Grant Proposal

Branchville-Georgetown
Transit Oriented Development Village

Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill Site

Branchville Mobility Hub

Preliminary Branchville Concept Plan

A Joint Proposal by the Towns of Ridgefield and Redding
in cooperation with the Houstatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials

August 4, 2011

Prepared by: Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.
GRANT PROPOSAL
BRANCHVILLE-GEORGETOWN TOD VILLAGE
(Joint Proposal by the Towns of Ridgefield and Redding)

1 INTRODUCTION

The Towns of Redding and Ridgefield are pleased to submit a joint response to the Connecticut Department of Transportation’s (CTDOD) and Office of Policy and Management’s (OPM) Request for Applications (RFA) for the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Program. Their commitment to this process is reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) and Certified of Resolutions attached to this proposal.

Building upon recently completed planning studies, it is the desire of the Towns to create a cohesive, suburban, transit-oriented village environment anchored by the existing Branchville rail station and the programmed Georgetown rail station that would promote economic development, a diversity of housing near transit stations, and livability within the Towns and the immediately surrounding areas. The Branchville-Georgetown TOD Village (BGTOD) encompasses the Route 7 Corridor between Route 102 in Branchville and Route 107 in Redding (see Site Map at the end of this narrative).

By coming together to submit a joint application for funding, the Towns recognize the regional importance of developing smaller-scale, transit-supportive development at and adjacent to the Branchville and Georgetown Stations, as well as the importance of making regional connections along Route 7 (specifically between Branchville, Georgetown and Wilton) to allow for increased connectivity between stations on the Danbury Branch Line and points of interest and destinations within the Route 7 corridor.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Towns of Ridgefield and Redding plan to develop a regionally-focused TOD framework that identifies opportunities to physically link the communities along Route 7 through transit. This framework will build upon the outcomes of recently-completed conceptual and planning studies and will present specific implementation strategies that will enable the Towns to move forward with the BGTOD village. To further develop the regional TOD framework, the goals and objectives of the grant award are to:

GOAL #1: Strengthen the cohesiveness, sense-of-place, and sustainability of the BGTOD village in terms of mix and character of development.

Objectives:
- Encourage policies and public investments which allow a mix of uses and housing types so that residents and visitors can live, work, and play without having to drive.
- Develop and implement consistent access management standards or plans appropriate to Route 7 and land use throughout the BGTOD.
- Promote compatible development consistent with historic village centers by avoiding “strip center” developments.
- Cooperatively develop zoning or a BGTOD overlay zone that is compatible across town lines.

GOAL #2: Strengthen multi-modal connections between Branchville, Georgetown, Wilton and their surrounding areas, as well as the greater Route 7 Corridor.

Objectives:
- Explore shared parking concepts that will serve commuters as well as patrons of the BGTOD commercial district.
- Promote alternatives modes of transportation by investing in infrastructure for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities.
• Encourage developers to include provisions for multiple forms of transportation such as sidewalk connections, bicycle racks, etc.
• Encourage transportation improvements that support infill development, clustering of land uses, and traditional community development.

GOAL #3: Guide development within the BGTOD in a context-sensitive manner such that it integrates well into the historic landscape and character of Redding and Ridgefield.

Objectives:
• Explore the use of the "Transect" concepts of New Urbanist planning to design for decreasing densities moving away from village centers towards the semi-rural environment.
• Explore the use of contemporary zoning techniques such as form-based zoning, specialized to serve the needs of a historic village centers.
• Encourage the development of transportation improvements that support a village center environment including wide sidewalks, especially linking to public places or parks.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL SUPPORTING ACTIONS
The following recently-completed or on-going plans, studies, and projects support, promote and complement the creation of the BGTOD:

Table 1: Local and Regional Supporting Actions with Funding Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Funding Source(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWRPA/HVCEO Route 7 Land Use Study</td>
<td>80% Federal; 20% State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route 7 Driveway Management Plans for Danbury, Redding and Ridgefield</td>
<td>Federal and State funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert &amp; Bennett Wire Mill Property</td>
<td>EPA Brownfields Grant; CT-DECD Brownfields Grant; USDA Loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown Railroad Station and Local Rail Improvements</td>
<td>Rail Station: Funding commitment from CT-DOT Relocated Grade Crossing: Metro North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danbury Branch Line Electrification Feasibility Study</td>
<td>Signal upgrade – Federal ARRA; EIS – combination of Federal and State funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HVCEO Regional Housing Market Assessment</td>
<td>Local dues money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Ridgefield Route 7 Task Force</td>
<td>Volunteer – planner/engineer on salary w/town; elected/appointed officials with volunteer time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Ridgefield 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development</td>
<td>Taxpayer dollars, under capital budget funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Redding 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development</td>
<td>Town of Redding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Ridgefield 2010 Economic Development Action Plan</td>
<td>Taxpayer dollars, under capital budget funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Redding Incentive Housing Zone Study</td>
<td>Planning Grant from CT-OPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Redding - Georgetown Streetscape Improvement (Completed enhancement project for Main Street/ Old Mill Rd commercial area)</td>
<td>Needs assessment/design study: HVCEO Grant Implementation grants: CT-OPM, US-ISTEA/AARA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Redding – Georgetown Traffic and Intersection Improvements</td>
<td>Implementation grant from US-FHWA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Redding 2005 recipient of the U.S. EPA’s National Award for Smart Growth Achievement Category for the Georgetown Redevelopment Project</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CONSISTENCY WITH THE STATE C&D PLAN
Based on the Locational Guide Map from the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005 – 2010, the BGTOD village are located within a Neighborhood Conservation Area, the goal of which is
to promote infill development and redevelopment in areas at least 80 percent built up and have existing water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure to support development.

The BGTOD will be a compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use village that will offer a broad range of housing choices to meet the needs of the regional workforce. Development within the BGTOD, part of which is located on a brownfield site, will be on a scale that preserves the existing character of Redding and Ridgefield, but also promotes pedestrian activity and neighborhood cohesion. For these reasons, the BGTOD is consistent with the Growth Management Principles and related polices of the State C&D Plan.

