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Branford's business friendly approach encourages new ventures and expansions

July 16, 2008 - Connecticut

For the past year, Branford has been working on a long term strategic plan to position the town so that in the coming decades it can take full advantage of its assets and resources. The group includes the town's land use commissions and the economic development commission, traffic and conservation commissions, as well as our Chamber of Commerce and Land Trust, and is in the throes of developing recommendations of how best to proceed. The end product will be a strategic plan that incorporates refined land use principles geared towards a longer view of how the town should develop in the coming years and how best to create business opportunities and maintain a high quality of life for its businesses and residents.

While the town works on its strategic plan, it continues to advance various efforts and projects that enhance its appeal as a desirable location. The recently announced expansion of the Shore Line East commuter rail service coincides with plans to expand Branford's train station. More parking combined with more trains will make Branford's train station an even stronger asset for the community. Conveniently located a short walk to the town green, the rail station currently serves hundreds of Branford residents as they commute into New Haven or travel on to Stamford and Manhattan via Metro North, or take Amtrak to Providence or Boston.

That area also offers prime space for commercial development as part of the approved mixed use of Anchor Reef's riverfront site. Situated along the Branford River and directly across from the train station, it's ideal for medical or professional offices.

With efforts underway to replace the railroad bridge spanning Rte.1 at its intersection with I-95's Exit 53, traffic flow and commercial opportunities will both improve dramatically. The results will include a new bridge, expanded vehicular lanes with better clearance, and an improved intersection at Rte. 142 (Short Beach Rd.), making it easier and safer to continue up Branford Hill along Rte. 1's retail district., including BranHaven Plaza, home to Kohl's, the GAP, Radio Shack and other national retailers.

More improvements to Rte. 1 have already begun at its intersections with Cherry Hill and Mill Plain Rds., and a major re-design at its Cedar St. juncture. This will shift an irregular intersecting road to a safer point of entry, add dedicated turn lanes, upgrade the signalization, and install sidewalks. With I-95 less than a ¼ mile away at Exit 54, this will improve both the traffic flow and safety, as well as enhance the area's development potential.

Meanwhile, new businesses, from locally owned retail shops to high tech manufacturing continue to locate in Branford. 4,000 s/f of new retail space is currently nearing completion on Main St. in the town center, a rare opportunity for boutiques and specialty shops near a town green as vibrant and established as Branford's. A new state of the art 40,000 s/f storage facility is also under construction on Rte. 1, while York Dental Labs has settled in at its new location near Exit 56. York

joins others in our manufacturing community, such as CAS Medical, LazerCut and Alcoa's Howmet Turbine. And of course, Branford's bioscience community is unrivaled, with 454 Life Science, CuraGen, Neurogen, the IPD group, Invitrogen, Cellular Genomics, and others.

Branford is desirable for manufacturing, technology, and retail because our past planning efforts have resulted in making Branford a full service town (e.g., water and sewer) with low taxes, and easy access to various transportation modes (interstates, air, and rail). And we have a "business friendly" approach that encourages new ventures and expansions, and boast a retail mix ranging from national chains to small, independents that carry a national reputation. Centrally located on the Long Island Sound shoreline, we have a quality of life and sense of community that is second to none. We're continuing to work.

To create your own vision of having a sound location in Branford and to see and hear about Branford, tune into Branford's "Community Video" on its website at www.branford-ct.gov. And to learn more about Branford and the opportunities it may hold for you visit the town's website at www.branford-ct.gov or e-mail us at info@branford-ct.gov.

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