

Branchville Zoning Study

Virtual Public Forum

6/24/25



Agenda

1. Introduction to the Branchville Zoning Study
2. Overview of the Branchville Area
3. Review of the 2017 Transit Oriented Development Plan
4. Options, Discussion, and Next Steps

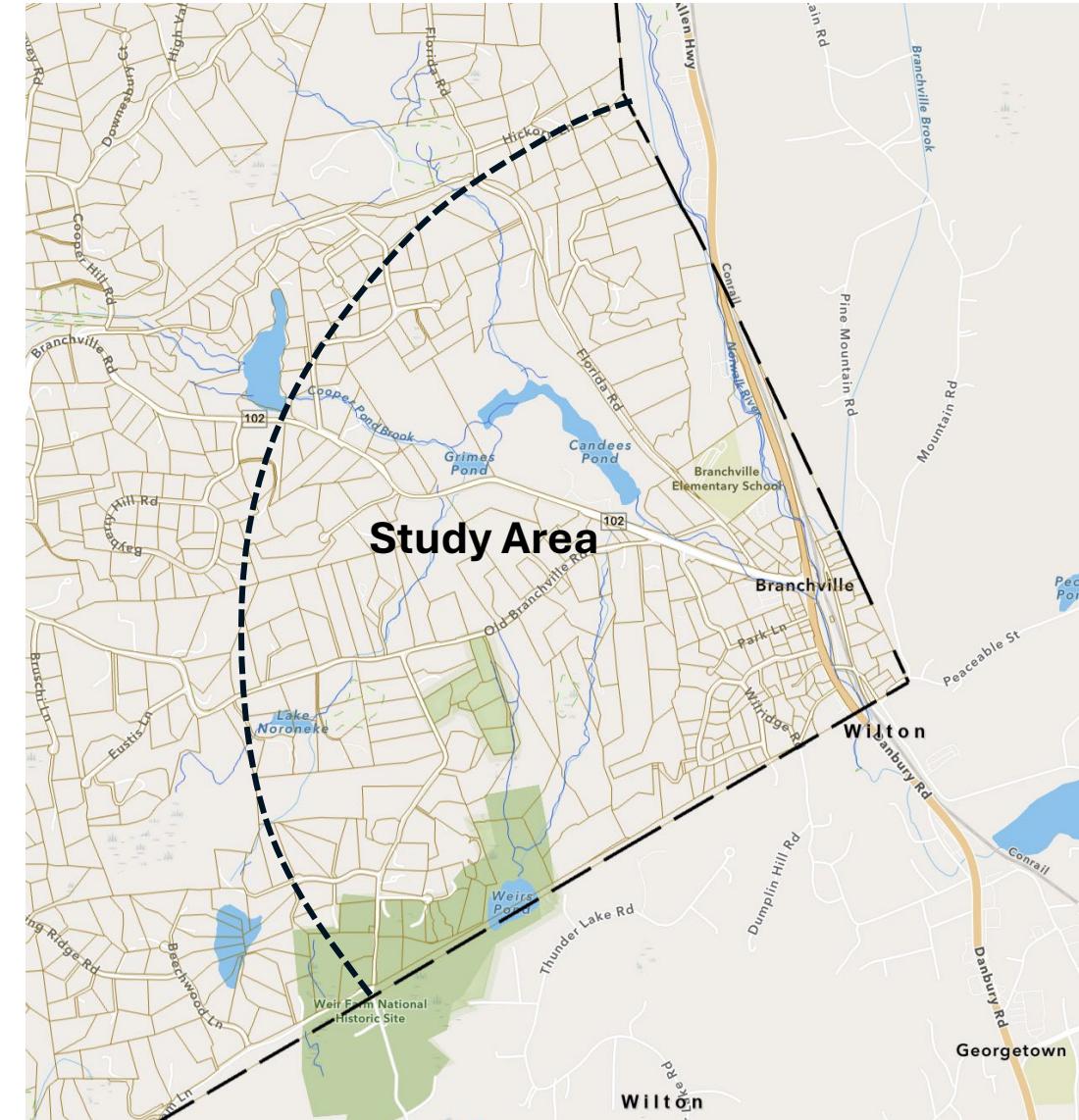
Purpose

- To reconsider the zoning and design guideline recommendations of the 2017 Branchville TOD plan and develop recommended zoning amendments for the Branchville area for the purpose of supporting new development and a mixture of land uses.
- We will also consider establishment of a Village District zone and develop associated design guidelines if such a designation is agreed upon.

