

CHAPTER 16:

IMPLEMENTATION



OVERVIEW

The Planning and Zoning Commission has the primary responsibility of implementing the Plan of Conservation and Development, but the Commission does not have the authority to implement all of the Plan's recommendations by itself. Residents, applicants, other local boards and commissions, and officials share responsibility for successful implementation of the Plan.

Implementation is a gradual and continual process. Some recommendations can be carried out in a relatively short period of time, while others may take longer.

TOOLS

Several tools are available to implement the Plan. These tools can influence the pattern, character, and timing of future development in Ridgefield - either public or private - so that it is consistent with and promotes the Plan's recommendations.

The tools available to the Commission include:

- Application Review,
- Zoning and Subdivision Regulations,
- Capital Improvement Program, and
- Referral of Municipal Improvements (CGS 8-24).

Application Review

The Planning and Zoning Commission can accomplish goals and objectives of the Plan by using it to guide land use decisions. The Commission should measure and evaluate all land use proposals for consistency with the Plan.

Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

The Zoning and the Subdivision Regulations provide specific criteria for land development. As a result, these regulations are important tools to implement the recommendations of the Plan. However, this is only true if the regulations reflect the recommendations of the Plan.

Zoning regulations, the zoning map, and subdivision regulations should be updated to implement Plan recommendations and promote consistency between the Plan and the regulations.

Capital Budget

The Capital Budget (or Capital Improvement Program) is a tool for planning, identifying and prioritizing capital expenditures while accounting for fiscal constraints.

The POCD contains recommendations that may require the expenditure of town funds. The Plan recommends that these (and other) items are included in the Capital Improvement Program and that funding is included in the Capital Budget.

Referral of Municipal Improvements

Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements (defined in the statute) be referred to the Planning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. If the Commission does not approve a project, it can only be implemented after a two-thirds vote by the Town Meeting. The Commission should evaluate referrals for their consistency with this POCD.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Some recommendations can be implemented in a relatively short period of time, others may only be realized towards the end of the planning period, and some may be more long-term in nature (beyond the end of the planning period). Recommendations may involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources and their implementation may take place over several years or occur in stages.

The charts on the following pages assign primary responsibilities. For those strategies which are under the purview of the Planning and Zoning Commission and are discrete tasks that can be completed, a timeframe is assigned.

Implementation Legend

AAC	Architectural Review Comm.
AHC	Affordable Housing Comm.
BOE	Board of Education
BOS	Board of Selectmen
CC	Conservation Comm.
CFD	Comm. for Disabled
EDC	Economic Dev. Comm.
ENG	Town Engineer
HGY	Highway Dept.
Hist. Orgs.	Entities such as Historical Society
IWB	Inland Wetlands Board (currently PZC)
PRC	Parks & Rec.
PZC	Planning & Zoning Comm.
Res.	Residents
RHA	Ridgefield Housing Authority
Town	Town Depts., Officials, Staff
VDC	Village District Consultant
WPCA	Water Pollution Control Authority

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Protect and Preserve Scenic Resources and Areas		
Preserve scenic areas by protecting ridgelines and scenic views.	PZC - CC	
Where possible, preserve open space or obtain scenic or conservation easements from property owners to protect ridgelines with panoramic views, steeply sloping hillsides, and areas with rock outcrops.	CC	
Encourage ConnDOT to designate State highways in Ridgefield as scenic roads.	BOS	
Continue to designate local roads under the Scenic Road ordinance.	BOS	
Protect and Preserve Physical Character		
Work with land use applicants to minimize the amount of vegetation cleared during development.	PZC - BOS	
Maintain the Architectural Advisory Committee and the Village District Consultant.	PZC	
Retain aspects of Ridgefield's rural heritage (e.g., stone walls, barns, etc).	PZC - CC	
Protect and enhance natural resources, open space, cultural resources, and Ridgefield Center to preserve community character.	PZC - CC - BOS - Town	
Promote Community Spirit		
Encourage local recognition, volunteer contributions, and special local services, facilities, programs, and events.	Town	
Ensure that people of all ages and physical abilities can enjoy local amenities.	Town - CFD	
Provide opportunities and facilities for various age groups to gather together.	Town	

