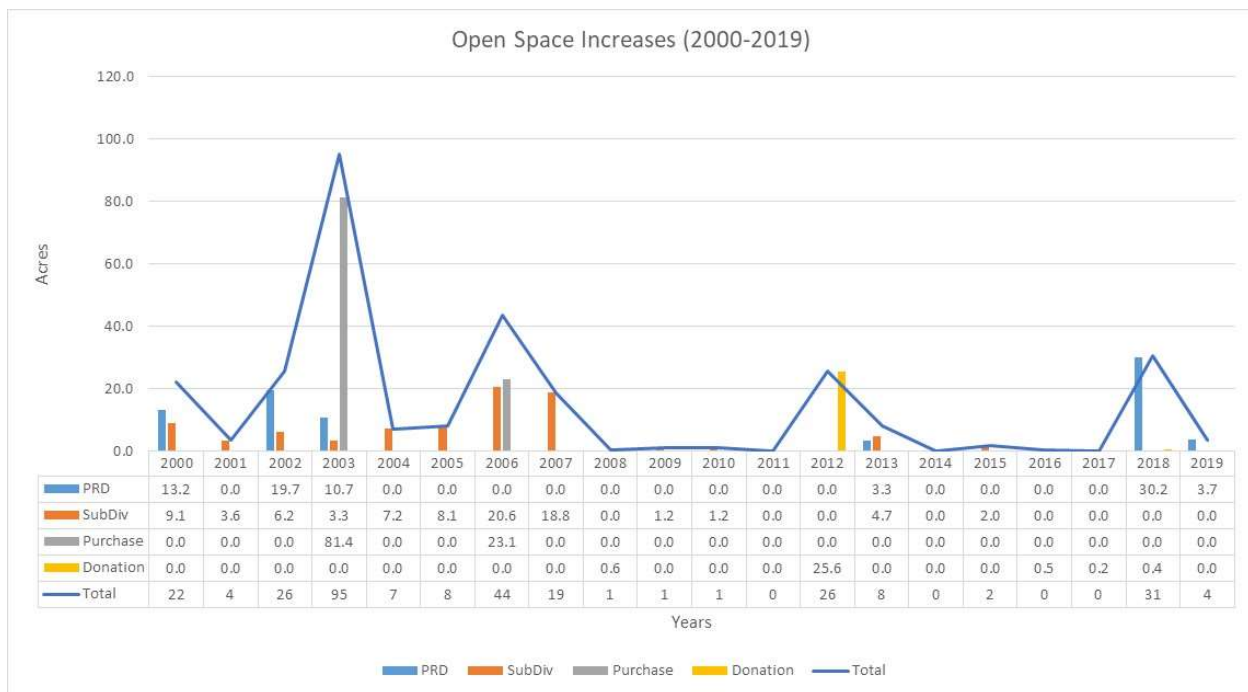


Figure 2

3.2 Land Conservancy Property

The commission also reviewed the history of Land Conservancy donations. As shown in Table 2, only 78 acres were donated in the last 20 years. This is in addition to the town-owned increase of about 300 acres bringing added open space to about 380 acres.

Table 2
Land Conservancy Open Space Acreage Increases

Type	Pre-2000	2000-2019	Total
Owned	484	47	532
Easements	139	31	170
Total	623	78	702

Table 3
Source of Open Space – Acres by Year

Year	PRD	SubDiv	Purchase	Donation	Total
2000	13.2	9.1	0.0	0.0	22
2001	0.0	3.6	0.0	0.0	4
2002	19.7	6.2	0.0	0.0	26
2003	10.7	3.3	81.4	0.0	95
2004	0.0	7.2	0.0	0.0	7
2005	0.0	8.1	0.0	0.0	8
2006	0.0	20.6	23.1	0.0	44
2007	0.0	18.8	0.0	0.0	19
2008	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	1
2009	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	1
2010	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	1
2011	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
2012	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.6	26
2013	3.3	4.7	0.0	0.0	8
2014	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
2015	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2
2016	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0
2017	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0
2018	30.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	31
2019	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4
Totals	80.8	85.8	104.5	27.3	298

Table 4
Open Space Increases by Parcel (2000-2019)

