

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Bureau of Policy and Planning
Intermodal Planning**

**WATERBURY AND NEW CANAAN
BRANCH LINES
NEEDS AND FEASIBILITY STUDY
Project 170-2562**

Phases I and II



**Waterbury Branch
Transit Oriented Development Report**

Date: September 2009

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1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), in cooperation with the South West Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA), Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA), Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (CGCNV), and the Valley Council of Governments (VCOG), is preparing a Needs and Feasibility Study for improvements to transit service along the New Canaan and Waterbury Branch Line corridors of the New Haven rail line. This study evaluates various improvement options along the existing CTDOT-owned 27-mile passenger railroad corridor between Milford and Waterbury and the 7.9-mile passenger railroad corridor between Stamford and New Canaan. The results of this study will identify potential service and infrastructure improvements for each corridor. It will also provide decision-makers with the information necessary to determine how the needs of the New Canaan Branch and Waterbury Line corridors fit into an overall statewide transportation strategy that balances needs and funding ability.

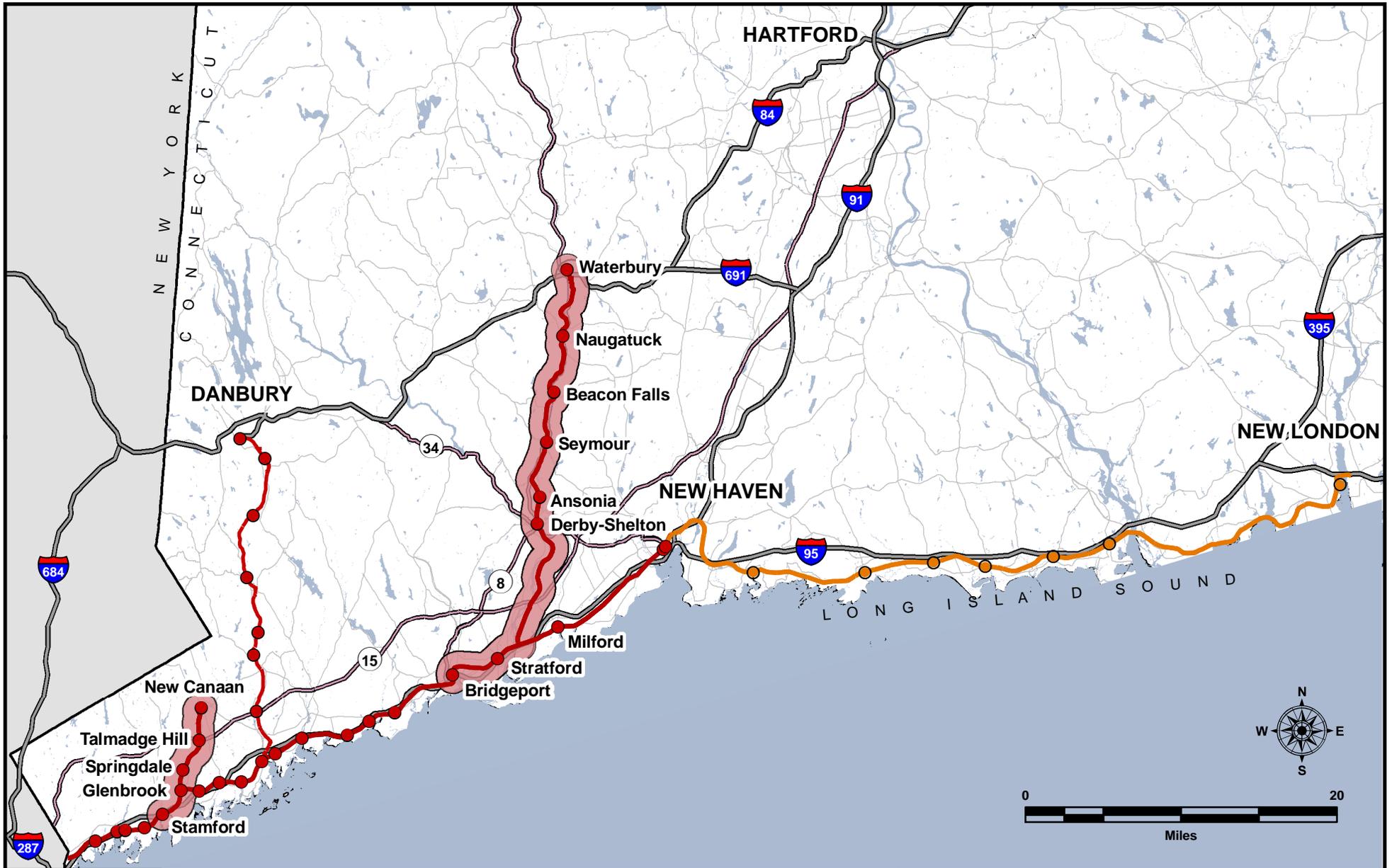
Metro-North Railroad operates service between New Haven and Grand Central Terminal on the New Haven Line, Connecticut's busiest commuter rail line. Three branch lines feed into the New Haven Line: the New Canaan Branch, the Danbury Branch, and the Waterbury Branch (Figure 1-1). While this study is focused on the Waterbury and New Canaan branches, a separate feasibility study of the Danbury Branch is also underway.

