



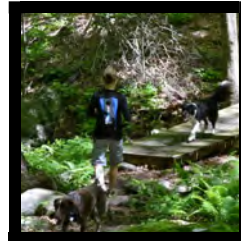
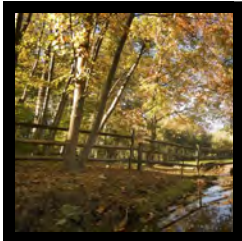
RIDGEFIELD

2020 Plan Of Conservation And Development

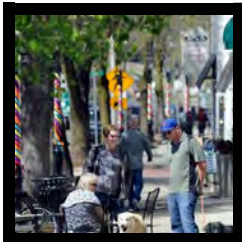
SUSTAINABILITY



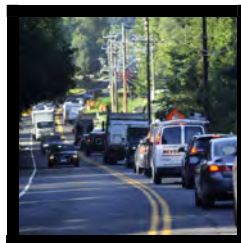
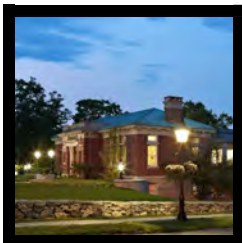
CONSERVATION



DEVELOPMENT



INFRASTRUCTURE



PROPOSED PLAN FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON ADOPTION
Scheduled For April 28, 2020

Planning & Zoning Commission

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WELCOME!

February 2020

Greetings!

This is the PROPOSED 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Ridgefield. A public hearing to consider possible adoption of this POCD has been scheduled for April 28, 2020.

This POCD, which is an update of Ridgefield's 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development, is based upon:

- Analysis of current conditions and trends affecting Ridgefield,
- Independent research and investigation,
- Input from local boards, commissions, and agencies,
- Surveys conducted as part of POCD update process,
- Numerous public input sessions,
- Working meetings of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and
- The provisions of Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Thank you for your input and feedback to date and we look forward to your assistance with implementation.

Ridgefield Planning & Zoning Commission

A glossary of some of the terms used is contained at the back of the POCD.

1

INTRODUCTION

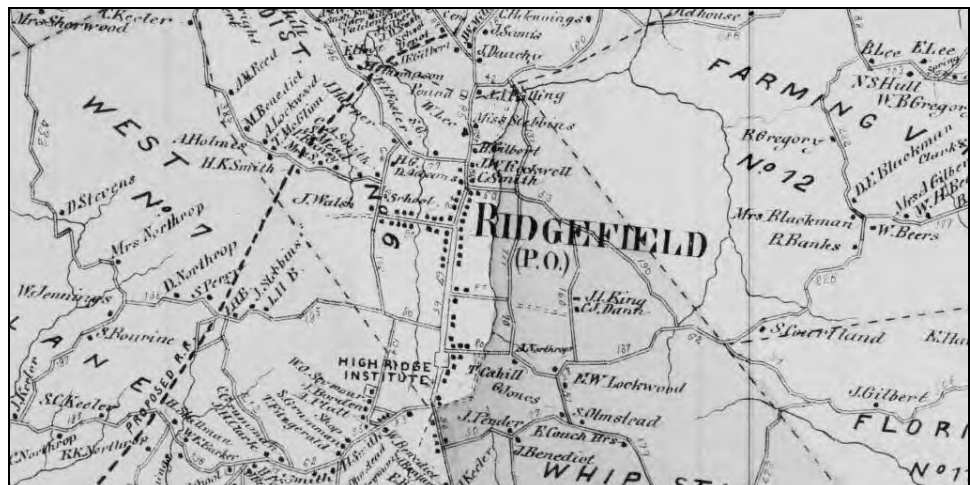
Overview

This document is the 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Ridgefield, Connecticut. A POCD is a document which is intended to determine a common vision for the future of a community and then determine strategies that will help attain that vision.

The common vision for Ridgefield which emerged from this planning process (and from prior planning processes) is intended to:

- Protect things important to the community (conservation strategies),
- Wisely manage our use of resources to help maintain and improve the community for future generations (sustainability strategies),
- Guide uses and activities in ways that will provide things the community wants or needs (development strategies), and
- Provide for things which will enhance the overall health and well-being of the community and the quality of life of its residents (infrastructure strategies).

The strategies, policies, and action steps in the POCD are intended to reflect an overall consensus of what is considered desirable for Ridgefield and its residents in the future.



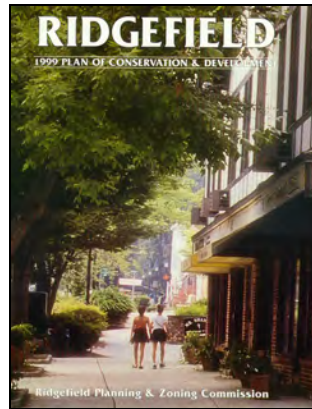
Ridgefield has a tradition of planning for the future physical development of the community in order to recognize current needs and anticipate possible future issues. Past plans have included:

- 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development,
- 1999 Plan of Conservation and Development,
- 1980 Plan of Development,
- 1975 Center Study,
- 1969 Plan of Development, and
- 1960 Plan of Development.

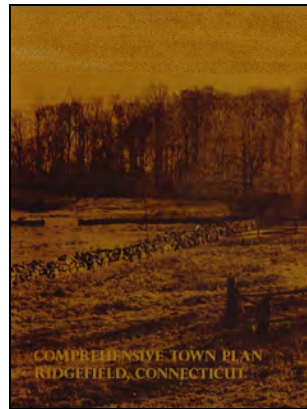
2010 POCD



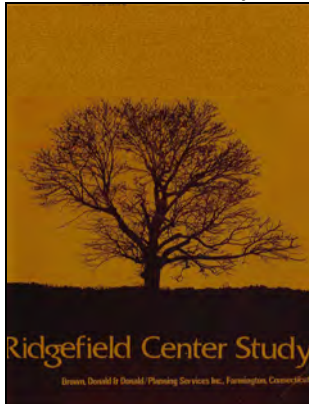
1999 POCD



1980 POCD



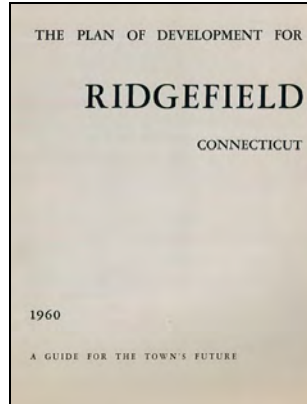
1975 Center Study



1969 Plan



1960 Plan



It is important to note that a Plan of Conservation and Development is primarily an advisory document. Prepared and adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission (as provided by Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes), the POCD is intended to guide local boards and commissions and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities in Ridgefield over the next decade or so.

Of course, implementation of the POCD will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town of Ridgefield. The POCD will only be effective if it is understood and supported by the community.

Key POCD Element

Focus On Implementation

The concept of “implementation” is a key focus in this Plan of Conservation and Development. After all, a plan that is not implemented has not reached its potential in terms of having a positive influence on the future of the community.

Several elements of this POCD have been specifically configured to promote implementation:

1. **Action Steps Specifically Called Out** – This POCD identified policies (strategies anticipated to continue over time) and action steps (specific tasks intended to implement the POCD). By specifically calling out action steps in red text in a separate table, the pro-active steps that should be taken to implement the POCD are made evident and this will aid in implementation.
2. **Leaders / Partners Identified** – Each policy and action step in the POCD has a leader (and often one or more partners). These are the entities most responsible for advocating for the policy / action step and/or for implementation of that policy or action step. Experience has shown that specifically identifying the responsible entity has a dramatic effect on implementation. A legend for the acronyms used to identify leaders and partners is on the inside back cover.
3. **Policies And Action Steps Prioritized And Ranked**– Each policy and action step in the POCD has a priority assigned. These priorities were based on a survey of members of the Planning and Zoning Commission and Staff. Then, throughout this POCD, the policies and action steps are presented in rank order so that the ones considered most important are listed first. This will hopefully draw more attention to the policies and action steps which will have the greatest interest and impact.

2. Continue To Protect Historic Resources			
A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)		Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Encourage identification and preservation of historic and archeologic resources.	2.7	HDC	RHS
2. Discourage the demolition or destruction of historic resources.	2.7	HDC	RHS
3. Continue to encourage awareness of local historic resources through:	2.7	HDC	RHS
a. Collection and maintenance of historic information, and			
b. Educational activities that highlight Ridgefield's historic resources.			
4. Continue to encourage the adaptive reuse of historic structures along Route 7, where appropriate, if that will help in the preservation of such structures.	1.92	RHS	RHS
5. Support establishment of local historic districts that are supported by a majority of the affected properties.	1.77	RHS	RHS
6. Encourage "sensitive stewardship" of historic resources owned by private persons in order to preserve and maintain them.	1.38	HDC	RHS
B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)		Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance to allow time for identification, review, and preservation of significant historic resources.	3.15	RHS	RHS
2. Consider additional incentives, such as historic tax credits, to encourage preservation of privately owned historic buildings.	2.15	RHS	RHS
3. Consider expanding adaptive reuse provisions to areas in Town.	1.38	RHS	RHS

Priority Listed and Ranked

Leaders / Partners Identified

Action Steps Called Out

Key POCD Element

POCD “Dashboard”

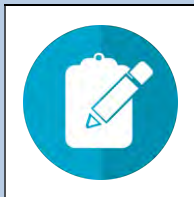
There are a couple of key threads which run through this POCD:

- The overall concept of sustainability,
- The results of several surveys which were conducted to get community input and feedback, and
- Considerations related to the changing age demographics of Ridgefield and what that may mean in the future.

In order to draw attention to these threads, the following icons are used in “sidebars” in POCD chapters to highlight issues and/or considerations.



Sustainability – This icon is used to highlight the overall concept of sustainability and how different strategies in the POCD support the overall thread of becoming a more sustainable community (see Chapter 4 also).



Survey Results - This icon is used to highlight the results of surveys conducted as part of the planning process. The results are located where they were considered most relevant. An overview of the different surveys conducted is contained in Chapter 3.



Changing Age Composition - This icon is used to highlight strategies and/or considerations in the POCD which result from the changing age composition of Ridgefield. Background information regarding the changing age composition is discussed in Chapter 2.

2

CONDITIONS & TRENDS

Overview

This section of the POCD provides a general overview of conditions and trends affecting Ridgefield at the time the POCD was being formulated.

History of Ridgefield

The landform of the area we now know as Ridgefield evolved over millions of years as a result of massive climatic and geologic processes which created the ridges, valleys, hills, and brooks that we recognize today. While there is no written record, Native Americans are believed to have inhabited this area for about the last 10,000 years.

European discovery and exploration of this part of North America began in the early 1600s and eventually led to trade with Native Americans, establishment of trading posts, and, after 1633, settlement along the Connecticut River (Wethersfield, Windsor, etc.). Following the Pequot War of 1637, European settlement began to extend along the shore and up major rivers.

In 1685, some intrepid settlers leapfrogged from coastal areas to settle in what we now know as Danbury. Settlement continued to expand out and, in 1708, land was “purchased” from the Ramapoo (a Native American tribe inhabiting this area) in the area we now know as Ridgefield.

Thirty families from other areas were the first settlers of this area and Ridgefield was incorporated as the 43rd municipality in Connecticut in 1709. Subsistence farming was the mainstay of the community for many years and life was difficult. Over time, local mills helped create goods for people’s needs and local residents bought and sold agricultural and other products at local stores.

Population grew as new families moved to this area and as new generations were born. By 1774, the census indicated that 1,708 people lived in Ridgefield.

BATTLE OF RIDGEFIELD

Ridgefield was the site of a pivotal Revolutionary War battle which had major political and military ramifications.

In 1777, British forces returning from a raid on Danbury were attacked by American forces as they made their way back to the coast. Several skirmishes preceded a showdown near Ridgefield Center where the British suffered extensive casualties. As a result of this defeat, it has been proffered that:

- the British refrained from venturing so far inland for the remainder of the Revolutionary War, and
- colonists were emboldened to join the Revolutionary War and participate on the American side.

Ridgefield lost population in the mid-1800s as people moved to other areas to take advantage of economic opportunities resulting from the industrial revolution. However, with the arrival of the railroad in 1856 and establishment of the Ridgefield branch line in 1870, Ridgefield became a popular summer resort area. Dozens of impressive estates were established in Ridgefield in the late 1800s and summer social events became the talk of the town. As part of this trend, Ridgefield became a haven for artists such as Frederic Remington (painter and sculptor), Eugene O'Neill (playwright), J. Alden Weir (painter), Cass Gilbert (architect), and Geraldine Farrar (opera singer).

Large estates were also established in Ridgefield by financiers (such as Seth Pierrepont) and other business leaders from New York City. Many of these estate owners allowed their land to revert from farmland back to woods, thus re-establishing and preserving the more rustic character of Ridgefield.

Since World War II, Ridgefield has been affected by suburban growth due to its attractiveness, location in the New York metropolitan area, and available land. Ridgefield's population quadrupled between 1950 and 1970 to become a community of over 18,000 people. During a period in the 1960s, Ridgefield was adding a new school each year to accommodate population increases.

In recent years, growth in Ridgefield has moderated. As of the year 2018, Ridgefield was a community of about 25,000 people and the overall development pattern of the community was well established.

Ridgefield's Population

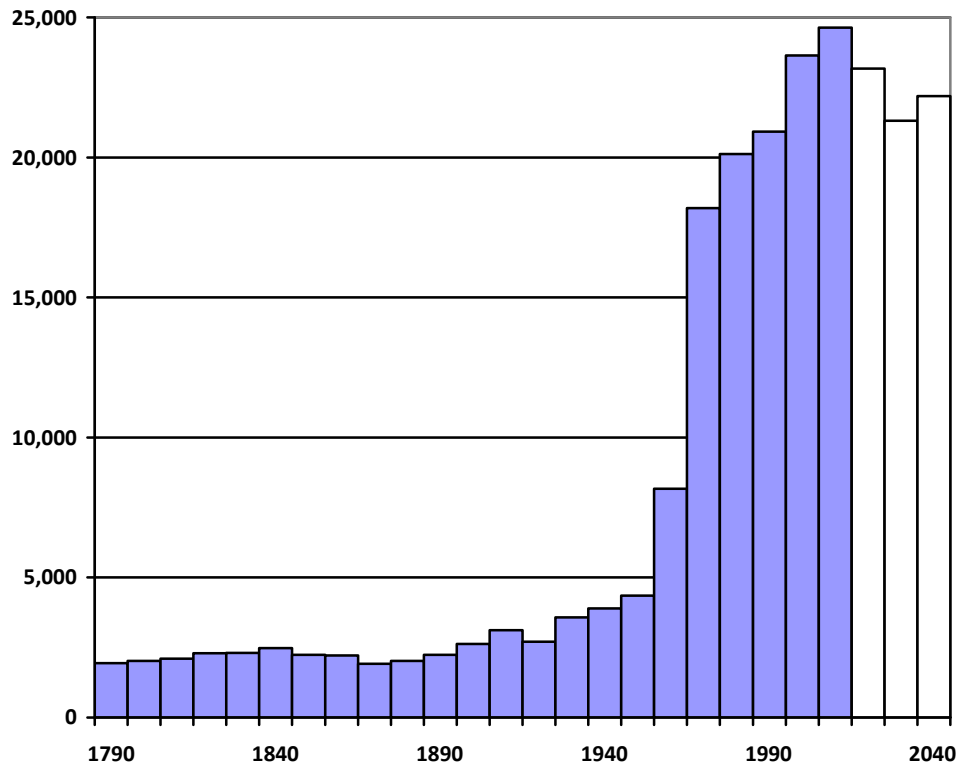
1790	1,947
1800	2,025
1810	2,103
1820	2,301
1830	2,305
1840	2,474
1850	2,237
1860	2,213
1870	1,919
1880	2,028
1890	2,235
1900	2,626
1910	3,118
1920	2,707
1930	3,580
1940	3,900
1950	4,356
1960	8,165
1970	18,188
1980	20,120
1990	20,919
2000	23,643
2010	24,638
2020	23,167
2030	21,304
2040	22,187

US Census data for 1870 to 2010.
Projections by the Connecticut State Data Center based on a cohort survival model.

Changing Demographics

While Ridgefield's population has been growing steadily for the last 70 years or so, developable land is less available and the age composition of the community is changing. As a result, projections prepared by the Connecticut State Data Center suggest that Ridgefield's population may remain stable or decrease slightly in the future. Whether Ridgefield's population is increasing or decreasing may not be known until after the 2020 Census is completed and reported.

1790 – 2010 Population (with projections to 2040)



US Census / CT State Data Center

Ridgefield Residents

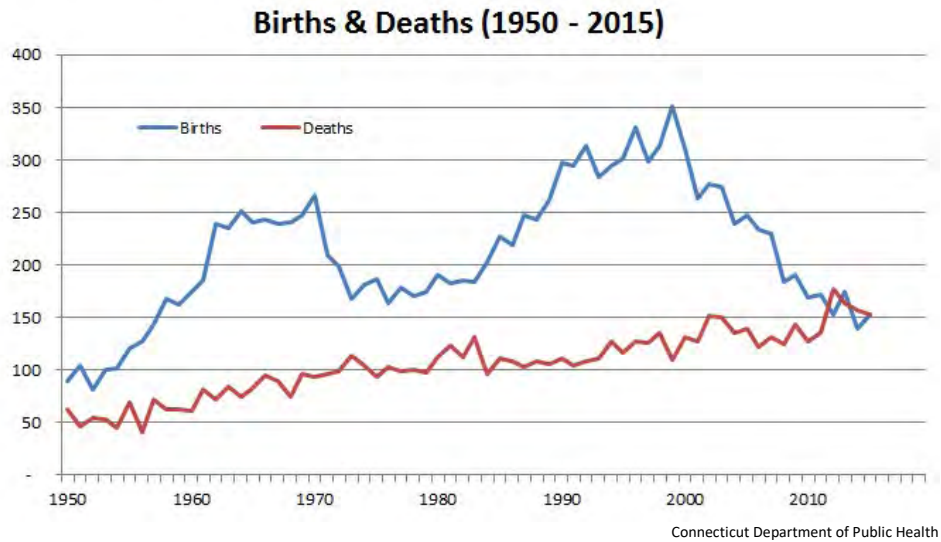


Ridgefield Residents



There are three key reasons why Ridgefield's population may not increase in the future the way it has in the past:

- Less housing construction,
- Fewer births,
- Lower net in-migration (and even net out-migration for some age groups).



Components of Population Change (1960 – 2010)

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
The Census indicates population changed this much in this decade	+10,023	+1,932	+799	+2,724	+995
If this much "natural change" occurred	+1,484	+896	+1,033	+1,899	+1,095
Births	2,296	1,897	2,146	3,077	2,452
Deaths	(812)	(1,110)	(1,113)	(1,178)	(1,357)
The rest of the change was people moving in (or out) of Ridgefield	+8,539	+1,036	(234)	+825	(100)

US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports, Planimetrics



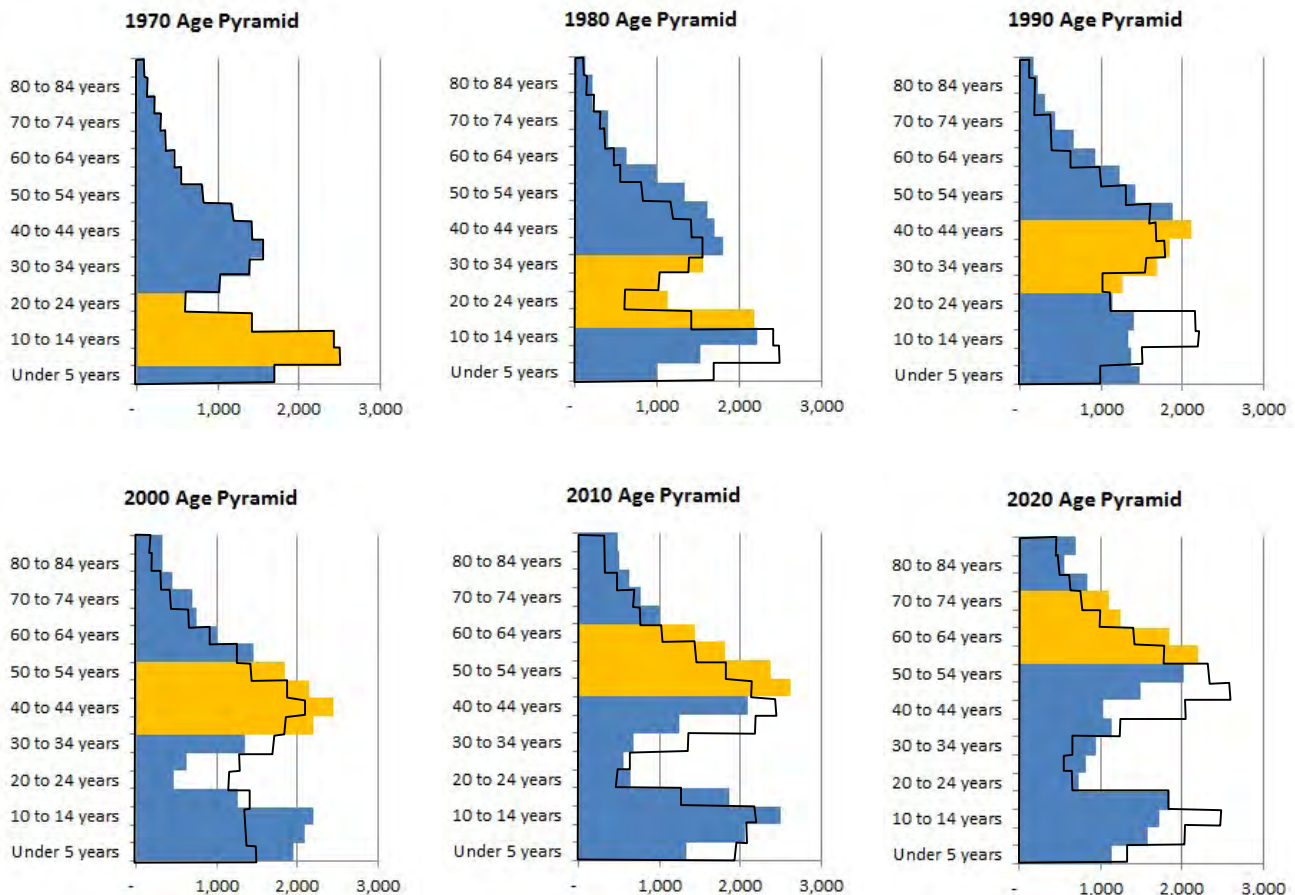
Dashboard

Throughout the POCD, this icon is used to highlight issues and strategies which relate to the changing age composition of Ridgefield.

Changing Age Composition

While the overall number of people may not change much, the changing age composition of Ridgefield is anticipated to be the most significant demographic consideration. The age composition of Ridgefield is being primarily affected by natural aging. The large demographic group referred to as the “baby boomers” (people born between 1945 and 1965) is now entering the older age groups and this is the dominant factor in Ridgefield’s demographic trajectory.

The following age composition charts show the number of people in each 5-year age group (by the width of the bar) from 1960 to 2010 with projections to 2040. People considered part of the “baby boom” (people born between 1945 and 1965) are shown in orange. The black outlines show the age composition in the prior Census so that changes can be seen more readily. Colored areas to the right of the black line indicate more people in those age cohorts compared to the prior Census. White areas to the left of the black line indicate fewer people in those age cohorts compared to the prior Census.

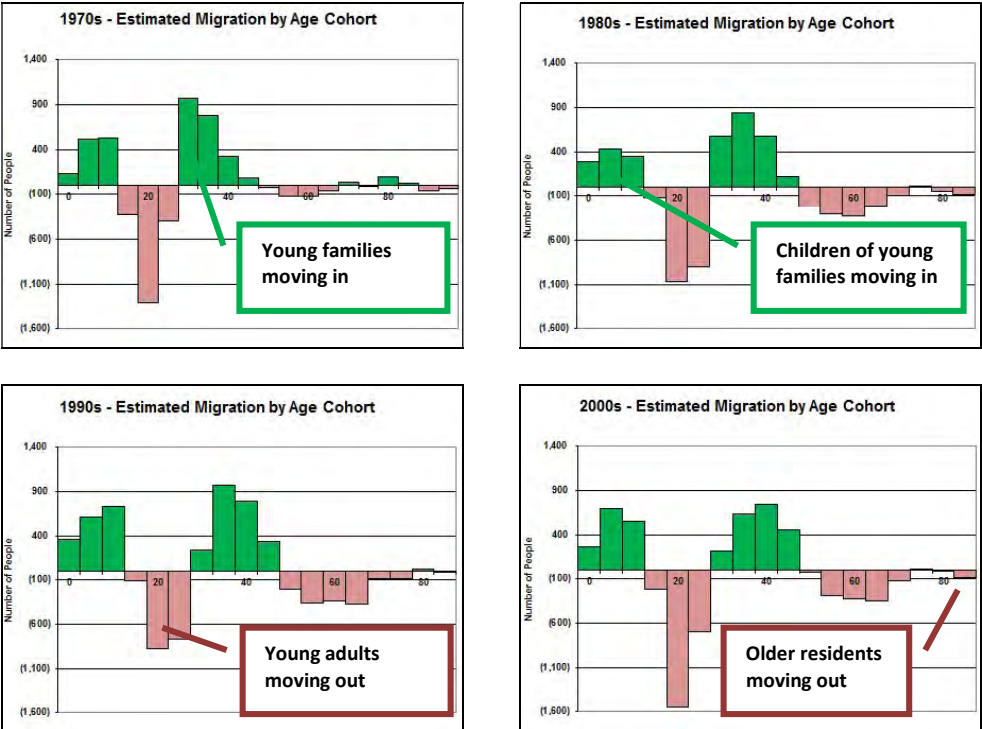


If past trends continue, Ridgefield’s population is expected to trend older and the number of older residents may be a significant factor.

Migration Patterns By Age Group

This natural aging of the population is also affected by age-specific migration rates. The following graphics, which show the number of people moving in (green) or moving out (red) in each 5-year age group during that decade illustrates that the following patterns have been occurring in Ridgefield over the past 50 years or so:

- Ridgefield tends to attract young families aged 30 to 50 who bring school age children with them (green bars).
- Ridgefield tends to lose young adults (ages 15 to 30) who may go off to college or to find their place in the world (red bars).
- Ridgefield tends to lose empty nesters and older residents (ages 50+).



Planimetrics based on data from US Census and Connecticut Department of Public Health



Age Composition

In the future, there may be:

- Fewer school age children in Ridgefield
- A larger number of older residents who may seek housing alternatives or who may choose to age in place

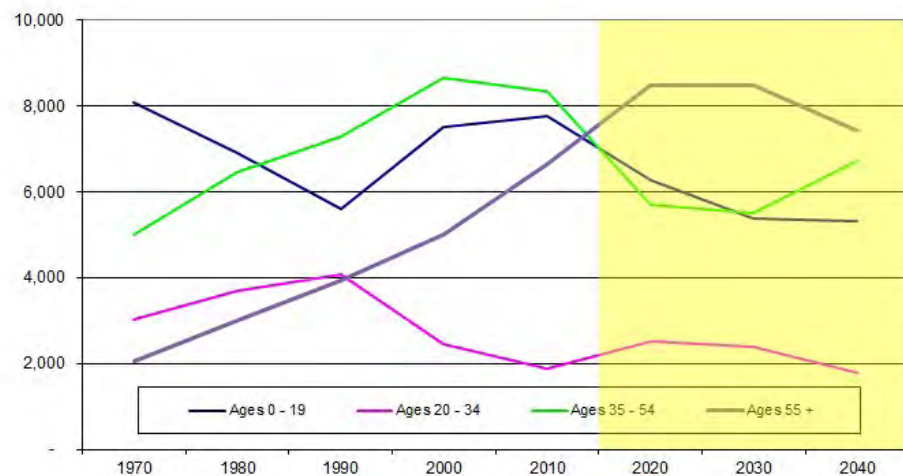
Implications Of A Changing Age Mix

This changing age composition may result in a changing demand for municipal services and housing types. The following table shows how the age composition (and corresponding service needs / desires) may change in the future. **Green numbers** indicate an increasing population and **red numbers** indicate a decreasing population.

Age Range	Potential Needs / Wants	Actual 1970	Actual 2000	Projected 2030
Infants (0 to 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services for infants / school children • Childcare / Pre-school programs 	1,703	1,950	1,049
School Age (5 to 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School facilities • Recreation programs and facilities 	6,392	5,565	4,328
Young Adults (20 to 34)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental housing / Starter homes • Social destinations 	3,034	2,441	2,394
Middle Age (35 to 54)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family programs • Starter homes / trade-up homes 	5,003	8,670	5,509
Active Adults (55 to 64)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller homes / Second homes • Recreation programs and facilities 	991	2,462	2,831
Mature Adults (65 to 75)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low maintenance homes • Housing styles and options / travel 	629	1,451	2,922
Senior Adults (75 plus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted housing / elderly housing • Elderly programs / tax relief 	440	1,104	2,741

This age composition is very different than in prior years. In 1970, people aged 0 to 19 were the largest age group in Ridgefield and people aged 55+ were the smallest. From about 2015 on, people aged 55+ will be the largest age group.

Number of Ridgefield Residents in Key Age Groups



Median Age	27.0	33.2	37.1	39.2	43.4	46.7	44.9	45.6
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US Census, Planimetrics

Housing In Ridgefield

According to the US Census, Ridgefield had about 9,420 housing units in 2010. Housing growth has slowed from an average of about 235 units/year in the 1960s to about 55 units/year or less after the year 2000. Ridgefield housing stock consists primarily of single-family detached homes (about 80% of all housing units) as opposed to other types of housing (townhouse, apartment, etc.).

Housing Units

1960	2,991
1970	5,341
1980	6,949
1990	7,999
2000	8,877
2010	9,420

US Census

Average household size has been decreasing over time in Ridgefield due to an aging population, longer length of residency, etc. This means that the same number of housing units contain fewer people and/or that more units are needed to house the same number of people.

Average Household Size

1960	3.32
1970	3.60
1980	2.97
1990	2.80
2000	2.78
2010	2.77

US Census

The median sales price of housing in Ridgefield is higher than the State average.

About 276 housing units in Ridgefield (2.9% of the housing stock) meet the statutory definition of “affordable housing” as follows:

- 179 governmentally assisted units,
- 5 rental units with households receiving tenant rental assistance,
- 28 units with government-subsidized mortgages (CHFA, USDA), and
- 64 units with deed restricted rental rates or sales prices.

As provided in Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes, communities where less than 10 percent of the housing stock meets the above criteria are potentially vulnerable to the “affordable housing appeals procedure” where a qualifying affordable housing development does not need to comply with all of the zoning regulations. Between 2014 and 2018, Ridgefield was exempt from this procedure since it had added enough units to qualify for a moratorium.



Age Composition

Decreasing household size can be an indication of an aging population since households tend to get smaller over time as children move on. This can be especially true in communities like Ridgefield where residents desire to live here for long periods.

In the future, older residents may seek alternative types of housing for financial or lifestyle reasons.

Percent Single Family		Median Sales Price (2016)		Percent Affordable Housing	
Weston	99%	New Canaan	\$1,373,100	State	11.3%
Redding	87%	Westport	\$1,087,700	Danbury	10.9%
Westport	86%	Weston	\$857,700	Wilton	4.0%
Wilton	84%	Wilton	\$812,100	Westport	3.6%
Ridgefield	80%	Ridgefield	\$673,900	Ridgefield	2.9%
New Canaan	73%	Redding	\$603,300	New Canaan	2.7%
State	41%	Danbury	\$286,400	Redding	0.3%
Danbury	43%	State	\$269,300	Weston	0.1%

CERC, 2018

CERC, 2018

CT Department of Housing, 2018

Economic Conditions in Ridgefield

A local economy is important in terms of providing for:

- Jobs and income for people,
- A range of goods / services to be available, and
- Tax revenue to support local services.

According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, there were 10,797 jobs (annual average) located in Ridgefield in 2017. The number of jobs in Ridgefield has grown significantly since 1960.

Jobs In Ridgefield

1960	1,597
1970	3,456
1980	5,540
1990	7,290
2000	8,940
2010	9,880
2017	10,797

CT Labor Dept.