Parcel #	Location	Acreage	Date	Source
D14-0172	Barry Ave	2.474	2002	PRD
?	Barry Ave (99)	3.680	2019	PRD
G17-0114	Branchville Road	5.039	2002	PRD
G17-0113	Branchville Road	0.826	2002	Sub-Div
G17-0112	Branchville Road	4.008	2002	Sub-Div
C03-0071	Canterbury Lane	10.716	2003	PRD
G11-0064	EA Highway	0.869	2000	Sub-Div
I16-0014	EA Highway	1.970	2015	Sub-Div
F09-0034	Great Hill	5.390	2000	Sub-Div
F12-0058	Great Hill (28)	1.184	2018	PRD
H15-0027	Hickory Lane	17.180	2006	Sub-Div
H15-0060	Hickory Lane	3.450	2006	Sub-Div
H15-0065	Hickory Lane	1.243	2009	Sub-Div
E04-0031	Ives Court	0.580	2005	Re-Sub
E06-0010	Knapp Preserve	25.590	2012	Donation
F07-0085	Lakeside Drive	0.203	2017	Donation
F07-0084	Lakeside Drive	0.440	2018	Donation
F08-0082	Lakeview Drive	0.340	2008	Donation
F08-0083	Lakeview Drive	0.250	2008	Donation
D08-0003	Ledges	28.883	2003	Purchase
D08-0119	Ledges	6.200	2003	Purchase
D08-0104	Ledges	3.310	2003	Purchase
I11-0039	Limestone	0.032	2002	PRD
Misc.	McKeon Farm	43.000	2003	Purchase
E06-0151	Mountain Road/Bennetts Farm	4.682	2013	Sub-Div
E15-0259	Mulvaney Court	2.063	2003	Sub-Div
H17-0083	Old Branchville	1.560	2001	Sub-Div
H17-0086	Old Branchville	2.000	2001	Sub-Div
B09-0018	Old Sib	23.060	2006	Purchase
G11-0057	Old Still/Fire Hill	0.869	2000	PRD
H11-0064	Old Still/Fire Hill	7.660	2000	PRD
C16-0056	Peaceable Hill	13.955	2007	Sub-Div
D15-0174	Peaceable Hill	4.864	2007	Sub-Div
C07-0077	Ridgebury Road (124)	1.263	2004	Sub-Div
C06-0062	Ridgebury Road (275)	3.340	2013	PRD
E16-0152	Rockwell Road	1.033	2005	Sub-Div
E17-0039	Seymour Lane	1.150	2010	Sub-Div
E20-0098	Silver Spring Road	2.793	2000	Sub-Div
E18-0125	Silver Spring Road	1.346	2002	Sub-Div
D19-0038	Silver Spring Road	6.474	2005	Sub-Div
C17-0032	South Salem Road	1.201	2003	Re-Sub
B05-0032	Spring Valley/Bridle Trail	5.937	2004	Sub-Div
F10-0123	Taylor Pond	28.988	2018	PRD
H12-0080	Topstone Road	4.714	2000	PRD
C01-0006	Turner Road	0.450	2016	Donation
F19-0002	Wilton Road East	12.118	2002	PRD
Total Acres 2000-2019		298.377		

4.0 Potential for Future Acquisitions

4.1 Specific Parcels

The commission has identified 1,127 potential acres of space for open space acquisition.² Of these lands, only 703 acres are virgin territory meaning that there is no development or structures on the property. Of the 1,127 acres, a rough estimate is that 87 of those acres would be considered developed and 1,040 would be considered undeveloped.

Many of these parcels border existing open spaces creating a larger and important ecosystem. Added all together they make a strong addition to the Town's open space. Several have unique and key attributes.

In 2012, the commission estimated that 1,754 acres were available (not including the aforementioned 250 acres). Approximately 150 acres were not identified in that survey that have now been identified bringing the total of available open space acres in 2012 to 1,900. This means that the available property for open space acquisition dropped by 40 percent in 7 to 8 years.

These statistics paint a bleak picture for Ridgefield's ability to meet its stated goal of 30 percent open space. Ridgefield needs 1,080 acres to meet its goal and today there are only 1,040 acres in Ridgefield that are deemed potentially available. This data implies that the Town cannot achieve its goal of 30 percent open space through conventional means or donations. A different approach is needed.