The 27-mile Waterbury Branch is the longest of the three branch lines, operating passenger service between Waterbury and Bridgeport with stops at Naugatuck, Beacon Falls, Seymour, Ansonia, and Derby-Shelton (Figure 1-2). The branch consists of an unsignalized single track with no passing sidings, making it impossible for northbound and southbound trains to pass one another along the branch and limiting the amount of service that can be provided. Freight trains also operate on the line.

The Waterbury Branch runs parallel to Connecticut Route 8, which is frequently congested during rush hour periods, especially in the vicinity of the Route 8/I-95 interchange. Improved transit service in the corridor could attract new ridership, which in turn may reduce vehicle trips and congestion on Route 8 and local roadways.

As a part of this needs and feasibility study, we are identifying opportunities for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) around existing station areas on the Waterbury Branch to encourage ridership and promote redevelopment on this branch. This report describes station area zoning and land use policies along the Waterbury Branch, discusses ongoing TOD initiatives in the corridor, and identifies other potential TOD sites.

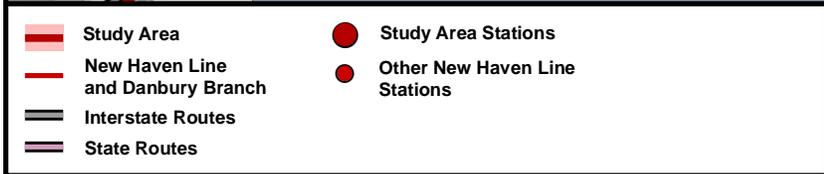
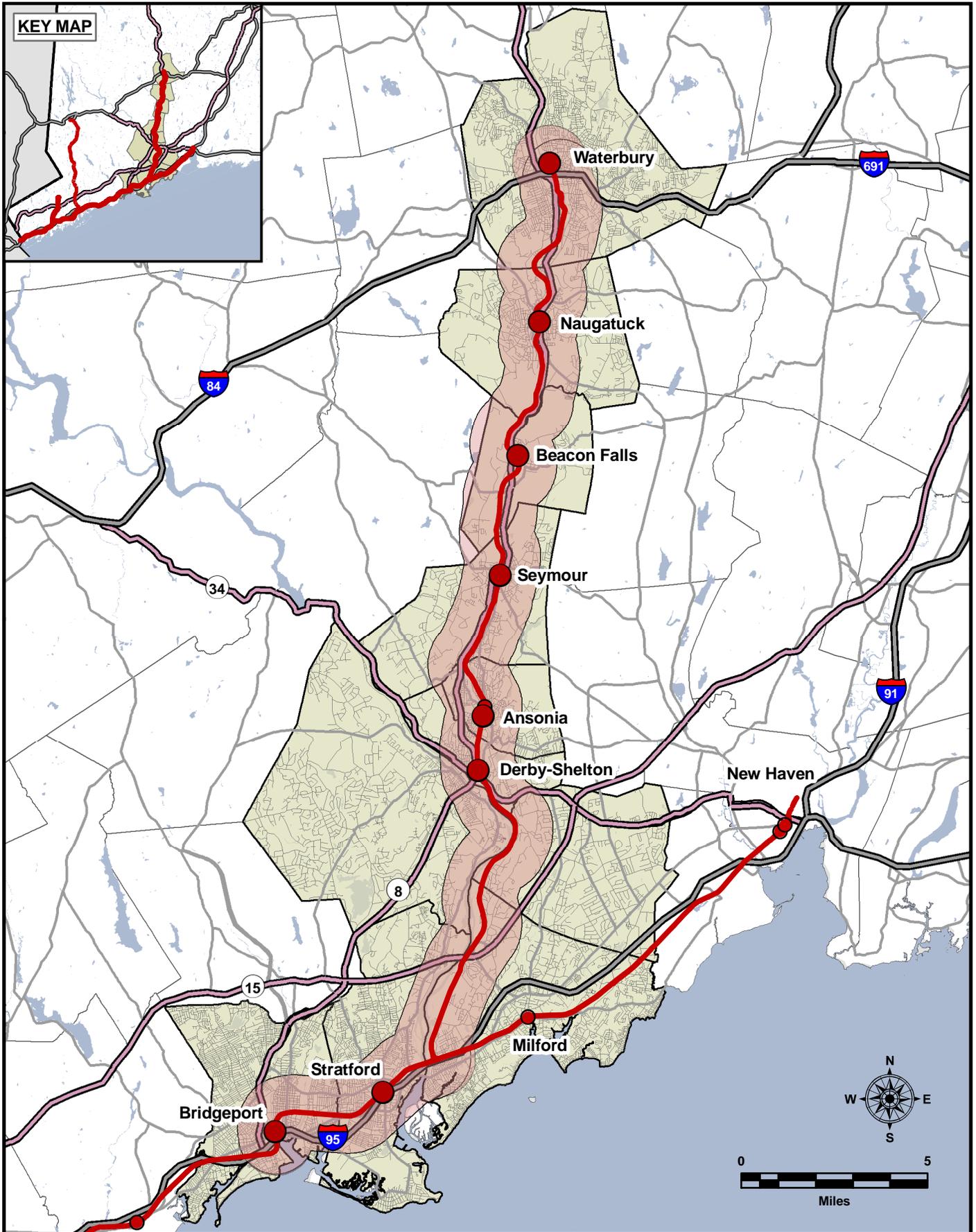
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- | | |
|--|---|
|  Study Area |  State Routes |
|  New Haven Line and Danbury Branch |  Study Area Stations |
|  Shore Line East |  Other New Haven Line Stations |
|  Interstate Routes |  Shore Line East Stations |

