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Branford mixed-use and manufacturing dominate scene enhancing the live-work-play reputation - by Terence Elton

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The first visible steps have been taken with the Atlantic Wharf development project. With site remediation at the former Atlantic Wire complex now completed, a methodical demolition of the facility is now underway as the site is cleared.

Passersby, local news stations and social media are following the transformation of the seven acre site from a brownfield into a transit-oriented mixed-use development. The new complex will offer more than two hundred upscale residential units and 20,000 s/f of commercial space distributed among ten new buildings.

Atlantic Wharf, as it's named, will be a ten minute walk to the newly expanded Branford train station and its Shoreline East rail service, and even closer to the town green with its Main Street shops, restaurants and boutiques.

This is the second major project underway in Branford's town center. A proposal for a new boutique hotel was recently announced and is expected to begin the planning and zoning process in the fall. The new 34-room hotel to be situated on the Branford River, only a quarter mile from the Branford train station, and directly across from the Stony Creek Brewery. In its brief two year history the Stony Creek Brewery has become one of the state's major destinations, bringing more than 300,000 visitors to town each year.

These two projects fit well with the direction the town is planning to go with its Transit Oriented Development study, currently underway. That study, scheduled for completion in the fall, will provide the groundwork for continued development along these lines, promoting Branford as a "sound location" for 21st century business development and enhancing the town's reputation as a place to live-work-play.

Another facet is the town's Main St. Gateway project. This state funded infrastructure project calls for the creation of a new roundabout to improve traffic flow at Main Street's entrance to the town green for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles, and will also create a new visual "gateway" to the town's historic town center.

And while this activity is taking place in the town center, development continues across town. American Polyfilm, Inc. officially opened its new 30,000 s/f manufacturing center in the 4th quarter of 2016, soon followed by Defibtech's November opening of its new 24,000 s/f manufacturing operation, along with Glaxo-Smith-Kline occupying its 20,000 s/f facility on East Industrial Rd.

In the 1st quarter of 2017, Yale-inspired Saphlux opened its R&D center a few doors away from GSK, and Virginia-based Artis Corporation cut the ribbon at its new 60+ bed memory care and senior living facility on Rte. 1, its first in New England.

Along with the town's business growth and expansion, the state continues to invest in the town's infrastructure. The Rte. 139 / North Branford Rd. replacement project is underway and will be finished by year's end with improved access to Rte. 1 and I-95's Exit 55. The Rte. 139 bridge project complements the recent replacement of the School Ground Rd. bridge and major improvements to its intersection with Rte. 139 and Valley Rd. It is the last piece of a multi-part project designed to improve the surface transportation system in the east end of town, home to much of Branford's industrial and commercial activity of biotech, R&D, medical manufacturing and aerospace operations.

The Rte. 139 bridge project begins not long after the recent expansion of the town's train station with a new platform on the north side of the tracks to accommodate increased rail service, along with a new curbside "kiss & ride" area and pedestrian bridge connecting to the main station. With parking for 500 vehicles, the Shoreline East rail connects our businesses to the New Haven and Yale University communities by a ten minute train ride, and offers a direct link to Metro Service to New York and Amtrak to Boston.

By rail or road, Branford's location is ideal. Midway between Boston and Manhattan, Branford is a gateway to New England and a portal to the New York market. In addition to its rail service, the town is served by four exits on I-95, providing direct access to the east coast corridor and to nearby I-91 into northern New England.

And with twenty miles of shoreline along Long Island Sound, forty miles of hiking and biking trails, a half dozen parks, two town beaches, a state boat launch, numerous marinas and yacht clubs, and a robust art & music scene, our quality of life is second to none.

To discover more about Branford and for assistance in finding a site that meets your needs, go to www.branford-ct.org or email info@branford-ct.gov.

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