Overview of the Branchville Area

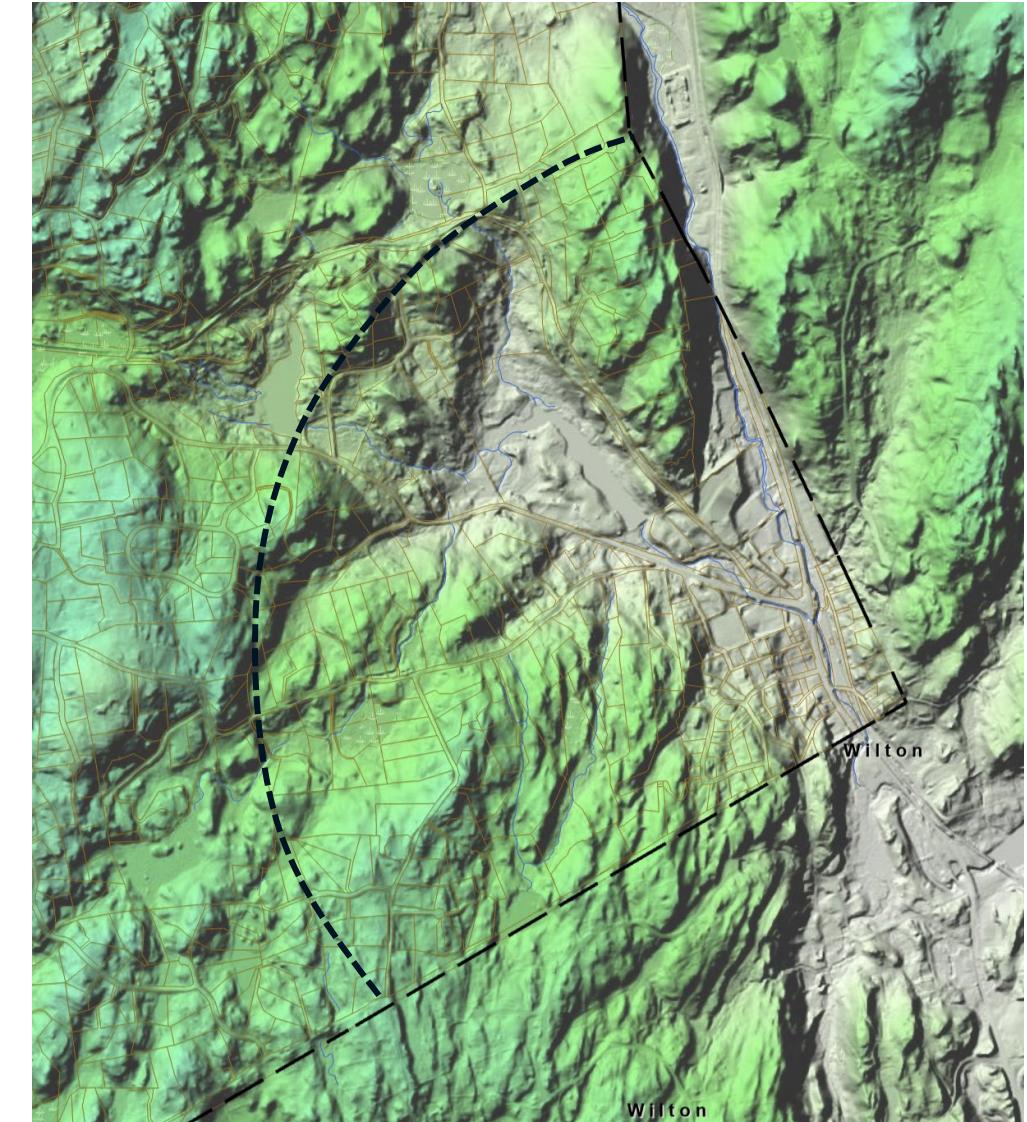
Study Area

- We will review an area within a one-mile radius of the Branchville Train Station.
- This will enable us to consider zoning changes comprehensively and in the context of the surrounding area.



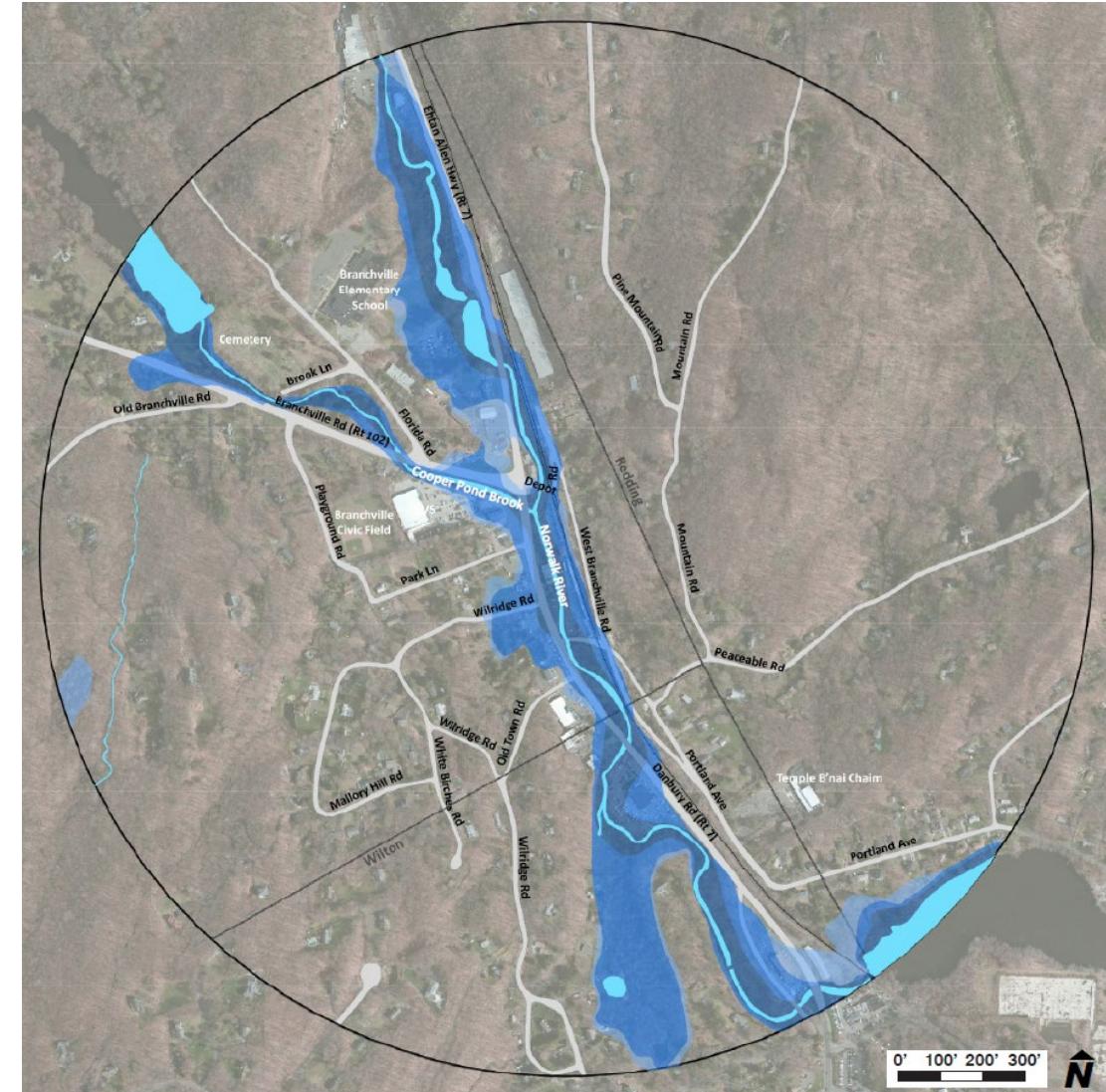
Topography

- The land surrounding Branchville, away from Route 7 and Branchville Road, is comprised of relatively steep, rolling terrain.