NATURAL RESOURCES		
	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Overarching Principles		
Preserve sensitive areas as open space, where feasible	CC - PZC - Town	
When open space preservation is not feasible, ensure careful site planning and allow flexibility in lot design to avoid sensitive natural resources.	PZC	
Educate residents and landowners about the importance of Ridgefield's natural resources, the cumulative impacts of their actions, and how they can contribute to protecting natural resources.	CC	
Use the Natural Resources Inventory to aid in land use planning.	PZC - CC	
Protect Water Resources		
Increase on-site stormwater infiltration and retention.	PZC - Town	
Preserve wetlands in their natural state.	CC - IWB	
Adopt water quality protection guidelines for all major lakes in Ridgefield.	IWB	
Monitor well permit data and complaints about water levels in wells.	Town	
Review recommendations from watershed plans and studies; implement appropriate recommendations.	PZC - CC - Town	
Minimize Flooding		
Continue to regulate activities in flood plains.	PZC	
Increase on-site stormwater infiltration and retention.	PZC - Town	
Protect Other Natural Resources		
Minimize the disturbance of steep slopes.	PZC	
Protect local plants and animals and their habitats, with an emphasis on minimizing habitat fragmentation.	CC - PZC	
Minimize the clearing of vegetation.	PZC - PRC	
Continue efforts to reduce local sources of air pollution.	PZC - CC - Town	

OPEN SPACE		
	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Continue to Preserve Open Space		
Continue open space preservation and acquisition efforts.	PZC - CC	
Preserve 30% of Ridgefield as protected open space.	PZC - CC	
Continue allowing a fee-in-lieu of open space.	PZC	
Explore additional funding opportunities.	CC - Town	
Preserve Greenways		
Tie existing and new open space and recreational areas together into an integrated greenway system.	CC - PZC - Town	
Preserve the Sugar Hollow Greenway and promote the Norwalk River Valley Trail.	Town - CC - PZC	
Establish a series of trails as a key element in connecting open space and recreation areas into an integrated system.	CC - PZC - Town	
Preserve old railways, trolley lines, logging roads, driftways, and other rustic byways as open space trails, where appropriate.	CC - PZC - Town	
Preserve "Perceived" Open Space		
Maintain the PA-490 policy as an incentive for preservation of open space.	PZC - BOS - Town Mtg.	
Stay apprised of potential surplus land disposition by water companies and the State of Connecticut.	BOS - PZC - CC	
Promote the Enjoyment of Open Space		
Continue to provide information on open space passive recreation opportunities.	CC	
Where feasible, improve accessibility for all ages and physical abilities.	CC – PRC - CFD	

HISTORIC RESOURCES		
	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Protect Historic Resources		
Preserve endangered and important historic properties through local organizations and agencies such as the Ridgefield Historical Society and the Historic District Commission.	Hist. Orgs.	
Consider additional incentives to encourage preservation of privately owned historic buildings.	PZC - BOS - Hist. Orgs.	
Encourage funding for local historic preservation.	Hist. Orgs.	
As specific preservation projects arise, seek funding through the Certified Local Government program.	BOS - Hist. Orgs.	
Identify additional potential historic areas and sites.	Hist. Orgs.	
Maintain and Adopt Appropriate Regulations		
Consider adopting a demolition delay ordinance.	BOS - Town Mtg.	
Maintain the Architectural Advisory Committee.	PZC	
Consider expanding adaptive reuse to additional areas in Town.	PZC	
Continue to provide flexibility in zoning regulations to preserve historical buildings.	PZC	
Continue to establish local historic district(s) that are supported by a majority of the district's residents.	BOS - Town	
Promote Historic Preservation Efforts		
Continue to encourage awareness of historic buildings and districts through the use of appropriate signage and displays.	Hist. Orgs.	
Promote awareness of State and Federal programs that provide tax credits and incentives for rehabilitating historic buildings.	Hist. Orgs.	
Encourage efforts to collect, maintain, and coordinate local historic information.	Hist. Orgs.	

COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Protect and Enhance Ridgefield Center		
Maintain a mixture of business, civic and residential uses in Ridgefield Center.	PZC	
Continue to discourage an abundance of office uses on the street level.	PZC	
Implement the <i>Ridgefield Center Study</i> by:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementing the recommended public improvements as funding permits 	PZC	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that public improvements are consistent with the <i>Plan</i> 	Town - PZC	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouraging or requiring landowners to comply with the <i>Plan</i> when redeveloping or developing properties. 	PZC	
Continue to conduct design review for proposed building alterations, redevelopment and new development.	PZC - VDC	
Encourage business owners to improve accessibility, where feasible.	Town - PZC - CFD	
Promote Branchville as a Focal Point		
Implement the public improvements recommended in the <i>Branchville Village Plan</i> by:		2 yrs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> modifying zoning in Branchville (possibly as a Village District) and incorporating the zoning recommendations from the <i>Village Plan</i> 	PZC	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that public improvements are consistent with the <i>Village Plan</i> 	Town - PZC - BOS	
When the State undertakes road or public transit improvements, encourage the State to take the <i>Village Plan</i> into consideration.	BOS - PZC	
Extend Positive Elements of Ridgefield Center to Other Commercial Areas		
For Route 35 commercial areas, develop guidelines to encourage pedestrian elements, attractive signs and landscaping, and overall site layout principles.	PZC	2 yrs.
Enhance Key Gateways		
For the Route 7 and South Salem Road gateways, encourage landowners to improve the appearance of buildings and properties.	Town - PZC - AAC - EDC	
Maintain the rural character of the remaining key gateways and consider adding welcoming elements.	PZC - Town	

RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND HOUSING		
	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Maintain the Overall Residential Pattern		
Maintain the current single family residential character of the community.	PZC	
Review the PRD provisions and update as needed	PZC	3 yrs.
Carefully Control Higher Density and Multi-Family Development		
Guide higher density and multi-family housing in accordance with the overall community structure.	PZC	
Use locational criteria to evaluate proposed higher densities and multi-family uses.	PZC	
Carefully review proposed densities in and near village areas to minimize congestion and impacts to character.	PZC	
Address Housing Needs		
Provide for a diversity of housing types, opportunities, choice, and costs consistent with community conditions and constraints.	PZC - AHC	
Annually publicize and assess progress on creating housing opportunities.	BOS - Town - AHC	
Find ways to meet Ridgefield's need for the development of housing that is affordable and accessible to all persons of moderate income, the elderly, and the disabled.	PZC - Town - AHC - CFD	
Encourage housing programs that meet the specialized needs of residents, such as assisted living facilities or extended life-care facilities that help meet the housing, social, and medical needs of elderly and/or disabled persons.	PZC - Town - AHC - CFD	
Determine which regulatory approaches might work best in Ridgefield in order for the private sector to create affordable housing units.	PZC - AHC	2 yrs.
Expand upon the community-driven housing development approach.	BOS - Town - AHC	
Energy efficient housing and retrofits should be encouraged in Ridgefield.	BOS - Town - Res.	

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Maintain A Strong Non-Residential Tax Base		
Continue to increase the business/commercial component of the tax base.	PZC - BOS - Town - EDC	
Promote Business Development in Appropriate Areas		
Maintain business zones adequate to meet community needs.	PZC	
Promote business development in areas already zoned for business use.	PZC - EDC	
Avoid the conversion of business-zoned land to residential uses.	PZC	
As appropriate, evaluate the potential for municipally-owned property for economic development.	BOS - PZC - Town - EDC	
Consider Zoning Updates		
Conduct a zoning study for the Route 7 corridor.	PZC - EDC	2 yrs.
Examine zoning on the southeast side of Route 35 between South Street and Farmingville Road.	PZC	1 yr.
As appropriate, consider allowing adaptive reuse of historic structures and residences in significant streetscapes in additional areas along major roadways.	PZC	
Additional Strategies		
Encourage building owners to enhance the appearance of their properties in key Route 7 gateways.	Town - EDC - AAC	
Continue careful review of business site plans to implement improvements at every opportunity.	PZC - AAC	
Continue to promote the concept of corporate parks.	Town - EDC	
Encourage new buildings to be energy efficient and encourage existing businesses to make appropriate upgrades.	PZC - Town- EDC	