2 CURRENT CONDITIONS AND TRENDS WITHIN THE BGTOD VILLAGE

Current conditions and trends within the BGTOD village are summarized below. Information was drawn from a variety of sources including (but not limited to) local plans of development, the Route 7 Corridor Study, Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Project concept plans, Danbury Branch Line Electrification Feasibility Study, and site observations. The information presented describes conditions within the transit-supportive focus area for this project and as those conditions served to define that activity area. That is, the focus area is the area within which most of the future transit-supportive infill and redevelopment is expected to occur.

Existing and Proposed Transportation Facilities: The BGTOD area is served by a diversity of transportation options today. Facilities include Danbury Branch Line commuter rail service to the station in Branchville, state arterial Routes 7, 102 and 107, local roads, and bus service via the Norwalk-Danbury “7-LINK”. The Danbury Branch Line Electrification Feasibility Study is planning for expansion of frequency and quality of service to the rail station in Branchville and to a new, approved future rail station in Georgetown. Conceptual plans for the train station in Georgetown are acceptable to CTDOT; the designs for the future platform and parking facilities have been and will continue to be closely coordinated with CTDOT. The quality of routes for access for pedestrians and bicyclists is inconsistent. Local roads intersecting the state arterials generally have low traffic volumes, but relatively high speeds. Roadway shoulder widths in the area vary. Some local residential streets such as Portland Avenue are frequented by walkers and bicyclists. The main arterial, Route 7, however, presents a challenging walking environment due to congestion, speeds, geometry, and inadequate shoulders. There are limited stretches of sidewalk in the heart of both Branchville and Georgetown.

Parking and Access: Public parking is available at the train station in Branchville, also associated with retail businesses in the BGTOD village, and on-street to a limited extent in both Georgetown and Branchville. Existing shopping plaza lots generally have two access points each, with one directly onto Route 7. The rail station parking lot in Branchville is reserved to capacity each day. The concept plan for Branchville developed as part of the Route 7 Corridor Study identified potential new locations for parking including a public lot on a new ‘Main Street’ in Branchville that would parallel Route 7, and a 180-space garage at the corner of Route 7 and Route 102. Plans for the enhancement of the Branchville train station include some additional parking. An access management plan was recently adopted for Route 7 through the BGTOD area. The fully-approved development plans for the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Property in Georgetown include a 450-space parking garage. It should be noted, however, that there is an acute shortage of parking for existing Main Street businesses in Georgetown, and a pilot program is in place to test alternate zoning concepts designed to preserve its streetfront-style development and pedestrian-friendly environment. This will necessitate the development of strategically-located parking resources for Main Street/Old Mill Road.

Land Use/Brownfields: The BGTOD village area is characterized by a relatively concentrated mix of development in the current villages of Branchville and Georgetown. In between there is commercial development along Route 7. Just outside the village areas are clusters of single-family homes on relatively small lots (1 acre or less) just east and west of Route 7. The existing villages have some institutional uses and public spaces (such as the elementary school and ball fields in Branchville). There is a single large brownfield site in Georgetown: the former Gilbert & Bennett Wire Factory site. There is a remediation plan
with approved mixed-use TOD redevelopment plan for the site which includes 450 units of diverse housing (including 55 affordable units), more than 300,000 square feet of commercial space, a performing arts center, a health club, and a bed and breakfast. The Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill site is situated across Route 107 from the historic commercial core of Georgetown where a vibrant cluster of businesses and restaurants exist today.

Environmental resources such as steeper terrain in some areas are expected to shape new development in the BGTOD village. Thus, the majority of development opportunities will come from infill, maximizing use of underutilized parcels, and redevelopment. In the Route 7 corridor as whole (Norwalk/Danbury), there are limited opportunities for higher-density residential development or areas that could support workforce housing, such as townhouses. These opportunity sites occur primarily in existing villages, such as Branchville and Georgetown, which benefit from existing and planned rail connections. The potential total number of new residential units in the entire BGTOD village is estimated at more than 500 units.

Locations of underutilized land and buildings are dispersed in the BGTOD village area. Opportunity sites of note in Branchville include the immediate rail station vicinity, parcels north of the rail station, and the vicinity of Route 7 at Route 102. Key sites in Georgetown, in addition to the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Property, include the vicinity of Georgetown Road and Old Mill Road, areas north of Portland Avenue, and areas adjacent to Route 7 from Route 107 northward to Sunset Pass.

**TOD Potential:** An analysis of the potential for TOD conducted as part of the Route 7 Corridor Study revealed that the towns along the Route 7 corridor, including Ridgefield and Redding, want to develop transit-supportive villages, building on existing villages and hamlets, while protecting nearby rural areas and sensitive environmental resources. Typical urban or suburban TOD high densities would be out of character for the villages along the rail line. Instead, the emphasis of TOD should be on design – creating a walkable village environment that includes strong multi-modal linkages to the train stations, strategically-located parking areas, safe pedestrian access along and crossing Route 7, and design requirements encouraging village-scale redevelopment with ground-floor retail, zero setbacks, and parking at the rear of buildings.

The findings of the TOD analysis concluded that the Georgetown area possesses all of the necessary factors for sustainable TOD, except an existing train station. However, as noted above, a new station is planned to open at Georgetown as part of the redevelopment of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Site. The assessment of Branchville concluded that while there are some challenges that could hinder TOD, there are intriguing opportunities for transit-supportive development. There are limited vacant sites for new development for example, but there are opportunities for parcel assemblage, redevelopment and infill. Overall, the Branchville station area provides an opportunity to enhance the existing village. By better connecting the station to the existing uses, encouraging some higher-density workforce housing, and creating a better pedestrian environment, the station can be better integrated into the community. This will help both support and enhance the economic sustainability of the village and boost transit usage.

**Zoning:** The BGTOD is currently zoned primarily general business in Ridgefield and village residential and business commercial in Redding. The Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill site has a special zoning district adopted to facilitate the mix of uses planned there. Both communities are exploring rezoning for the area to be directly supportive of TOD and the current concept plans for Branchville and the Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill Site. Recommendations for regulatory modifications contained in the Route 7 Corridor Study and recent planning and zoning actions by both Towns have laid the foundation for these rezoning efforts.