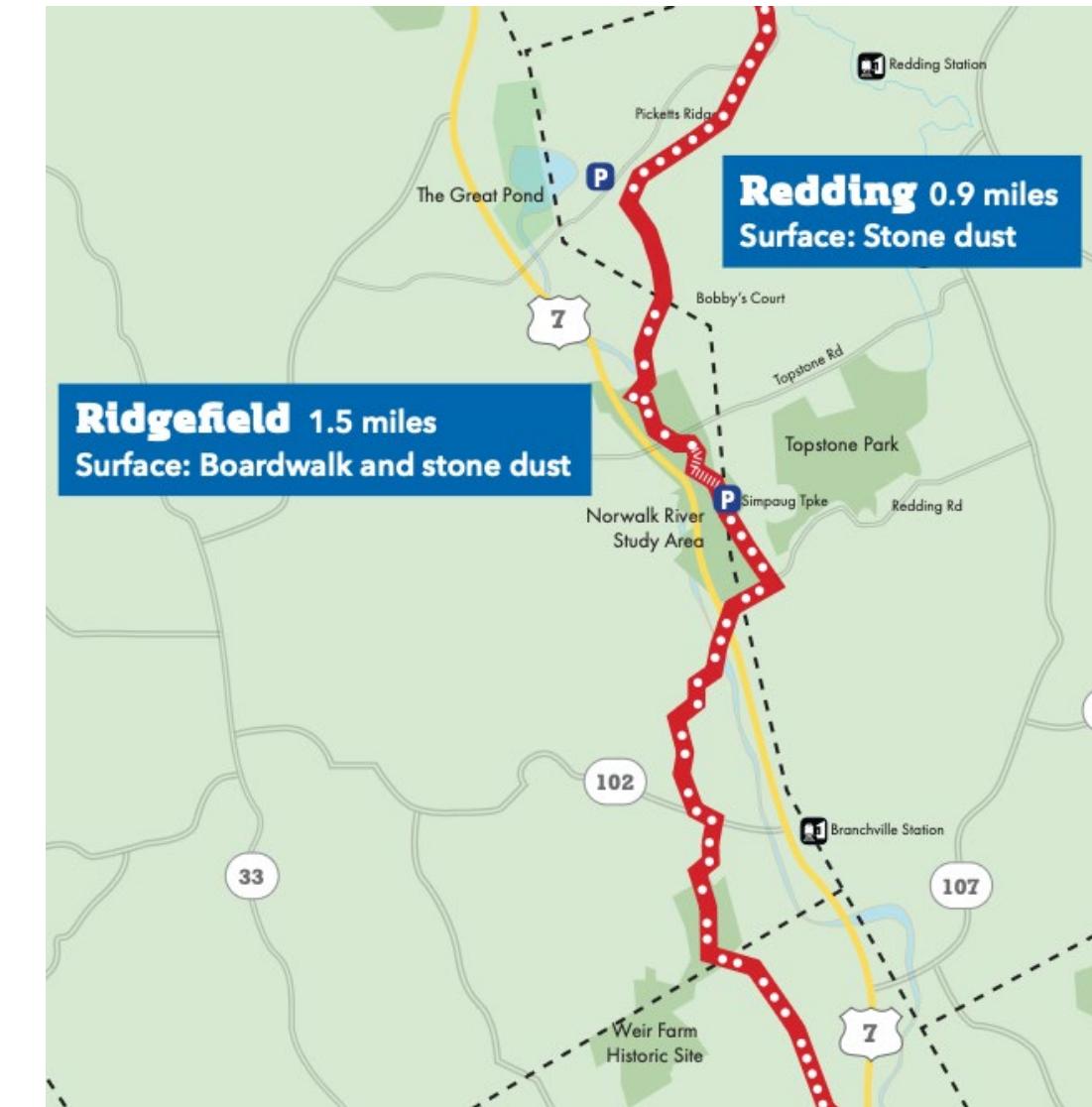
Flood Zones

- Flood zones surround the Norwalk River and Cooper Pond Brook.
- Commercial development is allowed in flood zones provided the construction meets flood zone standards.
- Residential development has to be elevated above the flood level.



