

# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction to Branford

Branford is located in New Haven County and is bordered by Guilford to the east, North Branford to the north, East Haven to the west and Long Island Sound to the south. Interstate 95 traverses Branford east-to-west.

The town is just over 14,000 acres in size and, as of 2007, home to about 29,864 people.

Branford is characterized by its shoreline, traditional village center, and preserved open space. Natural features play an important role in the town's character. In addition to the sound and 21 miles of shoreline, natural features include the Saltonstall Ridge and Lake Saltonstall along the west.



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## Trolleys in Branford

Branford still enjoys a connection to its transportation past when trolleys provided access to East Haven and New Haven. While the trolleys only operated for a short time, from 1900 to 1947, their presence can be observed where the former trolley bed has been converted into a walking trail.

The Shore Line Trolley Museum continues to operate a fine collection of restored trolleys over a 1.5 mile segment of the Branford Electric Railway.

 bera.org



**Branford Trolley** - Branford Historical Society

## Historical Context

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The area that is now Branford provided Native Americans important access to the coast. The area was originally called "Totoket" or "place of the tidal river."

In 1644, the Colony granted land in Branford to settlers, but after 20 years, the settlers migrated to New Jersey. Branford remained without a church for 20 years until it was resettled in 1685.

Settlers cleared forests and transformed the land to agriculture. The land was then sold to church dissidents from Wethersfield who built the first meetinghouse and established an area of common land now known as Branford Green. Over time, public buildings were built around the green and various religious denominations established churches in town.

The Boston Post Road served as the mail route between New York and Boston, beginning in the late 1600s. In the late 1700s and 1800s, water resources - the Branford River and Long Island Sound - spurred the development of industry. Train service, which began in the mid-1800s, made Branford even more attractive to industry.

At various times, Branford has been home to shipbuilders, quarries, wire companies and the Malleable Iron Fittings Company (MIF).

By the late 1800s and early 1900s some coastal agricultural areas had been transformed into summer colonies, with cottages and hotels, making Branford a popular tourist destination.

Trolleys were active in Branford by the early 1900s, making travel to New Haven convenient. Trolley travel was replaced by automobile travel as roads were built

and in 1958, the Connecticut Turnpike opened as a toll road.

As Branford became more accessible to employment centers around the state, population increased accordingly. While fewer than 6,000 people lived in Branford in 1900, over 28,000 lived in town in 2000.

## About Plans of Conservation and Development

A Plan of Conservation and Development is a tool for guiding the future of a community. Planning provides the opportunity to review past activities, understand the long term consequences of current actions, suggest positive strategies for the future, and identify priorities in order to assign the necessary time or financial resources to complete them. Planning provides the opportunity to make good decisions and produce desired results.

The goals and recommendations of this Plan reflect an overall consensus of what is considered desirable for Branford and its residents in the future. The Planning and Zoning Commission prepared this Plan with input from Branford residents.

While it is primarily a statement of recommendations addressing the conservation and development of Branford (the physical layout), this Plan is also intended to address the social and economic development of the community.

### Planning History

Planning in Branford started in the 1950s with the adoption of zoning regulations to control how land use would impact the community. In the 1960s, the Planning and Zoning Commission expanded the planning program with a series of Community Development Action Plans dealing with issues such as community facilities, economic profiles, and education resources.

By 1972, the community had adopted the first comprehensive planning document, and three updates of this planning process have been completed since that

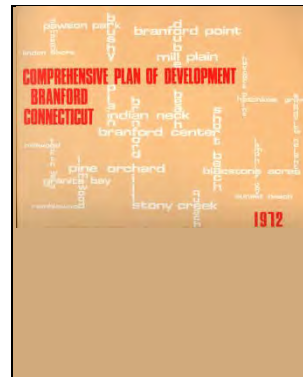
time, including the most recent complete update, adopted on January 16, 1997.

This Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document, not only to the Planning and Zoning Commission, but also to all other Town boards and commissions and Branford residents as well.

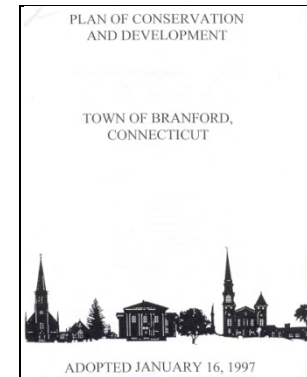
It is intended to guide local residents and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities in Branford over the next decade or so.

### Statutory reference

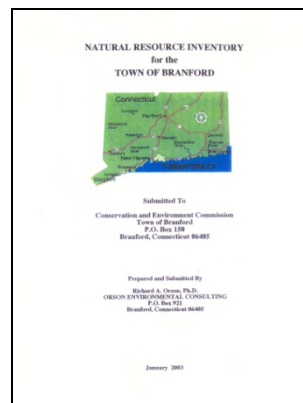
Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that the Planning and Zoning Commission prepare, adopt, and amend a Plan of Conservation and Development for Branford. The requirements for the Plan are presented on page 4.



1972 Plan of Development



1997 Plan of Conservation and Development



2003 Natural Resource Inventory



2007 Traffic Study

**EXCERPTS FROM CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 8-23 - PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**The Commission shall:**

- prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development ...
- review the plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years ...
- adopt such amendments to the plan or parts of the plan ... as the commission deems necessary to update the plan.

**The Plan shall:**

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality...,
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in ... parts of the municipality,
- be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people,
- be made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound ...,
- make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ...,
- promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and

moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing that will meet the housing needs ...,

- take into account the state plan of conservation and development ... and note any inconsistencies it may have with said state plan, and
- consider the use of cluster development to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity.

**The Plan may:**

- show the commission's recommendation for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets and other public ways; for airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; for general location, relocation and improvement of public buildings; for the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes; and for the extent and location of public housing projects,
- include recommended programs for the implementation of the plan ..., and
- (include) such other recommendations ... in the plan as will ... be beneficial to the municipality.