**Economic/Market Conditions:** A recent market analysis conducted for the Route 7 Corridor Study found that Route 7 is the service corridor for the region. There is unmet demand for services and goods that patrons typically prefer to purchase locally or at their convenience, such as pharmacies and local restaurants. The biggest unmet residential market demand is for workforce housing; the overall multi-family housing market is strong. There also is unmet demand for senior housing. Rental-based senior housing is reported to have strong demand with few vacancies.

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Branchville-Georgetown TOD Village Grant Proposal
**Natural Resources:** The BGTOD sits in the Norwalk River Valley and its floodplain. As such, it has a varied terrain with some cliff sides and steep hills. Consequently, the expected area of active transit-supportive development and redevelopment as shown on the map included in this packet has somewhat of an hourglass shape. Development is expected to be concentrated in a well-defined village framed by the terrain. The Norwalk River will offer both opportunities for enhancing the character of the BGTOD and challenges for future development as described elsewhere in this grant proposal.

**Utilities:** The Branchville area currently relies on individual septic system and a limited water service area. The Georgetown area within Redding is partially served by the Georgetown sewer system and Aquarion Water Company lines.

3 **MUNICIPAL VISION**

In the future, the BGTOD village area will be a strong, well-defined, connected, and cohesive mixed-use TOD village that transitions smoothly in form, outward into the context of the surrounding community. The BGTOD village will be anchored by historic Georgetown and Branchville and will have many small-scale developments with a mix of businesses and a diversity of housing opportunities available. It will have outdoor public spaces, landscaping, and amenities that will be inviting to visitors and residents alike. The Norwalk River and Factory Pond at the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Site will be focal points for passive recreation and serve to further connect the BGTOD as a whole. Parking will be located so visitors can park once and travel easily on foot or via transit throughout the area. This will be a destination with a walkable village-like environment that values preservation of historic character and richness of context.

The train stations will be well-connected to the rest of the village physically, visually, and with complementary architectural styles such that commuters will be encouraged to shop or dine at local businesses. Housing available within walking distance of the train stations will be desirable places to live. Most new development will result from infill in the village and from reuse or redevelopment of existing sites consistent with the character of the surrounding community and landscape. Sensitive natural resources such as cliff faces and wetlands will be respected and preserved. New strip or large-scale single-use developments will be discouraged.

Routes 7, 102 and 107 will remain the main arteries for motor vehicle travel between Branchville and Georgetown. Other more minor roadways will serve to enhance the overall multimodal grid network of the village. They will be complete streets with inviting access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and buses. There will be consistent key connections among all means of travel. The transportation system will provide a balance between serving local needs for travel within the village and efficiently moving and connecting people and goods throughout the region. Traffic on Routes 7, 102 and 107 will flow at reasonable speeds as a result of measures designed to encourage drivers to slow down, to ensure safety, and to minimize any degradation of the character of the area. The village roadways will be complemented by streetscaping to help integrate them into the community sense of place. This will be accomplished through enhancements as landscaped sidewalks, aesthetic lighting, and public spaces.

4 **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL**

The Towns of Ridgefield and Redding have developed a work plan and budget for the implementation of the BGTOD village. The work plan outlined below includes a more in-depth evaluation of critical resources and potential hurdles within the BGTOD, which builds upon several conceptual level transportation and planning studies already undertaken by both Towns. The estimated budget for the work plan tasks is summarized in Table 1 below. A site map has been included at the close of this document.

**WORK PLAN AND BUDGET**

The work plan for the BGTOD would include, but not be limited to, the following tasks:
Task 1: Project Management and Administration

a. **BGTOD Village Joint Task Force:** The Towns of Ridgefield and Redding will establish a Joint Task Force (to include the necessary Town staff). Conduct working and advisory meetings with the Task Force, as needed. *(Anticipated cost: $20,000)*

b. **Outreach and Public Involvement Plan:** Work with the Task Force to create a plan BGTOD Framework, through stakeholder and public outreach meetings, as well as a strong media outreach plan. *(Anticipated cost: $20,000)*

Task 2: Existing and Future Conditions

a. **Existing Land Use Patterns and Zoning:** Evaluate existing land use patterns through field observation, existing mapping, and consultation with Ridgefield and Redding Town staff. Analyze current zoning regulations and official zoning maps for the BGTOD village specifically as they direct development. *(Anticipated cost: $10,000)*

b. **Parcel Assessment:** Identify and assess which properties in the BGTOD village would be appropriate for increased commercial, retail and residential opportunities, through an evaluation of site factors that would potentially enhance, limit or complicate the development process. *(Anticipated cost: $15,000)*

c. **Environmental Screening Evaluations:** Perform fatal-flaw evaluations for all publicly- and privately-owned parcels, as necessary, within the BGTOD village and the Norwalk River to assess development opportunities and constraints. The need for additional, more in-depth environmental studies, such as Phase 1 Environmental Assessments or floodplain analyses, will also be identified at this time. *(Anticipated cost: $25,000)*

d. **Regional Market Study:** Determine BGTOD’s competitive market region, evaluate existing retail services within that region, and identify specific kinds of retail services that could be added to improve the BGTOD’s neighborhood-serving amenities. *(Anticipated cost: $25,000)*

e. **Development of Design Guidelines:** Develop a set of design principles that establishes the BGTOD as a vibrant, cohesive, mixed-use, transit-supportive village that enhances the surrounding region’s architectural heritage. *(Anticipated cost: $10,000)*

f. **Historic Resources Inventory and Assessment:** Conduct an inventory of existing historically-significant structures and analyze the potential opportunities and constraints to transit-supportive development from these resources. *(Anticipated cost: $15,000)*

g. **Parking Inventory:** Determine the number of spaces currently available within the BGTOD village and determine whether the supply and location will meet the future demand/need of residents, employees, and visitors to the BGTOD. Strategic locations for parking will also be identified. *(Anticipated cost: $15,000)*