Figure 1-1
Study Area





**Figure 1-2
Waterbury Branch**



2.0 TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL TOD?

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is typically defined as compact development within easy walking distance of transit stations (typically a half mile) that contains a mix of uses such as housing, jobs, shops, restaurants and entertainment (Reconnecting America, 2009). TOD offers the opportunity for infill development and redevelopment in underutilized areas and can include a variety of housing types and prices. Concentrating employment, residential, retail, and leisure activities near transit stations and providing a walkable environment can make transit service more viable, at the same time reducing the number of automobile trips and improving mobility. There are also secondary economic and social benefits associated with TODs, which have the potential to generate value for community in terms creating and retaining jobs.

Successful transit oriented development creates synergy within a community by combining innovative urban development and current market opportunities to enhance residential and commercial activity. The best TODs provide pedestrians with convenient, safe, and pleasant access to transit stations, surrounding businesses, and other services. Transit oriented development designs include buildings located within walking distance of a station, with retail services located on the ground floor to capture pedestrian traffic. In commercial areas, the retail and entertainment activities should be located closer to the station than other land uses. Major commercial centers and businesses that serve the commuters on daily basis can be connected directly to the transit facility. TODs provide pedestrian friendly public spaces and avoid pedestrian barriers like cul-de-sacs. The transit facility should provide different modes of transportation like walking paths, “kiss-n-ride” areas, bike racks, and where appropriate parking (Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, 2001).

2.2 TOD PROGRAMS IN CONNECTICUT

2.2.1 TOD Pilot Program

In 2007, Public Act No. 07-7 authorized the State Bond Commission to issue up to \$5 million in state bonds to CTDOT for the purposes of establishing a transit-oriented development pilot program. As a part of this program, the state has identified potential station area development projects in various rail and bus corridors throughout the state. In addition, the TOD Pilot Program funds can be used for strategic transportation projects, projects that are substantially funded by state, local or federal governments, and projects where substantial planning is either underway or completed. Awards ranging from \$250,000 to \$1 million can also be used for designated TOD projects when participating towns execute a memorandum of understanding

involving one or more regional planning agencies. This memorandum of understanding should include either work plan, budget, anticipated work products, geographically defined TOD zones, time frame for completion of the project, identity of the administering entity of the grant, and identity of participating municipalities; or it should include a TOD plan or station area plan, TOD development overlay zone, selection of preferred development approach, implementation of TOD plan, market assessment of TOD implementation plan, detailed environmental and brownfield remediation plan, and development and joint development agreements (State of Connecticut, Public Act No. 07-7, 2007). Three State agencies have primary responsibility for implementing the program: the Office of Policy and Management, the Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Department of Transportation.