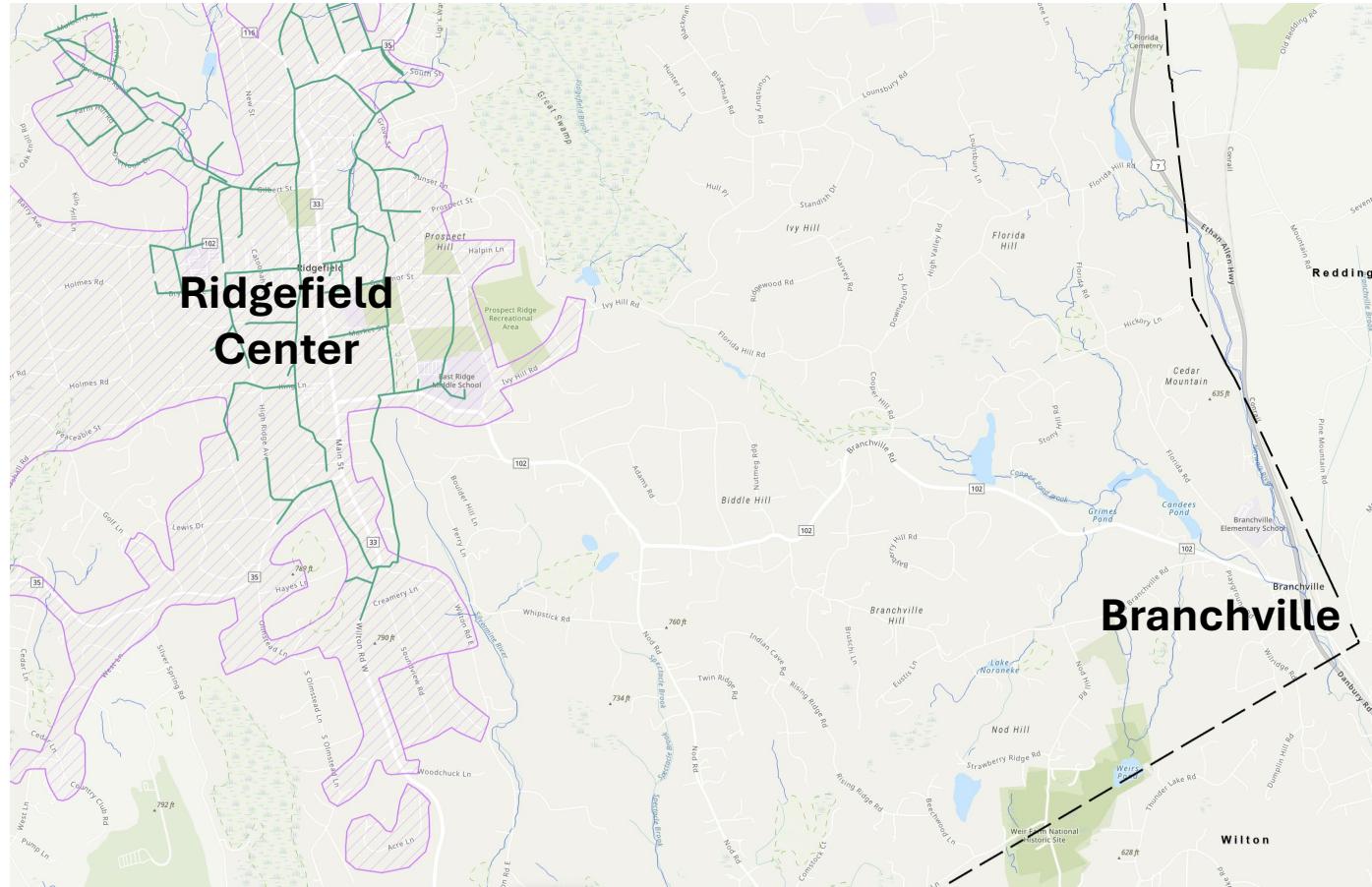
Open Space Considerations

- Branchville is proximate to important open space resources such as:
 - Weir Farm National Historic Site
 - Weir's Pond & Nod Hill Refuge (state & municipal lands)
 - Candeas Pond & Grimes Pond (privately owned)
- The Norwalk River Valley Trail is a vision to connect those resources with regional open space resources connecting through Branchville



Water and Sewer Infrastructure

- Branchville is served by a public water supply main, although that service is primarily limited to Route 7 and Branchville Road.
- There is no sewer infrastructure in Branchville, which limits the density of development that is currently feasible.
- The closest wastewater treatment facility is in Georgetown, almost 1 mile away.
- Ridgefield does not currently have a sewer allocation at the treatment plant and there is no sewer main connecting Branchville to the plant.



Sewer Feasibility Study

- A study is currently underway to explore the feasibility and design of a connection to the Georgetown treatment plant.
- The study will be concluded by this year and could result in an agreement between Redding and Ridgefield that would allow Branchville to be connected to the plant.

Branchville-Georgetown Sewer Feasibility Study



Purpose

To evaluate what sewer infrastructure improvements are needed for the Branchville section of Ridgefield and the Georgetown section of Redding to accommodate for future development.