(Note: In the analysis, we included few large estates as the commission is doubtful that most owners of such properties would want their land limited in use. Also many of these properties have often been developed in a way that makes open space easements difficult to create. A few large estates with high open-space value, however, have been included. We also did not look at smaller properties with dwellings that could be interesting though, unless donated, will be too expensive for the Town to afford.)

² There is an additional 250 acres that could be considered for open space acquisition; however, the commission has little confidence in its ability to acquire them at this point in time.

Table 5
Potential Property Acquisitions

ADDRESS	AC	HOUSE	UNDEV	VIRGIN	ADDRESS	AC	HOUSE	UNDEV	VIRGIN
Oreneca Rd	34.80		34.80	34.80	Limestone and Great Hill Rd	2.30		2.30	2.30
North Salem Rd	11.00	5.5	5.50		Limestone and Great Hill Rd	2.25		2.25	2.25
Tackora Trail	5.30	2	3.30		Limestone and Great Hill Rd	4.44		4.44	4.44
Silver Spring Rd	0.80		0.80	0.80	Limestone and Great Hill Rd	2.60		2.60	2.60
Silver Spring Rd.	10.00		10.00	10.00	Limestone and Great Hill Rd	3.13		3.13	3.13
Chesthill Rd	5.50		5.50	5.50	Limestone and Great Hill Rd	2.45		2.45	2.45
Ridgebury Rd	17.30	4	13.30		Limestone and Great Hill Rd	5.40		5.40	5.40
Ridgebury Rd	10.00	2	8.00		Limestone and Great Hill Rd	1.60		1.60	1.60
Harding Dr.	8.70		8.70	8.70	Limestone and Great Hill Rd	2.00		2.00	2.00
Old Stagecoach Rd	32.00	10	22.00		Barrack Hill Rd	7.50		7.50	7.50
Old Stagecoach Rd	32.20		32.20	32.20	Oreneca Rd	1.00		1.00	1.00
Old Stagecoach Rd	22.00		22.00	22.00	Oreneca Rd	3.00	3	0.00	
Eastgate Rd	33.40	4	29.40		West Mt. Road	3.00		3.00	3.00
Mopus Bridge Rd	15.00	3	12.00		Olmstead La	14.40		14.40	14.40
Mopus Bridge Rd	33.00	6	27.00		South Olmstead La	11.60		11.60	11.60
Rippow am Rd	66.00		66.00	66.00	Silver Spring Rd.	10.70		10.70	10.70
Ridgebury Rd	50.80	10	40.80		Silver Spring Rd	13.60		13.60	13.60
Rippow am Rd	106.00		106.00	106.00	Old Branchville Rd	14.30		14.30	14.30
Ridgebury Rd	24.70		24.70	24.70	Florida Rd	23.00	2	21.00	
Ridgebury Rd	33.90	8	25.90		Florida Rd.	2.00		2.00	2.00
Ridgebury Rd	34.60		34.60	34.60	Florida Rd.	0.90		0.90	0.90
Ridgebury Rd	5.00		5.00	5.00	Florida Rd.	1.20		1.20	1.20
Wilton Road East	47.70		47.70	47.70	Old Stagecoach Rd	3.00	3	0.00	
Wilton Road East	110.00		110.00	110.00	Ridgebury Rd	12.00		12.00	12.00
Bennetts Farm Rd	26.00		26.00	26.00	Neds Mtn Rd.	13.30		13.30	13.30
Branchville Rd	45.00	5	40.00		North Salem Rd	10.00		10.00	10.00
Branchville Rd	30.00	3	27.00		Spring Valley Rd	35.00	5	30.00	
Great Hill Rd.	23.50	11	12.50		Spring Valley Rd	4.00		4.00	4.00
Limestone and Great Hill Rd	2.10		2.10	2.10	Spring Valley Rd	13.80		13.80	
Limestone and Great Hill Rd	1.20		1.20	1.20	Spring Valley Rd	5.20		5.20	
Limestone and Great Hill Rd	1.24		1.24	1.24	Rippow am Rd	3.80		3.80	3.80
Limestone and Great Hill Rd	3.30		3.30	3.30	Total available space	1,126.51			
Limestone and Great Hill Rd	2.80		2.80	2.80	Space dedicated to dwellings		86.50		
Limestone and Great Hill Rd	5.20		5.20	5.20	Undeveloped space			1,040.01	
Limestone and Great Hill Rd	4.00		4.00	4.00	Virgin space				703.31