2.2.2 Other State and Regional Initiatives

Conservation and Development Policy Plan for Connecticut 2005-2010

One of the growth management principles of Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management is to "concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options" (Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, 2005). The State's current Conservation and Development Policy Plan outlines the policy to promote compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns around public transportation stations and along public transportation corridors. The tools and strategies employed to implement this policy include encouraging affected municipalities to enact transit supportive zoning regulations within a quarter mile of existing or proposed stations; incentives for developers to invest in projects that complement both the community development goals within the transit corridor and the transit system operations; incentives for individuals to live within walking distance to public transportation facilities; state tax incentives for businesses that locate in areas accessible to public transportation facilities; emphasizing clustering of mixed-use, mixed-income development in pedestrian friendly villages to reduce the number of automobile trips; encouraging an appropriate mix of services near transit stations that accommodate the needs of working families and the transit dependent; and providing a network of pedestrian and bicycle paths and greenways that are safe and provide convenient access to the transit system (Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, 2005).

Regional Plans

Transit oriented development is also consistent with the regional plans developed by the Valley Council of Governments (VCOG) and the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV). As a part of its *Strategic Plan of Conservation and Development for the All-American Valley*, VCOG will continue to encourage and seek developments that utilize the transit system (Valley Council of Governments, 2008). VCOG also recently received \$400,000 in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding to study potential TOD opportunities in the region.

In their *Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Plan of Conservation and Development*, the COGCNV presents the goal to "improve the quality of life for current and future residents of the Central Naugatuck Valley Region by promoting orderly conservation and development of the Region as a whole, while encouraging community identity and character." In order to achieve this goal, some recommendations put forth by the COGCNV are: encouraging settlement patterns that reduce the rate of land consumption, facilitating sustained and coordinated efforts

to renovate brownfield sites, protecting water quality in the Region, relating land use intensity to the capability of the land, supporting efforts to protect natural resources, and encouraging considering the of impact on natural resources. The Region also recommends the improvement and expansion of transportation options, and to coordinate the land use to transportation actions (Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, 1998).

2.3 REPORT METHODOLOGY

As a part of the effort to identify TOD sites along the Waterbury Branch, six existing stations along the branch were studied. Potential TOD sites were identified within a quarter mile radius of each station. These sites include “Ongoing TOD Initiatives” – sites that have already been identified by the town or by private developers and are at various stages of development or construction – and “Other Potential TOD Sites” identified based on their potential for development or redevelopment. Sites identified for conservation or preservation by the Connecticut DEP or in communities’ Plans for Conservation and Development were avoided.

To identify potential TOD sites, the State of Connecticut’s Plan of Conservation and Development, local municipalities’ development plans, and local land use and zoning were all studied. In addition, meetings hosted by COGCNV on July 16, 2009 and VCOG on July 29, 2009 were held to update local stakeholders on the Waterbury and New Canaan Branch Lines Study, garner feedback on proposed alternatives, and gather information on ongoing and planned development projects and policies in the corridor. Minutes of these meetings can be found in the Appendix.

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3.0 WATERBURY STATION TOD SITES

Waterbury Station, the northernmost stop on the branch, is located at 333 Meadow Street, opposite Library Park, on the western edge of the downtown. West of the station, the Naugatuck River runs parallel to Route 8. The existing station has a high-level platform with some surface parking facility in the station area. This chapter discusses zoning and land use in the City of Waterbury and identifies existing and potential TOD sites around Waterbury Station.

3.1 LAND USE

“Land use patterns in Waterbury have been shaped by the City’s industrial past, and continue to evolve in response to both market forces and public priorities” (City of Waterbury, 2005). This is especially true for the Waterbury Station area, where industrial land use accounts for the highest percentage of land use type, with more than 31% of the land is used for industrial purposes. This is followed by vacant land and land used for surface parking not ancillary to other uses, which accounts for about 27% of land uses. Institutional uses account for more than 21% of the total land uses in the study area, about 8% of the land is used for commercial purposes, and less than 2% of land is used for mixed use developments and parks. In addition to this, about 2% of land is used for religious, civic, and philanthropic purposes. Less than 3% of land in the Waterbury Station area is currently used for residential purposes. No land use data is available for about 3.8% of the lands (City of Waterbury GIS Department, 2009). In the City as a whole, residential land uses account for the highest percentage with more than 40% of land used for residential purposes. This is followed by vacant land at 27%, and open space at 10%. The commercial land uses account for 5%, industrial 7%, and institutional 6%. Mixed uses and office land uses have negligible contributions, and no data is available for 3% of the land uses (City of Waterbury GIS Department, 2009). Figure 3-1 shows the various land uses in the Waterbury Station area.

