

RTM RULES & ORDINANCES COMMITTEE

Town of Branford



Adrian Bonenberger, Dan Adelman, Susan Dahill, Ray Ingraham, Peter Black, Trish Anderson
Peter Hentschel, Chair

SCHEDULED MEETING

February 18, 2025, Branford Community Center

1. Call to Order - Roll Call **7:03pm**

All present and accounted for

2. **Rep Black moved to have minute approval added to agenda, Rep Dahill second. All in favor 7-0.**

Rep Adelman moved to approve minutes of 11/19/24 and 1/21/2025, Rep Dahill seconded, All in favor 7-0.

3. To consider, and if appropriate, consider the establishment of a Pedestrian / Bicycle Committee as requested in a letter to the RTM from Judith Miller, Branford Chair of the Shoreline Greenway Trail and as recommended in the Branford POCD adopted in 2019.

- a. Introduction of the request - Judith Miller

Mrs. Miller introduced herself and described her proposal to the R&O committee; her hope of R&O creating an ordinance to create a committee that could advocate for and oversee “complete streets” and the shoreline greenway trail as recommended in Chapter 15 of the 2019 POCD.

- b. Discussion – options for establishing such a committee – Ordinance vs BOS.

Conversation about what different towns and New Haven are doing; what the rules are around “complete streets” and the data for supporting its efficacy. Discussion of the options of creating a committee through ordinance vs through action of the BOS.

- c. Determine the next steps

Rep Ingraham and Rep Dahill offered to form a group to meet with the First Selectman to discuss the two options and ask for his opinion. Rep Adelman moved and Rep Ingraham seconded formation, all in favor (7-0), the motion passed.

Rep Black moved to rerefer, Rep Ingraham seconded, all in favor (7-0), the motion passed.

Attached documents – letter from Judith Miller and Chapter 15 of the 2019 POCD

Note – It is anticipated that the consideration process will involve several future meetings of the R&O Committee.

4. To consider, and if appropriate, recommend an ordinance establishing a Branford Harbor Management Commission as requested by the First Selectman.

- a. Report from the working group established to research the issues. The working group is representatives Dan Adelman, Chris Hynes, and Peter Hentschel

Reported on the progress of answering questions such as limiting bureaucracy and defining that part of our coastal waters that belong to the territorial waters of the Town and ought to be overseen by the proposed HMC. The working group is also reviewing the draft to ensure that the proposed ordinance doesn’t conflict with existing State legislation.

Move to rerefer: Rep Black, Seconded: Rep Adelman, All in favor (7-0), the motion passes.

b. *Note – It is anticipated that the consideration process will involve several future meetings of the R&O Committee.*

5. To consider, and if appropriate, recommend the establishment of a Town Ordinance to regulate short-term rentals in Branford. This topic will be the primary focus of tonight's meeting, and interested members of the public are invited to attend.

a. Report from the working group established to research the issues. The working group is representatives Peter Black, Adrian Bonenberger, and Peter Hentschel.

Discussion of a Synopsis of the key elements of the STRR draft ordinance being developed by the working group. Each section of the Synopsis was discussed by the Committee and then approved unanimously by a straw vote to determine consensus with the progress of the ordinance.

Motion to rerefer: Rep Black, Second: Rep Adelman, All in favor: (7-0), the motion passes

Attached Document – STRR Synopsis

6. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: Rep Ingraham, Second: Rep Black, All in favor: 7-0

Respectfully Submitted
Peter Hentschel
Chair, RTM Rules & Ordinances Committee

2/11/25

Dear Moderator Amore:

I am writing to request that the RTM establish a Pedestrian/Bicycle Committee in compliance with the 2028 Plan of Conservation and Development, Section 15, page 126: Establish a broad-based advocacy committee dedicated to promoting bicycle / pedestrian use (including sidewalk ordinance, pedestrian crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, etc.)