4.2 Financing Open Space Land Acquisitions

Given the diminishing number of open space parcels in Ridgefield that have acquisition potential for meaningful open space, and the increasing cost of those parcels, new and enhanced strategies for financing are necessary to achieve the Town's goal of 30 percent open space. A good source of information for acquisition strategies to achieve that goal is the report *Open Space in New Canaan* (February, 2018) prepared for the New Canaan Conservation Commission and the New Canaan Land Trust by Eve Boyce and Katherine Panek, Master's degree students at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. A link to the report's Executive Summary is as follows:

<https://www.newcanaan.info/Commissions/Conservation/2018%20Open%20Space%20in%20New%20Canaan%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>.

Strategies that can be used singularly or in combination are:

- **Town Budget Line Item** - Several towns include an annual line item in their budget to contribute to an Open Space Land Acquisition Fund. Norwalk and Hebron are two examples and their allocations are \$25,000 and \$140,000 respectively. Per CGS S7-131r (2013) any municipality can create a special fund, which shall be known as the land acquisition fund.
- **New Tax or Fee** – Any new tax or fee will be subject to significant scrutiny but could be used for land acquisition. The high approval rate for open space in Ridgefield in recent polls may permit this strategy to be successful. This method provides a constant source of income that would build over time.
- **Bonding** – Open space bonds have raised \$250,000,000 in Connecticut since 1988. Local towns who have used this approach include Danbury and Newtown. About 88 percent of town bonding initiatives that were proposed have been approved by voters statewide (Table 5).
- **Payment in Lieu of Open Space** – Ridgefield currently uses this approach. Other towns are using a higher percentage of land value in their calculation and we could do this also. However, this practice generally does not generate much revenue for future projects. Since 1995, the commission has received about \$540,000 in cash with about half of that since 2011.
- **Tax Abatement for Conservation** – State law allows municipalities to waive taxes for property owners in exchange for preservation of their land for open space. Each proposal is negotiated between the town and the property owner and can't exceed the market value of the land to be preserved. Danbury is a town in this region that uses this approach. The result is land for open space rather than funds to acquire land.
- **Seller Conveyance Tax** – This tax in Connecticut includes state (0.75 percent and up depending on the value of the property) and local (0.25 percent for most towns) portions. Ridgefield currently has a 0.25 percent seller conveyance tax. In the fiscal year ending 2019, the tax collected was \$700,017, which goes to the Town General Fund as a revenue. Some towns use a portion of these funds for open space acquisition funding.