While there are a number of jobs in Ridgefield, the community is not totally self-sufficient in this regard and Ridgefield still relies on the region for jobs. Ridgefield residents tend to commute south for work while people who work in Ridgefield tend to come from communities to the north and east.

Median household income (half the households earn more and half the households earn less) is one way to gauge the size or strength of the local economy. Although not as high as some nearby communities, Ridgefield's median income is much higher than the State median.

The value of taxable property in a municipality is important because it supports municipal budgets and services provided within the community. The percent of the real estate tax base that is comprised of businesses is an important consideration to many people since business uses typically provide revenue but do not demand as much in services. This revenue is then available to provide services that primarily benefit residents of the community. The total value of the tax base is on the next page.

Jobs In The Community	
Danbury	44,131
Westport	15,212
Wilton	12,978
Ridgefield	10,710
New Canaan	6,698
Weston	1,236
Redding	1,818

CERC, 2018

Median HH Income	
Weston	\$218,152
Wilton	\$179,844
New Canaan	\$176,601
Westport	\$166,307
Ridgefield	\$145,014
Redding	\$129,643
State	\$71,755
Danbury	\$67,430

CERC, 2018

Percent Business Tax Base	
Danbury	25.3%
Wilton	13.7%
Westport	11.8%
Ridgefield	10.9%
Redding	7.5%
New Canaan	4.7%
Weston	1.0%

CERC, 2018

Fiscal Overview

Key fiscal indicators which reflect the circumstances affecting Ridgefield and surrounding communities are presented below.

Equalized net grand list (ENGL) is a way to compare the overall tax base between municipalities. ENGL is the full market value of all taxable property in a municipality estimated by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

Per Capita Equalized Net Grand List	
New Canaan	\$610,328
Westport	\$596,365
Wilton	\$352,127
Weston	\$347,981
Ridgefield	\$287,781
Redding	\$249,848
Danbury	\$118,509

CERC, 2018

Equalized Mill Rate	
Redding	19.85
Danbury	19.50
Weston	18.74
Wilton	17.60
Ridgefield	16.83
Westport	11.01
New Canaan	10.54

CERC, 2018

Per Capita Tax Levy	
Westport	\$6,566
Weston	\$6,520
New Canaan	\$6,433
Wilton	\$6,199
Redding	\$4,960
Ridgefield	\$4,844
Danbury	\$2,311

CERC, 2018

Education Share of Municipal Budget	
Weston	76%
Redding	73%
Wilton	69%
Ridgefield	67%
New Canaan	63%
Westport	59%
Danbury	57%

CERC, 2018

Per Cent Intergovernment Revenue	
Danbury	18%
Weston	9%
Wilton	9%
Ridgefield	9%
New Canaan	8%
Redding	7%
Westport	2%

CERC, 2018

Per Capita Debt	
New Canaan	\$5,936
Wilton	\$4,510
Weston	\$3,826
Westport	\$3,626
Ridgefield	\$3,176
Redding	\$2,134
Danbury	\$1,767

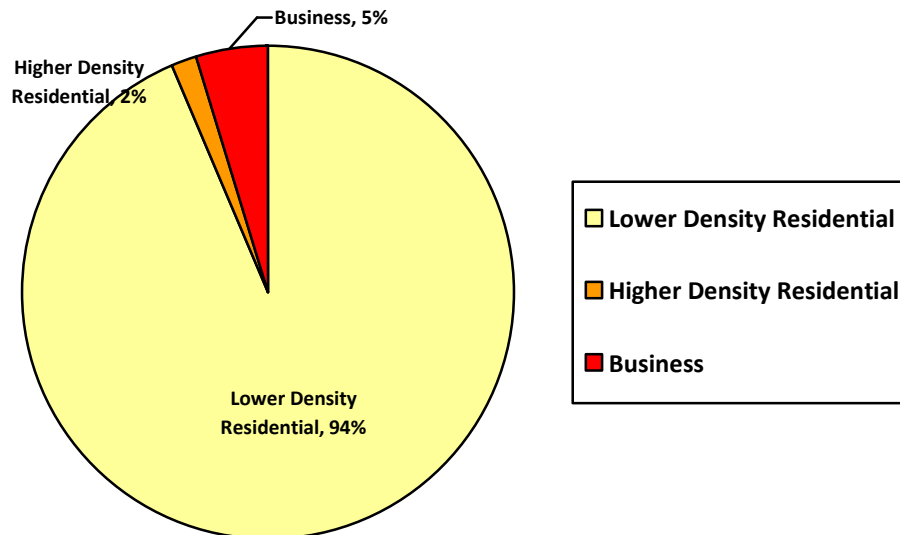
CERC, 2018

Zoning In Ridgefield

According to digital mapping, over 95 percent of Ridgefield is zoned for residential development. Approximately 5 percent of the community is zoned for business development.

	Acres	Acres	Percent of Total Area
Residential			
Low Density Residential		20,901	93.5%
R-AAA – About 0.3 units per acre	5,887		
R-AA – About 0.5 units per acre	13,533		
R-A – About 1.0 units per acre	1,481		
Higher Density Residential		422	1.9%
R-20 – About 2.0 units per acre	160		
R-10 / R-7.5 – About 4.0+ units per acre	56		
MFDD / CAH / CCF / ARHD / MSDD / HOD -	206		
Business		1,020	4.6%
CBD	42		
B-1 – Business	84		
B-2 – Business	260		
B-3 – General Urban	27		
NB - Neighborhood Business	7		
CDD– Corporate Development	599		
Total		22,342	100%

Planimetrics and based on Assessor database. Totals may not add due to rounding



Conceptual Zoning

Ridgefield, CT

Lower Density Residential Zones

RAAA

RAA

RA

Higher Density Residential Zones

R-20 / R-20 SD

R-10 / R-7.5

Multi-Family District

Business

CBD

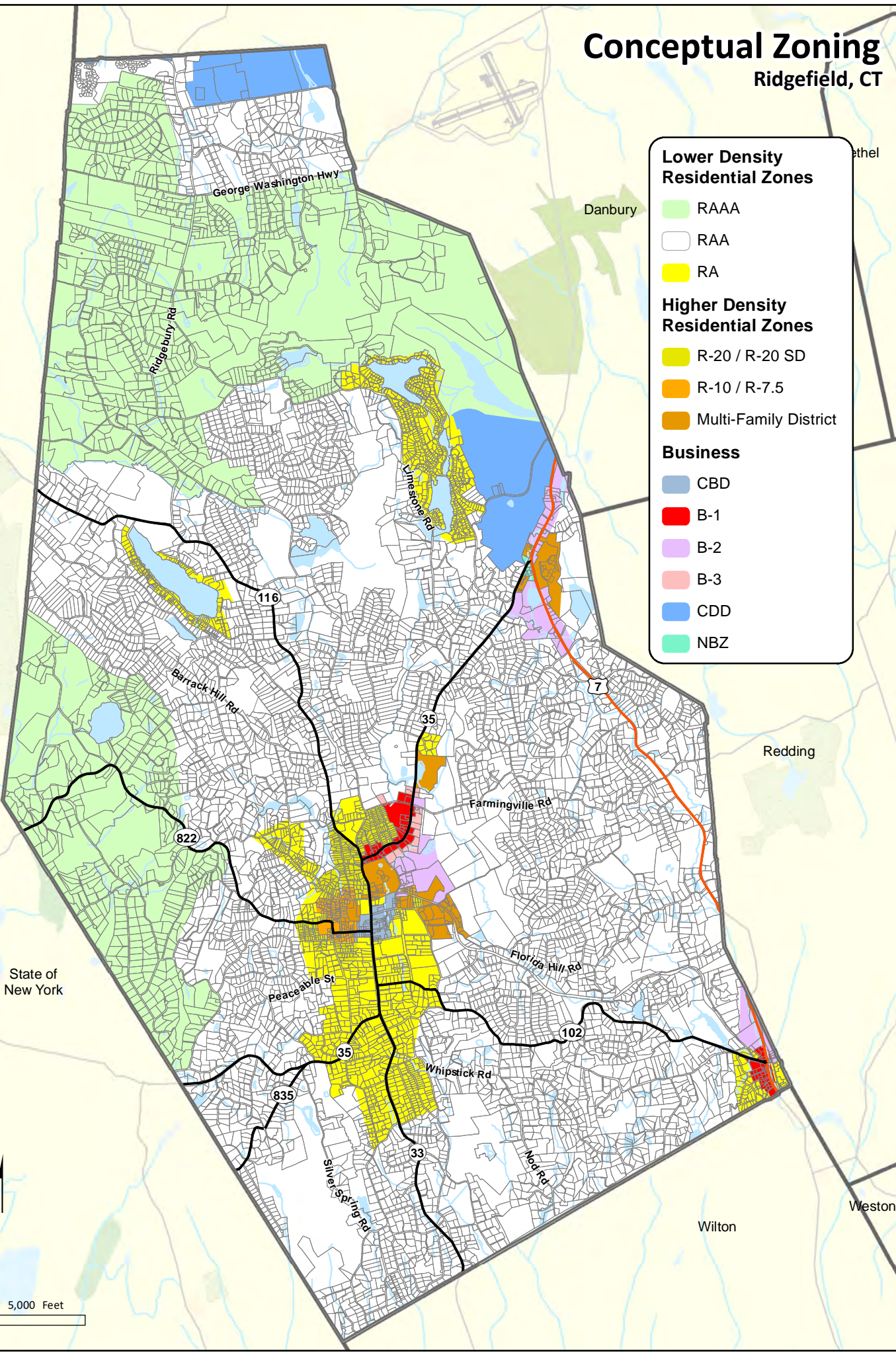
B-1

B-2

B-3

CDD

NBZ



3

COMMUNITY ISSUES, CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES

Overview

As part of the process of preparing the POCD, several exercises were conducted to help understand community issues, concerns and priorities:

1. An initial telephone survey of 100 randomly selected residents to get a sense of issues of concern to the community (November 2018),
2. An initial on-line survey about issues of concern to the community which received 438 responses (December 2018),
3. A series of “listening sessions” where local boards and commissions and the general public were asked to provide comments and feedback on the strategies in the 2010 POCD and a series of briefing booklets prepared on different topics as part of the POCD process (February to June 2019),
4. A follow-up telephone survey of 300 randomly selected residents to better understand community preferences and support for different policy options (July 2019), and
5. A survey among members of the Planning and Zoning Commission to prioritize POCD strategies for implementation (July 2019).

The results of those exercises are summarized in this chapter and throughout the other chapters of the POCD.

Character



Traffic



Initial Community Issues & Concerns

In order to learn about issues important to Ridgefield residents, two surveys were conducted in November - December 2018 in the early stages of preparing this POCD:

- A telephone survey of 100 randomly selected households in order to get a general sense of issues and concerns (November 2018), and
- An on-line survey with 438 responses which was conducted over a 4-week period after the telephone survey (December 2018).

Overall Quality of Life Is Considered Good / Very Good

In both surveys, at least 98 percent of respondents felt the quality of life was good or very good.

Most Participants Attracted Here Due to Character and Amenities

On average, about one-third of survey participants were attracted to Ridgefield because of community ambience (character, reputation, appearance) and another third or so moved here primarily because of amenities / services (education system, recreational facilities, etc.). The remainder ended up in Ridgefield because it was close to work, housing characteristics, they grew up here or for another reason.

When asked what they like most about Ridgefield today, people in both surveys indicated that character / ambience and amenities / services were still the attributes they liked the most.

Participants Concerned About Taxes and Traffic

When asked what they like least about Ridgefield today, the responses included the following:

- Taxes / cost of living (27%)
- Traffic / transportation issues (19%)
- Nothing (16%)
- Overall growth (10%)
- Other responses (16%) including noise, ruralness of community, inconvenient location, lack of diversity, rude or unfriendly people, bad attitudes, crime, politicians, storms/trees falling, difficulties in winter season, lack of public sewer system, lack of job opportunities, lack variety of restaurants.



Dashboard

Throughout the POCD, this icon is used to highlight results from community surveys.



Initial On-Line Survey

From the following list, what topic do you feel should be the highest priority in the POCD.

Preserving Open Space	154
Invigorating Downtown	143
Protecting Natural Resources	137
Promoting Business Development	115
Addressing Vehicular Transportation	96
Enhancing Community Character	91
Sustainability / Resiliency	72
Improving Comm. Facilities / Services	58
Address Residential Development	57
Addressing Utility Services	39

Most Important POCD Topic / Most Important Issue

From a list pre-determined options, participants in the on-line survey indicated that the following topics should be given the most emphasis in the POCD:

- Preserving Open Space
- Invigorating Downtown
- Protecting Natural Resources

With no list to guide them, participants in the telephone survey indicated that the following three issues should be given the most emphasis in the POCD:

- Managing / Controlling Development - including managing / controlling development, over-development, land use/conservation, subsidized housing, more affordable housing, economic growth, more employment opportunities for locals, maintain downtown area / Main Street, declining population, business turnover
- Managing Taxes and Spending
- Addressing Traffic / Congestion

When asked what they felt was the greatest challenge or need facing Ridgefield today, participants in the telephone survey indicated the following:

- Managing Taxes / Cost
- Retaining Character
- Managing Development - including affordable housing, more senior services / senior housing, economic growth, attract / retain businesses, more employment opportunities, viability of local businesses, expansion on Route 7

If Could Make One Thing Happen

When asked about the one thing they wished they could make happen, the responses to the telephone survey were characterized as follows:

- Retaining Character (18%)
- Managing Traffic / Transportation (17%)
- Managing Development (16%)
- Nothing (17%)
- Taxes / Cost of Living (12%)
- Other (20%)

The Planning and Zoning Commission carefully considered this input as part of preparing this POCD update.

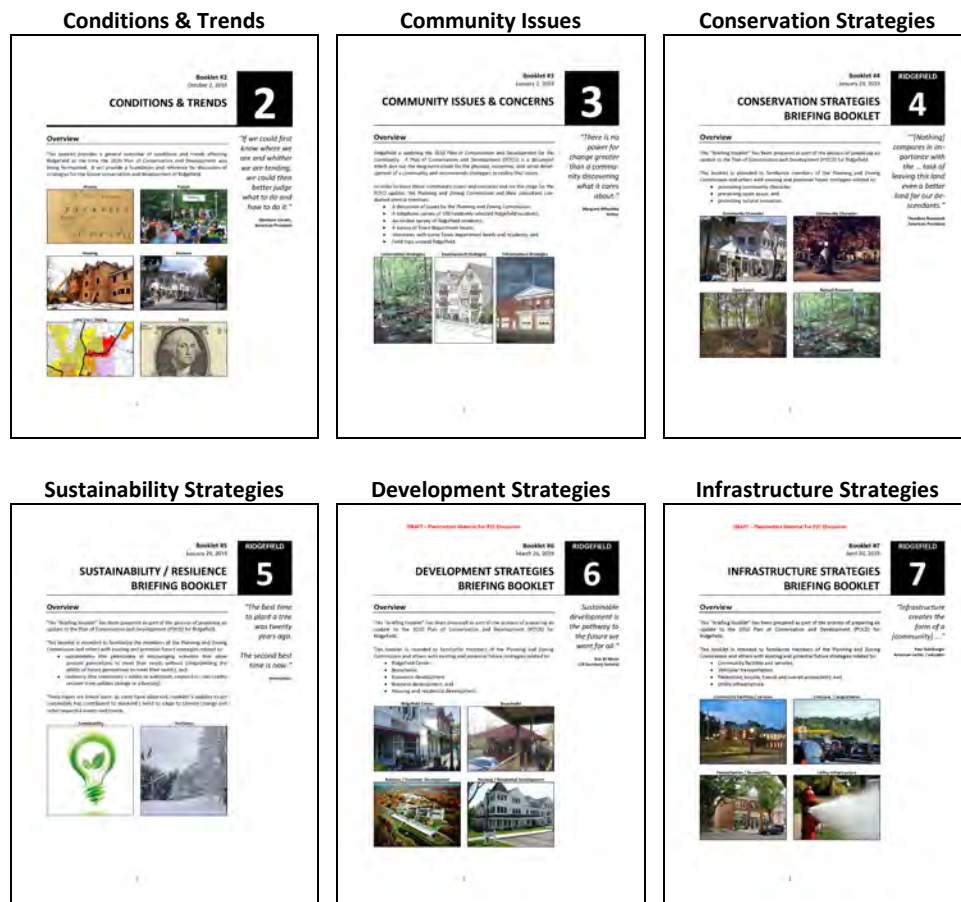
Briefing Booklets / Listening Sessions

In late 2018 and early 2019, briefing booklets were prepared on different POCD themes and then listening sessions were held where local boards and commissions were invited to participate and provide input and feedback on potential POCD strategies. The booklets and the dates of the listening sessions were:

- Conditions & Trends
- Community Issues and Concerns
- Conservation Strategies – March 5, 2019
- Development Strategies – April 2, 2019
- Infrastructure Strategies – May 7, 2019
- Public Listening Sessions – June 18, 2019

All the briefing booklets were available on-line and were placed on file in the Planning and Zoning Department at the Town Hall Annex.

The input and feedback from these listening sessions was reviewed and discussed by the Planning and Zoning Commission at a meeting on July 2, 2019 and incorporated into this POCD, where considered applicable.





Telephone Survey

The specific results of the community preferences survey (a telephone survey of 300 residents) are reported throughout this POCD.

In addition, the full results were placed on file in the Planning and Zoning Department at the Town Hall Annex.

Community Preferences Survey

In July 2019, the Planning and Zoning Commission requested that Great Blue Research of Glastonbury, CT undertake a telephone survey of 300 randomly selected Ridgefield residents to obtain input and feedback on POCD strategies being considered.

Some general findings from this survey are presented below.

Overall Quality of Life Is Considered Good / Very Good

Over 98 percent of respondents felt the quality of life in Ridgefield was good (24%) or very good (74%).

If Could Make One Thing Happen

When asked about the one thing they wished they could change in Ridgefield, the responses to the telephone survey were characterized as follows:

Theme	Specifics	
Managing Traffic / Transportation	Less traffic, parking, improve road conditions, sidewalks, bike paths, improve public transportation, road expansion, train service	20%
Managing Development	Control development, proper zoning, more businesses, control population, upgrade downtown	20%
Nothing	Nothing/no improvements needed	12%
Don't know/refused	Don't know/refused	12%
Taxes / Cost of Living	Property taxes, affordable cost of living, lower rental costs, balanced budget, frugality	10%
Enhancing Character	More diverse, more open-minded people, sense of community, community involvement, preserving open spaces, noise ordinance, maintain small town feel	6%
Services / amenities	Improve school system/education, activities/recreational facilities, maintain school facilities, help emergency services, more restaurant/leisure time locations	5%
Other		14%

Commission Priorities Survey

After considering the strategies in the briefing booklets and other input received from the listening sessions, the Planning and Zoning Commission undertook an exercise to prioritize the strategies, policies, and action steps.



In the POCD:

- Strategies are statements or phrases providing an overall direction for Ridgefield to make the community a better place (strategies show up as numbered headings at the end of each chapter).
- Policies are statements in black text suggesting ways that Ridgefield should evaluate proposed activities or initiatives to accomplish POCD strategies (note that policies may never be considered “implemented” since they are intended to be on-going).
- Action steps are specific tasks in red text which can be taken to implement POCD strategies and which can be considered implemented when complete.

The results of the Commission’s priorities survey are presented alongside each policy and action step in the POCD.

Where no priority is indicated (symbolized by a “-”), it is because the policy or action step was added to the POCD after the exercise was conducted.

Participants were given a certain number of dots with different point values (on a four-point scale) and tasked with allocating these dots to strategies, policies, and action steps from the briefing booklets to reflect their sense of importance / priority. The highest score would be a 4.00 (if every participant gave it a 4-point rating) and the lowest score would be a 1.00 (if every participant gave it a 1-point rating).

A comprehensive listing and ranking of all strategies, policies, and action steps is contained in the implementation chapter of the POCD.

STRATEGY	3. Improve The Pedestrian Experience		
	A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Score	Leader / Partners
Policies (black text)	1. Maintain sidewalks and pedestrian pathways, enhance them with trees, lighting, and site furnishings, and eliminate physical barriers.	3.08	PO
	2. Improve mobility and accessibility for mobility impaired people.	2.77	PO Town
Action Steps (red text)	B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Score	Leader / Partners
	1. Install kiosks/ wayfinding signage at strategic locations to inform visitors of business locations and Town Center sidewalks and pathways.	1.62	ECDC
	2. Increase and enhance pedestrian crosswalks (such as installing “bump-outs” to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance and realign the pedestrian crosswalk on Main Street to align with Big Shop Lane).	2.31	DOT Town
	3. Convert alleyways off Main Street to exclusively pedestrian uses and add lighting and amenities to enrich the pedestrian experience.	2.38	Town PZC

Initial POCD
Priorities

4

SUSTAINABILITY THEME

BE SUSTAINABLE

Strive to be a more sustainable and more resilient community



Telephone Survey Results

I want Ridgefield to be a more sustainable community in terms of energy efficiency and water conservation.

Strongly agree	26%
Agree	52%
Don't Know	9%
Disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	1%

Overview

Two of the themes central to this POCD are:

- Sustainability (an integrated planning approach designed to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs), and
- Resiliency (the community's ability to withstand, respond to, and readily recover from sudden change or adversity as well as the community's ability to adapt to long-term change).

Since at least the late 1980s, there has been growing recognition of the importance of these topics and it is appropriate for Ridgefield's POCD to embrace them. In addition to this chapter and theme of the POCD, a sidebar icon will be used throughout the POCD to identify strategies, policies and/or action steps related to the concepts of sustainability and resilience.

These topics are linked since, as some have observed, mankind's inability to act sustainably has contributed to mankind's need to adapt to climate change and other impactful events and trends.

Sustainability

Concern for sustainability and climate change led the State of Connecticut to adopt an executive order pledging that, by 2030, the State will have lowered its fossil fuel emissions by 45% from the 2001 levels.

SustainableCT Certificate



Become More Sustainable

In addition to the traditional environmental stewardship concept of “sustainability”, the term has grown to include:

- Economic sustainability,
- Resource management,
- Social and cultural sustainability, and
- A variety of related concepts.

An organization called SustainableCT has identified a range of activities which communities can engage in to demonstrate sustainability. The organizational framework used by SustainableCT includes the following:

1. Reduce dependence on fossil fuels, underground metals and minerals,
2. Reduce activities that negatively impact nature,
3. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently,
4. Reduce dependence on chemicals and unnatural substances, and
5. Promote activities that have multiple benefits to the community.

SustainableCT maintains a “master action list” which communities can use to guide and document sustainability efforts. As of 2019, over half the communities in Connecticut were participating in this voluntary program and completing (and documenting) activities on the master action list to demonstrate their progress in this regard. Communities receive certification for completing actions listed on the master action list (which is updated over time).

Ridgefield has been participating in the SustainableCT program (through RACE, the Ridgefield Action Committee for the Environment) and received a Bronze level certification in 2018. RACE is working on ways to get the Silver certification and potentially higher certifications in the future.

The following pages summarize the SustainableCT “Sustainability Concepts In Action” as of 2019. In addition, the Sustainability icon in the sidebar highlights the location of specific SustainableCT concepts.

SustainableCT Master Action List

Some of the actions on the following pages have been edited to fit into the space provided. A complete and up-to-date description of the SustainableCT themes and action steps can be found at:

<https://sustainablect.org/>



Dashboard

Throughout the POCD, this icon is used to highlight strategies and considerations related to making Ridgefield a more sustainable community in the future.

In general, the sustainability chapter of the Ridgefield POCD includes many of the concepts in the SustainableCT action framework including, but not limited to:

- Energy (generation, source, use, conservation and energy efficiency),
- Water (use, conservation, and re-use of processed water),
- Waste (reduction, recycling, composting, and re-use),
- Re-use of sites and materials,
- Life-cycle costing,
- Reduction in the use of hazardous materials,
- Air quality (such as vegetation that absorb carbon dioxide and air pollutants), and
- Education about sustainability concepts.

The “concepts” on this page are examples from SustainableCT of the types of actions which could be taken to promote sustainability. These potential actions are illustrative and may be subject to evolution over time.

They are included in the POCD in order to promote sustainability initiatives with the understanding that their applicability to Ridgefield may need to be evaluated.

SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

1. Land Use Actions

A. Reduce dependence on fossil fuels, underground metals, and minerals by promoting:

1. Compact development that minimizes the need to drive.
2. A mix of integrated community uses — housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks, civic facilities — within walking or bicycling distance.
3. Human-scaled development that is pedestrian-friendly.
4. Public transit-oriented development.
5. Home-based occupations and work that reduce the need to commute.
6. Local food production and agriculture that reduce the need for long-range shipping.

B. Reduce activities that encroach upon nature:

1. Guide development to existing developed areas and minimize development in outlying, undeveloped areas.
2. Maintain a well-defined "edge" around each community that is permanently protected from development.
3. Remediate and redevelop brownfield sites and other developed lands that suffer from environmental or other constraints.
4. Promote regional and local designs that respect the regional ecosystems, biotic corridors and natural functions which adequately support and protect people and native plants/wildlife.
5. Create financial and regulatory incentives to infill development; and eliminate disincentives.

C. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently:

1. Identify the communities impacted by environmental burdens and pollution.
2. Evaluate which communities are disproportionately impacted.
3. Engage in outreach/conversation with those communities.
4. Co-design, with input or in collaboration, with those communities, a plan to eliminate such burdens and pollution.

SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

2. Transportation Actions

A. Reduce dependence on fossil fuels:

1. Reduce vehicle trips and miles traveled through compact, infill, and mixed-use development.
2. Increase access to, and use of, alternatives to the drive-alone automobile, including walking, bicycling, public transportation, and in the case of communities without adequate population densities to support conventional public transit, strategic implementation steps toward generally broadening mobility options for municipal residents.
3. Calculate the municipality's transit propensity score (a measure of how likely the use of public transportation is), especially as it compares to the current regional and state scores.
4. Develop and use vehicles powered by renewable fuel sources.
5. Design local streets that encourage pedestrian and bicycle use and discourage high-speed traffic.
6. Design streets that support/enhance access between neighborhoods and to neighborhood-based commercial developments.

B. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently:

1. Providing access to affordable, efficient transportation alternatives for multiple populations, especially low-income households, elders, and others that cannot or do not own cars (for current and future residents).

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SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

3. Housing / Building Actions

A. Reduce dependence on fossil fuels, extracted underground metals, and minerals:

1. Design and develop solar-oriented housing & buildings.
2. Use regenerative heating and cooling energy alternatives.
3. Provide housing near places of employment.
4. Select building materials with low "embodied energy," which require less energy-intensive production methods and long-distance transport.

B. Reduce dependence on chemicals and unnatural substances:

1. Use chemical-free and toxin-free building materials.
2. Use eco-friendly, non-toxic cleaners in municipal buildings and encourage residents and business owners to use such cleansers.
3. Reduce waste, recycle building waste materials, and promote recycling by residents.
4. Create a community standard for landscape design that minimizes the use of pesticides and herbicides and promotes native/naturalized landscapes.

C. Reduce activities that negatively impact nature:

1. Reuse existing buildings and sites for development.
2. Develop compact and clustered residential areas with reduced minimum lot sizes.
3. Adopt water conservation measures, to minimize environmentally destructive side effects of developing new water sources.
4. Manage stormwater responsibly by reusing and restoring the quality of on-site runoff (for example, constructed marsh or wetlands systems).
5. Reduce or eliminate impervious paving materials.
6. Use recycled building materials, thus helping to minimize the mining of virgin materials.
7. Use "cradle-to-cradle" (life cycle) analysis when choosing materials and construction techniques.
8. Recycle building construction waste materials and use appropriate deconstruction techniques.

D. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently, by providing for:

1. Communities and housing developments that are socially cohesive, in order to reduce isolation, foster community spirit, and enhance resource sharing (for example, cohousing).
2. Housing within the same community that residents in many levels of income can afford.
3. Diverse occupancy in terms of age, social, and cultural groups.
4. Housing located near employment centers.

SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

4. Economic Development Actions

A. Encourage businesses that reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, extracted underground metals, and minerals; for example, businesses that:

1. Reduce employee and product transport vehicle trips.
2. Use regenerative energy alternatives to replace fossil fuels, or reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
3. Do not use or reduce the use of cadmium, lead, and other potentially toxic metals and minerals that can accumulate in the biosphere.
4. Are locally-based or home-based, reducing or eliminating the need to commute.

B. Encourage businesses that reduce dependence upon chemicals and unnatural substances; for example, enterprises that:

1. Actively seek ways to minimize the use of toxic manufactured substances.
2. Meet or exceed clean air standards.
3. Minimize or reduce use of chemicals and employ proper disposal and recycling mechanisms for these.
4. Use agricultural methods that reduce or minimize use of pesticides, herbicides, and manufactured fertilizers.
5. Use byproducts of other processes or whose wastes can be used as the raw materials for other industrial processes.

C. Encourage businesses that reduce activities that negatively impact nature; for example, enterprises that:

1. Use recycled or by-products of other businesses, minimizing the use of virgin raw materials.
2. Prevent activities that emit waste or pollutants into the environment.
3. Use agricultural approaches that build up rather than deplete topsoil, and conserve or minimize water use.
4. Maintain natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation, minimizing disruption of natural systems.
5. Re-use processed water.

D. Encourage businesses that meet human needs fairly and efficiently; for example, enterprises that:

1. Fulfill local employment and consumer needs without degrading the environment.
2. Promote financial and social equity in the workplace.
3. Create vibrant community-based economies with employment opportunities that allow people economic self-determination and environmental health.
4. Encourage local agriculture, providing a nearby source of fresh, healthy food for urban and rural populations (for example, farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), independent health-food stores).

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SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

5. Open Space/Recreation Actions

A. Reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, extracted underground metals, minerals:

1. Provide recreational facilities within walking and bicycling distance.
2. Use local materials and native plants in facility design to reduce transport distances and reduce maintenance.
3. Maintain landscapes and parks with minimal fossil-fuel-powered equipment.

B. Reduce dependence upon chemicals and synthetic substances:

1. Use alternatives to chemical pesticides and herbicides in park and facility maintenance (for example, integrated pest management, planting natives that require fewer inputs).

C. Activities that reduce negative impacts upon nature:

1. Fund open space acquisition.
2. Preserve wilderness areas.
3. Create urban gardens and community gardens.
4. Preserve wildlife habitats and biological diversity in area ecosystems.
5. Establish on-site composting of organic waste.
6. Restore damaged natural systems through regenerative design approaches.
7. Create systems of green spaces and biotic corridors within and among communities.
8. Develop responsible alternatives to solid waste landfills.
9. Use regionally native plants for landscaping.
10. Encourage landscape and park maintenance that reduces the use of mowers, edgers, and leaf blowers.

SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

6. Infrastructure Actions

A. Reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, extracted underground metals, minerals, by promoting:

1. Facilities that employ renewable energy sources, or reduce fossil fuel use for operations and transport needs.

B. Reduce dependence upon chemicals and synthetic substances, by promoting:

1. Treatment facilities that remove or destroy pathogens without creating chemically contaminated by-products.
2. Design approaches and regulatory systems that focus on pollution prevention, re-use and recycling.

C. Reduce activities that negatively impact nature:

1. Promote innovative treatment for sewage and effluent to meet or exceed federal drinking water standards while minimizing or eliminating the use of chemicals (for example, greenhouse sewage treatment facilities).
2. Recognize the "cradle-to-grave" and "cradle-to-cradle" costs of waste generation and disposal.
3. Promote composting and gray-water reuse systems, and remove regulatory barriers to those systems.

D. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently, by:

1. Cleaning, conserving, and reusing wastewater at the site, neighborhood or community level, reducing the need for large, expensive collection systems and regional processing facilities.

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SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

7. Growth Management Actions

- A. Reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, extracted underground metals, minerals, by promoting:**
 - 1. Development near existing transport systems; minimizing need for new road and highway construction.
- B. Reduce activities that negatively impact nature, by promoting:**
 - 1. Appropriate development and population growth policies linked to carrying capacity of natural systems and community facilities.
 - 2. Development patterns that respect natural systems such as watersheds and wildlife corridors.
- C. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently, by promoting:**
 - 1. Understanding current demographics and projected demographics for the community.
 - 2. Planning and promoting growth management policies that recognize the values of a diverse local population and economy.

SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

8. Floodplain Management Actions

- A. Promote activities that provide protection for the community from flooding and other damages:**
 - 1. Guide development away from floodplains.
 - 2. Guide development away from barrier beaches.
 - 3. Preserve or restore wetland areas along rivers for natural flood control.

SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

9. Watershed Planning / Management Actions

- A. Reduce activities that negatively impact nature:**
 - 1. Preserve and enhance water quality.
 - 2. Reduce water use.
 - 3. Recharge groundwater basins.
 - 4. Use flood control and stormwater techniques that enhance and restore natural habitats.
 - 5. Prevent wetlands destruction; restore degraded wetlands.

SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

10. Resource Conservation Actions

- A. Reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, extracted underground metals, and minerals:**
1. Minimize energy use.
 2. Encourage the development and local siting of renewable energy generation.
 3. Discourage the use of products that utilize packaging derived from non-renewable, non-degradable resources.
 4. Promote recycling, especially of waste materials derived from non-renewable, non-degradable resources.
 5. Develop community gardens that reduce the need for long-range transport of food and associated consumption of fossil fuels.
- B. Promote activities that have multiple benefits to the community:**
1. Preserve and plant trees and other vegetation that absorb carbon dioxide and air pollutants.

The “concepts” on this page are examples from SustainableCT of the types of actions which could be taken to promote sustainability. These potential actions are illustrative and may be subject to evolution over time.

They are included in the POCD in order to promote sustainability initiatives with the understanding that their applicability to Ridgefield may need to be evaluated.

SustainableCT – Sustainability Concepts In Action

11. Planning Processes / Education Actions

- A. Reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, extracted underground metals, and minerals, for example, by:**
1. Encouraging and enabling residents to use transport other than diesel- and gasoline-powered vehicles.
- B. Reduce dependence upon chemicals and unnatural substances, for example, by:**
1. Educating citizens and public servants about both short- and long-term risks associated with the use and disposal of hazardous materials.
- C. Reduce activities that negatively impact nature, for example, through:**
1. Educational efforts to reduce levels of consumption and waste generation at the household and community levels.
- D. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently by:**
1. Integrally involving local residents in setting the vision for and developing plans for the community and region.
 2. Establish avenues for meaningful participation in decision-making for all residents and in particular for historically disadvantaged people.
 3. Provide for equitable educational opportunities for all members of society.
 4. Promote retraining of those workers displaced in the short-term by a shift of industries and businesses to a more sustainable economy.



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield should do more to prepare for emergency events such as storms.

Strongly agree	23%
Agree	36%
Don't Know	11%
Disagree	28%
Strongly disagree	3%

Be Resilient

For the POCD, resiliency relates to being able to absorb and/or recover from impactful events in an efficient and timely way.

In years past, the concept of resiliency included emergency response, storm preparation, and similar activities. Now, resiliency has grown to include the concept of “hazard mitigation” (identification, avoidance, mitigation, response) related to known hazards such as intense storms, flooding, and similar events.

In the future, the concept of resiliency will also need to include adaptation to climate change. There is increasing evidence that climate change (such as warming temperatures) is occurring and affecting Ridgefield and other communities. This includes an increase in the occurrence of more frequent and intense storms which overwhelm the infrastructure (such as storm drainage systems) installed in many parts of the community.

The elements of being a resilient community include:

Avoidance-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification / avoidance / risk reduction
Mitigation-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating probability / risk scenarios • Evaluating approaches (protection / adaptation) • Balancing of cost / benefit • Hardening infrastructure (e.g. burying utilities) • Requiring resilient buildings in coastal areas • Promoting grid independence / interconnected community
Response-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-event education / training • Pre-event response plans

A Hazard Mitigation Plan prepared for Ridgefield in 2015 identifies the major hazards (flooding, hurricanes and tropical storms, summer storms and tornadoes, winter storms, earthquakes, dam failure, wildfires) and strategies to reduce or eliminate risk to human life and property.

Intense Rainfall Events



Severe Winter Storms

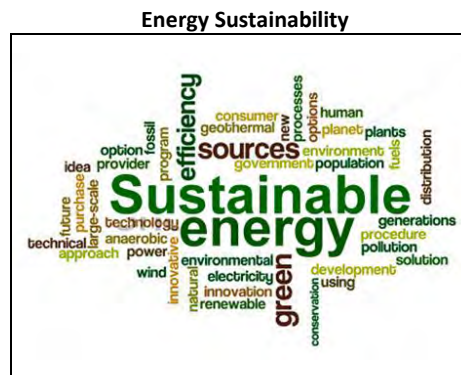
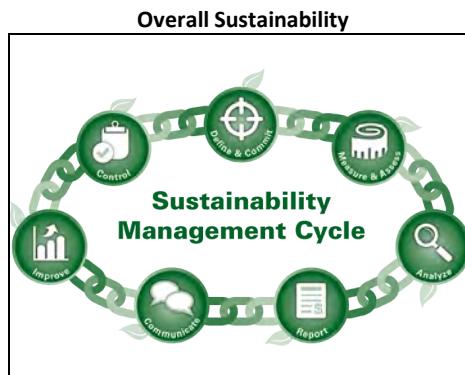


SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

**Legend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**

1. Increase Overall Sustainability

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to encourage consideration of overall issues of sustainability in municipal decision making.	2.85	Town RACE ETF
2. Continue efforts to create transit-oriented and pedestrian friendly areas to reduce motor vehicle emissions and energy utilization.	2.77	PZC
3. Encourage residents and businesses to include sustainability considerations in their decision making.	2.46	Town ETF RACE
4. Continue to educate the community about sustainability concepts.	2.38	Town ETF RACE
5. Continue to participate in programs and activities of SustainableCT (an independent organization which helps Connecticut municipalities make progress towards implementing sustainability initiatives).	2.38	Town ETF RACE
6. Continue to advocate for ways to accomplish reductions of CO ₂ emissions and reduction of the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gasses.	2.23	Town RACE



2. Become More Energy-Sustainable

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Encourage and support efforts to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reduce energy use and become more energy efficient, b. Include life-cycle costing in municipal decision-making, c. Reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and d. Address other energy sustainability issues. 	3.23	Town ETF
2. Complete the transition to LED streetlights with an eye towards balancing energy efficiency with human and environmental impacts, quality of life, and public safety.	2.54	Town PW
3. Encourage residents and businesses to conserve energy, become more energy efficient, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.	2.46	Town ETF
4. Support the State goal of, by 2030, a 45% reduction of fossil fuel emissions from 2001 levels.	-	Town ETF

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Review municipal programs relative to energy sustainability issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promoting “greener” buildings / vehicles, b. Providing for alternative approaches (fuel cell, micro-grids, etc.), c. Streamlining permitting for small solar installations, wind generators, etc., and d. Providing for electric car charging stations. 	2.69	Town ETF RACE PZC

3. Become More Water Sustainable

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue efforts to conserve water / reduce water use by municipal agencies.	2.23	Town
2. Encourage residents and businesses to conserve water / reduce water use.	1.77	AWC HD

4. Become More Waste Sustainable

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Seek to reduce the use of plastic bags and other single use products and containers.	2.77	RACE HARRIS TS
2. Seek to increase recycling / composting and reduce the overall waste stream (including food waste).	2.15	RACE HARRIS TS
3. Support the State goal (Public Act 14-94) to divert 60 percent of solid waste (reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and waste conversion) from disposal by 2024.	-	RACE HARRIS TS

5. Become More Resilient

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Maintain and improve approaches for preparing for and responding to impactful events including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Emergency shelter capacity / supplies b. Redundant energy supply c. "Off-grid" generation (including generators and fuel cells) d. Mobile cellular antennae / charging stations 	2.54	CPD ESD FD PD PW
2. Continue efforts to identify, avoid, reduce, mitigate, and recover from impactful events.	2.15	Town

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Implement the Hazard Mitigation Plan, as amended.	2.23	Town
2. Update the Hazard Mitigation Plan on a regular basis in order to address risks and obtain funding.	1.62	Town WCOG
3. As part of the next update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, create a map which identifies (to the extent possible) the location of natural hazard areas in Ridgefield.	-	Town WCOG

5

CONSERVATION THEME

PROMOTE COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Preserve and encourage those features that contribute to Ridgefield's character



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield is doing a good job protecting historic resources, scenic resources, and other things that contribute to community character.

Strongly agree	22%
Agree	54%
Don't Know	8%
Disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	5%

Overview

Community character is important to Ridgefield residents. Over the years, residents have indicated that community character attracted them to Ridgefield and a contributed to their quality of life today. For the POCD, the concept of “community character” includes attributes that contribute to a positive perception and distinctive impression of Ridgefield. This includes “physical” characteristics as well as “social/cultural” characteristics.

Maintain And Enhance Overall Character

Overall, about 76 percent of participants in the telephone survey felt that Ridgefield does a good job protecting character elements. Efforts to maintain and enhance things that have a **positive** correlation to people's perception of community character will continue.

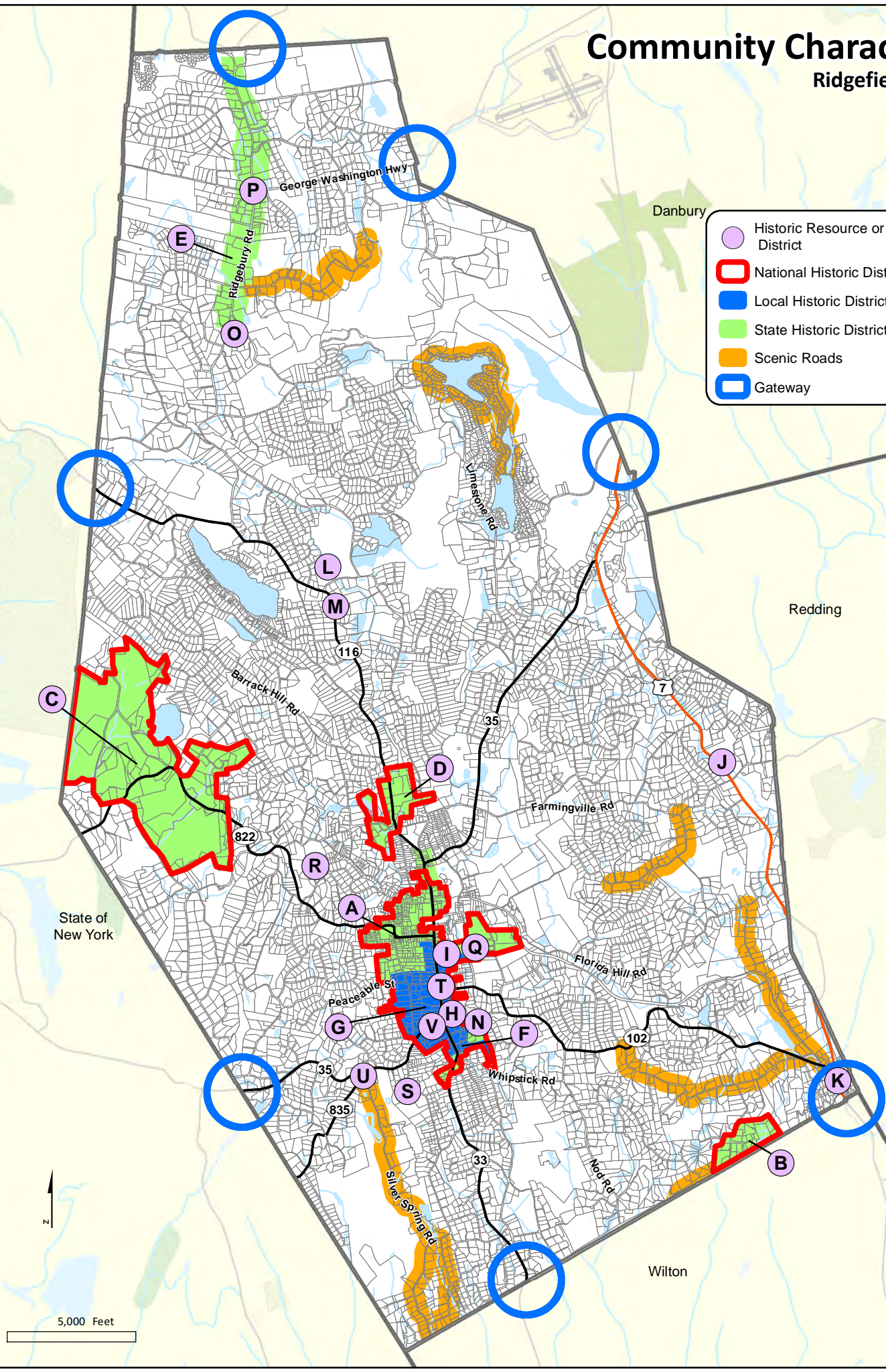
Natural Resources / Open Space / Scenic Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water features / wetland areas / landform / hillsides • Open spaces / greenway trails / connections • Scenic views / scenic areas / scenic roads • Significant trees / street trees / tree canopies
Place-making / Streetscape / Building Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifiable places with a “sense of place” • Building design that reinforces “sense of place” • Strong gateways / Intuitive wayfinding • Pedestrian-friendliness • Appropriate landscaping / lighting / noise / signs
Destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique public and institutional facilities / places • Unique restaurants / retailers / services • Unique festivals / events • Attractive community facilities / services
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic resources / Agricultural uses • People / organizations / traditions • Community image / reputation / perception • Cleanliness / maintenance / safety

The map on the facing page shows the location of some of these resources and features in Ridgefield.

Community Character

Ridgefield, CT

- Historic Resource or District
- National Historic District
- Local Historic District
- State Historic District
- Scenic Roads
- Gateway



5,000 Feet

Some Components of Ridgefield's Physical Character

"Sense of Place



Landscapes



Scenic Views



Landmarks



Some Components of Ridgefield's Arts / Cultural Character

Performing Arts



Visual Arts



Famous Artists



Local Events



Continue To Protect Historic Resources

Historic buildings and sites make a major contribution to community character. Ridgefield is home to a number of recognized historic resources, as shown on the map and in the following table (the letter corresponds with the location of the resource on the map).

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) identifies resources significant in the history of the nation. The State Register of Historic Places (SRHP) identifies resources significant in the history of the state. The designations may be for districts (areas containing multiple properties) or for individual properties. These designations are not regulatory in nature and, with a few exceptions, generally only directly affect activities involving federal and/or state funding.

A local historic district is regulatory in nature and regulates exterior changes in view from a public street. Ridgefield has two local historic districts where activities are overseen by the Historic District Commission.

"Recognition" District	NRHP	SRHP	Local
A. Ridgefield Center Historic District	■	■	
B. Weir Farm Historic District	■	■	
C. West Mountain Historic District	■	■	
D. Titicus Hill Historic District	■	■	
E. Ridgebury Historic District		■	
"Regulatory" Districts			
F. Ridgefield Historic District #1		■	■
G. Ridgefield Historic District #2		■	■

Frederic Remington House



Thomas Hawley House



Cultural Districts

See page 79 for an action step recommending participation in a State program for "municipal cultural districts" for the benefit of Ridgefield businesses and organizations.

Other Preservation Tools

In the year 2000, Ridgefield enacted an ordinance which designated the Historic District Commission to also act as a Historic Properties Commission. When private property owners request their property be designated as a "historic property", the Commission administers the restrictions on the property.

State statutes (CGS Section 22a-19a) also make the provisions of the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) applicable to the unreasonable destruction of historic structures and landmarks of the state (properties listed or under consideration for listing on the National Register of Historic Places individually or as part of a district).

Individual Property Listings			
H.	Keeler Tavern	■	■
I.	Governor Lounsbury House ("Grovelawn")	■	■
J.	Fulling Mill / Woolen Mill Archeological Site	■	■
K.	Branchville Railroad Tenement	■	■
L.	Thomas Hyatt House	■	■
M.	Lewis June House	■	■
N.	Benedict House and Shop	■	■
O.	Rochambeau March Route	■	■
P.	Ridgebury Congregational Church	■	■
Q.	Old Ridgefield Playhouse (removed)		■
R.	Frederic Remington House (see note below)	■	■
S.	Stephen Olmstead House		■
T.	Thomas Hawley House		■
U.	Peter Parley Schoolhouse		■
V.	Cass Gilbert Fountain		■

* The Frederic Remington House is also a National Historic Landmark.

The best way to protect historic resources is ownership or stewardship by a sensitive owner. The Zoning Regulations (ZR) allow some flexibility for certain dimensional requirements and allow adaptive reuse along Route 7. The Town will consider options (such as tax incentives or additional zoning relief) for retaining and increasing the reuse of historic buildings.

In some situations, the above strategies may not be enough to preserve a historic resource. Ridgefield is in the process of adopting a Demolition Delay ordinance to potentially provide for a longer waiting period before demolition of a historic property in order for the community to explore alternatives.

Keeler Tavern



"Grovelawn"



Maintain and Enhance Scenic Features

Community Design / Architectural Review

Building architecture significantly contributes to overall community character in Ridgefield. Over the years, Ridgefield has demonstrated the ability to blend new buildings into the historic architecture and landscapes. In the telephone survey, about 54% of residents felt the Town was doing a good job ensuring new residential development fit into the character of Ridgefield.

Much of the credit for this goes to the Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) which reviews certain development projects as provided in Section 8.3 of the Zoning Regulations. The AAC will continue to ensure that building scale, design and materials are compatible with neighboring buildings, especially in Ridgefield Center.

Physical Character - Scenic Resources / Features

Ridgefield contains many scenic resources and features such as waterbodies, wetlands, meadows, ridgelines and hillsides, scenic views and vistas, and stone walls, barns and similar features.

The Board of Selectmen has designated the following local scenic roads:

- Clearview Drive
- Clearview Terrace
- Florida Road
- Lake Road
- Lakeside Drive
- Lakeside Drive Extension
- Lounsbury Road
- Mountain Road
- Ned's Mountain Road
- Old Branchville Road
- Pelham Lane
- Rainbow Drive
- Shady Lane
- Silver Spring Road
- Woody Place

The Town will seek to preserve these scenic resources and features and other aspects of Ridgefield's rich heritage. The Town will seek to retain the scenic aspects should they be threatened by proposed development or otherwise.

Physical Character - Undeveloped Land (PA-490)

Some properties in Ridgefield participate in the use assessment program (commonly known as "Public Act 490") and this allows property meeting defined criteria (such as farm or forest use) to receive a reduced assessment. This helps preserve undeveloped property which provides character benefits to the whole community. While the State established criteria for farm and forest designations, the Town sets the criteria for the "open space" designation. Ridgefield's existing open space assessment policy should be continued.



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield is doing a good job making sure that new residential development fits into the character of Ridgefield.

Strongly agree	9%
Agree	45%
Don't Know	9%
Disagree	22%
Strongly disagree	16%



Sustainability Actions

This chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Local food production and agriculture.
- Sustainable agricultural methods that:
 - reduce use of pesticides, herbicides, and manufactured fertilizers.
 - build up rather than deplete topsoil, and
 - conserve or minimize water use.

Physical Character - Vegetation

In addition to significant individual trees, mature vegetation in Ridgefield is an important aspect of community character. The preservation of trees (especially notable trees) will be encouraged, especially along roadways.

Physical Character – Use Compatibility

Incompatible uses without adequate transitions and/or buffering can have a negative impact on community character and neighborhood stability. Non-residential uses in residential zones will continue to be carefully managed to help protect residential neighborhoods and residential character with an emphasis on compatibility. If necessary, the Commission will undertake a review of the following Zoning Regulations as they pertain to residential districts:

- Non-residential uses allowed by Special Permit,
- Accessory uses (including commercial vehicles), and/or
- Accessory structures.

Physical Character - Gateways

Gateways are locations which provide the primary entrance and first visual impression of the community. Ridgefield will strive to maintain and enhance the character of these areas (especially commercial areas) through building design, site layout, landscaping, property maintenance, and other approaches.

Demarcating the gateway with “welcome” signs (or other features) could enhance the appearance of these areas. Agencies such as the Economic and Community Development Commission, the Chamber of Commerce or other business-related organizations could sponsor and/or encourage such gateway features in these locations.

Northern Gateways to Ridgefield

- Danbury Road (Rt. 7)
- Ridgebury Road

Eastern Gateways to Ridgefield

- Washington Highway

Southern Gateways to Ridgefield

- Ethan Allen Highway (Rt. 7)
- Wilton Road (Rt. 33)

Western Gateways to Ridgefield

- Salem Rd. (Rt. 35)
- North Salem Rd. (Rt. 116)

Promote Community Ambience

Community Events

Community events such as concerts, festivals, and other family activities are important for bringing a community together and promoting community spirit and cohesiveness. In the telephone survey, about 53 percent of residents felt the Town should have more public events, such as concerts, festivals and other family activities for residents and visitors.

Local Recognition / Branding

Ridgefield is considered a special place by its residents (and by residents of other communities as well). *Connecticut Magazine* continues to rank Ridgefield as one of the best Connecticut communities in which to live.

Ridgefield has a number of facilities, programs, and events that enhance community character and build community recognition and community spirit. Ridgefield has also developed a reputation as a “cultural destination” (theaters, museums, community concerts, street festivals, etc.) and a bit of a “foodie vibe” (local restaurants). This recognition enhances Ridgefield’s overall sense of community pride and spirit.

Cultural Organizations

Ridgefield is fortunate to have a number of organizations and facilities that contribute to the overall culture and character of the community. Assets such as the Arts Council, Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra, Aldrich Museum, Keeler Tavern, Ridgefield Playhouse, and many others make major and meaningful contributions to the overall character of Ridgefield and the quality of life of residents and visitors.

Volunteer Contributions

Many volunteer organizations and committees work to support community activities and maintain Ridgefield’s quality of life. Volunteers also serve on municipal boards and commissions. These contributions support the overall social/cultural character of the community and help make Ridgefield the place that it is today.



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield should have more public events, such as concerts, festivals and other family activities for residents and visitors.

Strongly agree	11%
Agree	42%
Don't Know	10%
Disagree	32%
Strongly disagree	6%

COMMUNITY CHARACTER STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Maintain And Enhance Overall Character**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Seek to maintain or enhance those characteristics which have a positive correlation to people's perception of community character.	3.92	Town

2. Continue To Protect Historic Resources

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Utilize the demolition delay ordinance, once adopted, to allow time for identification, review, and preservation of significant historic resources.	3.15	HDC RHS
2. Encourage identification and preservation of historic and archeologic resources.	2.77	HDC RHS
3. Discourage the demolition or destruction of historic resources.	2.77	HDC RHS
4. Continue to encourage awareness of local historic resources through: a. Collection and maintenance of historic information, and b. Educational activities that highlight Ridgefield's historic resources.	2.38	HDC RHS
5. Continue to encourage the adaptive re-use of historic structures along Route 7, where appropriate, if that will help in the preservation of such structures.	1.92	PZC
6. Support establishment of local historic districts that are supported by a majority of the affected properties.	1.77	HDC RHS
7. Encourage "sensitive stewardship" of historic resources owned by private persons in order to preserve and maintain them.	1.38	HDC RHS

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Consider incentives, such as historic tax credits, to encourage preservation of privately-owned historic buildings	2.15	BOS HDC RHS
2. Consider expanding adaptive reuse provisions to additional areas in Town.	1.38	PZC

3. Maintain and Enhance Scenic Features

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue efforts to protect visually distinctive landscapes, high quality views, and other scenic features.	3.15	CC Town
2. Evaluate any proposed road widening projects to balance roadway needs with scenic characteristics (i.e. – “context sensitivity”).	2.85	Town
3. Continue to carefully review the non-residential uses allowed in residential zones in order to help protect residential neighborhoods and residential character.	2.85	PZC
4. Continue to ensure that building scale, design and materials are compatible with other buildings, especially in Ridgefield Center.	2.69	AAC PZC
5. Continue to promote public art as a way to help enhance community character.	2.46	RAC Town
6. Encourage the preservation, maintenance, and planting of trees for their visual and scenic benefits.	2.38	CC TC
7. Continue to seek an appropriate balance between utility pruning for reliability and scenic tree canopies.	2.23	TW TC
8. Maintain the character of designated scenic roads and seek to designate other scenic roads in the future.	2.15	CC Town
9. Minimize lighting impacts on the overall environment (light pollution).	2.00	PZC Town
10. Continue to use the PA-490 assessment program to help preserve farms, forests, and properties meeting the “open space” assessment criteria.	1.92	Town

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. If considered necessary, undertake a review of non-residential uses, accessory uses, and accessory structures in residential zones.	2.23	PZC

4. Promote Community Ambience

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to encourage volunteer contributions.	2.69	Town
2. Continue to encourage community-wide events and activities, such as concerts, festivals and other family activities for residents and visitors	2.46	Town
3. Continue to encourage local recognition.	1.92	Town
4. Continue to encourage local organizations (such as the Arts Council) that contribute to the overall character and culture of Ridgefield.	-	Town

6

CONSERVATION THEME

PRESERVE OPEN SPACE

Preserve open space**Telephone Survey Results**

Ridgefield should try to acquire more land for such things as parks, open space areas, or wildlife habitat.

Strongly agree	33%
Agree	43%
Don't Know	4%
Disagree	15%
Strongly disagree	4%

Ridgefield should try to acquire more land for open space, even if taxes are raised to pay for it.

Strongly agree	13%
Agree	32%
Don't Know	6%
Disagree	30%
Strongly disagree	18%

Overview

Open space is a key contributor to Ridgefield's overall character and its preservation and protection is important to Ridgefield residents. In the telephone survey, about 76 percent of residents felt the Town should try to acquire more land for such things as parks, open space areas, or wildlife habitat. However, when asked if tax dollars should be used, the level of support decreased.

Open space preservation helps:

- Protect important natural resources and habitats and protect the health of the environment,
- Protect and enhance community character,
- Provide active and passive recreation opportunities,
- Provide fiscal and economic benefits, and
- Enhance the quality of life of residents.

Preserve At Least 30% Of Ridgefield As Open Space

Ridgefield has made tremendous progress over the years preserving land as open space. The map on the facing page shows the location of open space parcels in Ridgefield as compiled by the Conservation Commission. A listing of the specific sites is available on the Conservation Commission website.







As can be seen from the map, Ridgefield is fortunate to have a number of properties within its open space inventory. Overall, 5,636 acres (*about 25 percent of Ridgefield's land area*) are categorized by the Conservation Commission as open space. Other land areas (such as golf courses, cemeteries, etc.) are not included in this total).

The Town has long had a goal to preserve *at least* 30 percent of the total acreage of the Town as open space (about 6,716 acres). The Open Space Inventory suggests that Ridgefield will need to *acquire or preserve* another 1,080 acres as open space to reach this goal.

TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT

OPEN SPACE MAP including WALK BOOK CODES

OPEN SPACE DESIGNATIONS

-  TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD OPEN SPACE
-  LAND CONSERVANCY OF RIDGEFIELD
-  TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
(SCHOOL, GOLF COURSE & REC CENTER)
-  OPEN SPACE EASEMENTS
-  PRIVATE OWNER OPEN SPACE
-  STATE AND FEDERAL OPEN SPACE

For a PDF of this map goto:

<https://www.ridgefieldct.org>

Government

Conservation Commission

Catalog of Open Spaces

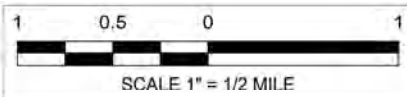
NORTH SALEM, NY

REDDING, CT

REDDING, CT

LEWISBORO, NY

WILTON, CT



**TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
OPEN SPACE INVENTORY MAP
January 2020**

Open Space Tabulation

The open space summary on this page was tabulated by the Ridgefield Conservation Commission as this POCD was being prepared.

According to the Conservation Commission, this tabulation does not include properties such as:

- Schools
- Town golf course
- Silver Spring CC
- Recreation Center
- Town cemeteries
- Private cemeteries

More information can be found at the [Conservation Commission website](#).

A [catalog of open spaces](#) as compiled by the Conservation Commission is also available through their website.

Town of Ridgefield - Open Space Summary

Town of Ridgefield

Owned	2,666
Parks	211
Conservation Easements	305
Subtotal	3,182 acres

Land Conservancy of Ridgefield

Owned	532
Easements	170
Subtotal	702 acres

State and Federal Lands

Owned	1,417
Subtotal	1,417 acres

Private Open Space

Homeowner's Associations	189
Other	146
Subtotal	335 acres

TOTAL	5,636 ACRES
	25.2% of Ridgefield's area

Trails can also be key open space amenities. For example, the Ives Trail and the Rail Trail are important amenities. The Norwalk River Valley Trail (which will travel through parts of Ridgefield) is intended to extend from Norwalk to Danbury and tie many open space areas together. In the telephone survey, about 74 percent of residents felt the Town should try to establish more greenway trails.

Open space priorities in Ridgefield include:

- Protecting important natural resources:
 - Water quality,
 - Waterways and surrounding wetlands and floodplains,
 - Large parcels providing “forest-interior” habitats,
 - Native flora and fauna,
 - Unique and significant natural features including critical or threatened habitats.
- Creating a meaningful open space system that interconnects trails, supports wildlife habitat and corridors both locally and regionally (as promoted by the Hudson-to-Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership), preserves community character, and contributes to an enhanced quality of life for residents and visitors, and
- Protecting overall community character and scenic resources such as ridges, rivers, ponds, forests, marshes, bogs, vernal pools, and waterfalls.

Enhance Open Space Preservation Tools

Ridgefield will continue to use available tools to accomplish these goals:

- Donation of open space properties and conservation easements,
- Purchase of lands / easements by the Land Conservancy of Ridgefield and/or the Town,
- Dedication of meaningful open space at the time of development (though mandatory set-asides as in the Subdivision Regulations or as mitigation to preserve important resources),
- Payment of a fee-in-lieu of open space, and/or
- Grant programs / partnerships with conservation organizations.



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield should try to establish more greenway trails.

Strongly agree	26%
Agree	48%
Don't Know	7%
Disagree	13%
Strongly disagree	6%



Sustainability Actions

The open space chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Creating systems of green spaces and biotic corridors within and among communities.
- Funding open space acquisition.

OPEN SPACE STRATEGIES

Legend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover

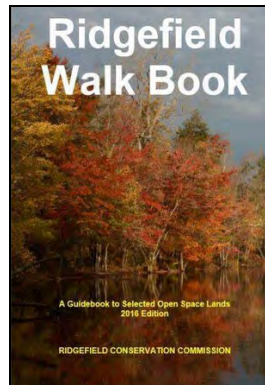
1. Preserve At Least 30% Of Ridgefield As Open Space

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue efforts to preserve at least 30 percent of Ridgefield as protected open space in order to protect natural and scenic resources and overall community character.	3.77	Town CC LCR DEEP
2. Continue efforts to create a meaningful overall open space system that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ties open space and recreational areas into an integrated greenway system, Supports wildlife habitat and corridors, and Enhances community character and quality of life. 	2.85	Town Town CC LCR DEEP
3. Seek to establish a series of trails as a key element in connecting open space and recreation areas into an integrated system.	2.77	CC LCR DEEP
4. Support efforts to extend and enhance the Norwalk River Valley Trail, the Sugar Hollow Greenway, and the Pollinator Pathway.	2.77	NRVT Town
5. Seek to preserve old railways, trolley lines, logging roads, and other rustic byways as open space trails, where appropriate.	2.23	Town CC LCR
B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Explore ways to establish trails and other improvements (such as boardwalks) to expose people to the Great Swamp and its surrounding ecosystem.	2.69	Town CC LCR
2. Develop an open space action plan which prioritizes resources / areas for protection.	-	Town CC

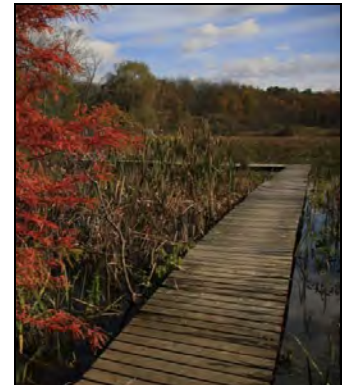
Greenway Trail



Walk Book



Boardwalk



2. Enhance Open Space Preservation Tools

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to support the Conservation Commission and the Land Conservancy of Ridgefield as the primary stewards of open space properties in Ridgefield.	2.62	Town
2. Continue to use “fee-in-lieu-of-open-space” funds for strategic acquisitions that meet open space goals.	2.23	PZC CC
3. Continue to encourage the use of conservation easements, both donated and acquired, as an important tool in open space preservation.	2.15	Town CC LCR
4. Where feasible, improve accessibility to open space for all ages and physical abilities.	2.15	Town CC LCR
5. Maintain the fee-in-lieu of open space provision in the Subdivision Regulations to discourage the preservation of random pockets of open space that exist simply because a given parcel was subdivided.	2.00	PZC
6. Continue to seek funding to preserve and maintain open space such as: a. Setting aside a certain amount annually in the Town’s budget, b. Seeking grants, c. Bonding to fund the open space account for future purchases, and d. Legislation that allows municipalities to raise funds for open space acquisition and maintenance.	2.08	Town CC LCR
7. Continue to provide information on open space parcels and trails (such as the “Walk Book” and the Conservation Commission website) and sponsor events on town open spaces.	2.00	CC LCR NRVT
8. Continue to seek opportunities to partner with other organizations (such as the Nature Conservancy) to protect open space.	1.92	Town CC LCR
9. Maintain the open space database / inventory.	1.92	CC
10. Maintain land use regulations encouraging or requiring open space preservation.	1.85	PZC
11. Maintain the Planned Residential Development provisions in the Zoning Regulations (Section 4.1) to enable more flexible residential development patterns which can help preserve important resources.	1.85	PZC
B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Integrate the open space inventory into the Town’s GIS system in order to facilitate overall open space planning.	2.69	CC Town

7

PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

Continue to preserve and protect important natural resources



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield is doing a good job protecting natural resources such as rivers, streams and wetlands.