The specific tasks of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Committee (PBC) are to:

- *Evaluate opportunities to create “complete streets” in Branford and retrofit existing situations to create “more complete streets.”
- *Prepare a pedestrian/bicycle master plan
- *Continue to require sidewalks as part of private development in appropriate areas of Branford (especially business zones)
- *Work with local bicycle groups, bicycle shops, and others to establish and nurture a system of on-road and off-road bicycle routes in Branford.
- *Create and publish a map of appropriate bicycle routes in Branford.
- *Investigate ways to create a system of signs and/or pavement markings to identify appropriate bicycle routes in Branford.
- *Seek to be officially recognized as a “bicycle-friendly” community

Shoreline Greenway Trail is confident that this compliance with the 2018 POCD would benefit Branford and move us forward in an important development area.

Thank you,

Judith Miller, Branford Chair
Shorelin Greenway Trail.

PROMOTE PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND TRANSIT FACILITIES

15

For the purposes of the POCD, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities includes:

- facilities such as sidewalks, trails, and related improvements for getting around by foot, walker, wheelchair, or similar means,
- bicycle facilities such as on-road bicycle travel, bikeways, , and related improvements, and
- rail and bus transit and associated facilities.

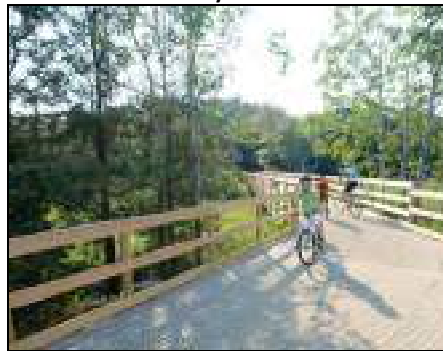
See Chapter 14 for strategies related to vehicular transportation.

With regard to pedestrians and bicycles, participants in a public meeting at the beginning of the planning process indicated that walking and biking enhance the community for almost everyone and improve the overall quality of life.

Pedestrians



Bicyclists



Bus Transit



15.1 Implement a “Complete Streets” Approach

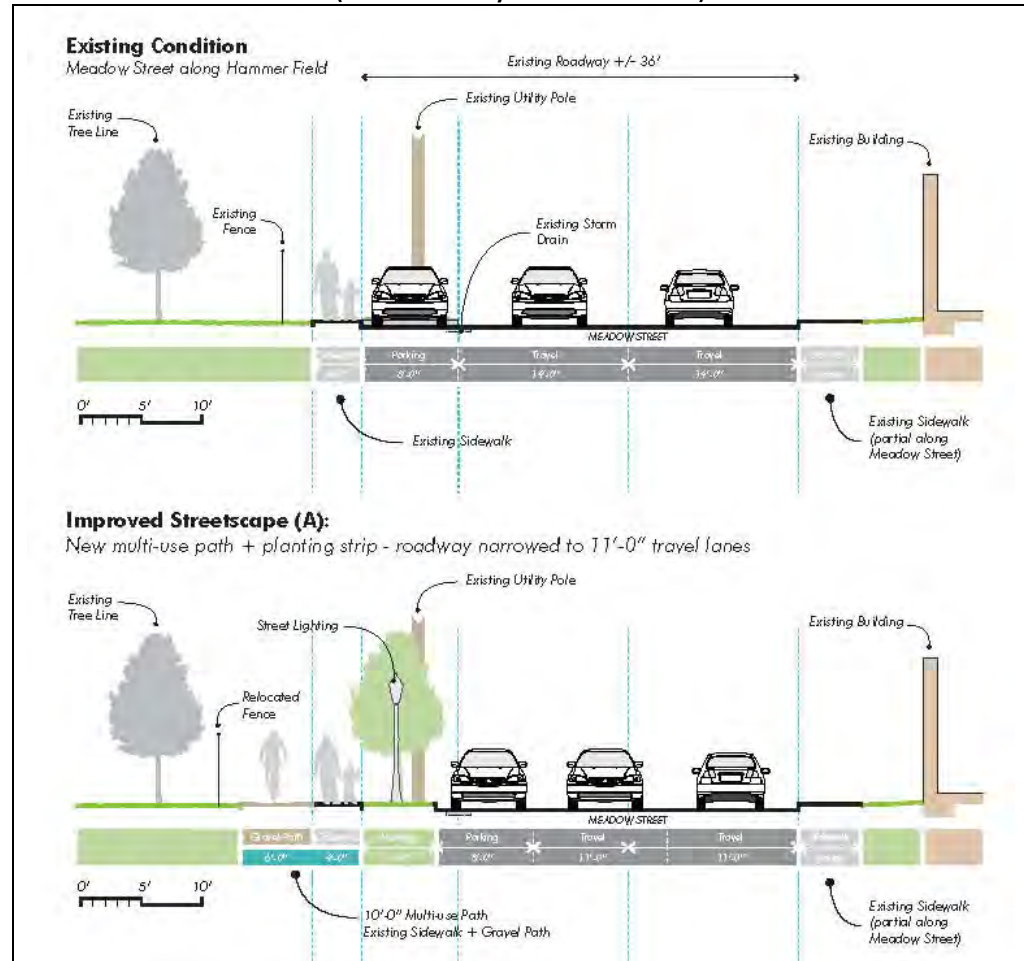
In 2014, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT-DOT) adopted an executive policy promoting “complete streets” and incorporating the following:

