

CHAPTER 2: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



OVERALL PLAN PHILOSOPHY

Ridgefield should be a community where:

- important natural and cultural resources are protected,
- community character is preserved and enhanced,
- the single family residential character is maintained,
- appropriate economic development is promoted,
- overall development patterns and transportation choices promote environmental sustainability, and
- all residents can benefit from and enjoy amenities that make Ridgefield unique.

MAJOR THEMES

A number of major themes emerged as the Commission prepared this Plan:

- It is important to protect character, historic resources, natural resources and open space.
- Ridgefield Center should be protected and enhanced.
- There is an interest in attracting additional business development to Ridgefield, but generally in areas already zoned for business use.
- The Town should discourage sprawl, strip retail and big box retail.
- The Town should examine and potentially modify the zoning along parts of Route 7.
- There is interest in providing more affordable housing for young workers, seniors, and the disabled.
- Traffic is a concern.
- The Town should encourage public transit, walking and bicycling.
- The Town should explore ways to become more “green”, in terms of waste reduction, energy use, and overall patterns of development.

MAJOR CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Community Character

- Protect and preserve scenic resources and areas, such as ridgelines, hillsides, and scenic roads.
- Protect and preserve Ridgefield’s physical character, from natural features to man-made features.
- Promote community spirit.

Natural Resources

- Preserve sensitive areas as open space where feasible; continue careful site planning; educate residents and landowners on natural resource issues; and use a Natural Resources Inventory to aid in planning.
- Protect surface and ground water.
- Minimize flooding.
- Protect other natural resources including habitat, vegetation, and air.

Open Space

- Continue to preserve open space, with a goal of preserving 30% of the Town as open space.
- Preserve Greenways, including the Sugar Hollow Greenway.
- Preserve “perceived” open space.
- Promote the enjoyment of open space.

Historic Resources

- Protect historic resources through the efforts of local organizations, by providing incentives to owners of historic buildings, and by seeking funding.
- Maintain and adopt regulations to help preserve historic buildings.
- Promote historic preservation efforts.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Community Structure

- Protect and enhance Ridgefield Center.
- Promote Branchville as a focal point.
- Extend positive elements of Ridgefield Center to other commercial areas, such as Copps Hill.
- Enhance Ridgefield's gateways.

Housing and Residential Areas

- Maintain the overall residential pattern.
- Carefully control higher density and multi-family development.
- Provide a diversity of housing types.

Business Development

- Maintain a strong non-residential tax base.
- Promote business development in appropriate areas.
- Consider zoning updates in specific locations.
- Consider additional strategies such as enhancing the appearances of businesses in the Route 7 gateways.
- Continue to promote the concept of corporate parks.

MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES

Community Services and Facilities

- Address current needs at Town Hall and the Venus Municipal Center, police and fire stations, and other facilities.
- Ensure that the Library remains in Ridgefield Center.
- Prepare for future needs by understanding how demographic changes might affect Town facility needs, exploring options for moving town departments into one building, and other strategies.
- Aim for efficiency and economy by exploring the creation of a public safety complex, creating a pavement management system, and other strategies.
- Improve the sustainability of Town practices and facilities.

Transportation

- Address overall circulation and minimize congestion.
- Evaluate road standards to ensure they protect character and natural resources.
- Continue roadway maintenance.
- Enhance Ridgefield Center by implementing recommended traffic and parking improvements.
- Improve and expand public transit services.
- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- Continue transportation coordination with State and regional entities.

Utilities

- Plan for future water supply needs by working with water companies.
- Improve public sewer service by undertaking rehabilitation and upgrades.
- Ensure that sewer extensions reflect land use goals and do not promote growth in areas where growth is not desired.
- Evaluate and address stormwater drainage.
- Improve telecommunications.