Strongly agree	21%
Agree	53%
Don't Know	13%
Disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	3%

Overview

Protecting natural resources is important in Ridgefield since doing so helps:

- promote overall environmental health,
- preserve environmental functions,
- enhance community character, and
- enhance the overall quality of life.

Natural resource protection is also important to residents. In the telephone survey, about 74 percent of residents felt the Town was doing a good job protecting natural resources such as rivers, streams and wetlands.

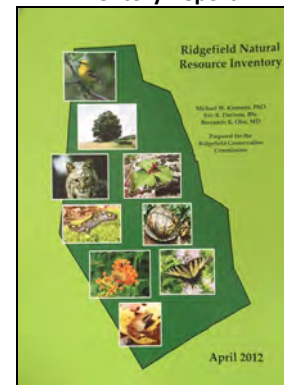
The 2012 Natural Resources Inventory report is an important reference work which can aid in the identification, recognition, and protection of important natural resources. That report (and a scheduled 2022 update) is hereby incorporated into this POCD for its inventory of natural resources in Ridgefield.

The Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) maintained by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT-DEEP) is another resource available to help public agencies protect important resources such as:

- Endangered / threatened species,
- Species of special concern,
- Significant natural communities,
- Scenic areas, and/or unique natural assets (waterfalls, caves, etc.).

The map on the facing page shows the location of some of the important natural resources in Ridgefield.

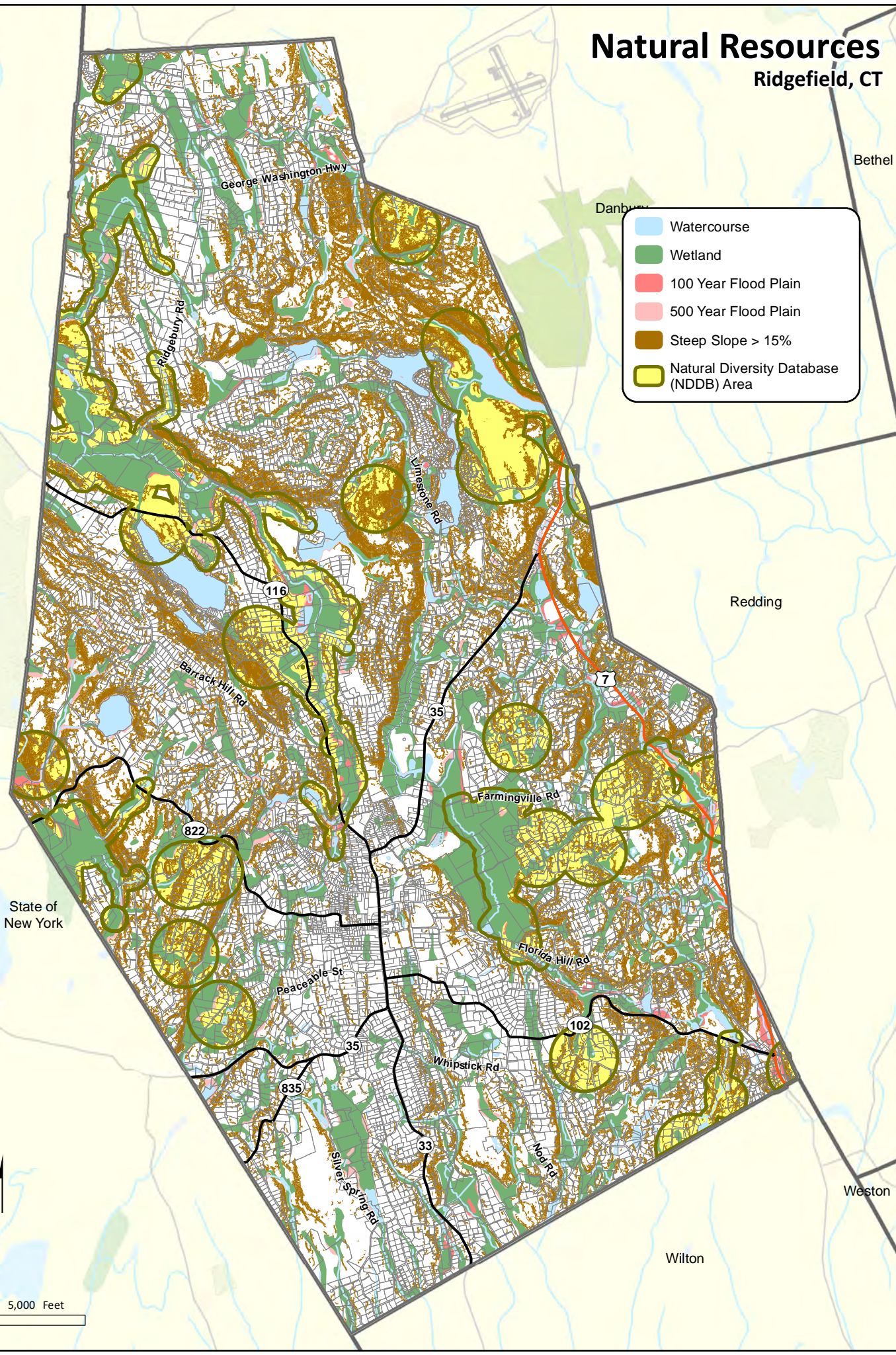
Natural Resources Inventory Report



Natural Resources

Ridgefield, CT

- Watercourse
- Wetland
- 100 Year Flood Plain
- 500 Year Flood Plain
- Steep Slope > 15%
- Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) Area



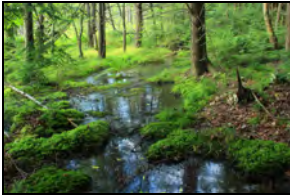
Surface Water



Surface Water



Wetland



Vernal Pool



Groundwater



Floodplain



Protect Water-Related Resources

Preserving and protecting water quality may be the most important natural resource strategy in Ridgefield.

Surface Water - Surface water features are the most visible water-related resources. More significantly, Ridgefield is at the top of multiple watersheds and almost 14,000 acres of Ridgefield drains into public water supply reservoirs for the Town itself, along with Danbury, Norwalk, Wilton, New Canaan, Stamford, New York City, and other communities in Connecticut and New York. Ridgefield will continue to protect water resources and water quality.

Wetlands - Preservation of wetlands, swamps, and marshes is also very important since these features help maintain water quality, control flooding, help maintain the water table, and support biodiversity in Ridgefield.


This includes vernal pools which fill a special niche in the environment. These small, seasonal waterbodies and the surrounding woodlands provide habitat for a variety of species (such as salamanders) that depend exclusively upon these temporary seasonal pools for their survival.

Groundwater - Although not as visible, groundwater is a significant natural resource since it stores significant amounts of water which maintains base flows in streams and rivers and can be a supply of water. Where there are significant deposits of sand and gravel, this groundwater storage can be a “stratified drift aquifer” which may be capable of supplying millions of gallons of water per day. Ridgefield will continue to administer the aquifer protection regulations (both State and local) to help protect groundwater quality.


Floodplains - Flooding along watercourses is a natural phenomenon associated with spring thaws and major storm events. Recognizing and respecting floodplain areas helps protect public safety and preserves this environmental function. This is expected to be even more important in the future due to anticipated increases in the frequency and intensity of major storm events as a result of climate change.


Water Resources Map


Ridgefield, CT


 State-Defined Aquifer Protection Area


Local Aquifer Areas

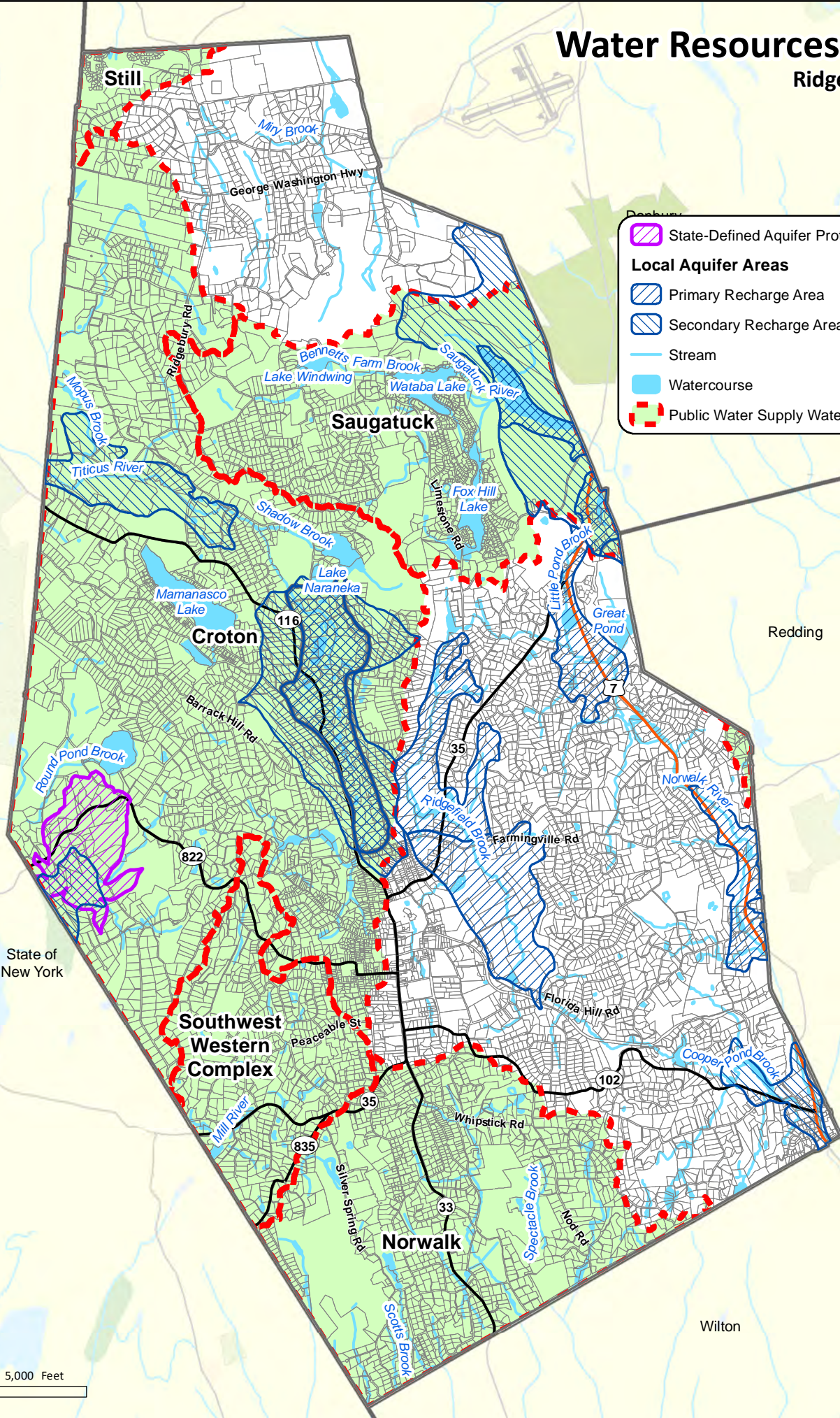
 Primary Recharge Area

 Secondary Recharge Area

 Stream

 Watercourse

 Public Water Supply Watershed





Sustainability Actions

In terms of water resources, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Preserving and enhancing water quality.
- Minimizing the use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Minimizing disruption of natural systems.
- Maintaining natural drainage.
- Recharging groundwater basins.
- Preventing wetlands destruction; restoring degraded wetlands.
- Managing stormwater responsibly by reusing and restoring the quality of on-site runoff.
- Reducing or eliminating impervious paving materials.
- Guiding development away from floodplains.
- Preserving or restoring wetland areas along rivers for natural flood control.
- Using flood control and stormwater techniques that enhance and restore natural habitats.

Water Quality - Protection of water quality (both surface water and groundwater) is particularly important to Ridgefield because much of the Town's drinking water (both public and private) comes from this supply.

Protection of water quality can occur through:

- Carefully managing activities in public water supply watersheds,
- Carefully managing activities in aquifer protection areas and areas of high groundwater availability,
- Protecting watercourses and waterbodies from nutrient loading,
- Reducing or eliminating erosion and sedimentation,
- Discouraging the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides,
- Preserving wetland areas due to their important natural functions,
- Providing vegetated buffers (ideally of natural vegetation) along watercourses and around waterbodies,
- Implementing “low impact development” (also known as “LID” and/or “green infrastructure”) practices to address the quality of stormwater runoff and helping recharge groundwater supplies.

Case Study – Nutrient Loading

Ridgefield contains a number of lakes and these areas have long attracted residential development. However, this development can add significant nutrients to the lakes from septic systems and use of lawn fertilizers. Over time, these nutrients accelerate to eutrophication of the lakes.

Lake associations in Ridgefield (starting with the Mamanasco Lake Improvement Fund) have recognized this and have promoted strategies such as:

- Preserving a vegetated buffer (100-foot) around the lake,
- Encouraging proper septic maintenance, and
- Reducing animal waste runoff and the use of fertilizers.

These strategies will be continued and expanded since climate change may accelerate the eutrophication process even more.

Lake Mamanasco



Algae Bloom



Case Study – LID / “Green Infrastructure”

For many years, the overall approach to managing stormwater runoff was to try to capture it and discharge it as quickly as possible. There is now a realization that this approach diverted water from infiltrating into the ground (cutting off recharge of groundwater) and exacerbating flooding. Moreover, discharging untreated runoff directly to watercourses contributed to pollution.

In recent years, attention has turned to “low impact development” (LID) approaches to stormwater management where rainfall is managed and treated as close as possible to where the raindrop falls. Treatment practices include:

- Using vegetation to remediate runoff quality,
- Infiltrating rainfall, and
- Detaining runoff so as to minimize downstream flooding.

Ridgefield has been implementing LID approaches (also referred to as “green infrastructure” because of its use of natural processes) and these efforts will continue and be enhanced over time.

Parking Lot Rain Garden



Infiltration Basin



Rain Garden



Pervious Pavement





Sustainability Actions

In terms of land-related and biologic-related resources, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Respecting the regional ecosystems, biotic corridors and natural functions which support and protect people and native plants/wildlife.
- Preserving wilderness areas.
- Maintaining natural terrain and vegetation.
- Promoting native / naturalized landscapes.
- Preserving wildlife habitats and biological diversity in ecosystems.
- Using native plants for landscaping.
- Creating systems of green spaces and biotic corridors within and among communities.
- Funding open space acquisition.

Protect Other Important Resources

Land-Related Resources

Slopes steeper than 15 feet of rise over a 100-foot distance (called a 15% slope) pose constraints to development because of the challenges of providing road access and maintaining slope stability. These issues are even more pronounced on 25% slopes which present significant constraints to development due to the difficulty of building foundations and siting septic systems. For the above reasons, steep slopes will be protected from development and development pressure.

Certain soil types are better able to infiltrate rainfall and runoff and thus are better able to implement LID practices. The map on the facing page shows the hydrologic capacity of soils in Ridgefield according to the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Biologic-Related Resources

Ridgefield contains numerous habitats for a variety of plants and animals. Overall, due to the significant amount of open space and undeveloped lands, Ridgefield contains a richness of flora and fauna.

Importantly, because of some of the unique natural features in Ridgefield, there are also several areas which have been documented as containing habitats of endangered, threatened, and/or special concern species. These habitat areas are recognized by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in a "Natural Diversity Database." The location of these areas in Ridgefield is illustrated on the Natural Resource Map. These unique natural features and habitats of endangered, threatened, and/or special concern species should be protected from development and development pressure.

To maintain an appropriate plant portfolio, Ridgefield will seek to require the use of native species (and remove invasive species and discourage or prohibit their future use) in Ridgefield.

Local Habitat



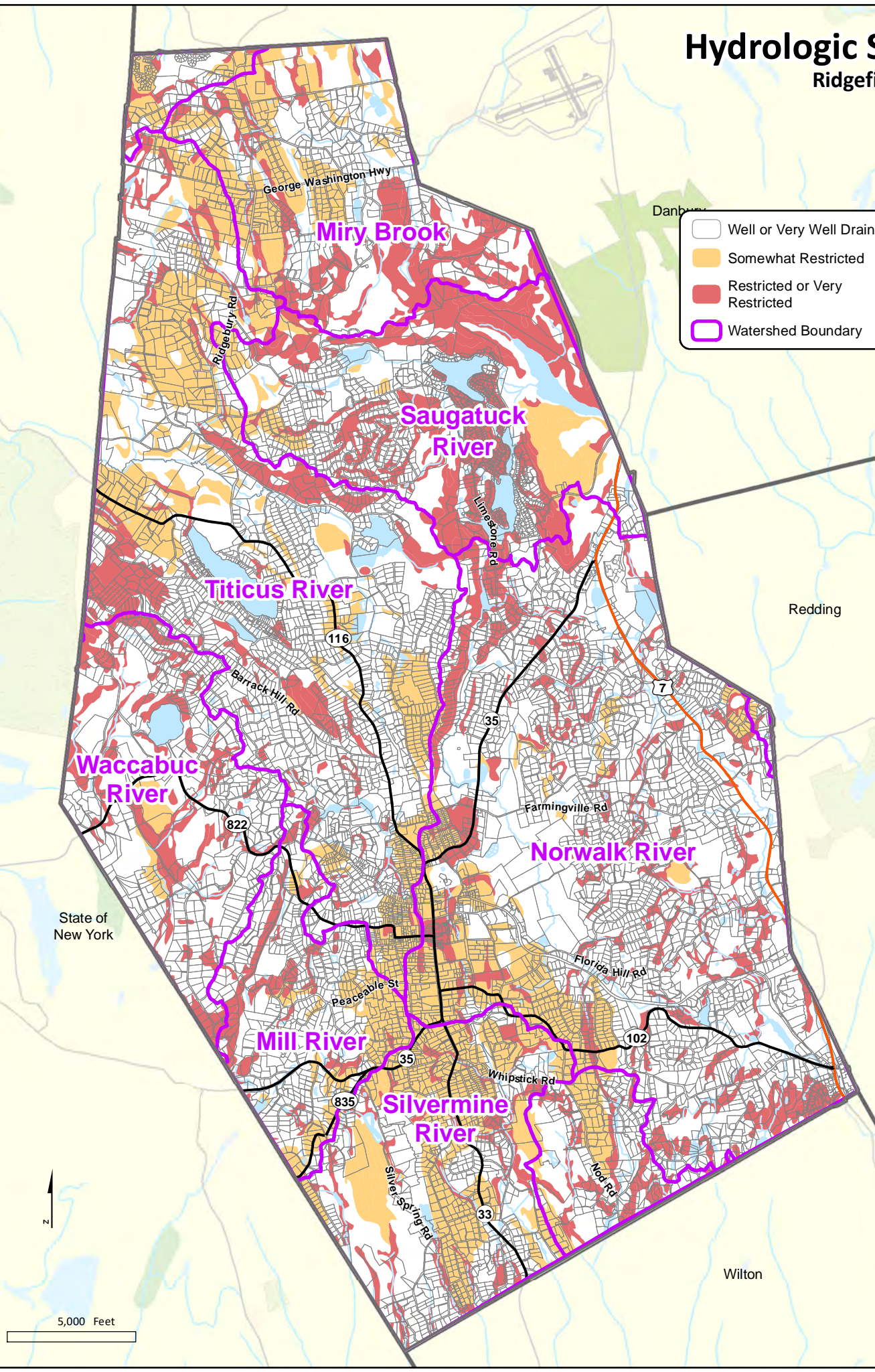
Local Habitat



Hydrologic Soils

Ridgefield, CT

- Well or Very Well Draining
- Somewhat Restricted
- Restricted or Very Restricted
- Watershed Boundary



NATURAL RESOURCE STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Protect Water-Related Resources**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue programs and efforts to maintain and improve water quality – both surface water and groundwater.	3.46	IWB APA
2. Continue to manage land use activities in ways which will help protect private wells and public water supply sources, especially in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated public water supply watersheds, and • Designated aquifer protection areas. 	3.15	PZC APA IWB AWC
3. Continue efforts to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect watercourses / wetlands from development impacts. • Preserve wetland areas due to their natural functions. • Provide vegetated buffers (ideally of natural vegetation) along watercourses. 	3.15	CC IWB
4. Continue to preserve and maintain natural floodplains and strictly control activities in floodplain areas.	2.85	PZC
5. Continue efforts to minimize erosion and the resulting sedimentation.	2.69	Town FECB
6. Continue to educate residents about the importance of protecting water quality.	2.38	CC AWC
7. Continue to review and implement appropriate recommendations from watershed plans and studies.	2.08	Town
8. Continue to support regional water quality protection efforts, such as those contained in the Norwalk River Action Plan and similar efforts.	1.85	Town

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Adopt and implement new “low impact development” / “green infrastructure” provisions in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with the provisions of the Town’s “MS4” permit, and • Provide environmental benefits (improve stormwater runoff quality, reduce stormwater runoff quantity, help recharge groundwater supplies, and reduce downstream flood risk). 	3.62	PZC IWB
2. Investigate opportunities to reduce the amount of impervious coverage and/or increase the amount of pervious surfaces.	3.08	PZC Town
3. Undertake education programs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discourage the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and b. Encourage the observance of water quality protection guidelines for all major lakes in Ridgefield. 	2.46	CC AWC
4. Consider adoption of a septic management ordinance, especially in lake watersheds.	2.08	BOS HD

2. Protect Other Important Natural Resources

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Encourage the preservation, maintenance, and planting of trees for their environmental benefits (such as interception of rainfall, removal of CO ₂ , heat relief, habitat, and other benefits).	2.92	CC
2. Protect plant and animal habitats, especially vernal pools and those areas listed on the State's Natural Diversity Database.	2.77	CC PZC
3. Continue to require the use of native species (and discourage invasive species) in Ridgefield.	2.54	PZC CC
4. Continue to protect natural resources within Ridgefield through the dedication of open space areas.	2.46	CC PZC
5. Continue efforts to educate the public on natural resource issues such as reducing pesticide use, using native plants in landscaping, and protecting wildlife.	2.46	CC
6. Encourage the Woodcock Nature Center and other organizations involved in natural resource education and other activities (such as the Pollinator Pathway program).	2.46	Town
7. Protect local plants and animals and their habitats, with an emphasis on minimizing habitat fragmentation.	2.38	CC PZC
8. Encourage landowners to protect vernal pools and the woodlands and watersheds surrounding them.	2.23	CC
9. Promote efforts to maintain and improve air quality such as reducing emissions from idling vehicles and promoting transit-oriented development.	2.23	Town
10. Maintain the Planned Residential Development provisions in the Zoning Regulations (Section 4.1) to enable more flexible residential development patterns which can help preserve important resources.	2.08	PZC
11. Continue to use the Natural Resources Inventory as a resource for helping guide overall land use planning and helping inform reviews of specific developments.	1.77	CC PZC
12. Continue to minimize the disturbance of steep slopes from development.	1.54	PZC CC

Local Habitat



Waterbody



8

DEVELOPMENT THEME

ENHANCE RIDGEFIELD CENTER

Maintain and enhance the vitality of Ridgefield Center**Telephone Survey Results**

Ridgefield should continue to promote the overall vibrancy and character of the Downtown.

Strongly agree	44%
Agree	48%
Don't Know	1%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	1%

Overview

Ridgefield Center is the “heart and soul” of the community in many respects. When people are asked to describe Ridgefield, the Center is central in people’s description and is often the first thing mentioned.

In the telephone survey, about 92 percent of residents felt the Town should continue to promote the overall vibrancy and character of the Downtown.

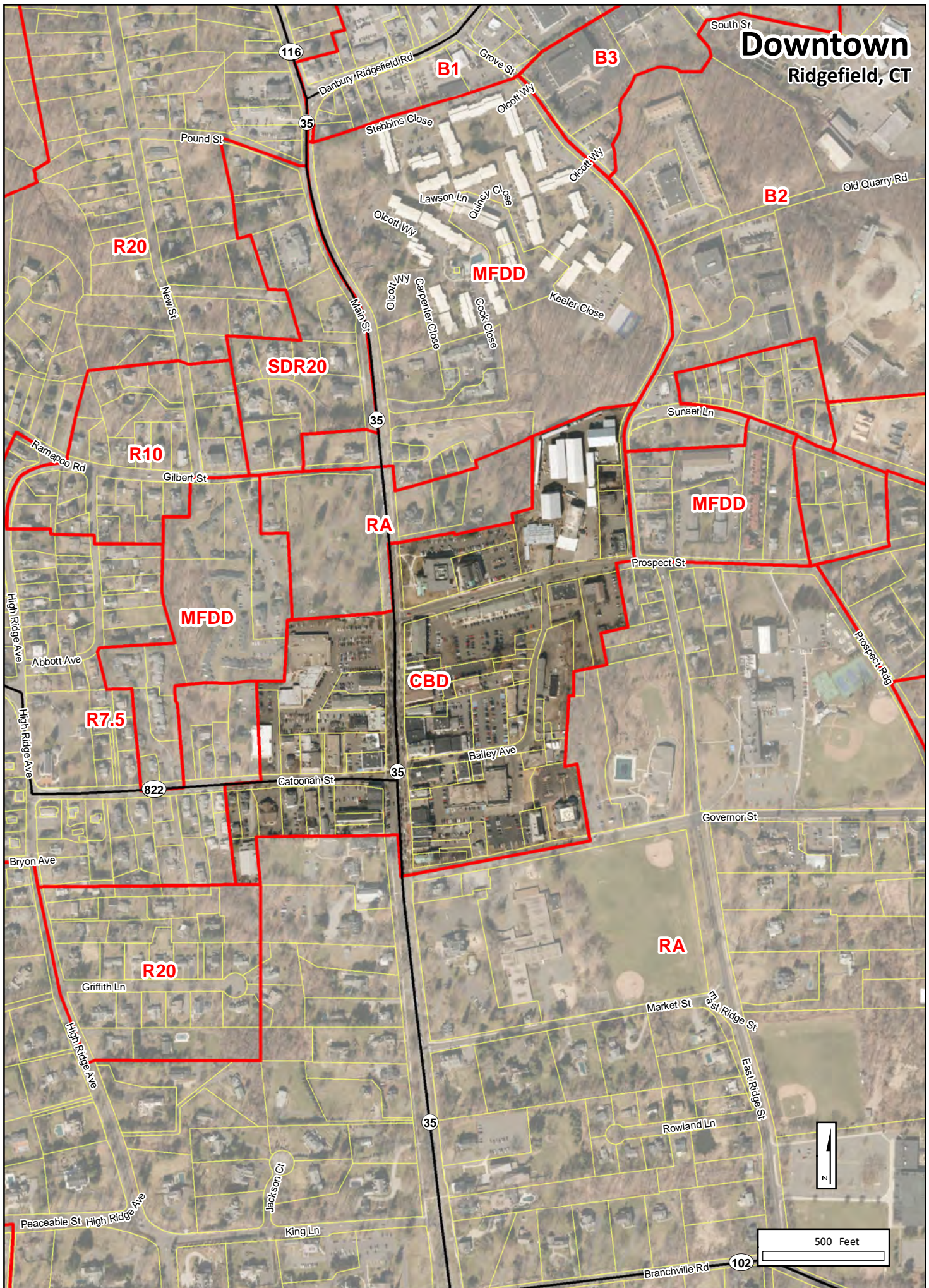
It is informative to reflect on the changes in Ridgefield Center over the last few decades. The Center was once an integral part of people’s daily lives and they visited frequently to visit shops, buy groceries, buy clothing, catch up on the news of the day and other things. Now, a number of those types of stores are no longer in the Center and people have become more inclined to frequent stores located elsewhere or buy things over the Internet.

Maintain And Enhance Vibrancy And Character

A key issue for the POCD is to keep Ridgefield Center vibrant and attractive and relevant to the needs of the community. Ridgefield Center should continue to be the major community focal point and the business, civic, institutional, and cultural center of the Town. This includes maintaining and enhancing the overall pedestrian experience.

Main Street**Main Street**

Downtown Ridgefield, CT





Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield should find ways to add more parking in the Downtown for visitors and employees.

Strongly agree	23%
Agree	38%
Don't Know	6%
Disagree	25%
Strongly disagree	8%

Ridgefield should change the way parking permits and time restrictions are handled in the Downtown for visitors and employees.

Strongly agree	13%
Agree	25%
Don't Know	24%
Disagree	33%
Strongly disagree	5%

Ridgefield should try to attract a boutique hotel to the Downtown area.

Strongly agree	11%
Agree	28%
Don't Know	9%
Disagree	30%
Strongly disagree	22%

A Ridgefield Center Study, prepared with the assistance of Milone & MacBroom in 2009, examined the Central Business District in downtown Ridgefield and provided recommendations for improvements. That study is incorporated as a part of this POCD. Over the course of the next ten years, it will probably make sense to update that study (or undertake a "visioning charrette") to further help coordinate and guide the future of Ridgefield Center.

Additional studies of Ridgefield Center (such as parking analyses and market studies) have also been conducted and the findings and recommendations of those studies were considered in the preparation of this chapter of the POCD.

2009 Ridgefield Center Study - Overview

The main recommendations of the 2009 Ridgefield Center Study included:

Traffic and Circulation

1. Continue to work with Connecticut Department of Transportation to plan and implement improvements to Route 35.
2. Improve vehicular connection/circulation between:
 - a. Governor Street and Bailey Avenue.
 - b. Bailey Avenue and Prospect Street.
3. Close alleyways on Main Street to vehicular traffic.

Parking

1. Install directional signs to direct traffic to municipal parking areas.
2. Reconfigure / expand parking and improve connections:
3. Upgrade the municipal parking lot(s) with site lighting.

Pedestrian Facilities

1. Enhance pedestrian pathways and eliminate physical barriers.
2. Provide and improve pedestrian crosswalks.
3. Convert alleyways off Main Street to exclusively pedestrian uses.
4. Install kiosks/ wayfinding signage at strategic locations.

Management Options for Town Center

1. Create a unified design palette for streetscape improvements (lights, benches, etc.) and signage.
2. Consider participating in the Connecticut Main Street Program.
3. Consider creation of a "special services district" (CGS Section 7-339m) to provide for and manage common services desired by Ridgefield Center businesses

Address Traffic And Parking Issues

Parking is an often talked about issue for downtown areas and Ridgefield is no different. In the telephone survey, about 61 percent of residents felt the Town should find ways to add more parking in the Downtown for visitors and employees. However, only 38 percent of residents felt the Town should change the way parking permits and time restrictions are handled in the Downtown for visitors and employees (about 24 percent were undecided on this issue).

Parking Adequacy

While some people remark that they can “never” find parking in Ridgefield Center, information in the 2009 Center Study indicates adequate parking is available.