- Providing training on “complete streets” best practices.
- Using a “complete streets” checklist on applicable projects.
- Considering “complete streets” when state or federal funding is used.
- Amending design, construction and maintenance guidelines to reflect the routine accommodation of all users.
- Increasing flexibility for the funding of “complete streets” projects.
- Collecting data (to the extent possible) as part of traffic counts.
- Establish and annually report “complete streets” performance measures.

The phrase “complete streets” refers to an approach where streets are planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access ***for users of all ages and abilities*** regardless of their mode of transportation.

“Complete streets” seek to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and other modes in addition to the traditional focus on people driving automobiles. See the Transit-Oriented Development Study completed in 2017 for additional discussion of “complete streets.”

Complete Streets Concept
(From TOD Study of Branford Center)



To help create an overall pedestrian / bicycle / transit **system**, Branford will take advantage of the transportation network already in place (existing roadways) to establish “complete streets” where feasible and appropriate.

| | Leader | Partners |
|---|------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Evaluate opportunities to create “complete streets” in Branford and retrofit existing situations to create “more complete streets.” | PBC | PW TA |
| <i>a. Adopt a “complete streets” policy in Branford.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> RTM | |
| <i>b. Evaluate a program of establishing 10-foot travel lanes on local roadways and encouraging DOT to implement 11-foot travel lanes on State highways as a way to promote traffic calming and make space available for other users. .</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> PBC | PW TA |
| Legend on inside back cover | | |

Travel Lane Widths

The Connecticut Department of Transportation has adopted a policy to restripe roadways with eleven-foot travel lanes when opportunities arise (such as paving or line painting projects). This policy change will expand the space available for non-motorized transportation users on a number of State highways and will be almost imperceptible to the motorist (and may slow traffic speeds).

After Narrowing Lane Width





15.2 Expand Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrians

There is growing interest in “pedestrianism” in Branford and elsewhere. Branford has sidewalks in a number of locations in the community and this helps enhance pedestrian safety and improve the quality of life in the community. The Shoreline Greenway and walking trails within the open space parcels in Town provide additional pedestrian opportunities.

What should the Town be doing in terms of promoting walkable, pedestrian-friendly areas in all parts of Branford?

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Do More | 62% |
| Keep Same | 34% |
| Do Less | 2% |
| Not Sure | 1% |

The key issues associated with improving “pedestrianism” in Branford include:

- closing gaps in the current sidewalk system,
- adding sidewalks and connections in key areas,
- extending sidewalks to serve key destinations,
- replacing existing sidewalks that have deteriorated.