Task 3: Build-out Analysis

a. **Density and Massing Study:** Based on the stated Vision and Guiding Principles for the BGTOD Village, as well as the existing and future conditions analysis, develop and compare at least three retail, commercial and residential Density and Massing Alternatives. Utilize 3-D modeling, as well as illustrative drawings, to conceptualize each Density and Massing Alternative. *(Anticipated cost: $30,000)*

b. **Transit Ridership Assessment:** Based on the results of the density and massing study, determine the potential for increased ridership at each station. Take into account the increased accessibility to
transit and the interrelationship between modes to suggest a transit capture rate for the BGTOD. *(Anticipated cost: $5,000)*

c. **Infrastructure Analysis:** Assess the potential sanitary needs of the Density and Massing Alternatives, and identify potential water supply and wastewater management options (off-site sewage treatment options, on-site package plant and septic alternatives). *(Anticipated cost: $30,000)*

**Task 4: Draft BGTOD Village Framework**

a. **Preferred Development Scenario:** Based on the findings of the tasks above, work with the BGTOD Village Joint Task Force to finalize a Preferred Development Scenario for the BGTOD Village. Utilize illustrative graphics to conceptualize the Preferred Development Scenario. *(Anticipated cost: $10,000)*

b. **Integrated Mobility Plan:** Based on the Joint Task Force's Preferred Development Scenario, develop recommendations for increased transit and pedestrian connectivity within the Study Area that are in line the SWRPA/HVCEO Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study and the CTDOT ongoing Danbury Branch Electrification Feasibility Study, including new town road assessments, traffic analyses, access management, and road alignment/relocation in the BGTOD Village and rail and ridership improvements. *(Anticipated cost: $25,000)*

c. **Stormwater Management Plan:** Based on the Preferred Development Scenario and the Integrated Mobility Plan, analyze BGTOD's stormwater drainage issues, and develop a description of necessary stormwater management measures for the area, as well a strategy for implementing those measures. *(Anticipated cost: $25,000)*

d. **Zoning Recommendations:** Recommend alternatives to replace existing zoning regulations, consistent with the Preferred Development Scenario, and in support of the creation of the BGTOD Village. *(Anticipated cost: $15,000)*

e. **Implementation Tools:** Explore tools and programs that can be used to implement the BGTOD Village Framework, including (but not limited to): zoning language, management and stewardship programs, funding mechanisms, collaborative approaches. *(Anticipated cost: $10,000)*

**Task 5: Final BGTOD Village Framework**

a. Finalize the BGTOD Village Framework based on the tasks above. *(Anticipated cost: $15,000)*

**Table 1: Estimated Budget for BGTOD Work Plan Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF WORK</th>
<th>ESTIMATED COST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Project Management and Administration</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Existing and Future Conditions</td>
<td>$115,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Build-out Analysis</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Draft BGTOD Village Framework</td>
<td>$85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Final BGTOD Framework</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Total Project Cost:** $320,000

**RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING CONDITIONS AND THE FUTURE VISION**

Currently, travel along the Route 7 corridor is difficult due to growing traffic volumes. The overall reliance on automobiles and the increased congestion has had a negative impact on the character of the villages of Branchville and Georgetown. By building upon recently-completed conceptual-level planning studies, the work plan described above supports the future vision of this area. The BGTOD will be a small-scale TOD...
village that capitalizes on its proximity between two commuter rail stations, encourages a mix of uses supportive of the transit services provided in Branchville and Georgetown, and provides a mix of housing types allowing residents the opportunity to work where they live and vice versa, which is practically non-existent today.

4 TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The timeframe for completion of the proposed BGTOD Village Framework is 18 months, from the date the consultant is hired, as outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: Estimated Timeframe for Completion of Work Plan Tasks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TASKS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Task 1: Project Management and Administration</td>
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<td>Task 2: Existing and Future Conditions</td>
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<td>Task 3: Build-out Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task 4: Draft BGTOD Village Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task 5: Final BGTOD Village Framework</td>
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5 FUTURE TRANSIT RIDERSHIP AND GROWTH

The development of the BGTOD is expected to result in increased transit use by providing significantly improved access to the Danbury Branch Line, where improvements in service are also currently under design and study. Transit use is also expected to increase as a result of coordinated intermodal connections between bus and train both in Branchville and Georgetown. By locating housing and complementary services near a commuter train station, and providing safe and convenient connections for walkers to the stations, not only is a new market created, but a significantly increased transit capture rate is expected. Currently the Branchville Station attracts riders who drive to and park at the station from a distance. The evolution of the BGTOD will result in a “new type” of transit rider for these stations: one that walks to the station from nearby housing or stops in the BGTOD to visit the businesses within walking distance.

The grant award would allow for more detailed ridership estimates to be developed. However, preliminary estimates based on a potential range of new development associated with the BGTOD village, indicate that the new development, combined with higher capture rates within the BGTOD, has the potential to increase ridership by 50 percent over existing levels, 28 percent over 2030 projected levels in Branchville, and 100 percent increase in Georgetown (resulting from the opening of the new station with 50 new inbound boardings from the uses surrounding and adjacent to the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill site). Table 3 summarizes the rough estimates of potential new ridership at both stations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3: Danbury Branch Line Ridership Levels and Estimates (Inbound Boardings)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Branchville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
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</table>

*Approximate future boardings from current Danbury Branch Line Electrification Feasibility Study for Diesel and Electric options.

**New transit trips associated with Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Project (225 inbound boardings) plus new trips associated with expanded TOD Zone near Georgetown village (50 inbound boardings).
CRITICAL HURDLES TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

In order for the BGTOD to become a reality, the Towns have identified several critical hurdles that would need to be overcome. These issues are addressed in the work plan proposed for this grant. Each hurdle is also an opportunity, and the tasks that will identify solutions to these challenges while taking advantage of the opportunities they present are also listed below:

- Extension of water and sewer service/capacity of wastewater facilities—to be addressed by an *Infrastructure Analysis*.