Although somewhat dated, the Study found 1,501 parking spaces in Ridgefield Center time and, given the 456,296 square feet of floor area, this represented about 3.3 spaces per 1,000 SF of floor area. Studies of mixed-use downtown / village areas have found that parking availability of 3.0 spaces per 1,000 SF of floor area is generally adequate to meet needs.

So, while Ridgefield may have enough parking spaces overall, the parking available may not be in the location where people want it when they want it. For example, if all the most convenient spaces for shoppers are occupied by employees, visitors will feel they can “never” find parking.

Assigning parking areas by use / function / location may be one way to help address this situation.

Main Street Project

Over the last several years, the Town has been working with the Connecticut Department of Transportation with regard to roadway improvements on Route 35 in Ridgefield Center. This includes realignment of the CVS driveway with Prospect Street and reconfiguration of travel lanes, parking areas, delivery areas, and other parts of the roadway system. The project is expected to be completed by 2022.



Sustainability Actions

In terms of Ridgefield Center, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Compact development that minimizes the need to drive.
- A mix of integrated community uses — housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks, civic facilities — within walking or bicycling distance.
- Human-scaled development that is pedestrian-friendly.
- Creating incentives to infill development.
- Reducing vehicle trips and miles traveled through compact, infill, and mixed-use development.

RIDGEFIELD CENTER STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Maintain And Enhance Vibrancy And Character**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to allow mixed use buildings (with residential units) provided the residential units are not at street level or below (as provided in ZR Section 5.1.D.6).	3.31	PZC
2. Strive to maintain a vibrant mixture of business, civic and residential uses in Ridgefield Center in order to maintain and enhance the vibrancy and vitality.	3.08	Town ECDC PZC
3. Maintain and enhance sidewalks and pedestrian pathways, and eliminate physical barriers.	3.08	Town PO ECDC
4. Maintain Ridgefield Center as a “village district” so that exterior building alterations and other development will enhance the Center’s overall character.	3.08	PZC
5. Seek to maintain Ridgefield Center as the community focal point and as a destination within the region and beyond.	2.92	Town
6. Improve mobility and accessibility for mobility impaired people.	2.77	PO Town
7. Encourage or require “active” street level uses in key areas in order to maintain an active, vibrant, and inviting pedestrian experience.	2.69	PZC
8. Seek to attract a hotel or other lodging facility in Ridgefield Center.	2.54	Town ECDC
9. Discourage or prevent the introduction of “passive uses” (such as office uses) at street level if that will detract from the overall pedestrian experience.	2.15	PZC

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Convert alleyways off Main Street to exclusively pedestrian uses and add lighting and amenities to enrich the pedestrian experience.	2.38	Town PC
2. Increase and enhance pedestrian crosswalks (such as installing “bump-outs to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance and realign the pedestrian crosswalk on Main Street to align with Big Shop Lane).	2.31	DOT Town
3. Explore installation of kiosks/ wayfinding signage at strategic locations to inform visitors of business locations and Town Center sidewalks and pathways.	1.62	Town ECDC

2. Address Traffic And Parking Issues

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue evaluating how to create a more efficient parking and circulation pattern east of Route 35, such as: a. Removing barriers to interconnecting parking areas, b. Improving traffic circulation between Governor Street and Bailey Avenue, and/or c. Making Bailey Avenue two-way from the Town Hall parking lot to Prospect Street.	3.08	Town PO PD PA
2. Seek ways to optimize the configuration of existing parking areas in Ridgefield Center.	2.69	Town PA
3. Seek an appropriate balance of parking spaces for short-term (shoppers and visitors) and long-term (employees) users which meets the needs of all users.	2.69	Town PA
4. Continue to work with Connecticut Department of Transportation to plan and implement improvements to Route 35 while maintaining as many on-street parking spaces as possible.	2.69	DOT Town
5. Seek to close alleyways on Main Street to vehicular traffic to direct movement to the signalized intersections.	2.00	Town PD

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Install pavement marking, signage, and wayfinding to direct employees and visitors to parking spaces specifically configured for meeting their needs.	2.38	Town ECDC PA
2. Investigate licensing arrangements or other approaches that will result in Town-managed parking areas and development flexibility for property owners.	2.15	Town PA

3. Address Other Issues / Opportunities

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Establish a unified design palette for streetscape improvements (lights, benches, etc.) and signage.	2.55	AAC PZC
2. Consider participating in the Connecticut Main Street Program.	2.18	Town ECDC
3. Consider the possible establishment of a Main Street manager.	2.18	Town ECDC

9

REDEVELOP BRANCHVILLE

*Redevelop Branchville as a pedestrian-friendly,
transit-oriented village area*



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield should pursue an opportunity to add more business and residential development near the train station in Branchville.

Strongly agree	19%
Agree	48%
Don't Know	11%
Disagree	14%
Strongly disagree	8%

Overview

Branchville is a unique area located in the southeast corner of Ridgefield at the intersection of Routes 7 and 102. Branchville was once the place where a “branch” railroad line connected from the Danbury - Norwalk main line to Ridgefield Center.

Branchville is an “opportunity area” to promote transit-oriented development and residents recognize this. In the telephone survey, about 67 percent of residents felt the Town should pursue an opportunity to add more business and residential development near the train station in Branchville.

Strengthen Branchville as a Focal Point

In 2017, a Transit-Oriented Development Plan was prepared to look at ways to encourage pedestrian-friendly (and transit-friendly) development in Branchville. That study is hereby incorporated as an element of this POCD. The process of preparing that plan involved public input through surveys and design workshops (called charrettes).

The main strategies included:

- Encourage infill development oriented around a new “Main Street.”
- Provide pedestrian enhancements and improve key intersections.
- Develop greenway and provide riverfront enhancements.
- Provide wastewater infrastructure.
- Make roadway improvements (such as realigning the Route 102/Route 7 intersection).
- Make pedestrian improvements (such as establishing a sidewalk network and creating a greenway along the Norwalk River).
- Adding bus stops and shelters.

Development scenarios were evaluated and the preferred option, if fully built out, would include the potential in Ridgefield (additional development potential was shown for Redding and/or Wilton) for:

- 38,000 SF of commercial space, and
- 381 residential units (189 apartments and 192 townhouses).

Branchville
Ridgefield, CT





Sustainability Actions

In terms of Branchville, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Public transit-oriented development.
- Compact development that minimizes the need to drive.
- A mix of integrated community uses — housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks, civic facilities — within walking or bicycling distance.
- Human-scaled development that is pedestrian-friendly.
- Reduce vehicle trips and miles traveled through compact, infill, and mixed-use development.
- Development near existing transport systems; minimizing need for new road and highway construction.

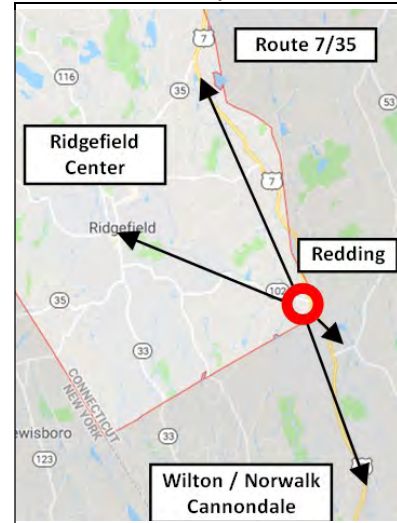
If fully built out, the estimated market value of property in the study area might increase from about \$21 million to about \$193 million. In Ridgefield, the increased development could produce approximately \$2.2 million in annual property tax revenue at full buildout.

The main challenge is the availability of sewage capacity (public sewer, community septic, individual septic) to support the development program.

A subsequent analysis of sewer options by Tighe and Bond found that neither option of going to the Ridgefield treatment facility was considered:

- Physically practical due to the elevation change (which would require considerable pumping) and the challenge of finding a right-of-way, and
- Economically practical to build or operate for the same reasons.

Sewer Connection Options?



The option of building community septic system encountered obstacles due to insufficient land area with appropriate characteristics (soil type, drainage, depth to water table, etc.) to meet the requirements of the Public Health Code.

As a result, the remaining options are to investigate an inter-municipal agreement with Redding, Wilton, and/or Norwalk.

Preferred Development Concept



BRANCHVILLE STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Strengthen Branchville as a Focal Point**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue efforts to strengthen Branchville as a distinct community focal point.	2.85	ECDC PZC
2. Expand wastewater and drinking water infrastructure.	2.69	ECDC AWC WPCA
3. Work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to make transportation and mobility improvements that are appropriate for Branchville. (See page 111 for a policy about supporting better train service on the Metro-North Danbury line).	2.62	Town DOT
4. Continue to pursue a diversity of funding sources to assist in planning and infrastructure enhancements.	2.31	Town
5. Solicit state funding (and identify town funds) for the design and construction of transportation enhancements in the station area.	2.31	Town DOT

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Seek ways to provide for (and carefully control) wastewater infrastructure in Branchville: a. The Georgetown facility in Redding (currently 100% allocated), b. The Wilton- Norwalk system in Cannondale, or c. Other option.	3.23	Town WPCA
2. Consider replacing the existing zoning with a new Branchville zone which: a. Would require a housing affordability component for any new residential development in Branchville, and b. Would be a "village district" (as per CGS Section 8-2j) to help maintain and enhance a distinct character for the village area it as development occurs.	2.69	PZC
3. Seek ways to expand drinking water infrastructure to the east side of the Norwalk River.	2.08	AWC
4. Consider establishing a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district that corresponds with the new Branchville Zone (when created).	1.38	Town

10

PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT THEME

*Encourage economic development
appropriate for Ridgefield*



Initial Telephone Survey

In the telephone and on-line surveys conducted early in the planning process, taxes and cost of living were identified as key issues of concern by participants.

Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield is doing a good job attracting new stores, offices, industries and other forms of economic development.

Strongly agree	6%
Agree	30%
Don't Know	15%
Disagree	33%
Strongly disagree	16%

Overview

For the POCD, economic development is considered to include uses and activities that:

- Provide jobs for residents of Ridgefield and the region,
- Provide goods and services for residents, businesses and visitors,
- Enhance the tax base, and/or
- Provide net tax revenue to support local services.

Given the concern expressed in the surveys about taxes and cost of living, economic development is an important issue for Ridgefield. In the telephone survey, only about 36 percent of residents felt the Town was doing a good job attracting new stores, offices, industries and other forms of economic development. About 49 percent did not agree with that statement.

Promote Economic Development

While business development (stores, offices, manufacturing, research and development, etc.) was historically considered to be the main focus of economic development efforts, the focus has grown in recent years to include other uses (including residential uses) which provide one or more of the above attributes. For example, assisted living facilities and age-restricted housing can provide more in tax revenue than they require in municipal services and can be considered a form of economic development.

Business Development



"Empty Nester Housing"



Since 1980, Town POCDs have included an objective to achieve at least 10-15 percent of the assessed value of the Town in “office and industrial uses” and this is interpreted to include commercial and industrial real estate, commercial vehicles, and business-related personal property (such as computer equipment). This POCD also recommends this objective for the Town.

In addition, the POCD recognizes that some residential-type developments enhance the overall tax base and provide more in tax revenue than they required in municipal services. As the age composition of the community changes, there is also a realization that “empty nesters” and senior citizens provide more in tax revenue than they require in municipal service costs. Allowing for these uses can also enhance the objective for a strong tax base and net tax revenue to support the Town’s ability to provide quality services.

Ridgefield has an Economic and Community Development Commission (ECDC) which is active in promoting the community and encouraging appropriate economic development. The ECDC has a five-point plan for promoting economic development in Ridgefield (paraphrased below).



Sustainability Actions

In terms of economic development, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Promoting a diverse local economy.
- Attracting and retaining businesses and other activities that help:
 - create a vibrant community-based economy,
 - create employment opportunities that support economic self-determination, and
 - maintain environmental health.

ECDC Five Point Plan

1. Preserve Ridgefield’s Image and Personality

- a. Safeguard Ridgefield’s unique “Norman Rockwell” persona.
- b. Promote Ridgefield as a leading Cultural and Arts destination.

2. Strive for Sustainable Economic Growth

- a. Identify best practices that can support all existing businesses.
- b. Secure new tenants that would significantly increase foot traffic and contribute meaningful tax revenue.
- c. Identify short- and long-term parking solutions.

3. Geographic [Areas]

- a. [Support] Ridgefield Center.
- b. [Support] potential Branchville TOD development.
- c. Support implementation of an approved Schlumberger Plan.

4. Innovation & Branding

- a. Develop active marketing supported by the ECDC website.

5. Improved Coordination & Communication

History Of Grand List Goal

1960 Town Plan – Reported the following:

- “Commerce and Industry” component of 1953 Grand List = 7.2%
- “Commerce and Industry” component of 1959 Grand List = 6.2%

1980 Town Plan – Stated the “objective of this Plan is to achieve 10 to 15 percent of the total assessed value of the Town in office and industrial uses” and reported the following:

- “Commercial and industrial” component of 1960 Grand List = 6%
- “Commercial and industrial” component of 1965 Grand List = 4%
- “Commercial and industrial” component of 1970 Grand List = 5%
- “Commercial and industrial” component of 1980 Grand List = 6%

1999 Town Plan - Background materials discussed a goal of achieving a non-residential tax base between 15 to 25 percent of the Grand List and reported the following:

- Estimated business / industrial component of 1994 Grand List = 16.2% based on business real estate (includes industrial), business motor vehicles, and business equipment.

2010 Town Plan - Background materials contained the following information:

- In the prior decade, residential demand and housing values had exceeded the demand and values for business property. This trend, coupled with depreciation, meant that the percentage of the non-residential component of the Grand List, as estimated by the Economic Development Commission, had decreased to 13 percent even though new development and refurbishment of existing commercial properties continued to occur.
- These trends indicated that a 25% non-residential tax base goal may not be realistic for Ridgefield since residential property values may become a larger proportion of the ratio.
- The amount of development that would be needed to attain a 25% non-residential component of the Grand List would involve changes in business zones that might adversely impact Ridgefield’s character.
- Rather than a specific percentage goal, the POCD recommended that efforts to grow the Grand List should continue.

Historic Grand List Data (continued)

Grand List information on file in the Assessor's Office indicated the following (all numbers in millions). While the 2015 Grand List showed a decline compared to 2010 as a result of a recession, more recent information has shown continued growth in the Grand List.

	2000	2005	2010	2015
GROSS Taxable Grand List	\$2,913.9	\$4,181.7	\$5,631.7	\$4,874.2
NET Taxable Grand List	\$2,662.2	\$4,154.4	\$5,553.0	\$4,740.3
REAL ESTATE (Gross)				
• Commercial Real Estate	\$150.8	\$214.7	\$544.6	\$495.6
• Industrial Real Estate	\$131.0	\$139.2	\$18.3	\$13.6
Subtotal	\$281.8	\$353.9	\$562.9	\$509.2
Percent of GROSS Taxable Grand List	9.7%	8.5%	10.0%	10.4%
Percent of NET Taxable Grand List	10.6%	8.5%	10.1%	10.7%
MOTOR VEHICLES / PERS. PROPERTY (Gross)				
• Commercial Motor Vehicles	\$3.0	\$3.0	\$2.7	\$3.2
• Business-Related Personal Property (industrial machinery and equipment; manufacturing machinery and equipment; biotechnology; furniture, fixtures and equipment; electronic data processing equipment)	\$106.3	\$108.1	\$119.0	\$132.2
Subtotal	\$109.3	\$111.1	\$121.7	\$135.4
Percent of GROSS Taxable Grand List	3.8%	2.7%	2.2%	2.7%
Percent of NET Taxable Grand List	4.1%	2.7%	2.2%	2.9%
OVERALL				
• Real Estate	\$281.8	\$353.9	\$562.9	\$509.2
• Motor Vehicles / Pers. Property	\$109.3	\$111.1	\$121.7	\$135.4
Total	\$391.1	\$465.0	\$684.6	\$644.6
Percent of GROSS Taxable Grand List	13.4%	11.1%	12.1%	13.2%
Percent of NET Taxable Grand List	14.7%	11.2%	12.3%	13.6%



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield should continue to promote its art and tourism assets as part of its economic development strategy.

Strongly agree	30%
Agree	55%
Don't Know	3%
Disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	2%

As part of the POCD process, Camoin Associates evaluated conditions and trends affecting economic development in Ridgefield and provide additional insight to economic development circumstances and opportunities in Ridgefield. Their main recommendations included:

- Promoting Ridgefield as a destination for arts and culture.
- Building Ridgefield's brand around arts and tourism
- Connecting and growing Downtown assets and amenities
- Continue improving access to Downtown
- Invest in Branchville

In the telephone survey, about 85 percent of residents felt the Town should continue to promote its art and tourism assets as part of its economic development strategy.

Build Ridgefield's Brand Around Arts and Tourism



Connect and Grow Downtown Assets & Amenities



Continue Improving Access to Downtown



Invest in Branchville



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Promote Economic Development**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Promote appropriate economic development in Ridgefield in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide jobs for residents of Ridgefield and the region, b. Provide goods and services for residents, businesses and visitors, c. Enhance the tax base, and/or d. Provide net tax revenue to support local services. 	3.31	ECDC PZC
2. Partner with civic organizations, private businesses, and residents to coordinate and schedule Town events and coordinate marketing with broader reach within Fairfield and Westchester counties.	2.54	ECDC
3. Continue to pursue an overarching goal where at least 10-15 percent of the Grand List consists of business components (commercial/industrial real estate, commercial motor vehicles, business personal property).	2.31	ECDC PZC
4. Promote tourism in Ridgefield as an economic development strategy.	2.31	ECDC
5. Seek to create economic growth with new strategic retailers to enhance the business community.	2.23	ECDC
6. Implement a "Make Ridgefield Business-Friendly" strategy.	2.15	ECDC
7. Encourage entrepreneurs and businesses to lease Ridgefield's commercial office space.	1.54	ECDC
8. Participate in the Western Connecticut Economic Development District.	1.46	ECDC
9. Continue to build awareness of local business organizations and activities through coordinated digital marketing on the ECDC website.	1.38	ECDC

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Participate in the State program for "municipal cultural districts" for the benefit of Ridgefield businesses and organizations.	2.23	ECDC
2. Strategically coordinate town marketing with the resources available.	2.23	ECDC
3. Hire/assign staff to assist in economic development efforts.	1.85	ECDC Town

11

DEVELOPMENT THEME

GUIDE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

*Guide business development
in appropriate areas***Telephone Survey Results**

Ridgefield has done a good job managing business development in areas outside of Downtown and Branchville - such as Copps Hill area and the Route 7/35 area.

Strongly agree	5%
Agree	40%
Don't Know	17%
Disagree	25%
Strongly disagree	13%

Overview

The overall goal of this part of the POCD is to guide business development and activities to:

- Encourage business development within existing business zones,
- Minimizing the conversion of business land to residential uses,
- Provide for adequate transitions to adjacent residential uses, and
- Promote coordinated development (more efficient parking, access management, fewer curb cuts and more cross-connections between sites).

In the telephone survey, residents were fairly evenly split (45 percent to 38 percent) as to whether Ridgefield has done a good job managing business development in areas outside of Downtown and Branchville - such as Copps Hill area and the Route 7/35 area.

Guide Business Development

Through its historic development practices (and zoning regulations), Ridgefield has mostly been able to avoid negative “strip” or “sprawl” development in its commercial areas. Since Ridgefield Center and Branchville are discussed separately, this section of the POCD focuses on:

- The Copps Hill area on Route 35,
- The intersection of Routes 7 and 35,
- The other parts of the Route 7 corridor, and
- Large office and research parks.

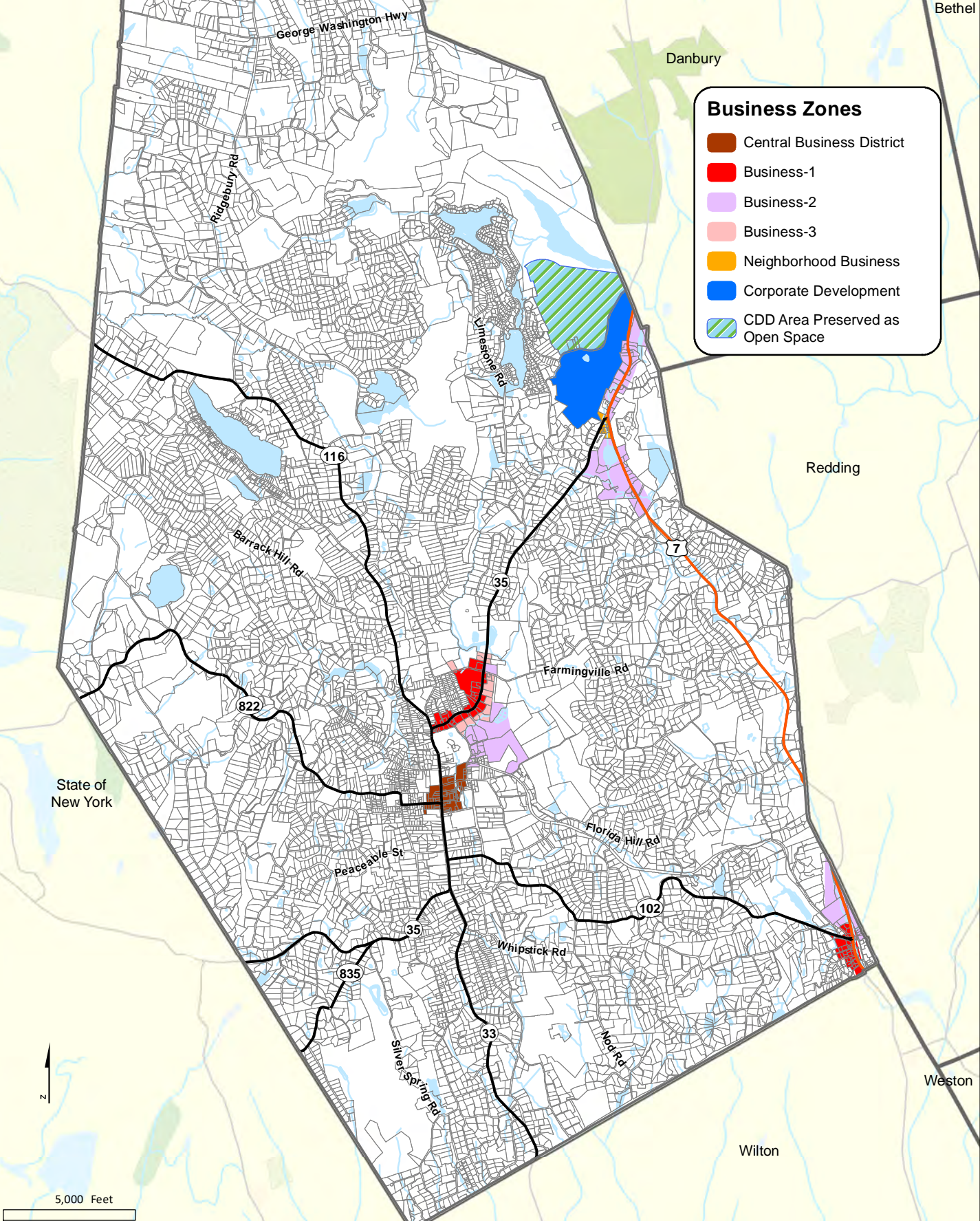
Due to the configuration of the roadway system and the availability of utility infrastructure, these locations (along with Ridgefield Center and Branchville) are logical business locations within the overall community fabric.

Business Zones

Ridgefield, CT

Business Zones

- Central Business District
- Business-1
- Business-2
- Business-3
- Neighborhood Business
- Corporate Development
- CDD Area Preserved as Open Space





Sustainability Actions

In terms of business development, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Guiding economic development to developed areas.
- Home-based occupations and work that reduce the need to commute.
- Locally-based businesses which reduce or eliminate the need to commute.

Copps Hill Area (Route 35)

The commercial development in the Copps Hill area functions primarily as a place where goods and services are available to Ridgefield residents.

General planning principles for this area include:

- Promote development with “village” characteristics
- Minimize or avoid parking areas between the building and street
- Enhance the streetscape appearance along Route 35
- Encourage attractive signs
- Expand and enhance sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities
- Promote rear access roads to help minimize traffic impacts
- Encourage access management along the roadway
- Limiting the roadway to a 2-lane configuration (with turning lanes) to the extent feasible

It may make sense to review the business zoning along Route 35 and the location / configuration of the B-1 / B-2 / B-3 zones to see if it is reasonably configured for the uses already there.



Gateway Area (Route 7 @ Route 35)

The gateway area at Routes 7 / 35 has evolved over the years from a historically manufacturing focus (the Benrus Plant) to a mixed-use area. Development is constrained by topography and surrounding development patterns. Traffic volumes in this area range from 15,600 average daily traffic (ADT) on Route 35 to 18,200 ADT on Route 7 south of Route 35 and 31,800 ADT on Route 7 north of Route 35.

General planning principles for this area include:

- Seek to minimize “strip” development patterns
- Seek to minimize or avoid parking areas between the building and street
- Enhance the streetscape along Route 7 and Route 35
- Encourage attractive signs
- Expand and enhance sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities
- Encourage access management along the roadway

As part of an effort to provide for additional business uses in this area (to try and capture business from the roadway travelers and to capture some of the “retail leakage” in Ridgefield), the Neighborhood Business Zone was established.



During the term of this POCD, it may make sense to review the overall zoning in this area to ensure it is reasonably configured for community needs.



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield should continue to allow people to operate home-based businesses if they do not impact the neighborhood.

Strongly agree	26%
Agree	60%
Don't Know	4%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	3%

Ridgefield should allow short-term rental of housing such as AirBNB.

Strongly agree	11%
Agree	39%
Don't Know	9%
Disagree	25%
Strongly disagree	16%

Route 7 Corridor

There has been limited interest in the past in extending business zoning along the Route 7 corridor due to the Town's desire to avoid large retail developments and strip-style commercial development in this corridor, and maintain the low intensity character of the Route 7 corridor in Ridgefield.

During the next ten years, the Commission may undertake a study of the Route 7 corridor in order to look at zoning and business development and:

- Examine the amount of vacant land and development potential;
- Determine whether and where business and other non-residential uses might be appropriate; and
- Consider zoning revisions that enable appropriate use of properties while controlling the scale and size of developments consistent with the limitations of transportation services and infrastructure.

Corporate Parks

The Town will continue promoting development of existing corporate park areas and attracting and maintaining office, research, and development facilities to these areas. Efforts by local officials, including the Economic and Community Development Commission, will play a critical role.

Adaptive Re-Use

Ridgefield has adaptive reuse provisions (ZR Section 3.2.C.6) for the Route 7 corridor and a small portion of Main Street near the intersection with Route 116 which allows for the utilization of existing buildings (typically historic residential structures or significant residential "streetscapes") for low intensity non-residential uses provided that the residential character of the area is maintained. The Town will continue to allow adaptive reuse and may consider expanding its applicability to other major corridors in Ridgefield.

Home-Based Businesses

Ridgefield has provisions for home-based businesses (ZR Section 3.3) where the type of approval required depends on the nature / intensity of the business activity. In the telephone survey, about 86 percent of residents felt that Ridgefield should continue to allow people to operate home-based businesses if they do not impact the neighborhood.

Since there are many occasions when people may work out of their homes, such regulations are important. Some home-based business activities require a Special Permit and the regulatory controls in place with this regulatory approach seem to be appropriate. Ridgefield should continue this approach in the future and modify it, if needed.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Guide Business Development**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Promote business development in areas already zoned for business use.	2.92	ECDC PZC
2. Continue to encourage enhancements to the appearance of business properties gateways.	2.46	AAC PZC
3. Continue to promote coordinated development (more efficient parking, access management, fewer curb cuts and more cross-connections between sites),	2.46	PZC
4. Seek to implement the general planning principles for the Gateway area (Route 7 @ Route 35).	2.31	PZC
5. Maintain provisions for home-based businesses.	2.31	PZC
6. Seek to avoid the conversion of business-zoned land to residential uses.	2.15	PZC
7. Continue allowing adaptive reuse of historic structures and residences in significant streetscapes along major roadways.	2.08	PZC
8. Continue to encourage / require adequate transitions to adjacent residential uses.	1.77	PZC
9. Seek to implement the general planning principles for the Copps Hill area.	1.69	PZC
10. Continue to promote the full utilization of corporate parks for office and industrial development.	1.00	ECDC PZC

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Review the business zoning in the Gateway area (Route 7 @ Route 35) to ensure it is reasonably configured for community needs.	2.62	PZC
2. Review the business zoning in the Copps Hill area and the location / configuration of the B-1 / B-2 / B-3 zones to see if it is reasonably configured.	2.46	PZC
3. Review provisions for home-based businesses, if needed, to adapt to changing times.	2.46	PZC
4. Consider undertaking a zoning study of the Route 7 corridor to determine whether business or other non-residential uses might be appropriate while controlling the scale and size of developments.	1.77	PZC
5. Consider expanding adaptive reuse of historic structures and residences in significant streetscapes along other major roadways.	1.77	PZC

12

DEVELOPMENT THEME

GUIDE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Promote a variety of housing types while retaining the overall character of Ridgefield



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield has a good mix of housing options to meet people's needs and desires.

Strongly agree	10%
Agree	55%
Don't Know	8%
Disagree	19%
Strongly disagree	8%

Overview

While Ridgefield has focused mainly on single-family residential development for the last seven decades or so, the age composition of the community is changing and there is a growing realization that Ridgefield can, and should, further diversify its housing portfolio to provide for a variety of housing types. Even though 65 percent of residents felt that Ridgefield has a good mix of housing options to meet people's needs and desires, about one-quarter of the community feels that other housing options should be considered.

This chapter focuses on addressing changing housing needs while retaining the predominantly (but not exclusively) single-family residential character of Ridgefield. With about 90% of Ridgefield zoned for residential uses and more than 25 percent of the land area preserved as open space, the rural and residential character of Ridgefield will be maintained.

Single Family



Multi-Family / Affordable



Guide Residential Development

Based on terrain, soil types, the natural carrying capacity of the land, infrastructure availability, and historic patterns of development, the residential pattern for Ridgefield going forward will continue to be:

- Predominantly single-family development,
- Higher densities in and near villages (Ridgefield Center and possibly Branchville), and
- A reduction of density as the distance from the villages increases.

Single-Family Residential Development

The zoning regulations seem to be working effectively at managing uses and activities on existing single-family residential parcels.

To help protect important resources and preserve as much meaningful open space as possible if subdivision development occurs in the future, the Commission will maintain the Planned Residential Development (PRD) provisions in Section 4.1 of the Zoning Regulations to continue to enable a more flexible development approach.





Telephone Survey Results

I think Ridgefield needs more housing options to meet the needs of people aged 55 and over.

Strongly agree	9%
Agree	24%
Don't Know	13%
Disagree	39%
Strongly disagree	16%

I think Ridgefield needs more housing options to meet the needs of people under age 35.

Strongly agree	13%
Agree	29%
Don't Know	9%
Disagree	34%
Strongly disagree	15%

Multi-family housing should be guided to areas in and near Downtown and other areas where public sewer service is available.

Strongly agree	11%
Agree	41%
Don't Know	9%
Disagree	25%
Strongly disagree	13%

Multi-Family Residential Development

Multi-family development is well configured to meet the housing needs of a younger population (who may not be in a position to purchase a Ridgefield home just yet) and an older population (who may want to live in Ridgefield and not be encumbered by home maintenance responsibilities). Other living situations can also benefit from multi-family housing. Most people have lived in a multi-family development at some point in their life.

In the telephone survey:

- About 33 percent of residents felt that Ridgefield needs more housing options to meet the needs of people aged 55 and over.
- About 42 percent of residents felt that Ridgefield needs more housing options to meet the needs of people under age 35.

Ridgefield intends to continue to seek ways to assimilate multi-family development in the community to help diversify its housing portfolio. Multi-family development can be consistent with the intent to locate higher density development in and near villages (Ridgefield Center and possibly Branchville).

When higher density or multi-family development is proposed to help meet housing needs, the appropriate location should be guided by principles outlined below. These principles are intended to address the need for housing diversity while preserving Ridgefield's character and environment, and considering the ability of infrastructure to handle growth.