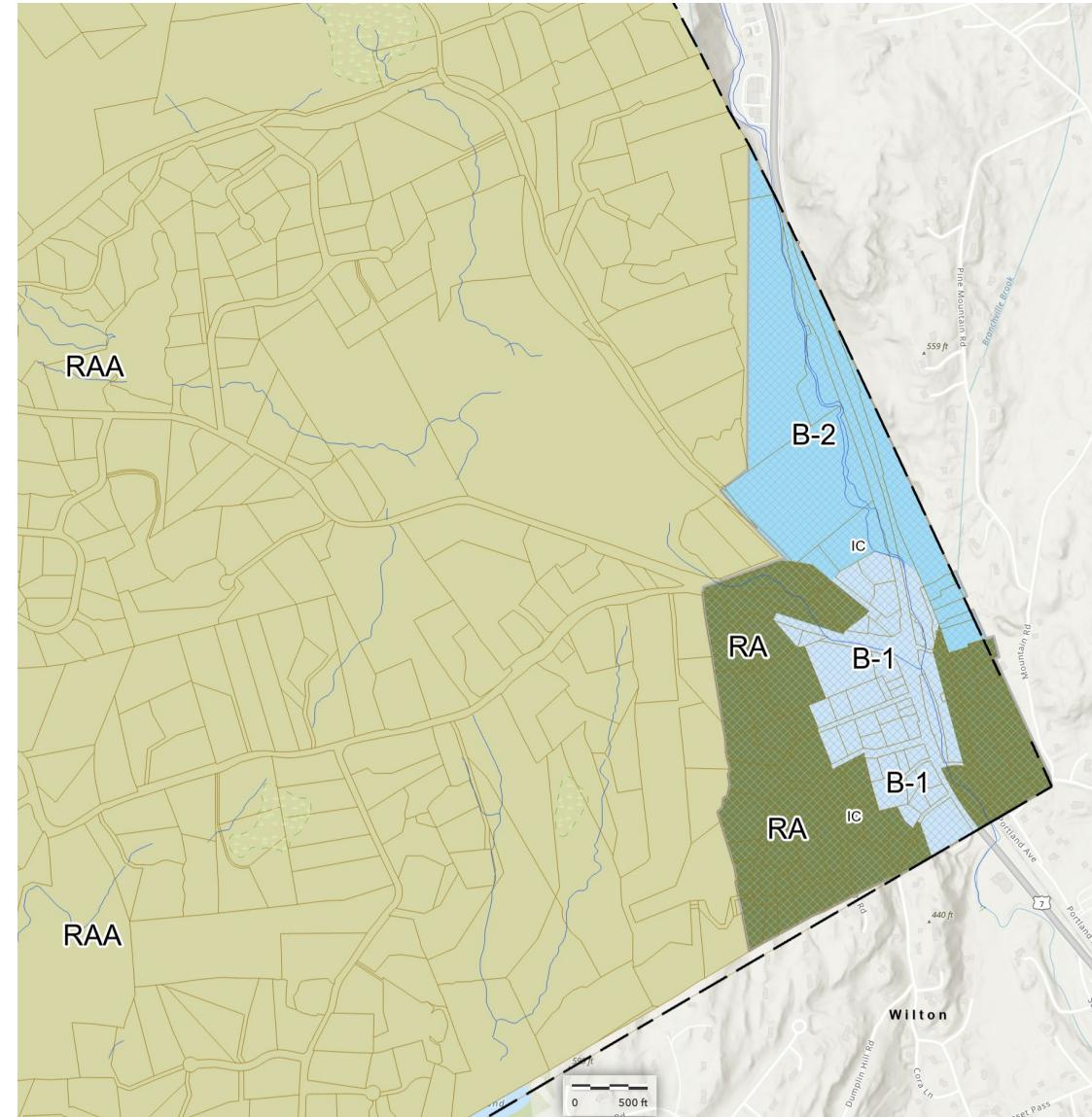
Next Steps

- **Saturday, July 19:** In-Person Workshop
- **August:** Special meetings of the Planning & Zoning Commission to review findings from public forum and in-person workshop and decide on potential amendments to advance.
- **September – October:** Draft recommended zoning amendments and related recommendations and additional community engagement.
- **November – December:** Public forums and hearings for recommended amendments.