- Limited opportunities to aggregate parcels in Ridgefield and Redding (i.e., there are many small parcels with individual owners). In Redding it is town policy to limit aggregations and to preserve existing neighborhoods; this policy is not likely to change—to be addressed by a detailed *Parcel Assessment* and *Build-out Analysis* of specific development site opportunities, and with the comprehensive concept plan for the BGTOD Village.

- Floodplains associated with the Norwalk River are located within both towns and within the BGTOD—to be addressed by the *Environmental Screening Evaluations*, plans for public spaces and open space preservation, and development of *Design Guidelines*.

- Traffic movement along Route 7—to be addressed in the *Integrated Mobility Plan*.

- Barriers to pedestrian movement and connectivity—to be addressed in the *Integrated Mobility Plan*.

- Development of active methodologies of development in combination with incentives for restoration and preservation within the existing Georgetown National Register Historic District, along with neighborhood preservation and historic preservation strategies for use throughout the BGTOD Village—to be addressed by the development of historic preservation principles within the *Design Guidelines*.

- Steep terrain at edges of BGTOD as the village is located within the Norwalk River Valley—to be addressed by the *Environmental Screening Evaluations* and plans for public spaces, open space preservation, and development of *Design Guidelines*.

- Strategic location and supply of parking to serve the BGTOD as a whole, and existing commercial centers in particular—to be addressed with a *Strategic Parking Analysis* and with the comprehensive concept plan for the BGTOD Village.

In future planning phases, it may be necessary to coordinate with several agencies to discuss the potential impacts (if any) of the BGTOD on the natural environment, as well as on the overall transportation system.

7 CONCLUSION

The Towns of Ridgefield and Redding, the HVCEO and SWRPA Regions, and many volunteers have demonstrated their commitment to enhance the BGTOD Village area for transit-supportive development. Both Redding and Ridgefield have actively engaged in progressive planning for the areas that would encompass the BGTOD Village, and are excited for the opportunity to continue that planning in and around the area's existing rail transportation infrastructure and service. A foundation of public-private collaboration has been established on the local, regional, and state level to help propel the vision for the area forward. Additional in-depth feasibility evaluations are needed to assess the full potential and constraints of the area. This grant offers a unique opportunity to take this commitment and the foundation of existing initiatives, concepts plans, and studies to the next phase, moving ultimately towards implementation. This grant money would provide much-needed funding and continued momentum that this area needs to realize its full potential as a cohesive transit-oriented village.
ATTACHMENTS
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

BETWEEN HVCEO AND

THE TOWNS OF REDDING AND RIDGEFIELD

FOR COOPERATION IN PURSUIT OF
TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

The HVCEO and the Towns of Redding and Ridgefield, in fulfillment of their joint responsibilities under the State of Connecticut Transit Oriented Development Pilot Program, do hereby agree as to the following:

1) TIME FRAME AND ADMINISTRATION

HVCEO hereby recognizes the Towns of Redding and Ridgefield as the administering entities for their joint TOD grant application and endorses the time frame for completion of proposed TOD planning activities, as shown in the application.

2) TOD WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

HVCEO has reviewed and hereby endorses the grant application, work plan, budget, and proposed work products included in the joint TOD application being submitted by the Towns of Redding and Ridgefield. Said items are hereby incorporated by reference into this MOU.

3) REGIONAL STAFF ROLE IN MUNICIPAL GRANT EXECUTION

It is mutually agreed by the signatories to this MOU that HVCEO staff shall assist in an advisory and technical capacity with Redding and Ridgefield's TOD planning activities, as described in the joint Redding and Ridgefield TOD grant application.
4) REGIONAL TOD FRAMEWORK MAP
The Towns of Redding and Ridgefield and the HVCEO agree to coordinate their TOD planning activities within the framework provided by the attached regional map of "Transit Oriented Development Zones July 2011."

5) COMMITMENT TO REGIONAL TOD POLICY FRAMEWORK
The Towns of Redding and Ridgefield commit to conducting grant related TOD planning activities in conformance with HVCEO’s Regional Plan of Conservation and Development’s Chapter 11 entitled “Transit Oriented Development” as authorized by CGS 8-35a.
(http://www hvceo.org/regionalplan_transitdevelopment php)

6) MUNICIPAL COMMITMENT TO UTILIZE CT DOT TOD RESEARCH
The Towns of Redding and Ridgefield hereby commit to conducting grant related TOD planning activities in consultation with the January 2010 CT DOT report entitled “Danbury Branch Improvement Program - Transit Oriented Development Report.”

7) MUNICIPAL COMMITMENT TO UTILIZE REGIONAL TOD RESEARCH
The Towns of Redding and Ridgefield hereby commit to conducting grant related TOD planning activities in consultation with the TOD recommendations in the June 2011 HVCEO report entitled “Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study.”

John Hodge, HVCEO Chairman and First Selectman of New Fairfield, CT

Natalie Ketcham
First Selectman of Redding, CT

Rudy Marconi
First Selectman of Ridgefield, CT

7/22/11
Date

7/23/11
Date

7/28/11
Date
11-1. INTRODUCTION

The 2005 legislative session amended state statutes to require that regional plans in Connecticut like HVCEO’s address transit oriented development (TOD). Specifically, the HVCEO regional plan must “identify areas where it is feasible and prudent to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns.”

See the 2010 CT DOT Transit Oriented Development Overview.

TOD’s can also be viewed as an implementation mechanism related to two other new requirements for regional plans, also mandated by the 2005 legislative session: These are to address pedestrian needs and promote better planning thru mixed land use.

Transit oriented development is defined by Connecticut law as a mixed use neighborhood within walking distance of a transit station. According to Public Act 07-6 of 2007:
Transit-oriented development means the development of residential, commercial and employment centers within one-half mile or walking distance of public transportation facilities, including rail and rapid transit and services that meet transit supportive standards for land uses, built environment densities and walkable environments, in order to facilitate and encourage the use of those services.

A TOD has a central area containing a rail or bus station and a mix of commercial, office and institutional uses. This center is typically surrounded by residential development that is located within easy walking distance of the transit station.

