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East Granby adopts Village Center Zone to bring Main St. to town center

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Bradley International Airport has grown to become the second largest airport in New England, with over 7.4 million passengers passing through the terminals yearly. Bradley continues to grow as they implement the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved Master Plan. The airport has become the centerpiece of the I-91 transportation corridor, which has gained attention as a significant regional transportation corridor. The I-91 corridor links the metropolitan area of Springfield and New Haven, which have direct transportation connections that extend out to two major metropolitan cities, Boston and New York. The thriving concentration of development along the I-91 corridor from Springfield to Hartford is designated as the "Knowledge Corridor" in that it provides an accessible and desirable place to work and live. Many companies continue to locate and grow in this region, because there is a well educated pool of talent for their workforce to draw from. At the center of the "Knowledge Corridor" is Bradley International Airport, which continues to be a desirable location for many companies, due to the close proximity to the airport and highways.

The Bradley Development League (BDL) is a public/private non-profit corporation representing four towns: East Granby, Suffield, Windsor and Windsor Locks. The BDL focuses on economic development in and around the airport. Distribution companies and light manufacturing companies continue to locate and grow in and around the airport, providing tax revenue and jobs for those who live in the area. BDL takes a regional approach regarding capitol improvement and economic development projects that emphasize Bradley's potential for economic development, and the need for better transportation connection to and from the airport.

As the "Western Gateway to Bradley" the town of East Granby looks to build upon the expansion and development around the airport. Rte. 20 carries over 20,000 vehicles a day and is a major connector to the airport and I-91 corridor. The town center has been situated at the center of East Granby at the intersection of Rtes. 20 and 187. In 2003 surveys were sent out to business and landowners to gauge their feelings about the town. The surveys showed the town received high marks in delivering a positive experience in most key categories. The town then sent out a second survey to residents to see where they did their shopping and to see what type of development they would like to see in their town. From these surveys came the 2004 update of the Plan of Conservation and Development, the master plan guiding development and future land use decisions within the town. The plan looked at many issues and concerns including the impact of the airport, preserving and conserving natural resources, and the development of a town center. Throughout the Plan update it was clear that business owners and residents felt the development of a true town center would help expand and create business opportunities while providing local services to the town residents. The plan's major objective is to preserve the rural character of the town, while creating a quintessential New England village center that would serve as a proper backdrop to the

small town and create a sense of place as the "Western Gateway" to the airport.

The town continues to implement the recommendations from the Plan of Conservation and Development. This included a major rewrite of the zoning regulations to establish a Village Center Zone along School St., the renaming of the Industrial Park Zone to Commerce Park to better establish the type of development wanted in that zone, an expansion of the Business Zone along Rte. 189, and a regulation that allows the adaptive reuse of historic structures in a residential zone to be used as a business in an attempt to provide additional incentive to preserve our historic structures. The town has also allowed higher density residential development in areas around the center. With the existing business activity in the newly named Commerce Park Zone and the higher density residential properties around the town center, it will provide the concentration of people and pedestrian traffic needed to develop a successful quintessential New England village center.

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