Casagmo



Fox Hill



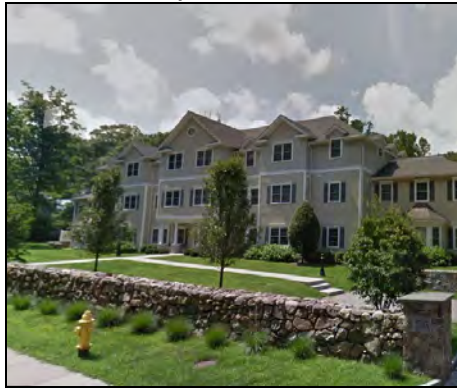
Higher Density Housing Locational Guidelines

1. Multi-family developments should be served by water supply systems and municipal sewer-age treatment facilities that meet all applicable requirements.
2. The most appropriate types of multi-family development for Ridgefield should continue to be moderate density townhouses and garden apartments proximate to shopping and community facilities. Larger developments not so located may be considered when meeting an identified and overriding Town need.
3. Roadways (and walkways) serving the site and the surrounding area should be capable of safely and conveniently handling traffic generated by the development as well as providing easy and direct access to major thoroughfares serving Ridgefield.
4. Multi-family developments should be located and designed to be compatible with the surrounding area with appropriate transitions (topographic, vegetative, or other) to provide a buffer or gradual transition in density or type of development.
5. The site should be of adequate size and suitable terrain to establish an attractive and functional layout of buildings and site improvements and permit reasonable screening to and from adjacent properties and streets.

Cannonfield



Multi-Family With Affordable Units





Housing Needs

In the future, there may be a larger number of older residents who are interested in housing options:

- With lower maintenance responsibilities
- Less floor area
- Lower costs
- One-floor living or other elements of universal accessibility (elevators, step-in showers, lever handles, etc.)

Housing That Is Affordable

Housing in Ridgefield can be expensive and housing affordability is a difficult issue to resolve. Sales prices are established by the housing market and what people are prepared to spend. Ridgefield is affected by multi-state housing markets that reflect State tax policies and other factors that influence where people choose to live.

State statutes consider housing to be affordable if a household spends less than 30 percent of its income on housing and related costs. On the other hand, the term “affordable housing” refers to the definition under CGS Section 8-30g which only considers governmentally assisted housing, housing receiving tenant rental assistance or financed by a CHFA / USDA mortgage, or deed restricted housing.

Since less than 10 percent of its housing stock is considered “affordable housing” as defined above, Ridgefield is subject to the Affordable Housing Appeals procedure (CGS Section 8-30g) whereby a development containing affordable housing does not need to comply with local zoning requirements.

Over the past decade or so, Ridgefield has seen an increase in the number of affordable housing units in the community. Since 2007, Ridgefield has received credit for 36 additional governmentally assisted units, 18 additional affordable mortgages, and 64 additional deed-restricted units. In fact, Ridgefield was able to obtain a four-year moratorium (2014-2018) from the Affordable Housing Appeals procedure based on the number of units created in the community, mostly by private developers.

Over this period, residents have become more accepting of affordable housing developments since developments which have occurred have generally:

- Been located in areas where they can fit in,
- Been designed to fit into the character of their location, and
- Not created issues in the neighborhood or the community.

Ridgefield will continue to encourage the provision of a diversity of housing types, opportunities, and choice at prices consistent with community conditions and constraints. The map on the facing page identifies areas which could be “potential housing opportunity focus areas.”

Residential Zones

Ridgefield, CT

Bethel

Danbury

Redding

Weston

Wilton

State of
New York

Low Density Zones

RAAA

RAA

Medium Density Zones

RA

R20 / R-20 SD


Higher Density Zones

R-10 / R-7.5 / R-5

MFDD / MSDD / HOD / ARHD

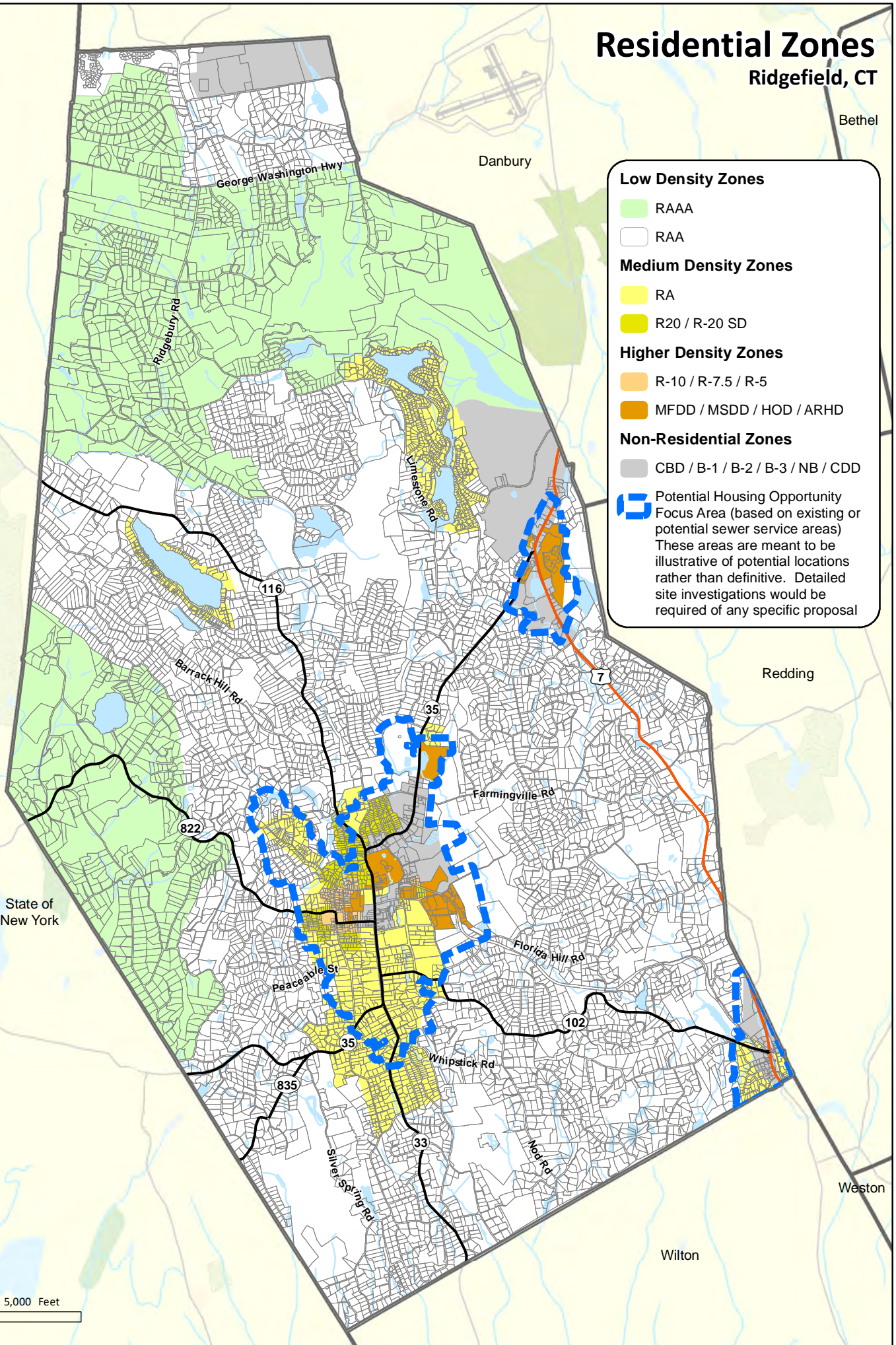
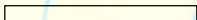
Non-Residential Zones

CBD / B-1 / B-2 / B-3 / NB / CDD

 Potential Housing Opportunity Focus Area (based on existing or potential sewer service areas)
These areas are meant to be illustrative of potential locations rather than definitive. Detailed site investigations would be required of any specific proposal



5,000 Feet





Sustainability Actions

In terms of residential development, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Understanding current demographics and projected demographics for the community.
- Appropriate development policies linked to carrying capacity of the land and that respects natural systems such as watersheds and wildlife corridors.
- Guiding higher density and multi-family development to existing developed areas.
- Providing for housing options near Ridgefield Center and Branchville.
- Allowing for compact residential areas with reduced minimum lot sizes when significant open space is preserved.
- Residential communities and housing developments that are socially cohesive,
- Housing that will be affordable to residents with different levels of income.
- Diverse occupancy in terms of age, social, and cultural groups.

Ridgefield Housing Authority

The Ridgefield Housing Authority (RHA) is an independent organization which operates three housing developments containing 152 units in Ridgefield:

- Ballard Green on Gilbert Street (elderly / handicapped),
- Prospect Ridge Congregate (elderly / handicapped), and
- Prospect Ridge (family, affordable and handicapped) housing.

The RHA operates 132 units for elderly and disabled persons and 20 units for families. While most of the units are income-based, there are some market rate units. As an indication of the strong demand for affordable housing, the waiting list for RHA units can be 3-5 years long. Since people are living longer (and may outlive their assets), additional RHA units are needed.

Affordable Housing Committee

Ridgefield has had an Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) for many years and the Committee has recently been reconstituted and reinvigorated. The AHC is well equipped to assist in addressing housing affordability.

Activities which have been suggested by the AHC include:

- Identifying and quantifying the need for and availability of housing and track Ridgefield's progress.
- Helping develop and maintain the town's official Affordable Housing Plan, as required under PA 17-170 (codified as CGS Section 8-30j), with compliance required by July 24, 2022).
- Serving as the town's clearing house for information on affordable housing, and as a resource to town bodies, organizations and individuals.
- Advocating for policies that will promote housing diversity in Ridgefield.
- Pursuing, in conjunction with other town bodies and outside organizations, the development of additional affordable housing in Ridgefield.
- Undertaking other initiatives that will promote housing diversity and opportunity in Ridgefield.
- Converting the Committee to a Commission (possibly called the Ridgefield Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC).

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Guide Residential Development**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to update local regulations as needed to address local housing needs and provide appropriate housing options.	3.08	PZC
2. Diversify Ridgefield's housing portfolio to provide for a variety of housing types to meet housing needs while retaining the predominantly single-family residential character of the Town and respecting important resources.	3.00	PZC AHC RHA
3. Continue efforts to create more housing units for elderly, disabled, and family households of limited means.	2.92	RHA AHC
4. Use the "potential housing opportunity focus areas" mapped in the POCD and the Higher Density / Multi-Family Guidelines in the POCD to guide proposed higher densities and multi-family uses.	2.69	PZC
5. Maintain the model "housing affordability plan" to provide a common framework for affordable housing developments (CGS Section 8-30g or otherwise).	2.69	AHC PZC
6. Maintain the list of qualified affordable housing "administrators" who will help qualify potential purchasers / tenants and ensure sale prices / rental rates comply with State law.	2.69	AHC PZC
7. Continue efforts to create more affordable housing units in Ridgefield.	2.38	AHC
8. Continue efforts to obtain another four-year moratorium from the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (CGS Section 8-30g).	2.31	Town AHC
9. Maintain the PRD provisions (ZR Section 4.1) to help preserve natural resources and open space as part of any new residential subdivision development.	2.00	PZC
10. Seek to retain deed-restricted affordable units so that the affordability restrictions do not expire.	-	Town AHC
11. Seek to extend the affordability period for any affordable housing development (CGS Section 8-30g or otherwise).	-	Town AHC
12. Promote education regarding housing needs and programs and applicable State laws which govern affordable housing (CGS Section 8-30g or otherwise).	-	AHC
B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Prepare an official Affordable Housing Plan, as required under PA 17-170 (codified as CGS Section 8-30j), with compliance required by July 24, 2022).	3.15	AHC
2. Consider adopting an inclusionary zoning requirement (as authorized by CGS 8-2i).	1.92	PZC

13

INFRASTRUCTURE THEME

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Provide appropriate community facilities to maintain and enhance the overall quality of life in Ridgefield



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield does a good job maintaining its public buildings and other community facilities.

Strongly agree	27%
Agree	58%
Don't Know	4%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	4%

Ridgefield has adequate recreation facilities and services for kids, families, and seniors.

Strongly agree	29%
Agree	59%
Don't Know	3%
Disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	1%

Overview

Community facilities (such as schools and public works, public safety, and recreation facilities) are used to provide services which contribute significantly to Ridgefield's character and quality of life. The POCD does not get involved in the day-to-day operation of local departments and facilities but does look at:

- The adequacy of local facilities to meet anticipated community needs for the next 20 to 30 years or so, and
- Whether the potential exists to expand such facilities in the future should the need arise.

The map on the facing page shows the location of existing community facilities:

General (blue)

10. Town Hall
14. Town Hall Annex
11. Ridgefield Library
15. Founders Hall (Senior Center)

Education / Schools (yellow)

1. Ridgefield High School (9-12)
2. East Ridge Middle School (7-8)
3. Scotts Ridge Middle School (7-8)
4. Barlow Mountain Elementary School
5. Branchville Elementary School
6. Farmingville Elementary School
7. Ridgebury Elementary School
8. Scotland Elementary School
9. Veterans Park Elementary School

Public Safety (light red)

13. Police Station
29. Fire/EMS Headquarters
30. Ridgebury Fire Station

Public Works (gray)

31. Public Works Garage
32. Wastewater Treatment Plant #1
33. Transfer Station
40. Wastewater Plant #2 (to be closed)

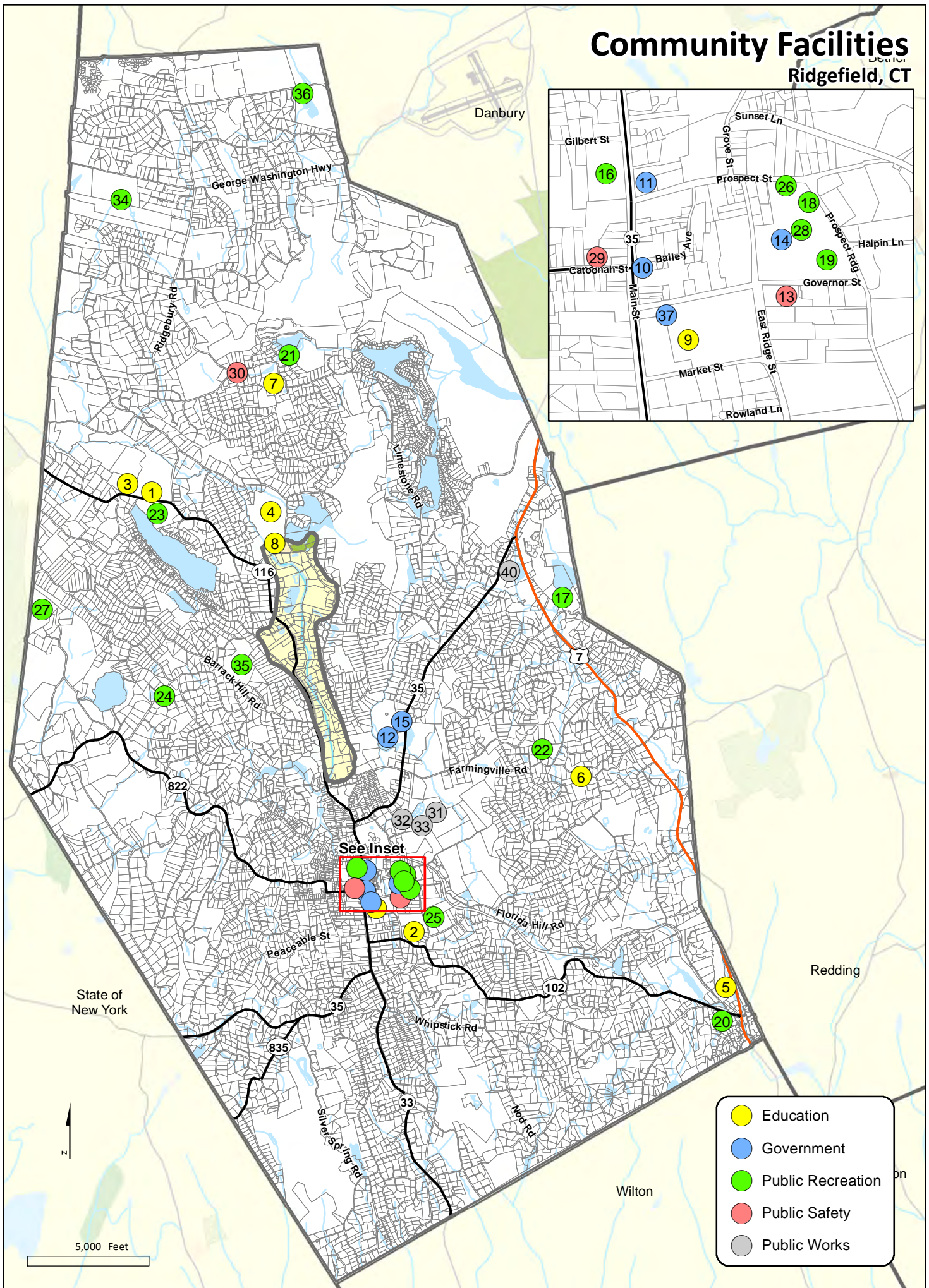
Parks / Recreation (green)

12. Recreation Center
4. Pool At Barlow Mountain ES
16. Ballard Park
17. Martin Park Beach
18. Skate Park
19. Ciuccoli Field
20. Branchville Civic Field
21. Lake Windwing
22. Aldrich Park / Field
23. Richardson Park
24. Sachem Field /Park
25. Scalzo / Diniz Fields
26. East Ridge II (Rink) Field
27. Sturges Park
28. Yanity Gym
34. Ridgefield Golf Course
35. Levy Park
36. Shadow Lake Park
37. Teen Center 38.

There are a number of other quasi-public and private facilities in Ridgefield which provide services to residents and visitors.

Community Facilities

Ridgefield, CT





Sustainability Actions

In terms of community facilities, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Developing and using municipal vehicles powered by renewable fuel sources.
- Provide recreational facilities to meet community needs, especially within walking and bicycling distance.
- Maintaining municipal facilities and parks with minimal fossil-fuel-powered equipment (such as mowers, edgers, and leaf blowers).
- Using alternatives to chemical pesticides and herbicides in park and facility maintenance (such as integrated pest management and planting of native species).

Address Near Term Needs / Issues

Based on a review of facility needs during the planning process, the following facilities were considered to have the most immediate needs:

Function	Assessment
Fire Department / Emergency Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently operate out of two stations • 6 staff at HQ and 2 at Ridgebury (24/7/365) • 70% of call are medical / 30% are fire • HQ station is undersized for modern equipment • Insufficient room to expand HQ • Preferred option is to build public safety complex with police department
Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current building is not adequate for department needs • Space needs study is underway • Options may include renovate / expand, build new police facility, build public safety complex with fire dept.

Address Medium Term Needs / Issues

The following facilities / services also have needs or issues which need to be addressed in the coming years:

Function	Assessment
Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing buildings / sites are intensively used and are experiencing space challenges / staffing is tight • Limited room for expansion / reconfiguration (adjacent land was sold by Town) • A satellite site in northern Ridgefield might alleviate some space constraints and improve efficiency
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer diverse recreation programs • Seeking to add aquatic facilities, turf fields, play courts, space of indoor/outdoor programs • Other improvements also desired (recreation center parking, outdoor recreation fields, Barlow pool)
Ridgefield Playhouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Playhouse is seeking ways to enhance their facility • More backstage / hospitality spaces are desired • Parking can be a problem, especially when other activities are occurring in the vicinity
Founders Hall (Senior Center)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility is well utilized and suffers from lack of parking (shares site with Recreation Center) • Utilization is expected to grow in the future due to growing number of older residents

Prepare For Longer Term Needs / Issues

Based on a review of facility needs, the following facilities are expected to be adequate for community needs through to the year 2030:

Function	Assessment
Buildings / Grounds Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building / grounds maintenance would like to be more proactive (instead of reactive)
Community Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lounsbury House (Town-owned but operated by a non-profit entity) is used for a number of functions Expected to be adequate for community needs to 2030
Education / Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment projections prepared for the Board of Education suggest a decrease in overall enrollment for the near future Existing facilities are expected to have adequate capacity through 2030 (and perhaps beyond) Board of Education continues to monitor school enrollment projections Long term enrollment trends may result in facility adjustments in the future (consolidation, redistricting, etc.)
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library was recently improved and expanded Utilization has increased and parking can be an issue when programs coincide with other activities Is undertaking a new strategic plan
Solid Waste / Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current arrangements for collection / disposal of solid waste considered adequate Solid waste arrangements can be extended as needed Collection of recyclables is adequate Economics of recycling are challenging at present and future attention may be needed
Teen Center / "The Barn"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Barn is expected to be adequate (in terms of size) for community needs to 2030 Upgrades (such as outdoor activity space) are desired
Town Hall / Town Hall Annex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town departments have been split up between multiple buildings due to space challenges Space at the Town Hall Annex has been leased to others and is not available for consolidation Arrangements are not optimal for governmental function but are expected to be adequate to 2030



Community Services

In the future, there may be a larger number of older residents who may:

- Be interested in using the Senior Center
- Need emergency medical response
- Desire social services
- Need dial-a-ride or other forms of transportation (especially if mobility impaired)
- Seek services or assistance in their home so they can "age-in-place"

COMMUNITY FACILITY STRATEGIES

Legend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover

1. Address Near-Term Needs / Issues

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Maintain and manage community facilities and services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To meet current community needs, b. To adapt to future community needs, c. To maximize their utility, and d. In an efficient and cost-effective way. 	3.00	Town BOS BOF
2. Continue to maintain high quality educational programs.	-	BOE

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Address the space needs of the Fire / EMS Department in an efficient and cost-effective way.	2.69	Town FD
2. Address the space needs of the Police Department in an efficient and cost-effective way.	2.62	Town PD
3. Undertake improvements to improve accessibility (mobility, sight, hearing, etc.) to all municipal facilities and services.	2.62	Town
4. Investigate the possibility of establishing a public safety complex for police and fire in an appropriate location.	2.54	Town FD PD

Fire Headquarters



Police Station



Recreation Center



Senior Center (Founder's Hall)



2. Address Medium-Term Needs / Issues

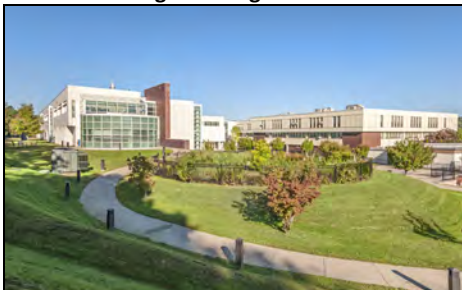
A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Seek opportunities to address parking challenges at the Recreation Center / Senior Center.	2.00	PRC
2. Support improvements at the Ridgefield Playhouse - both to the facility and the parking availability.	1.77	Town BOS
3. Seek opportunities to address parking challenges at the Library / Prospector Theater.	1.77	RL

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Evaluate the town-wide maintenance function for municipal facilities to ensure that all capital needs (Town, school, recreation, etc.) are being adequately addressed.	2.54	BOS

3. Prepare For Longer-Term Needs / Issues

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to monitor how the changing age composition of the community affects the demand for emergency medical services, dial-a-ride, and other services.	2.77	Town
2. Continue to monitor school enrollments in order to anticipate future enrollment trends well in advance.	2.00	BOE
3. Monitor usage of the Senior Center in order to anticipate the need to expand the facility, if needed, in the future.	2.00	COA
4. When and where appropriate, acquire properties (if they become available) adjacent to existing facilities in order to allow for future expansion / renovation of existing facilities rather than having to develop entirely new sites.	1.85	Town
5. Investigate ways to relieve some of the space constraints at the public works facilities, including the possibility of establishing a satellite public works site in northern Ridgefield.	1.46	Town PW

Ridgefield High School



Ridgefield Library



14

INFRASTRUCTURE THEME

ADDRESS VEHICULAR
TRANSPORTATION ISSUES*Provide a safe and efficient vehicular transportation network that meets the needs of the community***Telephone Survey Results**

Ridgefield is doing a good job managing traffic congestion.

Strongly agree	3%
Agree	29%
Don't Know	5%
Disagree	33%
Strongly disagree	30%

Overview

The roadway system in Ridgefield is important in the day-to-day life of the community. This section of the POCD looks at the roadway system to ensure that it will continue to meet community needs, efficiently and cost effectively, into the future.

Ridgefield's system of public roads fulfills three basic functions:

- Primarily accessing individual properties (local roads),
- Conveying traffic from local roads to main roads (collector roads), and
- Primarily connecting Ridgefield to other areas (arterial roads).

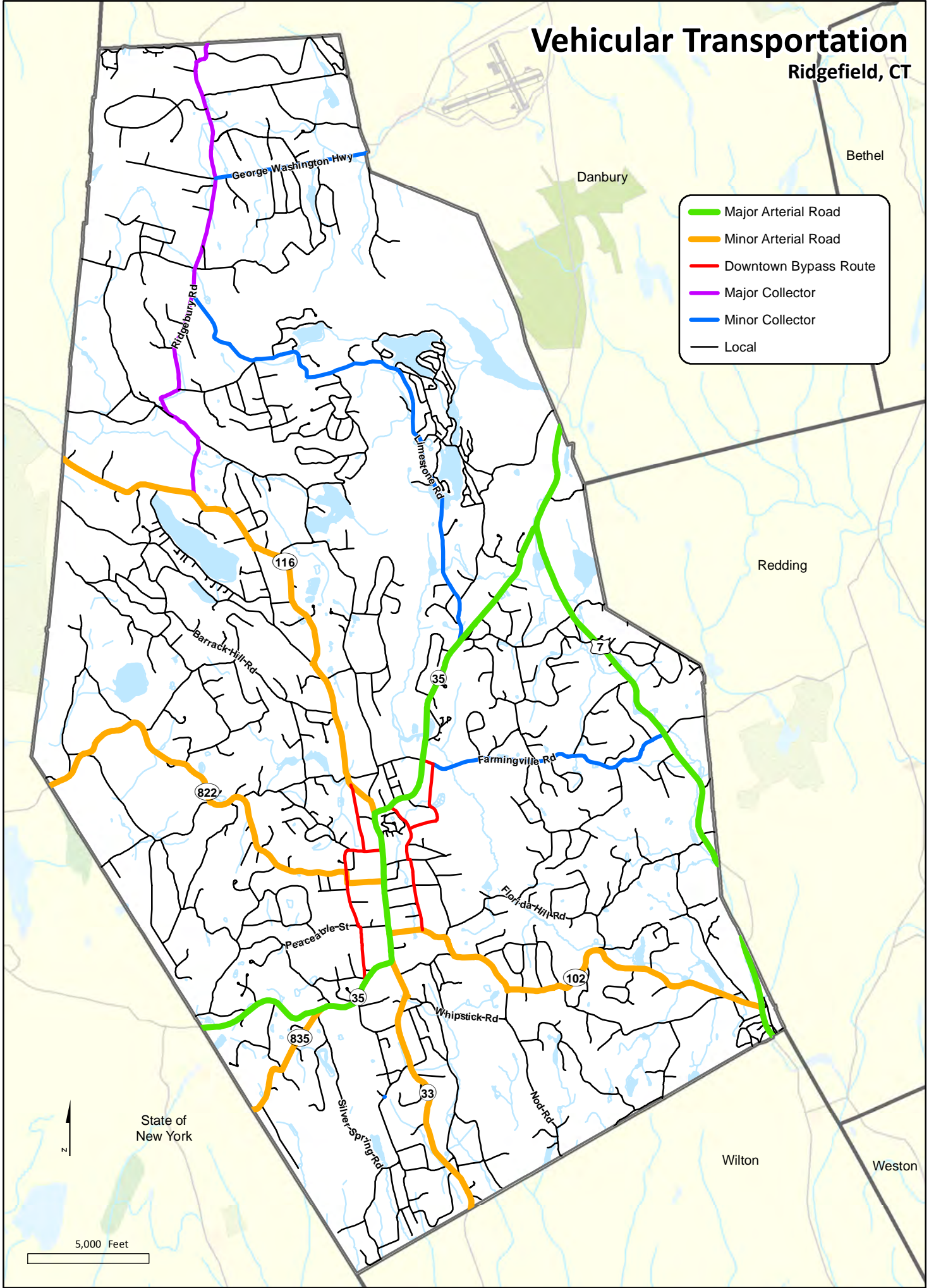
As shown on the map on the facing page, roads are categorized as follows:

Functional Class	Road	
Major Arterial Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 35
Minor Arterial Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 33 • Route 102 • Route 116 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 822 • Route 835
Downtown Bypass Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grove Street • East Ridge Street • Ligi's Way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Ridge Avenue • Gilbert Street • New Street
Major Collector Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ridgebury Road 	
Minor Collector Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Washington Tpke. • Limestone Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmingville Road • Cairn's Hill Road
Local Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other roads in Ridgefield 	

Vehicular Transportation

Ridgefield, CT

- Major Arterial Road
- Minor Arterial Road
- Downtown Bypass Route
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local





Sustainability Actions

In terms of vehicular transportation, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Street designs that support / enhance access between neighborhoods and to neighborhood-based commercial developments.

Improve Traffic Operations / Safety

Traffic capacity and safety are an important consideration in the POCD. At certain times (hours, days, and/or months), high traffic volume and/or congestion are evident in some locations. In the telephone survey, about 63 percent of residents did not feel that Ridgefield is doing a good job managing traffic congestion.

The Police Department is monitoring accident locations and trends. Locations which exhibit significant accident concentrations should be addressed by the Town or State as expeditiously as possible. In recent years, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT-DOT) has been working with the Town to make improvements to Route 35 in Ridgefield Center to improve the operation of certain intersections (such as the reconfiguration of the intersection at Prospect Street / CVS driveway) and balance traffic capacity with on-street parking and pedestrian improvements.

Roads And Character

The majority of Ridgefield's roads, laid out prior to today's engineering standards, are narrow, tree-lined, winding and/or steep. These features contribute greatly to Ridgefield's character and require a careful balance between safety and roadway aesthetics when improvements are undertaken.

Access Management

Roadway capacity is essentially fixed by the configuration of the roadway (number of lanes, etc.). Continuing to increase driveways, turning movements, and other potential impediments to traffic flow is one of the main causes of congestion and accidents. To help preserve traffic capacity on roadways and reduce accident potential, the Commission has specific access management provisions in the Zoning Regulations Section 7.7).

In addition, there have been some access management studies conducted (all or parts of Route 7, Route 35, etc.) and these studies provide specific recommendations related maintaining the capacity of the roadway and reducing safety issues due to turning movements. The following studies are hereby incorporated into the POCD in order to help guide access management strategies long these major roadways:

- Route 35 Driveway and Curb Cut Management Plan (HVCEO, 2005), and
- Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study, (SWRPA / HVCEO, 2011)

While these corridor plans only apply to Routes 7 and 35, principles of access management should be a consideration for all future development along all arterial and collector roads.

“Traffic Calming”

Due to the overall configuration of the road system, there are a number of situations in Ridgefield (especially near the Center) where traffic travels through local streets to get to other parts of the community. This is unfortunate since it can turn what was intended and built as a local street into the functional equivalent of a collector street (more traffic seeking to travel at higher speeds).

To address this, Ridgefield may wish to consider implementing “traffic calming” measures, *as appropriate*, along certain streets as a way to deter through traffic and manage it more effectively. Traffic calming should generally allow for through traffic provided it occurs in ways that are respectful of the nature of the local streets and abutting uses.



Transportation

In the future, there may be a larger number of older drivers on the road who may:

- Drive more slowly
- Be uncomfortable in traffic
- May need assistance parking in tight quarters
- Be uncomfortable driving at night

Sample Of Possible Traffic Calming Techniques



Awareness - A neighborhood meeting can raise awareness of the issue and involve residents in identifying possible approaches.



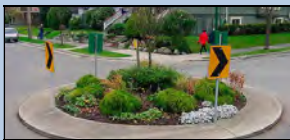
Signage – Signage informs motorists of acceptable speeds and/or behavior. Roads can be marked for “no trucks.” Unreasonably low speed limits are not recommended.



Speed Enforcement – Enforcement of speed limits and other traffic laws in neighborhoods can help slow traffic and help police learn when and where to focus their traffic calming efforts.