The idea of linking land development decisions to the presence of transit service is not new. During the early 1900’s, the development of many neighborhoods in Connecticut was influenced by the presence of a system of trolley lines that provided efficient transportation services for the needs of that era.

Today, the idea of transit oriented development is to link land use decisions with public transportation infrastructure, where possible, in order to accommodate new traffic demands and reduce the dependence on highway transportation.

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11-2. LOCATE DENSITY AND MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AT TRANSIT HUBS

Mixed use development surrounding rail and bus stations, at densities appropriate for the affected neighborhoods, benefits the mobility of residents as well as the economics of public transit systems. The presence of office and commercial uses within the core of a TOD can stimulate transit patronage throughout the workday, not just during morning and afternoon commuter hours, further enhancing the economic viability of public transit service.

MTA passenger rail stations in the New York Metro Area. New TOD near these stations will enhance the Connecticut and tri-state rail systems.
Residential areas with convenient pedestrian access to transit service, combined with convenient pedestrian access to job sites on the other end of transit service, are key factors for creating more demand for transit.

A New Jersey transportation study showed that "an increase in residential housing options within walking distance of a transit facility, typically a one quarter to one half mile radius, does more to increase transit ridership than any other type of development."

11-3. TOD PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND SUPPORTING MUNICIPAL REGULATIONS

Special zoning designations are needed to facilitate the implementation of transit oriented development.

A major factor to consider in writing transit oriented development planning principles and supporting regulations is the resulting scale of development. It is important that the TOD’s result in neighborhoods that are in scale with the communities located along the Danbury Branch Line: Ridgefield, Redding, Bethel, Danbury, Brookfield and New Milford.

Metro North Railroad will soon announce TOD criteria to be applied to the Beacon Rail Line in nearby New York State. It can be anticipated that Metro North will eventually recommend similar planning criteria be considered on the Danbury Branch Line, as part of its continuing efforts to increase ridership levels.

The transit oriented development goal for this Regional Plan is to reinforce, intensify and foster mixed use neighborhoods at most existing and proposed passenger rail stations and at HART’s central bus transfer station in Downtown Danbury.

New mixed use development at those locations should be designed to utilize and benefit from the presence of public transit services.

11-4. SITE EVALUATIONS FOR POTENTIAL TOD

The market support for rail TOD development within the Housatonic Valley Region is influenced by the need for many people working in Connecticut's expensive southwestern Norwalk-Stamford-Greenwich area to find more affordable housing within a reasonable commuting distance of their jobs. See the map of relative housing costs between the two areas on hvceo.org.
For decades, many of the workers employed in southwestern CT have chosen to live in the Housatonic Valley Region, where housing costs are more affordable. To illustrate, from 1990 to 2000 resident commuters from HVCEO municipalities to job sites in southwestern CT increased from 12,737 to 14,436, a continuing trend.

A key goal of the HVCEO Regional Transportation Plan is to facilitate the ease of rail commuting by HVCEO residents to southwestern CT employment sites. The development of rail oriented TOD’s, supported by Danbury Branch Line commuter service improvements, will help achieve this goal.

*Existing Danbury Branch Line stations shown in red, proposed stations in blue.*

The following is an assessment of TOD potential at each of the Region's existing, planned or potential rail passenger stations, at the HART bus central transfer station, and along HART bus routes:

**GEORGETOWN RAILROAD STATION**

*TOC UNDER CONSTRUCTION*

The HVCEO Regional Plan's Future Growth Map offers a TOD supportive "Near Central Area" designation for this innovative project, located in the Georgetown section of Redding adjacent to Wilton.

This development has received all required town, state and federal approvals and construction is in progress. This TOD is a brownfield redevelopment project that includes a new Georgetown Railroad Station on the Danbury Branch Line as authorized by Conn DOT.
Intermodal transportation hub
near proposed Georgetown Station

**BRANCHVILLE (RIDGEFIELD) RAILROAD STATION**
- **POTENTIAL TO BE DETERMINED**
The HVCEO Regional Plan's Future Growth Map offers a TOD supportive "Near Central Area" designation for the Branchville Railroad Station vicinity in the Town of Ridgefield.

In 2002, the Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission prepared the Branchville Village Plan that included a goal to "Preserve the train station as part of Branchville," and to "support enhancement of the Branchville railroad station as a multi-modal transportation center with transit oriented services at or near the train station": essentially TOD.

Working with the Town of Ridgefield and HVCEO, CT DOT will study this location for TOD potential in 2009. See [study draft as of May 2011](#).

![Ridgefield's Branchville Station (red) and linear parking lot. The vicinity will be studied by CT DOT for TOD potential.]

**WEST REDDING RAILROAD STATION**
- **POTENTIAL TO BE DETERMINED**
Currently, the West Redding Railroad Station has the least patronage of any station on the Danbury Branch Line. This is an "out of the way" station location adjacent to a small, historic and rural hamlet.

Redding's 2008 draft Plan of Conservation and Development states "this edition of the Town Plan seeks to expand the discussion of higher density development to include the central part of
the hamlet of West Redding due to its transportation resources and its resulting potential for transit-oriented development. It should be noted, though, that West Redding’s lack of public water and sewer and its sensitive location at the headwaters of the Saugatuck River may turn out to be limiting factors."

The HVCEO’s Plan Future Growth Map does not offer a growth designation for TOD at this location. It will need to be determined locally and thru the Conn DOT Branch Line planning process the extent to which TOD is feasible in this location.

**BETHEL RAILROAD STATION**  
– SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL

The Danbury Branch Line train station serving Bethel is located on the northern fringe of the Bethel Village Center.

This center is compact, pedestrian friendly, and contains a mix of commercial, office and institutional land and building uses surrounded by a variety of housing types.

The Bethel Railroad Station was located in the middle of this village center until the 1990’s, when it was relocated approximately 2,200 feet to the north to provide for improved parking and to eliminate congestion caused by trains blocking Main Street while stopped at the old train station.

Of great importance to Danbury Branch Line TOD advocates, the 2007 Bethel Plan of Conservation and Development supports rail oriented TOD around the Bethel Railroad Station. HVCEO completed a feasibility study of this proposal in 2010.