Table 6 Bonding Measures in CT Since 2007

Municipality	Date	Funds at Stake	Funds Approved	Pass?	Status	% Yes	% No
Glastonbury	11/7/17	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	yes	Pass	60.49%	39.51%
Glastonbury	11/8/16	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	yes	Pass	56.97%	43.03%
Manchester	11/8/16	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	yes	Pass	57.82%	42.18%
Watertown	11/8/16	\$550,000	\$550,000	yes	Pass	63.18%	36.82%
Wolcott	11/8/16	\$325,000	\$325,000	yes	Pass	67.87%	32.13%
Cheshire	11/3/15	\$500,000	\$500,000	yes	Pass	63.62%	36.38%
East Haddam	3/24/15	\$127,500	\$127,500	yes	Pass	55.55%	44.45%
East Haddam	3/24/15	\$767,000	\$767,000	yes	Pass	56.35%	43.65%
Southington	11/3/15	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	yes	Pass	67.25%	32.75%
Cheshire	11/4/14	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	yes	Pass	51.24%	48.76%
Coventry	11/4/14	\$1,000,000		no	Fail	49.99%	50.01%
Farmington	5/1/14	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	yes	Pass	70.31%	29.69%
Old Saybrook	7/8/14	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	yes	Pass	89.22%	10.78%
Colchester	5/8/12	\$615,000		no	Fail	36.24%	63.76%
Glastonbury	11/6/12	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	yes	Pass	58.04%	41.96%
Granby	1/17/12	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	yes	Pass	54.84%	45.16%
Rocky Hill	11/6/12	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	yes	Pass	66.55%	33.45%
East Lyme	9/1/11	\$4,235,000	\$4,235,000	yes	Pass	77.45%	22.55%
Madison	1/26/10	\$9,000,000	\$9,000,000	yes	Pass	57.27%	42.73%
Mansfield	11/2/10	\$1,040,000	\$1,040,000	yes	Pass	65.28%	34.72%
Sherman	5/15/10	\$2,250,000	\$2,250,000	yes	Pass	73.09%	26.91%
Chester	11/10/09	\$1,000,000		no	Fail	35.20%	64.80%
Ellington	11/3/09	\$1,725,000		no	Fail	44.27%	55.73%
Glastonbury	5/19/09	\$3,875,000	\$3,875,000	yes	Pass	74.56%	25.44%
Glastonbury	11/3/09	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	yes	Pass	61.92%	38.08%
Guilford	1/27/09	\$15,450,000	\$15,450,000	yes	Pass	84.52%	15.48%
Mansfield	11/3/09	\$1,052,450	\$1,052,450	yes	Pass	61.41%	38.59%
South Windsor	11/3/09	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	yes	Pass	62.53%	37.47%
Danbury	2/5/08	\$6,600,000	\$6,600,000	yes	Pass	77.40%	22.60%
Ellington	11/4/08	\$2,000,000		no	Fail	48.70%	51.30%
Farmington	1/17/08	\$6,750,000	\$6,750,000	yes	Pass	82.50%	17.50%
New Hartford	12/2/08	\$438,000	\$438,000	yes	Pass	81.02%	18.98%
Pomfret	2/5/08	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	yes	Pass	70.04%	29.96%
Sherman	5/17/08	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	yes	Pass	77.52%	22.48%
Southington	8/12/08	\$1,258,000	\$1,258,000	yes	Pass	63.85%	36.15%
Windsor Locks	12/9/08	\$2,160,000	\$2,160,000	yes	Pass	89.09%	10.91%
Ellington	11/6/07	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	yes	Pass	80.32%	19.68%
Glastonbury	11/6/07	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	yes	Pass	71.08%	28.92%
Middlefield	4/10/07	\$2,850,000	\$2,850,000	yes	Pass	87.90%	12.10%
Middletown	11/6/07	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	yes	Pass	76.06%	23.94%
Sherman	6/9/07	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	yes	Pass	54.98%	45.02%

Source: Open Space in New Canaan, February 2018.

- **Pending CT bill** – A statewide buyers’ conveyance tax has been proposed to be used for funding open space acquisition. Towns would have the ability to opt in or opt out of this program. The receipts could be used to acquire, preserve, and steward open space (including water resources) and farmland at the municipal level by enacting a conveyance fee of up to 1 percent paid by buyers of real property over \$150,000 in value.

4.3 Review Potential for Deed Restricting More Town Parcels

Per the analysis presented in Section 2.0, there are a number of larger town parcels that have not been included in our calculation of open space acreages as they do not meet the State of CT definitions of preserved or protected open space. Notably, these properties include the Golf Course, Recreation Center, Schlumberger, and schools. If some portions of these properties were deed restricted to prevent future development; that action could add to the Town’s inventory of open space.

In addition, if Ridgefield is viewed through the lens of Google Maps or other such tool, it is apparent that large swatches of undeveloped land connecting a wide variety of open spaces exist. The swatches are not single properties but rather parts of individual land ownership. An innovative program that would link them as wildlife corridors could be essential to helping the Town meet its open-space goal.

5.0 Conclusion

The Town of Ridgefield is approximately 1,080 acres short of its stated goal of 30 percent open space. Between the Town and the Land Conservancy, only roughly 380 acres have been added to the open-space inventory in the last 20 years. In addition, the potential inventory of private land suitable for open space consideration has dropped by 40 percent in the last 7 to 8 years.

Today, the commission has identified nearly 1,040 acres in Ridgefield that could be considered for inclusion in its open-space mission. It believes unless aggressive and active measures are taken immediately, the Town will not realize its open-space goal.