Narrowing Travel Lanes - Narrowing travel lane width can calm traffic. A constriction (choker, chicane, etc.) can also be effective although it can hamper snow-plows and emergency response.



Mini-Roundabouts - A mini-roundabout is a street intersection feature which requires vehicles to slow down and navigate around the island in an intersection and yield to vehicles already in the roundabout.



Speed Bump / Hump – Temporary or permanent raised sections of roadway which can deter speeding and cut-through traffic. However, this can also create issues for snow plowing and emergency response.



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield is doing a good job maintaining and repairing roads.

Strongly agree	6%
Agree	33%
Don't Know	3%
Disagree	31%
Strongly disagree	26%

Improve Pavement Management

The POCD recommends that Ridgefield continue to maintain roadway pavement as efficiently and economically as possible. Pavement has a useful life and it is cheaper to preserve pavement quality by on-going crack-sealing and chip-sealing activities rather than let a road deteriorate until it needs to be rebuilt.

In the telephone survey, about 57 percent of residents did not feel that Ridgefield is doing a good job maintaining and repairing roads.

While the Public Works Department used to revisit each road on a regular schedule to maintain the roads in adequate condition, this is no longer the case due to fewer available resources (staff, time, and money).

A number of communities have adopted a pavement management system to help track pavement condition, increase useful life, and fund maintenance in the most cost-effective manner. If pavement conditions are deteriorating over time, the tracking of pavement condition helps focus attention on the fact that reducing funding today increases the costs significantly in the future. Ridgefield should consider establishing a pavement management system so that the maintenance / deterioration of the road system can be tracked and monitored over time.

Studies over the years have shown that roadway pavement deteriorates in an “S-shaped” fashion and that minor expenditures up front (in the “preservation” phase) can avoid major expenditures later (in the “rehab” or “reconstruction” phases). Ridgefield should continue to implement and fund a long-term pavement management program. Overall, Ridgefield may not be devoting adequate funding to pavement management to avoid deterioration of the pavement and a larger cost in the future.



VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Improve Traffic Operations / Safety**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to work with CTDOT and WestCOG in identifying and addressing traffic issues (congestion, accident concentrations, etc.) along main transportation corridors since many of these roadways serve regional traffic circulation functions.	2.85	Town WCOG DOT
2. Continue to implement effective access management strategies along major roadways in order to manage the number of driveways, share parking areas, and improve traffic operations on the roadway while enhancing vehicular and pedestrian safety.	2.31	PZC DOT
3. Consider implementing traffic calming to address traffic issues on local roads, in residential neighborhoods, and other areas, as appropriate.	2.31	PD
4. As necessary, address safety and capacity issues on Town roadways in Ridgefield.	1.92	PW PD

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Evaluate possible ways to improve the Prospect Street / Grove Street intersection.	-	TE Town

2. Improve Pavement Management

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to implement pavement management techniques on Town roads to reduce long-term maintenance costs.	1.92	PW

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Prepare and maintain a formal pavement management plan to monitor pavement condition and reduce long-term maintenance costs.	2.31	PW

15

PROMOTE WALKING,
CYCLING & TRANSIT

*Promote and support pedestrian, bicycle, transit,
and other forms of transportation*



Accessibility

In the future, there may be a larger number of older residents who may have mobility impairments or may desire mobility accommodations (wider sidewalks, sidewalk ramps, longer times at crosswalks, wider doorways, elevators, etc.)

There may also be a larger number of older residents who may need dial-a-ride or other paratransit services.

Overview

Over the last century or so, most planning and engineering attention has been devoted to the movement of vehicles on a roadway system. However, there is growing interest in transportation and mobility needs for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and those who are mobility impaired.

Promote Pedestrianism and Accessibility

Parts of Ridgefield are very walkable and pedestrian activity is evident. In fact, Ridgefield Center has a “walk score” of 77 (due to proximity and variety of potential destinations) and the pedestrian-friendliness of this area helps attract shoppers and visitors. People often travel to the Center to walk and get exercise due to the wide sidewalks and attractive streetscape.

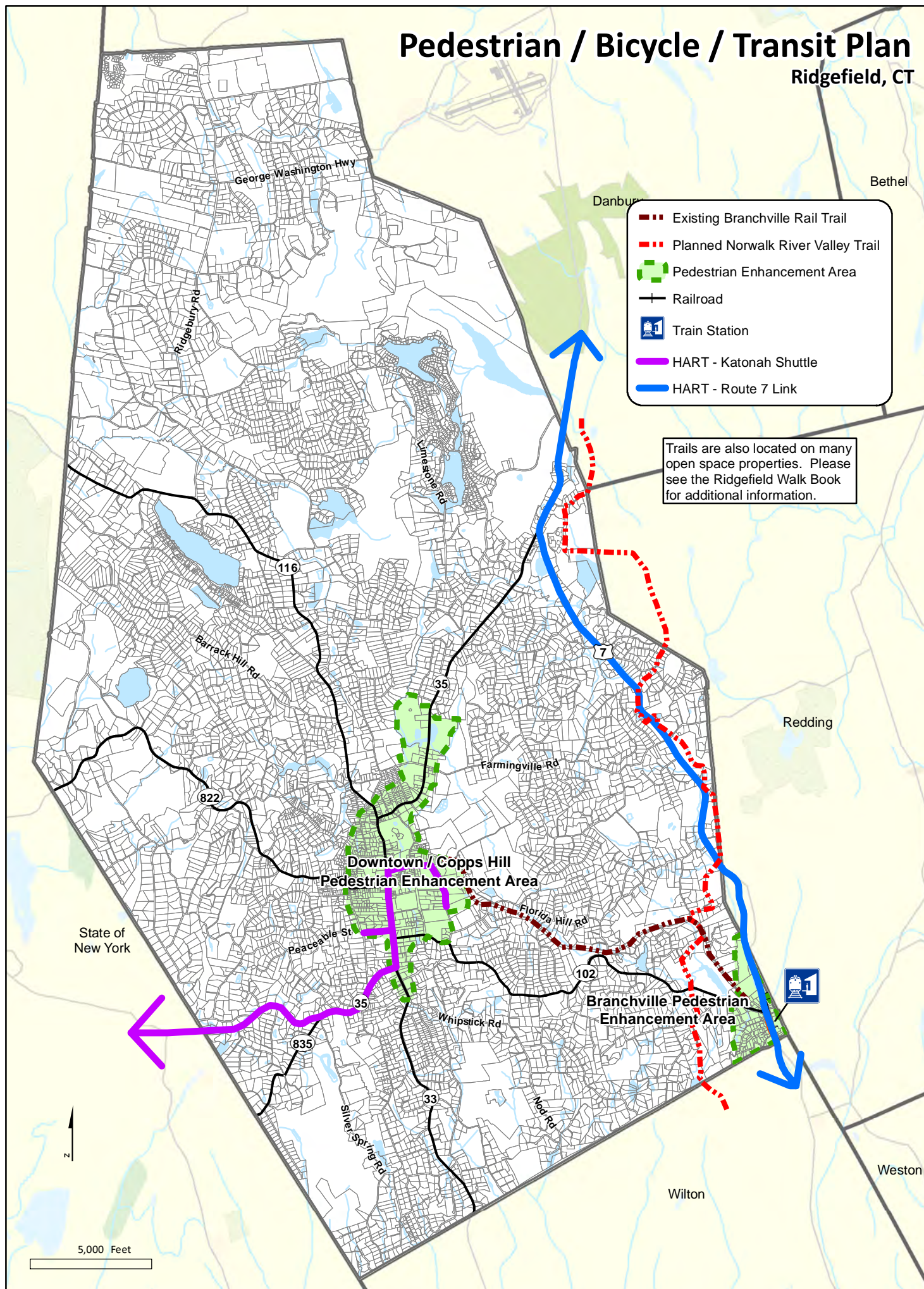
Still, Ridgefield can do more to maintain and enhance overall accessibility in the community for pedestrians and for mobility-impaired people:

- Maintain and enhance the sidewalk network in the Center (including crosswalks).
- Seek ways to improve the sidewalk network from the Center to Copps Hill (and even beyond to the Recreation Center / Senior Center).
- Seek to enhance and expand the sidewalk network in Branchville.
- Make sidewalk / crosswalk improvements to improve accessibility for mobility-impaired people (and for an aging population in general).

In outlying areas where sidewalks may not yet be practical, pedestrian trails provide opportunities to walk. Connecting destinations such as schools, recreational amenities and commercial areas with pathways should be encouraged.

The Norwalk River Valley Trail (a proposed 33-mile greenway trail system connecting Danbury to Long Island Sound in Norwalk) is an excellent example of efforts to create greenway trails which enhance the community and the region. With stages having been built in Norwalk and Wilton, attention is now turning to Ridgefield and the first segment (referred to as “Ridgefield Ramble”) will be located on the east side of Route 7 and extend from Simpaug Turnpike to Fire Hill Road. Ridgefield should continue to support the efforts to establish the entire Norwalk River Valley Trail system.

Ridgefield, CT





Sustainability Actions

In terms of accessibility, walking, cycling, and transit, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Increasing walking, bicycling, public transportation, and other mobility options, especially for low-income households, elders, and others.
- Encouraging pedestrian and bicycle use and removing or minimizing impediments (such as high-speed traffic).
- Providing access to affordable, efficient transportation alternatives (such as transit) for multiple populations,



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield should create more bike lanes on existing roads.

Strongly agree	24%
Agree	36%
Don't Know	6%
Disagree	24%
Strongly disagree	10%

Consider A “Complete Streets” Policy

The term “complete streets” refers to a new way of thinking about enhancing the overall transportation network. For years, roadways were treated as an area exclusively for vehicles. Now, communities around the country are using existing road rights-of-way to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access **for users of all ages and abilities** regardless of their mode of transportation. Regional, state and federal transportation agencies (and funding programs) have been turning their attention to “complete streets.”

Ridgefield may wish to consider adopting a “complete streets” policy. Doing so will show a commitment to improving non-vehicular transportation within the community and taking advantage of the transportation network already in place (existing roadways) to make provision for a wider variety of transportation modes than just focusing on vehicles.

Enhance Provisions For Bicycles

A number of roads in Ridgefield are not well configured for bicycle riders since they are narrow, have constricted shoulders, are steep, have speeding traffic, and/or have heavy traffic. Despite these impediments, on-road bicycle usage and interest is increasing in Ridgefield and elsewhere.

In the telephone survey, about 50 percent of residents felt that Ridgefield should create more bike lanes on existing roads. The Connecticut Department of Transportation has adopted a policy which provides for establishing lane widths of 11 feet when repaving or restriping roads. This change (from historic lane widths of 12 feet or more) has the potential to make more space available for cyclists and other roadway users and Ridgefield should actively participate in evaluating opportunities to stripe narrower lanes where appropriate.

The POCD encourages safe, convenient, comfortable, and secure bicycle-riding environments and encourages bicycle use (on-road and off-road) as an important transportation mode and recreation activity.

During the planning period, it will be beneficial if maps of on-road and off-road bicycle routes are prepared and shared. A system of route markings or difficulty (color-coded or letter-coded on street name poles or stop sign poles) could also help people be comfortable navigating through parts of Ridgefield on bicycles. With the train station in Branchville, bicycle riders could come to Ridgefield from other areas and enjoy rides and the many amenities Ridgefield has to offer.

Enhance Transit Services

Commuter Rail - The Branchville train station is located on the Metro-North Danbury Line and passenger rail service is available northwards to Danbury and southwards to Norwalk where passengers can connect to New Haven or to Stamford / New York City. Ridgefield residents also use stations (such as the Katonah station) on the Metro-North Hudson Line in New York State due to the more frequent and faster train service. The POCD recommends that Ridgefield continue to support service improvements on the Danbury Line and seek ways to improve and enhance the Branchville station.

Scheduled Bus / Shuttle Services – As part of their service within the Danbury region, Housatonic Area Regional Transit (HART) provides bus services in Ridgefield:

- Route 7 Link providing service between Danbury and Norwalk with three trips northbound and southbound in the morning and two trips north-bound and south-bound in the evening.
- Ridgefield-Katonah Shuttle (due to the more frequent trains on the Metro-North Hudson Line) with 8 trips to Katonah and four trips back in the morning and 6 trips to Katonah and 9 trips back in the evening.

Para-Transit – Ridgefield has a weekday dial-a-ride (paratransit) service offering door-to-door service for the elderly and disabled through SweetHART. In addition, there is a shuttle between the Senior Center and downtown. Usage of these programs should be monitored since there may be a need to provide more vehicles and/or service more needs (residents, workers, commuters, other age groups) as Ridgefield's population ages.

Branchville Train Station



Route 7 Link



Katonah Shuttle



SweetHART Dial-A-Ride



Transit

The changing age composition of Ridgefield may result in more older residents who will want to use dial-a-ride and other services.



Telephone Survey Results

I would use transit if better service was available.

Strongly agree	21%
Agree	36%
Don't Know	13%
Disagree	22%
Strongly disagree	9%

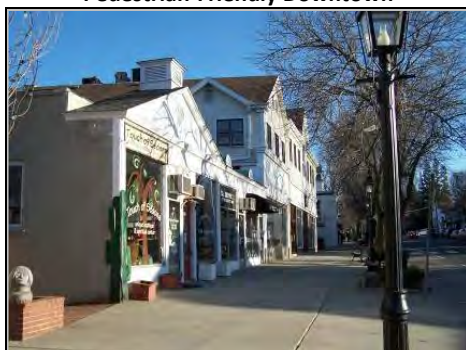
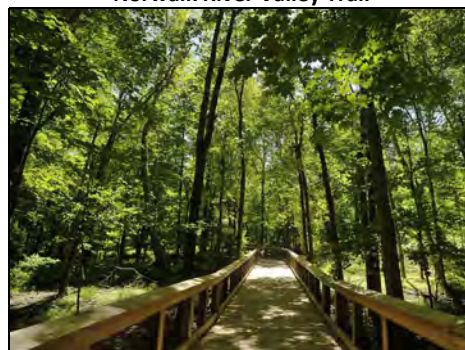
Branchville train station provides a good public transportation option for residents and workers.

Strongly agree	8%
Agree	37%
Don't Know	17%
Disagree	24%
Strongly disagree	14%

PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE & TRANSIT STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Promote Pedestrianism and Accessibility**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Maintain and enhance overall accessibility in the community for pedestrians and for mobility-impaired people (and for an aging population in general).	3.31	CFA Town
2. Continue efforts to complete the Norwalk River Valley Trail which will eventually extend from Norwalk to Danbury.	3.08	NRVT
3. Maintain and enhance the sidewalk network in the Center (including crosswalks).	2.85	Town
4. Seek ways to extend the sidewalk network from the Center to Copps Hill (and even beyond to the Recreation Center / Senior Center).	2.77	Town
5. Encourage new development and redevelopment to provide pedestrian amenities (sidewalks and/or trails).	2.62	PZC
6. Seek to enhance and expand the trail network in Ridgefield including the Branchville Rail Trail and the Norwalk River Valley Trail.	2.54	Town NRVT
7. Seek to enhance and expand the sidewalk network in Branchville.	2.38	Town
8. Promote pedestrian trails in outlying areas of Ridgefield where sidewalks may not yet be practical.	1.85	Town

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Consider adopting a “complete streets” policy in Ridgefield.	1.85	BOS

Pedestrian-Friendly Downtown**Norwalk River Valley Trail**

2. Enhance Provisions For Bicycles

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Support accommodations and improvements which will enhance bicycle use in Ridgefield (on-road and off-road).	2.62	PD PW
2. Continue to participate in regional bicycle planning efforts and seek to implement Ridgefield recommendations (such as those from the Greater Danbury Regional Bike Plan and successor documents prepared by WestCOG).	2.23	Town
3. Encourage new development and redevelopment to provide bicycle amenities.	2.08	PZC
4. Seek to enhance bicycle connections from the Branchville train station to other parts of Ridgefield.	1.77	Town
5. Continue to educate cyclists and motorists about appropriate road use and etiquette.	1.69	PD

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Investigate ways to create a system of signs and/or pavement markings to identify appropriate on-road (and off-road) bicycle routes in Ridgefield.	2.38	PD
2. Prepare and share maps of on-road and off-road bicycle routes in Ridgefield.	2.08	PRC

3. Enhance Transit Services

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to support rail service improvements on the Danbury Line and seek ways to improve and enhance the Branchville station (including parking).	3.38	Town DOT
2. Continue to support fixed route bus services in Ridgefield (Route 7 Link and the Kato-nah Shuttle).	3.00	Town DOT
3. Continue to support the SweetHART "dial-a-ride" program and continue to monitor ridership since there may be a need to increase service as Ridgefield's population ages.	3.00	Town COA
4. Support the construction of bus shelters, bike racks, and benches at fixed route transit stops.	1.92	Town

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Investigate the possibility of providing public or private shuttle / trolley service(s) within Ridgefield for people of all ages.	-	Town

16

INFRASTRUCTURE THEME

ADDRESS

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Seek to ensure that adequate utility services are available to meet community needs

Overview

In the POCD, utility infrastructure refers to utility services such as:

- Piped utilities (sewer, water, storm drainage, and natural gas),
- Wired utilities (electric, telephone, and cable), and
- Wireless services (communications).

Since utilities can influence growth patterns, it is Ridgefield's intent that:

- The availability and/or capacity of utility infrastructure should serve the needs of the community and the desired community structure.
- Utility infrastructure should not, by itself, dictate community structure or density patterns.

Address Piped Utility Services

Public Water

Public water service in Ridgefield is provided primarily by the Aquarion Water Company (a division of Eversource) which, over the past decade or so, has acquired several smaller water companies in Ridgefield. Aquarion has exclusive rights to provide water in areas in Ridgefield not currently served if there is a need or desire to expand water service to new areas of town.


The water system is expected to be adequate during the planning period in terms of water quantity and water quality. Available information indicates that the Aquarion system has adequate water supply from its well-fields in Ridgefield (and from inter-connections to adjacent water systems) to meet community needs through 2030 and beyond.



Water Service Area

Ridgefield, CT

Bethel

 Water Service Area

Danbury

Redding

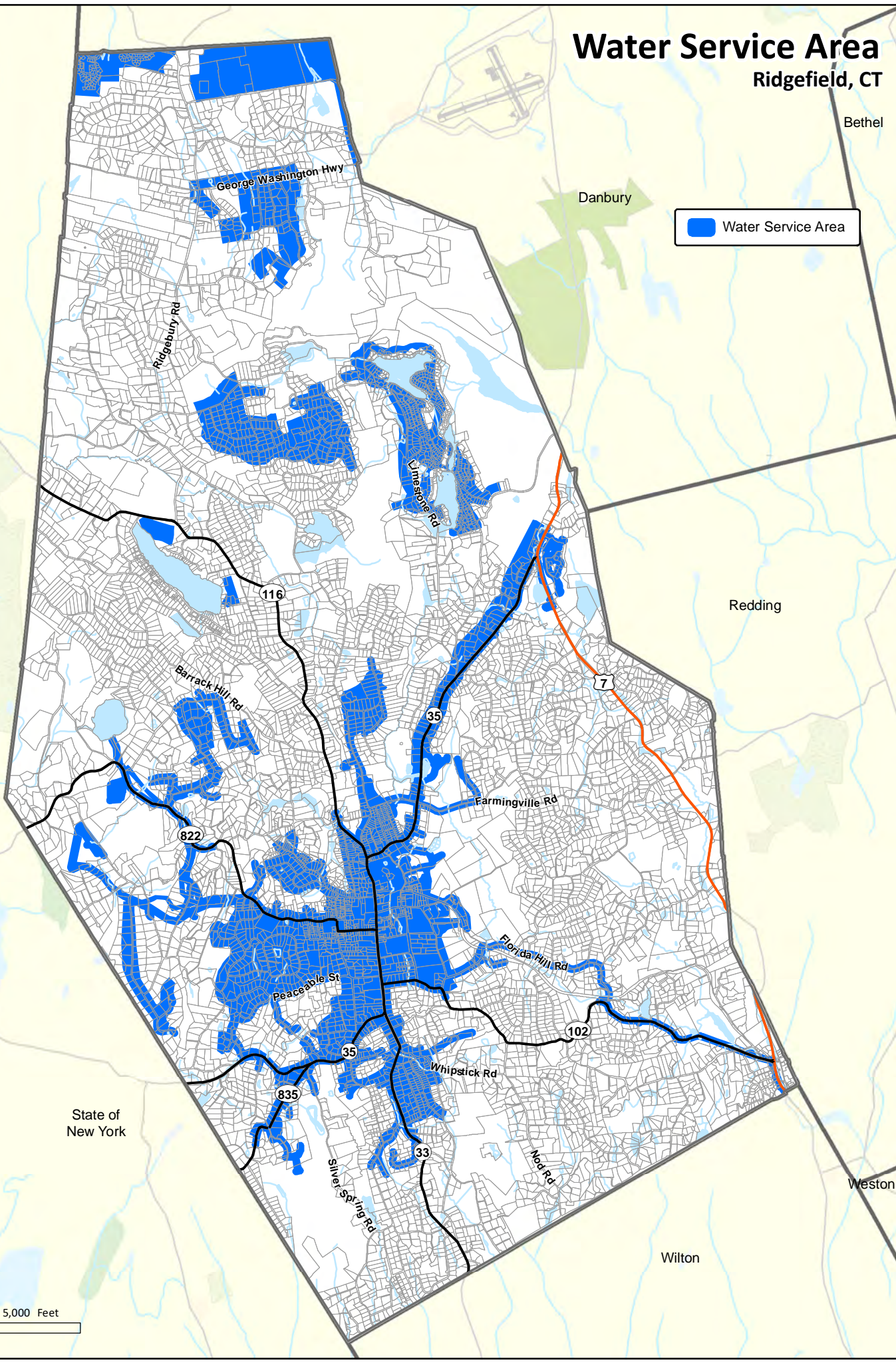
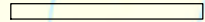
Weston

Wilton

State of
New York



5,000 Feet





Sustainability Actions

In terms of accessibility, walking, cycling, and transit, this chapter of the Ridgefield POCD supports:

- Infrastructure facilities that employ renewable energy sources, or reduce fossil fuel use for operations and transport needs.
- Treatment facilities that remove or destroy pathogens without creating chemically contaminated by-products.
- Design approaches and regulatory systems that focus on pollution prevention, re-use and recycling.
- Innovative treatment for sewage and effluent while minimizing or eliminating the use of chemicals.
- Composting and gray-water reuse systems.
- Cleaning, conserving, and reusing wastewater at the site level, preserving limited sewage capacity for those areas that need it.

Public Sewer

Sewer service is available in several key areas of Ridgefield:

- Service area #1 in Ridgefield Center (where an upgrade to the wastewater treatment system is being pursued).
- Service area #2 in the Route 7/35 area (which is in the process of being connected to the treatment facility in service area #1).
- Service area #3 in the far northern section of Ridgefield (where effluent is treated in Danbury through an inter-local agreement).
- Boehringer Ingelheim is connected directly to the Danbury sewer system (and is not shown as a “sewer service area” in Ridgefield).

In addition to the above, there are several special situations of note:

- Ridgefield High School and Scott’s Ridge Middle School have a private sewer connection owned and maintained by the Board of Education.
- There are two areas (Soundview and Marcardon) where sewer service (or an alternative approach to addressing failed septic systems) may be proposed in the future to address public health issues.
- Future transit-oriented development in Branchville may involve sewer service to accommodate potential growth and provision for wastewater treatment and discharge.

Sewage Treatment Plant



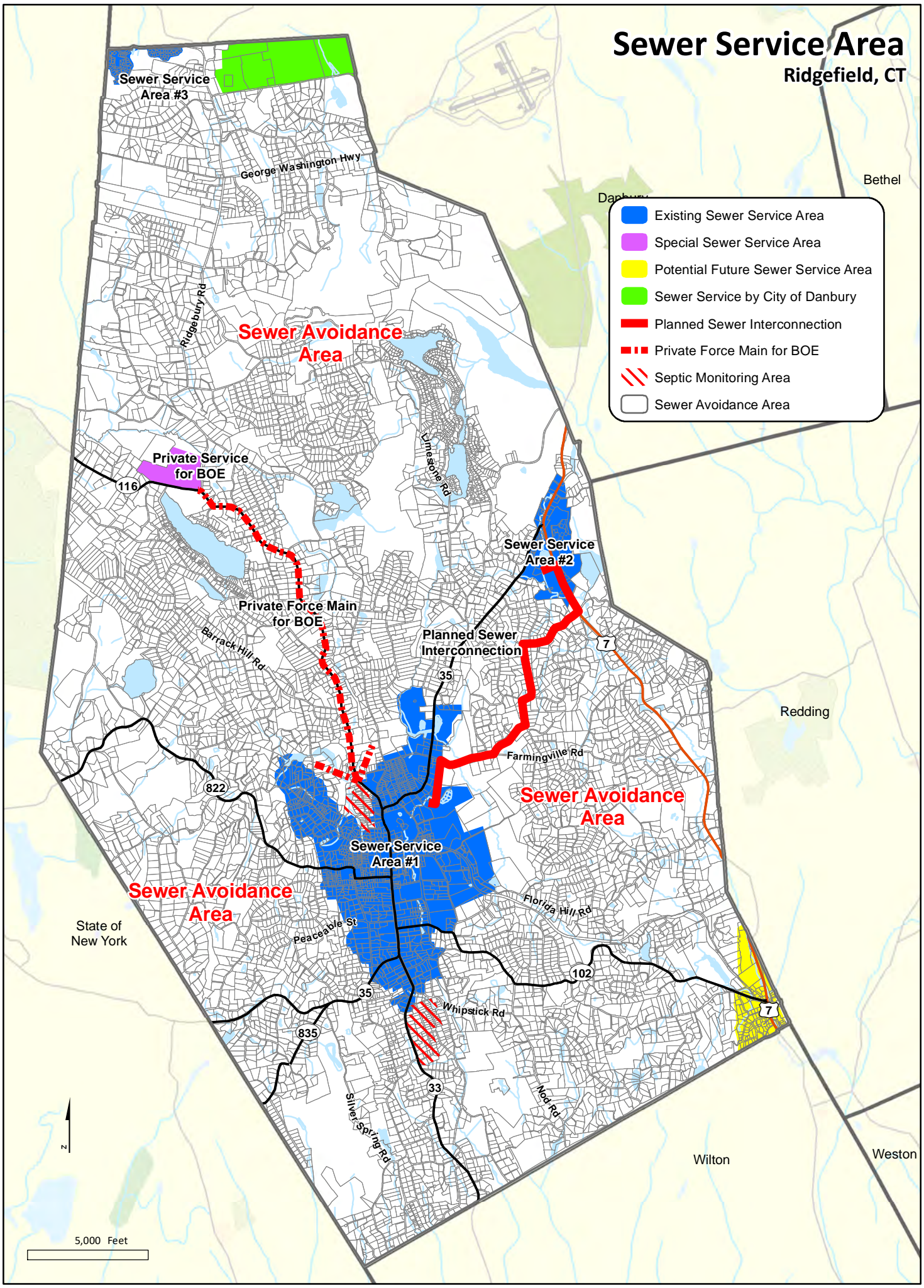
Sewage Treatment Plant



Sewer Service Area

Ridgefield, CT

- Existing Sewer Service Area
- Special Sewer Service Area
- Potential Future Sewer Service Area
- Sewer Service by City of Danbury
- Planned Sewer Interconnection
- Private Force Main for BOE
- Septic Monitoring Area
- Sewer Avoidance Area





Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield is doing a good job managing stormwater drainage.

Strongly agree	9%
Agree	48%
Don't Know	19%
Disagree	17%
Strongly disagree	7%

Storm Drainage

Storm drainage is an important infrastructure issue and is becoming more visible to residents and property owners since climate change is producing more intense storms which can overwhelm the capacity of storm drainage systems installed in years past. At the same time, there are increasing concerns about the quality of stormwater runoff and state and federal governments have established new standards (called “MS-4” regulations) for municipalities to address these issues.

A good way to address these requirements is to implement “low impact development” (LID) techniques. These techniques, also referred to as “green infrastructure”, seek to:

- Capture stormwater as close as possible to where the raindrop falls,
- Clean the stormwater as much as possible using natural means (such as vegetation), and
- Infiltrate as much rainfall as possible back into the ground.

Ridgefield has made some progress in implementing LID and these efforts will be continued. In addition, Ridgefield intends to adopt update stormwater management regulations to provide appropriate standards and requirements.

Residential Rain Garden



Parking Lot Infiltration Basin



Natural Gas

Natural gas in Ridgefield is provided by Eversource (successor to Yankee Gas):

- Along Main Street in Ridgefield Center between Catoonah Street and the Copps Hill area.
- Along Route 7 from the Danbury line to just south of the Route 35 intersection.

Within these service areas, adequate natural gas supplies are expected to be available to meet future demands. New service connections can be accommodated for those in close proximity to the existing service area (the property owner generally pays for the extension). They do not expect to expand service to areas that are not in proximity to the current service area.

Address Wired Utility Services

Electricity

Electrical generation generally occurs outside Ridgefield and is transmitted here. Solar, wind, and other localized generation is being deployed but is not widespread. Back-up generators are installed at a number of houses, but these are installed for emergency use rather than for long-term generation. Adequate electrical power is expected to be available in the future to meet the needs of local users and accommodate new technologies and uses (such as electric vehicles and electric charging stations).

Electrical distribution in Ridgefield is provided by Eversource. Over the years, Eversource (or predecessor companies) improved the reliability of its distribution service through equipment upgrades, tree trimming, and other approaches. Major storms and other events can still cause service disruptions, but periodic tree trimming and other approaches have helped reduce power outages due to storms and other events.

Most of the distribution system in Ridgefield involves overhead wires although there are some areas where the electrical wires are contained in underground conduits. As service upgrades and renovations take place in the future, power lines should be placed underground to enhance community character, especially in Ridgefield Center and Branchville.

Street Lighting

Although streetlights are not prevalent in most of Ridgefield, they can enhance public safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The conversion of existing streetlights to LED lighting is mostly complete. While the potential savings in electricity costs are significant, the “temperature” of the LED lights can have a significant impact on community character and even have negative environmental / health effects. Ridgefield will strive to ensure that new or replacement LED lighting is rated at 3000 degrees Kelvin or similar standard.

Wired Communications

Wired communication services (land-line telephone and cable communication) in Ridgefield are provided by Comcast / Xfinity and Frontier Communications. Most people are now obtaining telephone, internet, and cable television service through “bundled services” from these providers.

Residents and Town officials have expressed concerns about broadband coverage. While wired communication service is adequate to meet the *basic* needs of residents and businesses, it is a key objective of Ridgefield to promote high speed / high capacity broadband service for all parts of the community. To meet current and future communications needs, it is imperative that the fiber-optic network in Ridgefield:

- be expanded to all corners of Town, and
- be improved to provide faster data transmission and greater capacity.

As with other wired utilities, installing lines and equipment is challenging because it may require new overhead wires, digging up and reinstalling pavement, acquiring easements, and addressing aesthetic and other concerns. However, doing so will support economic development, higher property values, and overall quality-of-life. In addition, it will support current and future wireless technology and facilitate any desired “smart” services or other future applications. The Town should explore public, private, and public-private models to achieve the widespread deployment a robust fiber-optic network.”

The Town will continue to work with providers to find ways to upgrade and improve the wired communications network.

Address Wireless Utility Services

Most people are using mobile phones and other wireless devices (some people are relying exclusively on them) and the capacity of the wireless system is an important consideration. Residents and Town officials have identified the need for more robust wireless service in Ridgefield. In the telephone survey, about 67 percent of residents felt that Ridgefield needs to do more to improve cell phone coverage and wi-fi services.

Residents and town officials have expressed concerns about gaps in wireless coverage today. This is expected to become even more important with the emergence of new technologies (such as 5G wireless services and other advanced technologies).

As people increasingly rely on wireless devices for communication and data (in lieu of wired technologies), the Town should continue to work with wireless providers to fill gaps in ways that have minimal impact on character. Since wireless technology evolves quickly, the Town should periodically assess community need and work proactively with wireless carriers to ensure that wireless networks meet mutual goals.

Overall, Ridgefield intends to support the improvement of wireless coverage throughout the community using *the least visually obtrusive means possible*. This can include “stealth” technologies and a transition to newer approaches which use smaller installations (with smaller service areas per installation) on existing utility poles in high usage areas.