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**Bethel’s 2007 Town Plan proposes a transit oriented development area (blue) surrounding Bethel Railroad Station (red) and near transit a supported housing area (orange).**

As stated in the Bethel Plan, “One area that is appropriate for TOD is the area adjacent to the Metro North Railroad Station on Durant Avenue. The Board of Selectmen, the Planning and
Zoning Commission, and the Economic Development Commission should work together to begin the process of assembling appropriate parcels in the area for TOD development."

Continuing, the draft plan states, "The Commission will revise the zoning regulations for areas deemed appropriate for TOD to encourage multi-story buildings set close to the street, with some on-street parking and bus kiosks. Other considerations include encouraging ground floor retail and restaurants with upper story residential.

Parking should be structured, either in stand-alone or mixed use buildings. Landscaped sidewalks connecting the mixed use development with the train station and downtown should include benches, water fountains and other pedestrian amenities."

Continuing, "In addition to transit oriented developments, there may also be locations appropriate for moderately dense residential development (approximately 10 to 15 units per acre) that integrate transit options by providing access to the train station. The area around Grassy Plain north of Greenwood Avenue should be examined as a potential location for transit supported development."

The HVCEO Plan's Future Growth Map offers a TOD supportive "Near Central Area" designation for this location.

In recent decades the number of Bethel residents that commute south daily to Stamford and other south western towns has continued to increase. This commuter flow is one market that could be served in Bethel by the proposed TOD area and related housing.

Another would be the reverse flow, coastal commuters to office locations in the new TOD. That would reflect the trend found along the Shoreline East rail passenger service east of New Haven, where city commuters increasingly reach new employment along the rail line.

**DOWNTOWN DANBURY RAILROAD STATION**

**SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL**

Commuter rail service on the Danbury Branch Line currently ends in Downtown Danbury. With its central transfer station also located in Downtown Danbury, fixed route bus service is provided by the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) throughout the City of Danbury and to the towns of Bethel, Brookfield, New Milford and Ridgefield.
HART's public bus routes converge in Downtown Danbury. As energy and environmental policy tightens, expect increased viability for transit oriented uses along these routes.

Hosting these two transit facilities, Downtown Danbury can function as a TOD area. There is a wide variety of retail and service businesses and relatively high density residential neighborhoods, all located within walking distance of public transit services in an attractive, pedestrian friendly environment.

Western Connecticut State University (WCSU), with its 4,200 students and 1,000 employees, is within walking distance of the train station. WCSU is also served by HART’s Downtown Bus Loop, with regional bus service provided through HART’s Downtown bus transfer station.

And, a major development, Kennedy Place has an approved plan that includes 586 dwelling units and 5,000 square feet of retail space, all adjoining the HART Pulse Point and within 1,500 feet of the Danbury Railroad Station.

Current development in Downtown Danbury includes high density housing that is being built in neighborhoods within walking distance of both the Danbury train station and HART’s Downtown bus transfer station.

In recent decades the number of Danbury residents who commute daily to job sites in lower Fairfield County has continued to increase. The daily total in 1980 was 2,572, up to 3,227 in 1990, and rising still further to 3,847 in 2000.

This expanding commuter market has the potential to be attracted into the Downtown area. It will bring added vibrancy and economic activity to Downtown, facilitated by the presence of public transit resources, attractive pedestrian friendly neighborhoods, a diversity of business uses and quality municipal services.

The HVCEO Future Growth Map offers a very TOD supportive "Regional Center" designation for Downtown Danbury. The Regional Center designation proposes relatively high densities and
to "concentrate development around transportation nodes to support the viability of transit oriented development."

**DANBURY AND REGIONAL HART BUS STOPS**

**LOW POTENTIAL AT PRESENT**

Bus stops to access Housatonic Area Regional Transit vehicles on their many routes throughout the Housatonic Valley Region are numerous. But due to today's relatively low service frequency, these geographically diffuse bus stops do not currently have the potential to become the transit element of a TOD.

However, future energy shocks that significantly impair the use of automobiles could rapidly enhance the strategic value of nearby bus service.

It is conceivable that in the future, having a bus route located nearby will be comparable to having public sewer service, a universally recognized positive influence on property values. The presence of nearby trolley lines in the past had the same positive impact on property values in their day.

The Region's many HART bus routes should continue to influence the shape and occupancy of adjacent developments so that they work better with transit. This means that large developments along bus routes should make provision for bus loading areas and passenger amenities such as shelters and good pedestrian connectivity.

In addition, residents who are bus dependent will continue to seek housing along HART bus routes, a common phenomenon in recent decades.

**DANBURY NORTH (PLANNED) RAILROAD STATION**

**MINIMAL POTENTIAL**

The HVCEO Future Growth Map offers a supportive "Primary Growth Area" designation for this location. The limitation on TOD potential at this site is due to the lack of developable land in the vicinity that could be linked with pedestrian access to the station and that could support the full range of TOD uses.

The upcoming Conn DOT Phase II Danbury Branch Rail Study will determine if this station should be constructed.

**BROOKFIELD (PLANNED) RAILROAD STATION**

**SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL**

The HVCEO Plan's Future Growth Map offers a TOD supportive "Near Central Area" designation for the Brookfield Village Center area.

Additionally, the design guidelines used by the Town of Brookfield for planning the future of the Village Center area call for mixed use development and state that the Town should "prepare for the possibility of rail passenger service from New Milford to Norwalk," and "identify an appropriate location for a commuter parking lot connected to the rail line by a pedestrian bridge over the Still River."
If the upcoming Conn DOT Phase II Danbury Branch Rail Study determines that this station should be constructed, then plans can be developed to provide for pedestrian connections from the commuter rail station to the adjacent planned mixed use village.

**DOWNTOWN NEW MILFORD (PLANNED) RAILROAD STATION**

**SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL**

The HVCEO Plan’s Future Growth Map offers a very TOD supportive "Regional Center" designation for Downtown New Milford. The Regional Center designation proposes relatively high densities and to "concentrate development around transportation nodes to support the viability of transit oriented development."