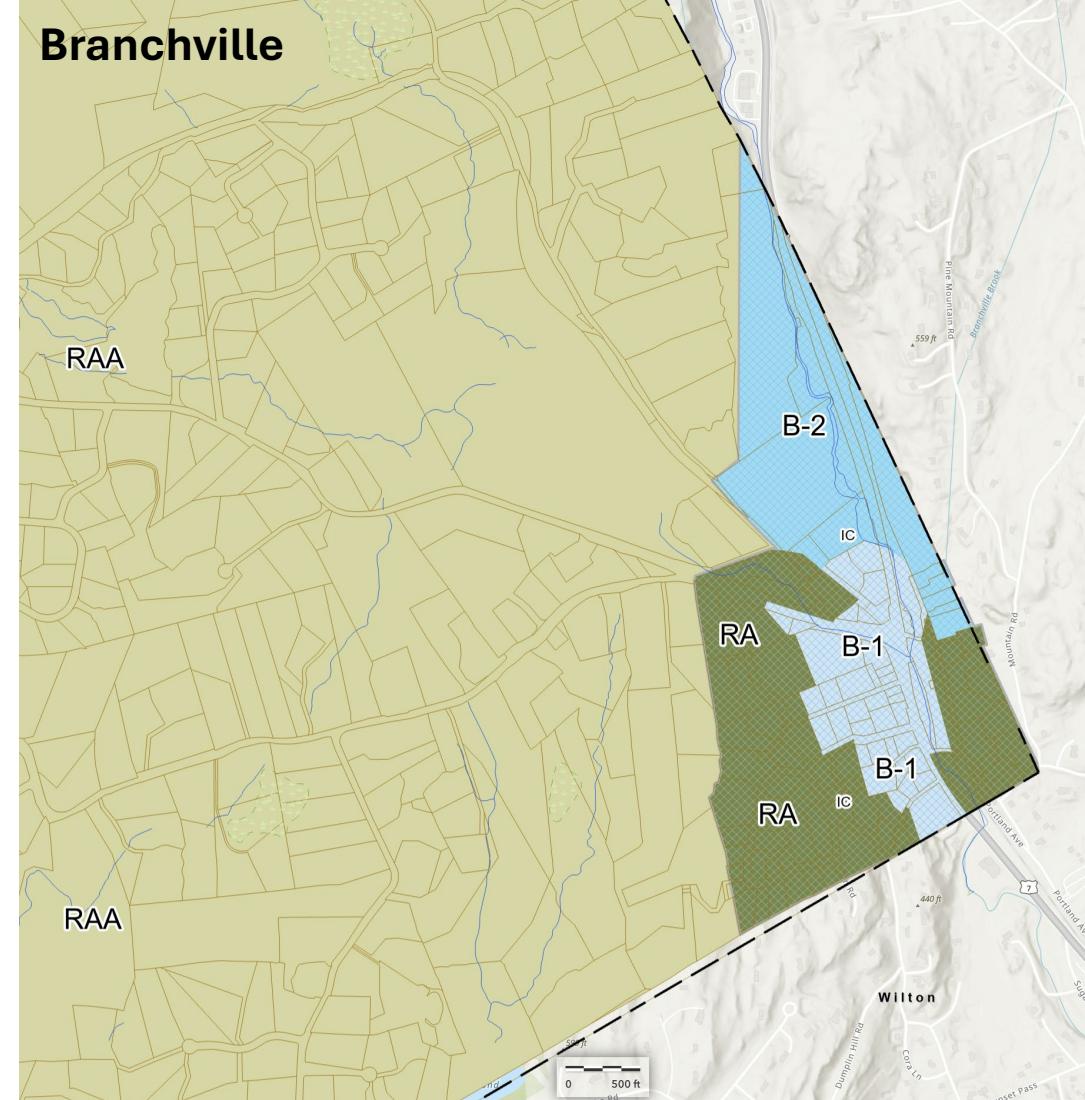
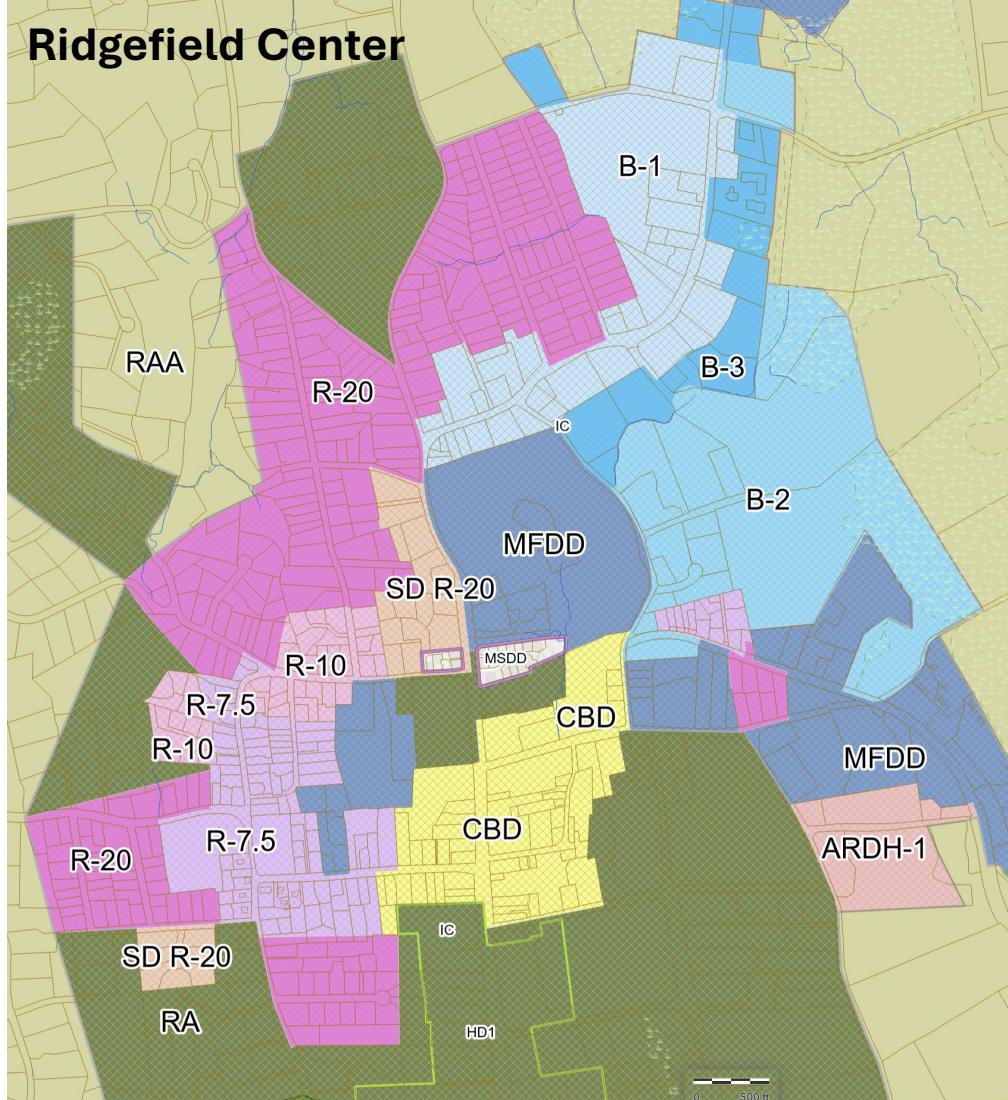
Branchville's Zoning

Zoning

- There are four zoning districts within the study area. These include:
 - RAA: 2-acre residential
 - RA: 1-acre residential
 - B-1: Business 1
 - B-2: Business 2



Zoning: Ridgefield Center vs Branchville



RAA and RA Zones

- 2-acre minimum for development (RAA), 1-acre minimum (RA)
- Permitted Uses:
 - Conservation, Agriculture, Equestrian Facilities
 - Single-family homes and group homes
- Special Permit Uses:
 - Government, Institutional, Instructional, Recreational, Public Utility, Cemetery uses
 - Adaptive Reuse
 - Day Care
 - Bed and Breakfast
 - Planned Residential Development (single-family homes, RAA zone)



Business 1 Zone

- 10,000 sf minimum lot size (approx. $\frac{1}{4}$ acre)
- Permitted Uses:
 - Retail store, shopping center, service establishments
 - Business, professional, medical, real estate office, or bank.
 - Restaurant and food retail
 - Single-family house existing as of 2008



Business 1 Zone

- Special Permit Uses:
 - Municipal or other government uses including parking and recreation uses
 - Gas station, motor vehicle repair, motor vehicle sales
 - Up to 8 dwelling units per acre above commercial development
 - Bowling alleys, driving range, and other indoor and outdoor recreation
 - Group day care homes and day care centers
 - Educational, philanthropic, or religious uses, nonprofit clubs and organizations
 - Funeral homes
 - Commercial kennels and veterinary hospitals
 - Theater
 - Hotel, motel, or inn
 - Public utility substation