Communications

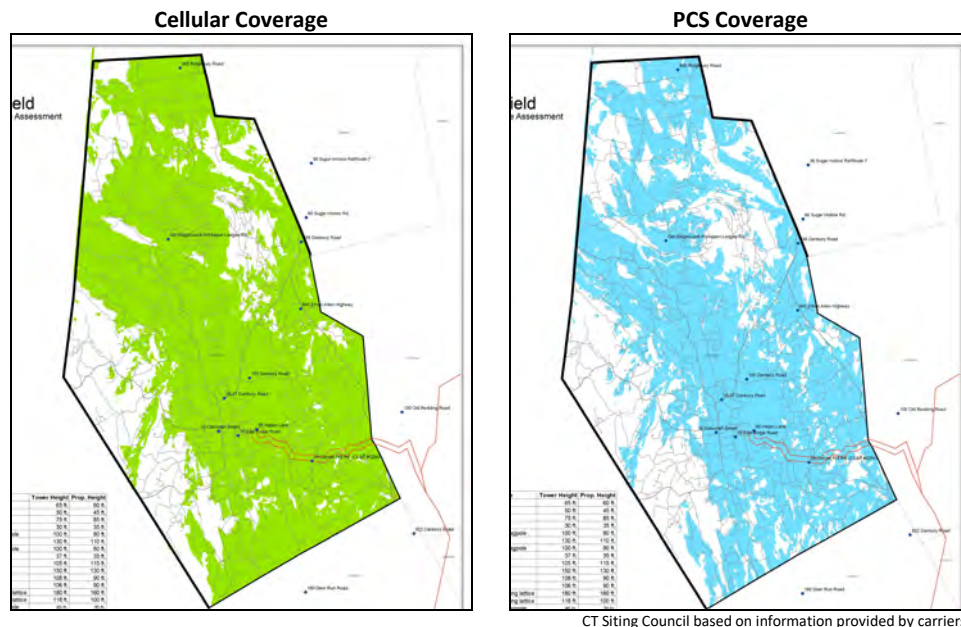
In the future, wireless services may provide ways to improve the health, safety, and welfare of older residents in addition to other benefits for the community as a whole.



Telephone Survey Results

Ridgefield needs to do more to improve cell phone coverage and wi-fi services.

Strongly agree	33%
Agree	34%
Don't Know	9%
Disagree	20%
Strongly disagree	4%



UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Use Utilities To Support Overall Structure**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Guide and manage utility availability to support desired community structure and character and implement the recommendations of the POCD.	2.62	Town

2. Address Piped Utility Services

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to address stormwater drainage issues in Ridgefield and prepare for issues which may from more frequent and more intense storm events.	3.00	TE PW
2. Maintain adequate sewer service to meet community needs within identified service areas.	2.46	WPCA
3. Encourage the provision of adequate natural gas service to meet community needs during the planning period.	2.31	ECDC
4. Continue to require the use of “low impact development” (LID) techniques.	2.15	PZC
5. Encourage the provision of adequate water service to meet community needs.	2.15	Town AWC
6. Continue to maintain sewer avoidance in areas of Ridgefield outside the existing sewer areas and the Branchville area.	1.54	WPCA PZC
7. Continue to monitor the Soundview and Marcardon areas in order to address any future public health issues.	1.77	WPCA

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Investigate options for wastewater treatment and discharge for the Branchville area (Redding, Wilton-Norwalk, etc.).	2.62	WPCA
2. Update the zoning regulations to incorporate LID standards and requirements as necessary to help address the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff.	2.15	PZC
3. Conduct a Town-wide drainage study to provide a comprehensive evaluation of drainage needs and issues within each drainage basin in Ridgefield.	2.15	TE
4. Complete the improvements to sewer service area #1.	1.92	WPCA

3. Address Wired Utility Services

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to work with Eversource to ensure adequate electric service and electrical reliability in Ridgefield.	2.69	Town
2. Promote provision of high-speed internet access (enhanced broadband capacity) in Ridgefield for the benefit of businesses and residents.	2.54	ECDC
3. Continue to require underground utilities in all new development and explore opportunities to relocate wired utilities underground where opportunities arise.	2.54	PZC
4. Continue to transition streetlights to LED streetlight technology while avoiding any negative character / environmental / health effects.	2.38	Town
5. Encourage the provision of adequate wired communication service (land line telephone, cable television, wired internet) to meet community needs.	2.31	Town
6. Work with utility companies to “balance” tree trimming with aesthetic and other concerns.	2.08	TW TC
7. Explore public, private, and public-private models to achieve the widespread deployment of a robust fiber-optic network in Ridgefield.	-	Town ECDC

4. Address Wireless Utility Services

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Continue to work with telecommunication providers and the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) and the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to provide for wireless services to fill local coverage gaps and meet local needs in the least visually intrusive manner.	2.62	Town CSC PURA
2. Periodically assess community need and work proactively with wireless carriers to ensure that wireless networks meet mutual goals.	-	Town

Overview

Implementation of POCD recommendations is the whole purpose behind the planning process. While identifying strategies, policies, and action steps is important, nothing will really change if they are not implemented.

Of course, implementation of the POCD will be a gradual and continuous process. Many of the policy recommendations in the POCD will be implemented by the Planning and Zoning Commission through zoning amendments, application reviews, and other means. Some policy recommendations will require the cooperation of other local boards and commissions such as the Board of Selectmen.

However, if the POCD is to be successfully realized, the recommendations must serve as a guide to all residents, applicants, agencies, and individuals interested in the future of Ridgefield.

Many sections of the POCD also identify specific action steps which can be itemized, scheduled, managed and completed. Action steps lend themselves to monitoring implementation and measuring progress. The POCD anticipates that over time, Ridgefield will continue to identify and undertake new action steps to help implement the POCD.

This type of process (reviewing the POCD and adding new policies and action steps) will help the POCD (and POCD strategies) be relevant over a long timeframe.

Implement The POCD

Establish A POCD Implementation Process

Having a process to implement the POCD will help ensure it is influential in guiding future actions of the town.

Some communities have found that a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) can be effective at coordinating implementation of the POCD. The most effective PICs include representatives of various Town boards and commissions. In some other communities, the Planning and Zoning Commission sets aside specific meetings to review POCD implementation.

The PIC meeting(s) should occur regularly (maybe 2-3 times per year) to review the implementation tables in the POCD and refine priorities based on local issues, funding opportunities, and/or other criteria.

Use The Implementation Tables

The chapters of the POCD contain implementation tables which contain two types of recommendations – policies and actions steps. Using these tables to guide municipal actions (leaders, partners, priority, etc.) will help implement the POCD.

Policies	<p>Policies tend to be continuing activities that may never be fully implemented. They are difficult to monitor in terms of implementation and do not lend themselves to target completion dates.</p> <p>Using POCD policies as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning and Zoning Commission will aid in Implementation of the POCD, especially with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Permit applications, and • Zone changes and text changes. <p>Implementation of the POCD can also be facilitated by encouraging the Board of Selectmen and other Town agencies to consider the POCD when making their decisions.</p>
Action Steps	<p>Action steps are activities which can be clearly defined and can be monitored in terms of implementation. Tasks (colored red in the implementation tables) also lend themselves to prioritization in terms of implementation.</p> <p>Organizing the action steps in the POCD according to the “priority score” they received might help guide the Planning and Zoning Commission (and other Town entities) as to which action steps should be undertaken first.</p>



Telephone Survey Results

Should Ridgefield explore working together regionally and/or sharing services with other communities in order to reduce costs?

Yes	38%
Maybe / Depends	26%
No	36%

Listing of “Top Ten” POCD Policies

The following represent the “top ten” policies in the POCD based on receiving the highest priority rankings:

Rank / Policy	Priority	Leader / Partners	Reference
1. Seek to maintain or enhance those characteristics which have a positive correlation to people’s perception of community character:	3.92	Town	Chapter 5 Community Character Page 46
2. Continue efforts to preserve at least 30 percent of Ridgefield as protected open space.	3.77	CC LCR DEEP	Chapter 6 Open Space Page 52
3. Continue programs and efforts to maintain and improve water quality – both surface water and groundwater.	3.46	IWB APA	Chapter 7 Natural Resources Page 62
4. Continue to support rail service improvements on the Danbury Line and seek ways to improve and enhance the Branchville station (including parking).	3.38	Town DOT	Chapter 15 Walking / Transit Page 111
5. Continue to allow mixed use buildings (with residential units) provided the residential units are not at street level or below.	3.31	PZC	Chapter 8 Ridgefield Center Page 68
6. Promote appropriate economic development in Ridgefield in order to [provide jobs, provide goods and services, enhance the tax base, etc.].	3.31	ECDC PZC	Chapter 10 Economic Development Page 77
7. Maintain and enhance overall accessibility in the community for pedestrians and for mobility-impaired people (and for an aging population in general).	3.31	CFA Town	Chapter 15 Walking / Transit Page 110
8. Encourage and support efforts to [reduce energy use and become more energy efficient, etc.].	3.23	RACE	Chapter 4 Sustainability Page 36
9. Continue to protect visually distinctive landscapes, high quality views, and other scenic features.	3.15	CC Town	Chapter 5 Community Character Page 47
10. Continue to manage land use activities in ways which will help protect public water supply sources, etc.	3.15	IWB APA	Chapter 7 Natural Resources Page 62
11. Continue efforts to protect water resources from development impacts	3.15	CC IWB	Chapter 7 Natural Resources Page 62
12. Use the POCD to guide land use decisions such as Special Permits, map changes, and text changes.	3.15	PZC	Chapter 17 Implementation Page 125

Listing of “Top Ten” POCD Action Steps

The following represent the “top ten” action steps in the POCD based on receiving the highest priority rankings:

Rank / Action Step	Priority	Leader / Partners	Reference
1. Adopt and implement new “low impact development” / “green infrastructure” provisions.	3.62	PZC	Chapter 7 Natural Resources Page 62
2. Seek ways to provide for wastewater infrastructure in Branchville:	3.23	Town WPCA	Chapter 9 Branchville Page 73
3. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance to allow time for identification, review, and preservation of significant historic resources.	3.15	BOS RHS	Chapter 5 Community Character Page 46
4. Prepare an official Affordable Housing Plan, as required under PA 17-170 (codified as CGS Section 8-30j), with compliance required by July 24, 2022).	3.15	AHC	Chapter 12 Residential Development Page 92
5. Investigate opportunities to reduce the amount of impervious coverage and/or increase the amount of pervious surfaces.	3.08	PZC Town	Chapter 7 Natural Resources Page 62
6. Review the Zoning Regulations and other municipal programs relative to energy sustainability issues.	2.69	PZC	Chapter 4 Sustainability Page 36
7. Explore ways to establish trails and other improvements (such as boardwalks) to expose people to the Great Swamp and its surrounding ecosystem.	2.69	CC LCR	Chapter 6 Open Space Page 52
8. Integrate the open space inventory into the Town’s GIS system to facilitate overall open space planning.	2.69	CC Town	Chapter 6 Open Space Page 53
9. Consider replacing the existing zoning with a new Branchville zone which [has a housing affordability component and is a village district].	2.69	PZC	Chapter 9 Branchville Page 73
10. Address the space needs of the Fire / EMS Department in an efficient and cost-effective way.	2.69	Town FD	Chapter 13 Community Facilities Page 98

Update The Zoning Regulations

The Zoning Regulations are critical in guiding new development and redevelopment in Ridgefield and so these regulations should be consistent with POCD goals and recommendations. It has been about a dozen years since the regulations were comprehensively updated and so it may be time to review and update the Zoning Regulations, as necessary.

The Subdivision Regulations should also be made consistent with POCD goals in order to implement POCD recommendations.

Implementing The POCD Through The Budget

Annual Operating Budget - The annual operating budget guides municipal spending and so it is an important indicator of municipal priorities. Incorporating POCD recommendations in the operating budget and adequately funding them will certainly help to implement POCD recommendations. Ridgefield should strive to incorporate POCD priorities into the annual operating budget and adequately fund them.

Capital Budget - Capital projects tend to be long-term investments in the future of a community. When these capital projects help accomplish recommendations in the POCD, the community benefits in a number of ways. Ridgefield should strive to consider POCD recommendations in the preparation of the capital budget and prioritization of projects.

Maintain The POCD

A POCD should be a dynamic document that is used, reevaluated, and amended as necessary. When a POCD is considered strictly a reference document rather than a working document, its effectiveness in guiding the community can diminish over time.

Ridgefield should consider keeping this POCD current and not waiting 10 years to update it. The simplest way to maintain the POCD might be to review major sections of the POCD every year by:

1. Doing an annual POCD review relative to the status and relevance of strategies, policies, and action steps,
2. Holding a workshop session to:
 - a. Summarize the “state of the plan” based on the POCD review,
 - b. Discuss potential new POCD strategies,
 - c. Get public input regarding the review and potential strategies,
3. Revising POCD sections including any changes to the maps, as appropriate, and
4. Re-adopting the POCD.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIESLegend for Leaders / Partners
on inside back cover**1. Implement The POCD**

A. POLICIES (Strategies anticipated to continue over time)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Use the POCD to guide land use decisions such as Special Permits, map changes, and text changes.	3.15	PZC
2. Implement the POCD using the implementation tables as a guide for municipal actions.	2.92	PZC Town PIC
3. Regularly review POCD strategies, policies and action steps to ensure they are relevant to community needs.	2.85	PZC PIC
4. Coordinate implementation efforts with adjacent municipalities as well as state and regional agencies.	2.38	Town WCOG
5. Use the POCD as a guide when preparing the capital budget.	1.54	FS BOS BOF
6. Use the POCD as a guide when preparing the annual operating budget.	1.62	FS BOS BOF

B. ACTION STEPS (Specific tasks intended to implement the POCD)	Priority	Leader / Partners
1. Establish a plan implementation process to prioritize, coordinate, and refine implementation of the Plan which might include a Plan Implementation Committee made up of representatives of various boards.	2.62	PZC
2. Update the Subdivision Regulations to implement strategies, policies, and action steps in the POCD.	2.62	PZC
3. Update the Zoning Regulations (and Zoning Map) to implement strategies, policies, and action steps in the POCD.	2.31	PZC
4. Create a GIS mapping framework to integrate data across municipal departments.	-	Town

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CONCLUSION

Overview

The POCD has been prepared to meet the challenges that will confront the Town of Ridgefield in the future. It is meant to serve as a working document to be followed in order to enhance the Town's quality of life, the overall economy, and community character.

The POCD is also intended to be flexible enough to allow adjustments that achieve specific goals and objectives while maintaining the integrity of the long-term goals of the community. Still, the most important step of the planning process is implementation of the POCD's strategies, policies, and action steps.

During the next few years, some of the goals will be achieved, circumstances will undoubtedly change, and conditions may arise that will suggest that it is time to reconsider some of the POCD strategies, policies, and action steps. Such situations are to be expected. Programs that help achieve community consensus, establish community goals, and promote community welfare will all turn out to be positive steps in the history of Ridgefield.

Future Land Use Plan

As the Plan is implemented, the map on the facing page illustrates the location and intensity of future land uses that are desired. Since this map illustrates the stated goals, policies, objectives, and recommendations of each of the Plan sections when combined together, it is called the Future Land Use Plan.

Conservation



Residential Development



Economic Development



Future Land Use Plan

Ridgefield, CT

Residential Use

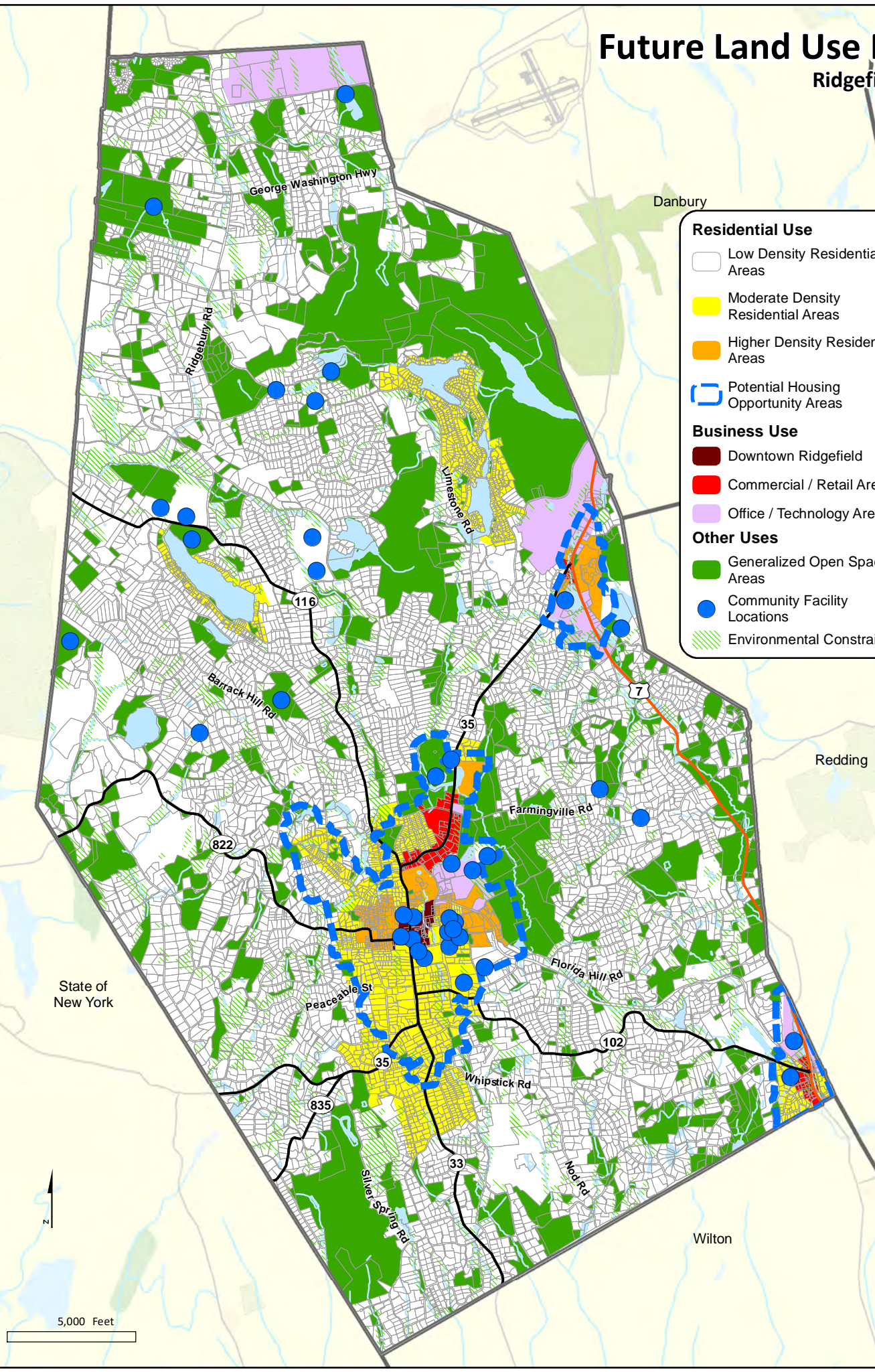
- Low Density Residential Areas
- Moderate Density Residential Areas
- Higher Density Residential Areas
- Potential Housing Opportunity Areas

Business Use

- Downtown Ridgefield
- Commercial / Retail Areas
- Office / Technology Areas

Other Uses

- Generalized Open Space Areas
- Community Facility Locations
- Environmental Constraints



State of New York



5,000 Feet

Bethel

Danbury

Redding

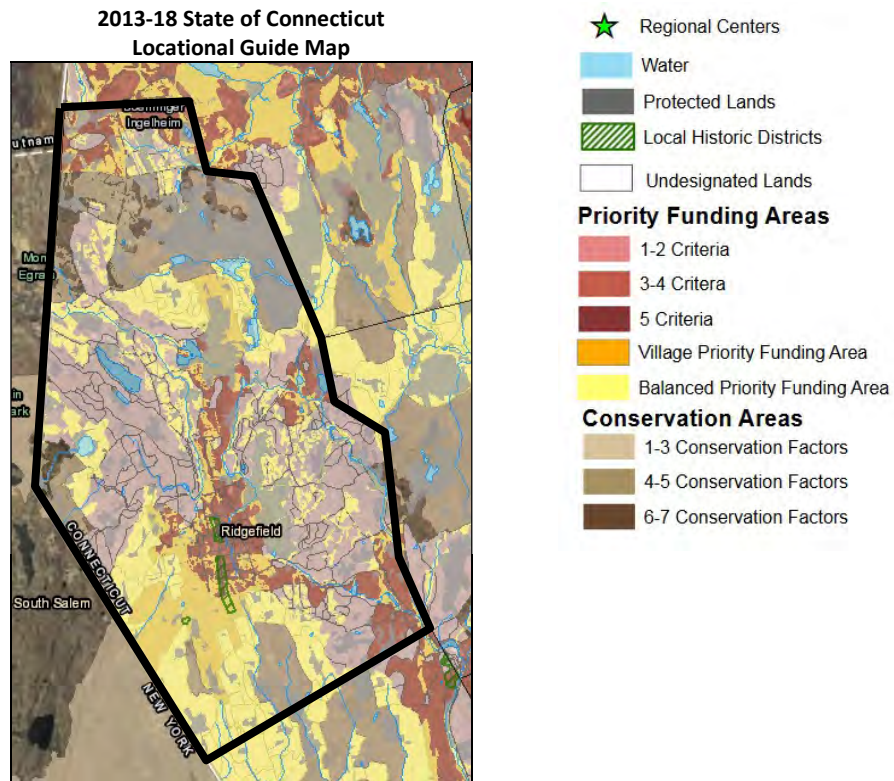
Wilton

Weston

Consistency With State / Regional Plans

In accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the POCD has been evaluated for consistency with the 2013-2018 State Conservation and Development Policies Plan (a more recent plan has not yet been adopted by the relevant legislative committee). As part of this review, the POCD was found to be generally consistent with the Locational Guide Map in that State Plan.

In the future, Ridgefield should consider requesting that Ridgefield Center and Branchville be designated as “village priority funding areas” in the State’s Conservation and Development Policies Plan.



The Regional Plan for the Western Connecticut Council of Governments was being prepared and was not available for review at the time this POCD was being prepared.

Consistency With State Growth Principles

In accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Ridgefield POCD was found to be consistent with statewide growth management principles.

Principle	Findings
1. Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.	CONSISTENT – Although Ridgefield is not a “regional center”, the POCD promotes mixed use, pedestrian-friendly development in Ridgefield Center and in Branchville.
2. Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.	CONSISTENT - The POCD promotes strategies to help provide for housing options that are more affordable and to address the housing needs of an aging population.
3. Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.	CONSISTENT - The POCD promotes mixed use, pedestrian-friendly development in Ridgefield Center and Branchville.
4. Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.	CONSISTENT - The POCD contains specific strategies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect natural resources, • Preserve open space, and • Protect historic and scenic resources.
5. Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.	CONSISTENT - The POCD contains recommendations to protect water quality (both surface and ground), preserve floodplain areas, minimize runoff, and other similar strategies.
6. Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.	CONSISTENT - The POCD has been used, and will be used, to coordinate efforts with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjacent communities, • Regional organizations, and • State agencies.

Future Steps

During the next few years, it is envisioned that action steps in the POCD will be implemented as opportunities arise and circumstances permit. Completion of action steps is the most effective way to accomplish POCD recommendations.

Over the course of time, it is also envisioned that the strategies and policies in the POCD will be applied and used to guide decision making in Ridgefield.

While circumstances will undoubtedly change, programs that help achieve community consensus, establish community goals, and promote community welfare will all turn out to be positive steps in the history of Ridgefield.

Land Use Roles and Responsibilities

Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) – The main entity involved in regulating the use of land (including the subdivision of land). Powers and authority granted by State statutes (CGS Section 8-1+ for zoning and CGS 8-18+ for planning). With the assistance of Staff, administer the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations.

Aquifer Protection Agency (APA) – Regulates activities in areas which recharge active public drinking water supply wells. In Ridgefield, the Planning and Zoning Commission is the Aquifer Protection Agency. Powers and authority granted by State statutes (CGS Section 22a-354a+).

Conservation Commission (CC) – The entity involved, among other things, in overseeing the conservation of open space and natural resources, in Ridgefield. Powers and authority granted by State statutes (CGS Section 7-131a).

Inland Wetlands Board (IWB) – Regulates activities in areas defined as wetlands or watercourses and associated upland review areas. Powers and authority granted by State statutes (CGS Section 22a-36+).

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) – A entity charged with reviewing requests from the strict application of the zoning regulations. Powers and authority granted by State statutes (CGS Section 8-5+).

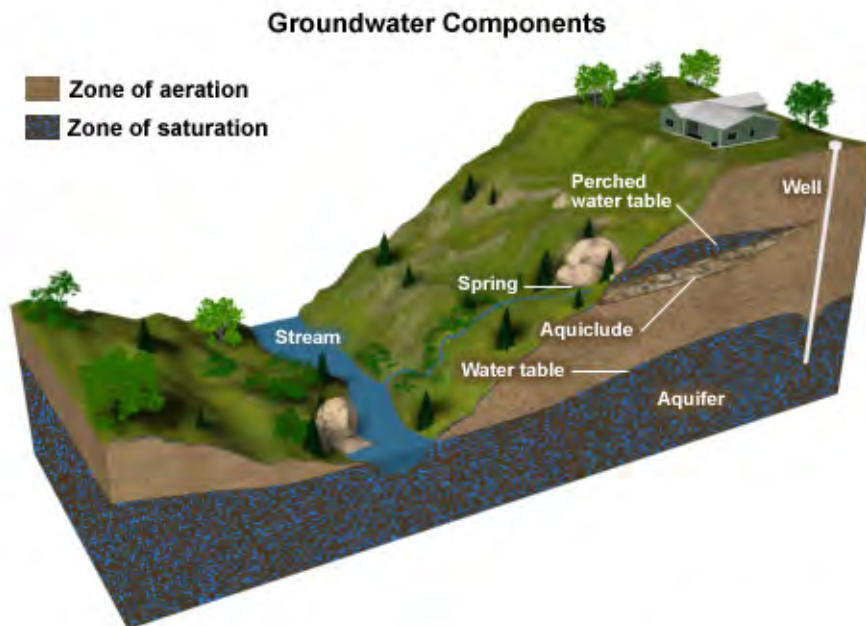
While the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and the First Selectman are key policy-makers in the Town of Ridgefield, their powers and authority (granted by State statutes, the Town Charter, and local ordinances)do not generally extend to land use matters.

GLOSSARY

Access Management - Managing access to developed land (shared driveways, curb cuts, property connections, etc.) while preserving the flow of traffic on the surrounding road system.

ADT - Average daily trips.

Aquifer - A geologic formation, group of formations, or part of a formation that contains sufficient saturated, permeable materials to yield significant quantities of water to wells and springs. (CGS Section 22a-354h[6])



Aquifer Protection Area (APA) - An area delineated by a water utility company encompassing the groundwater recharge area for an active public drinking water supply well or for well fields serving more the 1,000 people that are set in stratified drift deposits.

Arterial Road - A roadway carrying large traffic volumes specifically for mobility, with limited or restricted service to local development.

CERC - Connecticut Economic Resource Center

CGS - Connecticut General Statutes

Collector Road - A street whose function is equally divided between mobility and access, linking local streets to arterials.

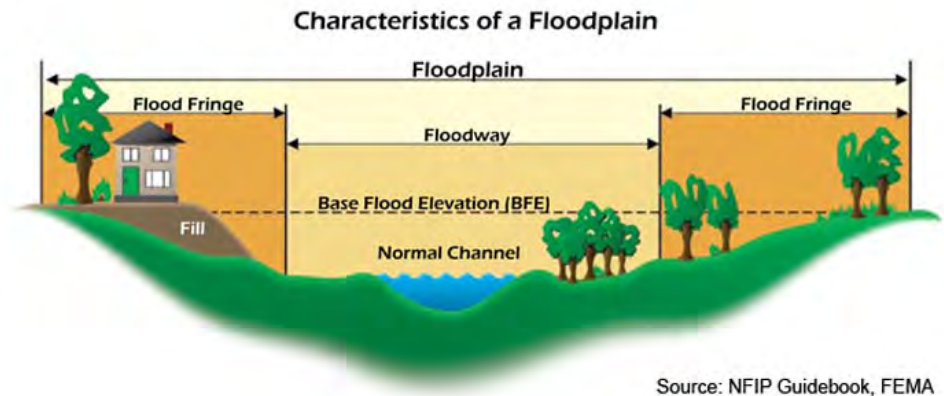
CT-DEEP - Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

CT-DOT - Connecticut Department of Transportation

FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency

Floodplain - An area land susceptible to being partially or completely inundated by water from any source.

Floodplain Zone - An area which has had a statistical probability of flooding calculated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), typically expressed as a recurrence interval (i.e. – a 100-year floodplain is an area with a 1 percent chance of being flooded in any given year).



Geographic Information System (GIS) - A combination of computer software, hardware and data used to create maps and analyze and present data.

Impervious - A surface (such as a road, driveway, parking lot, outdoor patio, or building footprint) or other barrier to infiltration of water into the ground.

Invasive Species - Non-native plant or animals that exhibit an aggressive growth habit and can out-compete and displace native species.

Local Street - A street whose primary function is to provide access to a residence, business or other abutting property.

NDDB - The Natural Diversity Database maintained by CT-DEEP.

POCD - Plan of Conservation and Development.

PZC - The Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission.

Watercourses - Rivers, streams, brooks, waterways, lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, bogs and all other bodies of water.

WestCOG - The Western Connecticut Council of Governments – the regional planning agency that includes Ridgefield.

Wetlands - Land, including submerged land, which consists of any of the soil types designated as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial and flood plain by the National Cooperative Soils Survey, as it may be amended from time to time, of the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Planning and Zoning Commission

Rebecca S. Mucchetti, Chair
Joseph C. Fossi, Vice Chair (to 11/19)
Charles H. Robbins Vice Chair (from 11/19)

Susan Consentino (from 11/19)
Joe Dowdell
George A. Hanlon
Robert Hendrick (from 11/19)
John Katz
Ben Nenji (from 11/19)

Catherine J. Savoca (to 11/19)
Richard Vazzana (to 11/19)
Mark Zeck (to 11/19)

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Daniel Robinson, Asst. Planner (to 9/19)
Beth Peyser, IW Agent / Cons. Officer
Aarti Paranjape, Office Administrator

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Planimetrics

Glenn Chalder, AICP
(Overall Project Management)



Tom Dworetzky, Project Manager
(Economic Development)



Michael Fazio
(GIS Mapping)

LEADERS AND PARTNERS

Designations For Leaders And Partners In The Policies / Action Steps Tables (sorted alphabetically by acronym)

AAC	Architectural Advisory Committee	IWB	Inland Wetlands Board
AHC	Affordable Housing Committee		
APA	Aquifer Protection Agency	LCR	Land Conservancy of Ridgefield
AWC	Aquarion Water Company		
		NRVT	Norwalk River Valley Trail
BOE	Board of Education		
BOF	Board of Finance	PA	Parking Authority
BOS	Board of Selectmen	PC	Police Commission
		PD	Police Department
CC	Conservation Commission	PO	Property Owners
CFA	Commission for Accessibility	PRC	Parks and Recreation Commission
COA	Commission on Aging	PW	Public Services / Highway Department
CPD	Civil Preparedness Director	PZC	Planning and Zoning Commission
DEEP	CT Dept. of Energy / Environmental Protection	RAC	Ridgefield Arts Council
DOT	CT Department of Transportation	RACE	Ridgefield Action Committee For Environment
		RHA	Ridgefield Housing Authority
ECDC	Economic / Community Development Comm.	RHS	Ridgefield Historical Society
ESD	Emergency Services Director	RL	Ridgefield Library
ETF	Energy Task Force		
		TC	Tree Committee
FD	Fire Department		
FS	First Selectman	TE	Town Engineer
FECB	Flood and Erosion Control Board	Town	Town agencies as directed by First Selectman
		TS	Transfer Station / Recycling Center
HD	Health Department	TW	Tree Warden
HDC	Historic District Commission		
HRRA	Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority	WCOG	Western CT Council Of Governments
		WPCA	Water Pollution Control Authority