The map on the page 127 identifies some potential sidewalk priority areas:

- Priority 1 - Town Center and any area within ½ mile of the train station
- Priority 2 – village-type areas and business zones
- Priority 3 – areas within ¼ mile of transit routes.

What should the Town be doing in terms of connecting area together for pedestrians and bicycles?

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Do More | 66% |
| Keep Same | 27% |
| Do Less | 2% |
| Not Sure | 5% |

Shoreline Area (Shoulder)



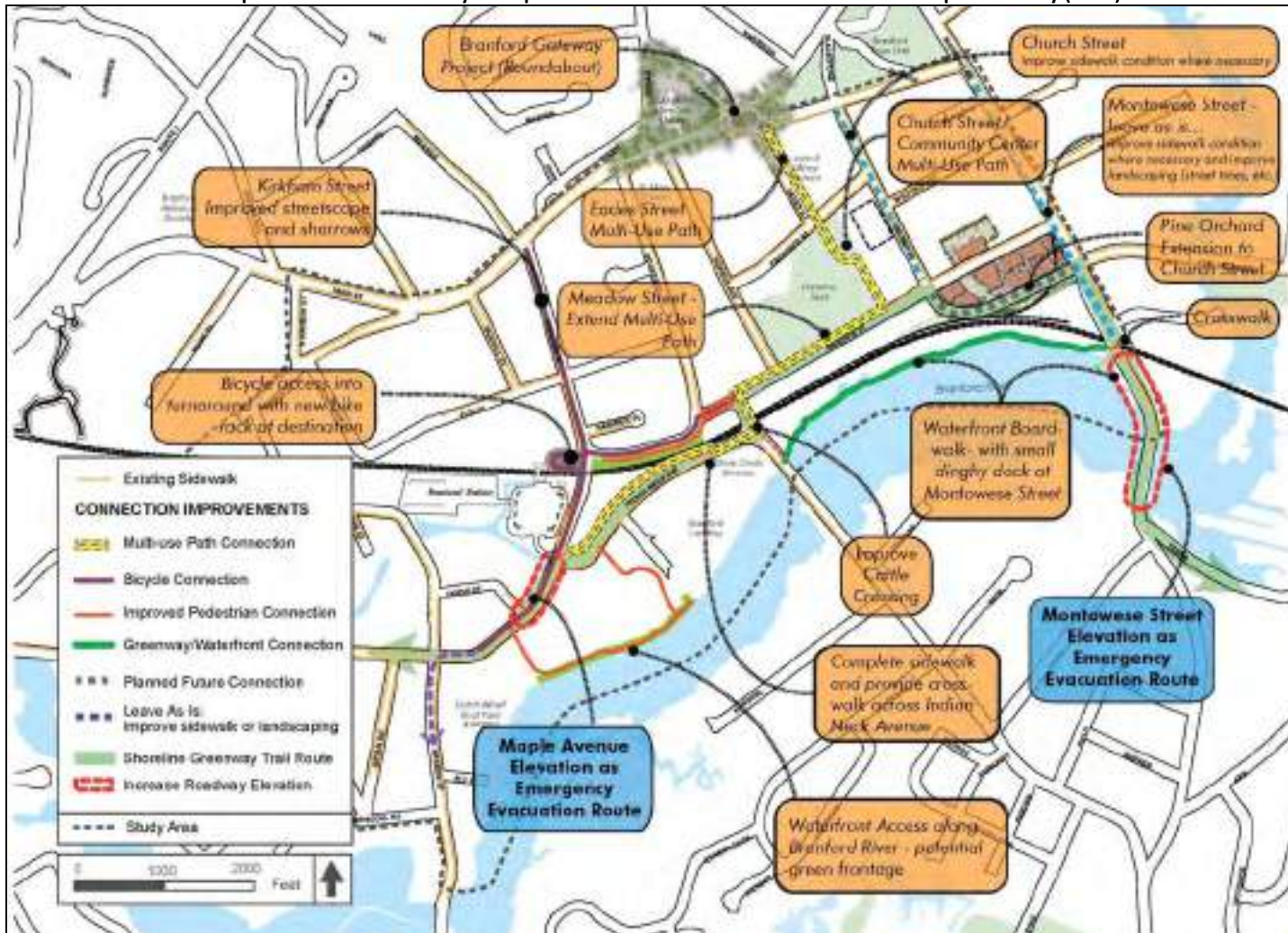
Where The Sidewalk Ends



Potential Conflicts



Conceptual Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements From The Transit-Oriented Development Study (2017)



BFJ Planning



Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Having a safe, walkable and bikeable community enhances the quality of life for Branford residents.

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 55% |
| Agree | 37% |
| Not Sure | 2% |
| Disagree | 4% |
| Strongly Disagree | 2% |

Bicyclists

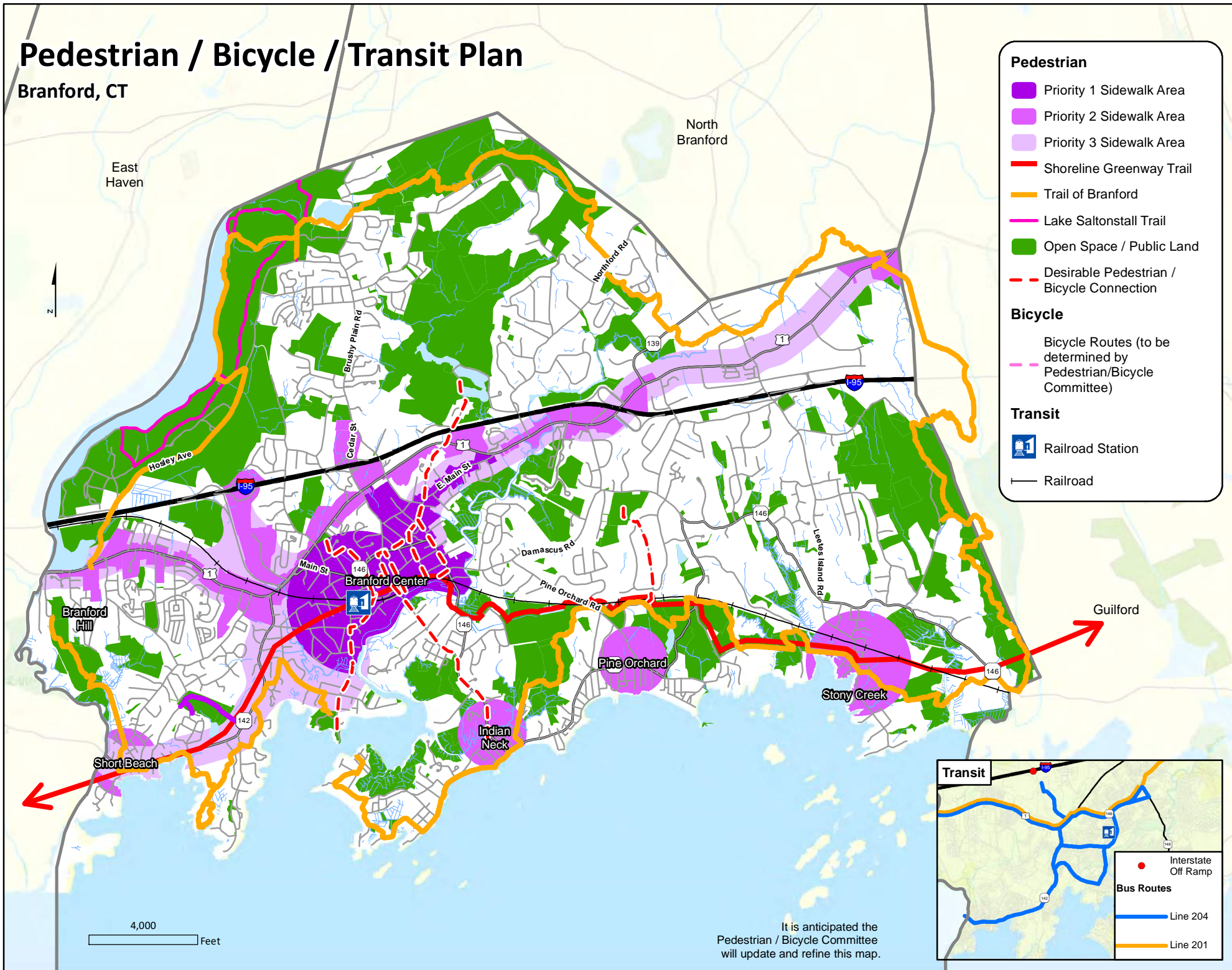
There is also growing interest in bicycle usage and Branford is well situated to be able to take advantage of this trend. If Branford were to make provisions for bicycles to interconnect the Town Center with shoreline villages and outlying neighborhoods (along existing roads, a harbor area esplanade / boardwalk and the Shoreline Greenway Trail), it would enhance community character and appeal and be an attraction for people from other areas to come and visit Branford.