Business 2 Zone

- 10,000 sf minimum lot size (approx. $\frac{1}{4}$ acre)
- Permitted Uses:
 - Service establishments
 - Business, professional, medical, real estate office, or bank
 - Offices for executive, administrative, and data processing
 - Restaurant and food retail
 - Seasonal Farmers' Market
 - Retail sales accessory to another type of commercial use
 - Fitness center, dance studio, arts education
 - Single-family house existing as of 2008



No general Retail or Mixed-Use Residential permitted

Business 2 Zone

- Special Permit Uses:
 - Assisted living facility, nursing or convalescent home, congregate housing
 - Municipal or other government uses including parking and recreation uses
 - Research and development labs
 - Manufacturing, processing, assembly, fabrication, packing, storage, distribution (limited to specific products)
 - Contractors' yards
 - Storage warehouse
 - Group day care homes and day care centers
 - Bowling alleys, driving range, golf clubs, and other indoor and outdoor recreation
 - Commercial kennels and veterinary hospitals
 - Educational, philanthropic, or religious uses, nonprofit clubs and organizations
 - Funeral homes
 - Theater
 - Hotel, motel, or inn
 - Public utility substation
 - Brewery or brewpub
 - Sales showroom

No general
Retail or
Mixed-Use
Residential
permitted

Residential Density

- Residential density in the study area is approximately 0.4 dwelling units per acre (an average of 2.5 acres per dwelling unit).
- This density is very low compared to most village centers.
- For comparison, the Multi-Family Development District in Ridgefield Center allows for development of up to 8 units per acre.



Example: Village development at 8 units per acre

2017 Branchville Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan

About the TOD Plan

- Branchville's TOD Plan was completed in 2017.
- The plan was led by FHI Studio and a task force comprised of Town, Regional, and State officials.
- It has been used to successfully leverage State and Federal funding for infrastructure enhancements.



The Plan's Vision

In the future, Branchville will be a strong, cohesive mixed-use village. It will have outdoor public spaces, landscaping, and amenities that will be inviting to visitors and residents alike. Parking will be located so visitors can park once and walk throughout the village. Branchville will have well-connected small-scale developments with a mix of retail and housing. The pedestrian environment along and across Route 7 will be pleasant and safe. The train station will be well connected to the rest of the village where commuters live, shop, or dine.

The Plan's Vision for the Public Realm



The Plan's Vision for the Public Realm



The Plan's Vision for the Public Realm



Zoning Recommendations

The plan includes zoning regulations and design guidelines that would enable:

- Innovative mix of land uses
- Better site organization
- Building types and scales that are appropriate for Branchville
- Tools to manage the “look and feel” of Branchville

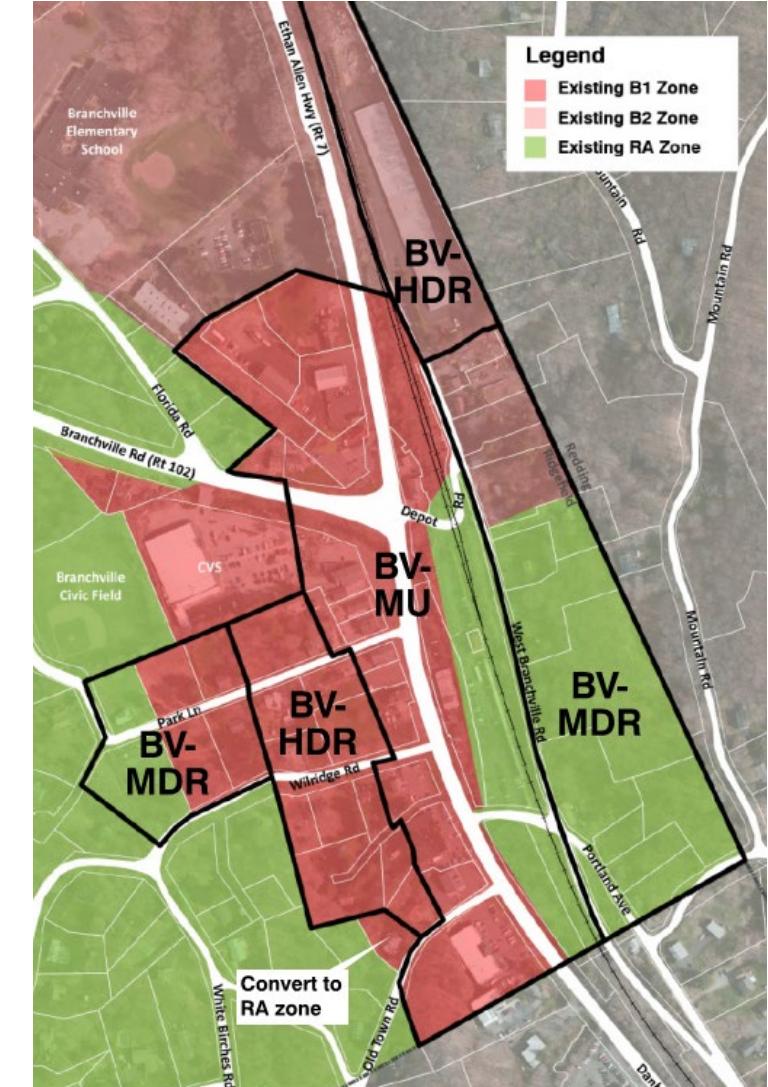


Development Concept

Zoning Recommendations

The plan recommends the creation of three new zoning districts to replace existing zoning districts in Branchville:

- Branchville Village Mixed-Use District (BV-MU)
- Branchville Village Medium Residential Density District (BV-MRD)
- Branchville Village High Residential Density District (BV-HRD)



Architectural Design Guidelines

- The Plan provides architectural design guidelines intended to ensure that development in Branchville is compatible with the Community's vision for the village.
- The Plan also recommends adoption of a Village District in Branchville that would provide the Town with the authority to require compliance with the design standards.