The Phase I findings of the Danbury Branch Rail Electrification Feasibility Study concluded that the restoration/extension of commuter rail service to New Milford would result in over 300 new daily boardings and increase ridership on the Branch Line by 37%, a dramatic projection as rail studies go.

The upcoming Conn DOT Phase II of the Danbury Branch Rail Study will further ascertain the TOD benefits that would result from the restoration of passenger rail to Downtown New Milford.

![Diagram showing a potential commuter rail platform in the 1996 "Downtown New Milford Study."](image)

**11-5. GOALS FOR TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT**

**GOAL:** HVCEO’s TOD goal is to reinforce, intensify and foster mixed use neighborhoods at existing and proposed passenger rail stations and at HART’s central bus transfer station in Downtown Danbury.

New mixed use development at those locations should be designed to utilize and benefit from the presence of public transit services.
CERTIFIED RESOLUTIONS
AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION OF THE
Town of Ridgefield Board of Selectmen

CERTIFICATION:
I, Barbara Serfilippi, Town Clerk of Ridgefield, Connecticut, a Municipality organized under the laws of the State of Connecticut, do hereby certify that the following is a full and true copy of a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Ridgefield duly held on the 20th day of July, 2011, at which a quorum was present and acting throughout, and that the resolution has not been modified, rescinded, or revoked and is at present in full force and effect.

RESOLUTION TO:

1. authorize the First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, to make, execute and approve, on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield, the submission of the Branchville TOD grant proposal, in accordance with the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Program Request for Applications Enhancement Grant;
2. authorize the Town of Ridgefield to enter into and, if necessary, to amend a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the HVCEO, or any successor organization, which incorporates the requirements outlined in the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Program Request of Applications, as well as identifies any other specific responsibilities that the Town chooses to delegate to the HVCEO in administering the grant, if awarded, as agreed to by the parties; and
3. authorize the individual serving as First Selectman, or their successor, to sign the grant application, to negotiate the terms and conditions of the MOU, to sign the MOU on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield, and to sign any other documents thereto. Such grant application is attached to and made a part of this record.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF:

The undersigned has affixed their signature this 21st day of July, 2011.

(Date) (Month)

Barbara Serfilippi
(Barbara Serfilippi, Town Clerk)
CERTIFIED RESOLUTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE BODY

Transit-Oriented Development Pilot Program

The Legislative Body of the Town of Redding met on July 18, 2011 and adopted a resolution by the vote of 3 to 0 to which:

1. authorizes submission of the Transit-Oriented Development Pilot Program Planning Grant in accordance with the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Program Request for Applications;

2. authorizes the Town of Redding to enter into and, if necessary to amend a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO), or any successor organization, which incorporates the requirements outlined in the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Program Request for Applications, as well as identifies any other specific responsibilities that the Town chooses to delegate to the Regional Planning Organization in administering the grant, if awarded, as agreed to by the parties; and

3. authorizes the individual serving as First Selectman, or her successor, to sign the grant application, to negotiate the terms and conditions of the MOU, to sign the MOU on behalf of the Town of Redding, and to sign any other documents associated with administering the grant, if awarded, including any amendments thereto. Such grant application is attached to and made a part of this record.

Attested to by:

Name: Michele R. Grande
Title: Town Clerk
Date: July 18, 2011
LETTERS OF SUPPORT
July 28, 2011

TO: Rudy Marconi, First Selectman, Town of Ridgefield
    Natalie Ketcham, First Selectman, Town of Redding

FROM: Bill Brennan, First Selectman, Town of Wilton

Dear Rudy and Natalie,

Thank you for the comprehensive briefing on the Branchville-Georgetown TOD Village proposal and status of plans to promote transit oriented economic development in the Georgetown area of the Route 7 corridor.

I have reviewed the grant proposal with our Director of Town Planning and Land Use Management and we are excited about the potential long term benefits to the region that will result from this project, when eventually completed.

As you both know, a considerable portion of Georgetown is located in Wilton. A section of this community, with many of the century homes, has been recognized and rightfully established as an “historic district”. In addition, this district also includes the Gilbert and Bennett school building that has been transformed into a local community and cultural center.

Over the past several years, Wilton has been very supportive of the redevelopment efforts at the Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill site, which also offers the potential of transit oriented development and badly needed housing for our region.

One of the pressing needs recently identified in the 2011 Wilton Senior Study was the lack of available alternative housing for aging seniors who wish to “size down” from larger homes to more manageable, less costly townhouses or apartments that are located in close proximity to available mass transit services.
The Branchville-Georgetown TOD Village addresses this identified need for this region and Wilton is most pleased to support the further study and refinement of the development plans outlined in the proposal.

It should be noted that $30,000,000 in federal funds, as part of the national economic stimulus program, is presently being invested in an enhanced and centrally controlled signalization project on the Norwalk-Danbury branch line. When completed, the upgraded signalization system will allow increased train service on this line that will increase ridership. Better train service will be an important benefit to the region, as well as to potential residents in the proposed housing.

In summary, the Town of Wilton is very interested in this proposal, as its objectives are consistent with development needs identified in Wilton’s Plan of Conservation and Development.

Please continue to keep us posted on the progress of your activity and advise how we can be of future assistance.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

William F. Brennan
July 18, 2011

Hon. Natalie T. Ketcham                           Hon. Rudolph P. Marconi
First Selectman                                      First Selectman
Town of Redding                                        Town of Ridgefield
100 Hill Road                                           400 Main Street
PO Box 1028                                             Ridgefield, CT 06877-4699
Redding, CT 06875-1028

Dear Natalie and Rudy,

SWRPA is very pleased to offer its support for your OPM application which will be considering the Georgetown and Branchville areas as a single transit village area for funding under the TOD Pilot Program.

We enjoyed our collaboration with you and the other municipalities as part of the Route 7 Land Use Transportation Study. Upgrading the Danbury Branchline and promoting TOD, as recommended in our joint study with the Housatonic Valley, will all go a long way in promoting more sustainable development and remove vehicles from Route 7.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Dr. Floyd Lapp, FAICP
Executive Director