Branford does have some challenges in terms of establishing a bicycle system due to the narrow width of some roadways and the need to educate motorists that cyclists are also entitled to use the roadway pavement. Addressing and these issues could go a long way to promoting more bicycle usage in Branford.

| A. Pedestrian System | | Leader | Partners |
|---|--------------------------|--------|------------|
| 1. Establish a broad-based advocacy committee dedicated to promoting bicycle / pedestrian use (including sidewalk ordinance, pedestrian crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | RTM | PZC BOS |
| <i>a. Prepare a pedestrian / bicycle master plan.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | PBC | TA |
| <i>b. Undertake campaigns to educate walkers, cyclists, and motorists about appropriate road use and etiquette.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | PBC | TA |
| 2. Continue to require sidewalks as part of private development in appropriate areas of Branford (especially in business zones). | | PZC | |
| B. Bicycle System | | Leader | Partners |
| 1. Work with local bicycle groups, bicycle shops, and others to establish and nurture a system of on-road and off-road bicycle routes in Branford. | | PBC | TA PW |
| <i>a. Create and publish a map of appropriate bicycle routes in Branford.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | PBC | TA |
| <i>b. Investigate ways to create a system of signs and/or pavement markings to identify appropriate bicycle routes in Branford.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | PBC | TA PW |
| 2. Seek to be officially recognized as a “bicycle-friendly” community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | PBC | |
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Pedestrian / Bicycle / Transit Plan

Branford, CT



Pedestrian

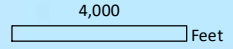
- Priority 1 Sidewalk Area
- Priority 2 Sidewalk Area
- Priority 3 Sidewalk Area
- Shoreline Greenway Trail
- Trail of Branford
- Lake Saltonstall Trail
- Open Space / Public Land
- Desirable Pedestrian / Bicycle Connection

Bicycle

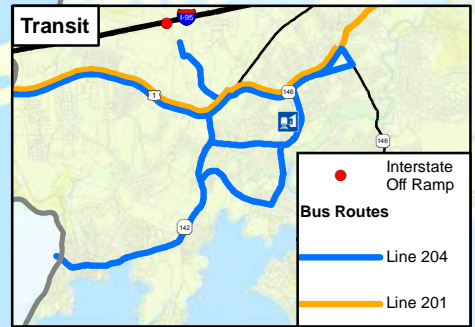
- Bicycle Routes (to be determined by Pedestrian/Bicycle Committee)

Transit

- Railroad Station
- Railroad



It is anticipated the Pedestrian / Bicycle Committee will update and refine this map.