Shingle Style



ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE SHINGLE STYLE

- Continuity of roof and wall surfaces. Wood shingles, stretched smooth, on siding and roofs
- Louvered shutters
- Shed roof and gambrel shapes
- Cross gables and irregular roof lines
- Prominent but not ornate chimneys
- Turrets, verandas, oriel windows
- Asymmetrical floor plans and elevations

History and Character

Shingle Style is essentially a suburban and resort style. It originated in the coastal towns of Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Newport, Rhode Island in the 1870's. Dwellings are ample in size, substantial in appearance and spread low against the ground usually on a heavy stone foundation. The Shingle Style plays with a complicated massing. Colonial motifs survive as isolated elements such as shingles, broad gables or gambrels, and small window panes.

Materials and Components

CLADDING: Wall cladding and roofing of continuous shingles; masonry first story with shingles above are also common in this style.

ROOFING: Complex roofs are common with this style. Gables are usually arranged asymmetrically. Intersected gables or a larger gable crossed with several smaller roof forms is a common practice in the shingle style. The gambrel roof form which is typical on shingle style homes, allows for a second floor to be incorporated into the steeper roof shape, while giving the appearance of only one floor. Dormers are usual and are used to add visual complexity to the roof.

WINDOWS: Generally numerous windows, some of ample proportions, some rather small. Double-hung windows are commonly arranged with single-pane sash at the bottom and multipane sash above. For large wall areas, windows could be arranged in rows of two, three or even more. Palladian windows are a popular eclectic element of this style.

COLUMNS: Classical columns as well as shingle clad-columns or stone supports are commonly used.

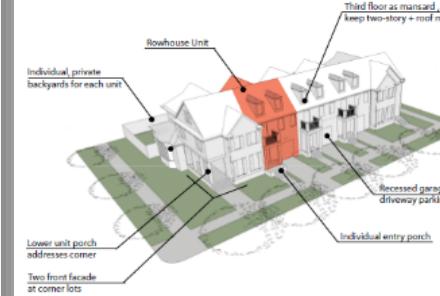
PORCHES: Porches are very common in this style, and associated with the main entrance. Porches are often planned with simple straight balusters used for railings.

Local Samples



Building Type: Rowhouse

Description



Rowhouse is a dwelling unit attached by common wall to another dwelling unit. Rowhouse is generally a single unit form ground to roof with no unit below or above it. Typical arrangements are a minimum of 3 individual dwelling units arrayed side by side along a primary frontage.

Urban Standards

Unit Frontage: 20' min.
25' typical

Unit Size: 850 Sq.Ft. min.

Lot Width/Frontage: 75 ft min.
150 ft max.

Max Height: 2 Story + Mansard

Access Standards:
(1) The main entrance to each dwelling shall be accessed directly from and face the street
(2) Parking shall be accessed through driveway in front

Parking Standards:
Parking garage in front of each unit and possibility of parking in driveway

Service Standards:
(1) Services (including all utility access, above ground equipment, trash containers) shall be located on the rear of the lot, or screened from street view.

Landscape Standards:
(1) All yards shall be landscaped
(2) Landscape shall not obscure front yards on adjacent lots.

Frontage Standards:
(1) Each rowhouse ground level shall be designed so that living areas (e.g. living room, family room, dining room, etc.) rather than bedrooms and service rooms are oriented toward the fronting street to the extent possible.
(2) Stoops, Frontyards and Porches allowed

Building and Massing:
(1) Buildings shall be composed of 2 and /or three story volumes in compliance with the regulations for the applicable zone.
(2) Buildings on corner lots shall be designed with two front facades.
(3) Each rowhouse building shall maintain setbacks from property lines, with as much direct access to yards as possible.



Lot Diagrams

Village District Regulations

- Ridgefield's Central Business District is designated as a Village District and is the town's only Village District.
- Village District designation, per Connecticut General Statutes, gives towns the authority to regulate architectural and site features that cannot be regulated through zoning alone.
- Projects within a Village District are required to go through design review.

Options, Discussion,
and Next Steps,

Options for Consideration

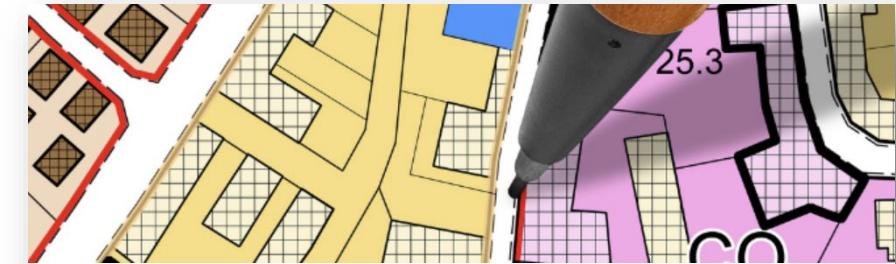
- Advance the zoning recommendations of the 2017 TOD Plan by adopting new zoning districts specific to Branchville -or- instead, amend the existing zoning regulations to provide more flexibility for development.
- Adopt a Village District and Village District Design Guidelines for Branchville.

Discussion

- What is your vision for Branchville?
- What changes in Branchville (or Ridgefield) since 2017 should be considered in this next stage?
- What type(s) of land use(s) would you like to see emphasized in the Branchville area
- What type(s) of housing are needed in Ridgefield over the next 10-20 years and what do you think would work?
- Do you support the establishment of a Village District in Branchville?
- What other ideas or concerns do you have specific to Branchville?

For More Information

- Visit the Planning & Zoning Commission webpage for presentations, meeting agendas, and meeting records.
- www.ridgefieldct.gov/boards_commissions/commissions/planning_and_zoning_commission/index.php



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Audio Recordings

Additional Questions
or Comments?