COMMUNITY FACILITIES		
	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Address Current Needs		
Improve handicapped accessibility of Town facilities.	Town - CFD	
Reconfigure space at the Town Hall and Venus Municipal Center to better meet needs.	BOS	
Move forward with expansion of the Police Station.	BOS	
Provide additional dormitory space at Fire Station 2.	BOS	
Implement the parking plan for the Recreation Center and Senior Center.	PRC	
Make improvements to parks, fields and recreation facilities as needed.	PRC	
Explore options for expanding the library, keeping it in Ridgefield Center.	Town - Libr.	
Explore options for outdoor activity space at Barn.	BOS	
Continue to assess needs for elderly and affordable housing.	BOS - AHC - RHA	
Prepare for Future Needs		
Determine how demographic changes might affect needs and demands on Town services and facilities.	PZC - BOS	
Explore options for moving all Town departments into one location in Town Center over long term.	BOS	
Investigate possible sites for a satellite Public Services facility in Ridgebury.	BOS	
Explore approaches for meeting demand for recreation fields by determining types & amounts of fields needed & investigating alternative approaches.	BOS – PRC	
Continue to encourage non-profit community and cultural facilities.	Town	
Retain school buildings and sites to meet education needs.	BOE - PZC - BOS	
Aim for Efficiency and Economy		
Investigate co-locating police, fire headquarters and EMS at a centrally located Public Safety Complex.	BOS	
Consider creating a pavement management system.	BOS - HWY	
Continue arrangements between School Dept. and Recreation Dept. for use of facilities at schools.	BOE PRC	
Continue to maintain in good condition:		
• educational facilities and grounds	BOE -Town	
• municipal facilities and grounds	Town	
• local roads	HWY - Town	
Improve Environmental Sustainability of Town Practices and Facilities		
Continue to work towards the goal of obtaining at least 20% of energy from renewable energy sources.	BOS - Town	
Continue and expand efforts to reduce the energy consumption of municipal facilities.	BOS - Town	
Incorporate green building measures when facilities are built, renovated or expanded.	PZC - BOS -Town	
Continue recycling and electronic waste disposal programs and improve and expand as warranted.	Town	

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Address Overall Circulation and Minimize Congestion		
Continue to implement access management recommendations for Routes 7 & 35.	PZC - BOS	
Encourage access management along all arterials.	PZC - CC - HWY	
Continue to carefully analyze potential traffic impacts of development.	PZC	
Consider incorporating Transportation Demand Management requirements into zoning regulations.	PZC	7 yrs.
Evaluate Road Standards		
Continue to designate local scenic roads.	BOS - HWY	
Ensure that new roads blend with existing roads.	PZC - Town	
Over long term, review road design standards to determine if they should be revised to provide additional flexibility to maintain roadway character.	PZC - Town - ENG	
Continue Roadway Maintenance		
Consider establishing a pavement management system.	BOS - HWY	
Enhance Ridgefield Center		
Continue to implement the recommendations in the <i>Route 35 Traffic Improvement Plan</i>	PZC - BOS	
Implement the <i>Ridgefield Center Study</i> .	PZC - BOS - EDC	
Improve and Expand Public Transit Services		
Encourage the State to move forward with Danbury Branch improvements.	BOS	
Create a public transit center and provide additional parking at the Branchville Station.	BOS	
Work with the State to ensure that the Branchville Station continues to provide rail service.	BOS	
Work with HART and ConnDOT to find additional parking areas to expand shuttle service to Katonah.	BOS	
Encourage additional shuttle or bus service.	BOS	
Explore approaches for paratransit service.	BOS	
Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel		
Expand and enhance sidewalk network in Ridgefield Center, Branchville, and the Copps Hill area.	BOS - Town - PZC - ENG	
Improve ADA accessibility of sidewalks.	Town - ENG	
Look for opportunities to connect destinations with pedestrian trails, pathways, and bikeways.	PZC - CC - ENG	
When roads are improved, consider needs of bicyclists.	Town - PZC - ENG - HWY	
Encourage new development and redevelopment to provide pedestrian and bicycle amenities.	PZC	
Continue Transportation Coordination		
Continue to work with regional public transit providers & State to improve transportation.	BOS	

INFRASTRUCTURE		
	WHO	TIME FRAME (as applicable)
Plan for Future Water Supply Needs		
Work with water companies in their efforts to augment and protect water supply sources, expand and improve service in Ridgefield, and address long-term local and regional water supply needs.	BOS - PZC - Town	
Improve Public Sewer Service		
Undertake rehabilitation and upgrades of the existing system as funding is available.	Town - WPCA	
Ensure that Sewer Extensions Reflect Land Use Goals		
Work with WPCA as it updates facilities plans to ensure that any capacity increases and service area expansions are consistent with land use goals.	PZC - Town - WPCA	1 yr.
Reserve sewer system at Routes 7 / 35 primarily for public health concerns in existing residential areas, with consideration given to limited service to businesses that meet a well-defined economic development need.	BOS - WPCA	
Determine if sewers should be extended to Branchville from neighboring communities to achieve land use goals for the area.	PZC - BOS - WPCA - EDC	2 yrs.
Evaluate and Address Stormwater Drainage		
Conduct a Town-wide drainage study to provide a comprehensive evaluation of drainage needs and issues in Ridgefield.	Town - ENG	
Improve Telecommunications		
Work with telecommunications providers to address wireless gaps in ways that have minimal impact on character.	Town	
Work with communication providers to find suitable options for installing fiber optic / high speed and capacity communications infrastructure.	Town	

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