15.3 Enhance Transit Services

What should the Town be doing in terms of having transit services for residents and businesses?

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Do More | 48% |
| Keep Same | 42% |
| Do Less | 4% |
| Not Sure | 7% |

Rail Transit - Passenger rail service from Branford to New Haven (and on to New York) or to New London is available on the Shoreline East railroad service operated by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The availability of this service is a significant asset to Branford and is expected to become more valuable over time. Branford should continue to support this rail service.

Bus Transit - Branford is served by two bus routes as part of the New Haven Transit District. Branford contracts with the Greater New Haven Transit District for a “dial-a-ride” service for eligible persons and trips. In addition, the Senior Center operates medical transport vehicles and paratransit buses. Branford intends to support these transit services.

| | Leader | Partners |
|---|--------|---------------|
| 1. Continue to support maintenance and enhancement of the Shoreline East rail service. | Town | SCRCOG DOT |
| 2. Continue to support fixed route bus services, paratransit services, and dial-a-ride services in Branford. | Town | SCRCOG DOT |
| 3. Support efforts to further improve scheduling between bus and rail transit at the Branford train station to promote coordinate use of both transit services. <input type="checkbox"/> | Staff | CTDOT |
| 4. Investigate the potential to operate a shuttle, especially in the summertime, connecting Branford Center with the Harbor area, the train station, and other destinations within Branford. <input type="checkbox"/> | Town | EDC |
| Legend on inside back cover | | |

Train Station



Senior Transport



Dial-A-Ride



SYNOPSIS – STRR ORDINANCE KEY POINTS – 2/17/25

1. Definition of a **Short-term Residential Rental (STRR)**
 - a rental for rental periods of less than **30 consecutive days**
 - and for more than a total of **30 aggregate days** during any calendar year.
2. Definition of a **Short-term Residential Rental (STRR) Seasonal Cottage**
 - Rental periods must be for 1-week or greater
 - Limited to the months of April, May, June, July, August, September, October
 - Total number of weeks rented per calendar year not to exceed 8 weeks
3. All STRRs must be Hosted
 - The host must be the owner or an immediate family member
 - The host must be able to be contacted 24/7
 - The host must reside in the rental property or reside within a 10-mile radius
 - (for Seasonal Cottages, the Host can be an agent of the owner)
4. Limit to the number of Registered Guests and Bedrooms
 - Limited to 6 persons total
 - Children under 2 not counted against the total
 - No more than 3 bedrooms
 - No more than 2 people in any bedroom
5. Every STRR must be Permitted through a yearly Registration Process
 - A form with the key information must be filed
 - A fee of \$200 per year (\$100 for Seasonal Cottages)
 - Permits are revokable if there are offenses due to prohibited activities
6. Every STRR must have:
 - Basic life safety features – smoke / CO2 detectors, fire extinguishers, path of egress, proper windows and doors, sleeping accommodations per code
 - Adequate off-street parking – figured at 1 car per 2 quests plus 2 owner-cars, no more than 2 cars of which can be on-street in areas with adequate on-street parking (Seasonal Cottages on the islands are exempted.)
 - Adequate septic systems if on septic
7. Required conduct and prohibited activities:
 - The Host is responsible for the proper conduct of all Registered Guests
 - Guests must comply with all applicable laws and regulations
 - No un-hosted STRRs
 - No Noise including outside amplified music and/or loudspeakers, which can be heard beyond the premises' boundaries, and capable of disturbing the neighbors and other persons off-site.
 - No Events of any kind, whether or not for consideration.
 - No Invited Guests (non-registered) on the premises
 - No use for illegal activities
 - No use for filming of pornographic activities.
 - No rental of tents, recreational vehicles, boats, sheds, garages, campers etc.
 - No meals shall be prepared by the host, and no catering may be provided.