3.2 ZONING

The City of Waterbury is divided into twelve Zoning Districts that can be broadly categorized as Residential, Commercial, and Industrial. Table 3-1 summarizes the zoning codes and permitted uses for each zoning district.

TABLE 3-1: WATERBURY ZONING DISTRICTS AND PURPOSE

Zoning Category	Zoning Districts and Zoning Codes	Purpose
Residential	Large Lot Single-Family Residence District (RS-12)	To provide for single-family residences sited on lots having a minimum area of 12,000 Sq Ft.

TABLE 3-1: WATERBURY ZONING DISTRICTS AND PURPOSE

Zoning Category	Zoning Districts and Zoning Codes	Purpose
	Single-Family Residence District (RS)	To provide for single-family residences sited on lots having a minimum area of 7,500 Sq Ft.
	Low Density Residence District (RL)	To provide for one family dwellings sited on lots having minimum areas of 6,000 Sq Ft.
	Moderate Density Residence District (RM)	To provide for housing at a maximum density of about 25 dwelling units per acre.
	High Density Residence District (RH)	To provide medium and high-rise multifamily residential structures at a maximum density of about 54 units per acre.
	Residential Office District (RO)	To provide for financial, professional, personal services and other similar office and/or multi-family residence structures.
Commercial	Neighborhood Shopping District (CN)	To provide for retail centers like convenience shopping goods and services required to meet the daily needs of residents in immediate neighborhood.
	Arterial Commercial District (CA)	To provide suitable locations for commercial uses that serve the needs of motorists, and business services.
	General Commercial District (CG)	To improve older shopping areas which are located along major arterial streets near the Central Business District.
	Central Business District (CBD)	To encourage intensive development of a diversity of land uses within the area.
Industrial	Industrial Park District (IP)	To provide locations for activities such as light industry, wholesaling, warehousing, transportation and distribution facilities in a low density, park-like atmosphere.
	General Industrial District (IG)	To provide for the location of the intensively developed, older, heavier types of industry.

Source: City of Waterbury, Connecticut Zoning Regulations, December 2007

Table Notes: 1. For details on permitted uses, and zoning regulations, refer to Waterbury, Connecticut Zoning Regulations.

As shown in Figure 3-2, the quarter mile study area is comprised of CA, CBD, IG, RH, and RO zoning districts that allow a range of commercial, residential, and industrial uses. More than half of the land in the study area is zoned IG and is concentrated west of the railroad station. The eastern portion of the study is comprised of lands predominantly zoned as CBD, RO, and RH. In addition, there are lands zoned as CA on the northern fringe of the study area (City of Waterbury GIS Department, 2009).

3.3 TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT NEAR WATERBURY STATION

Seventeen TOD sites were identified within the quarter mile study area. Eleven of these sites have already been identified by the City, Waterbury Development Corporation (WDC), and private developers, and an additional six sites were identified by the Waterbury and New

Canaan Branch Lines study team based on a GIS search and site visits to the station area. See Figure 3-3 for the location of these sites.

3.3.1 Ongoing TOD Initiatives

The Waterbury Development Corporation identified various ongoing or proposed projects in the vicinity of Waterbury Station. The City of Waterbury has also identified blighted properties targeted for redevelopment in its GIS database. These sites are described below and shown in Figure 3-3. Ongoing studies of the I-84/Route 8 interchange and Naugatuck Greenway could also impact development in the station area.

226-228 Meadow Street

A 3½-story, 30,000-square foot office building is currently under construction on the west side of Meadow Street between I-84 and Waterbury Station. The building, which is walking distance from the station, replaces an older building that was demolished on the site. As of summer 2009, the exterior of the building is completed, and interior construction is underway.

Freight Street Area Potential Development

WDC indicated that there has been interest in developing the area along Freight Street for twenty years. The corridor is currently dominated by older industrial properties. Earlier proposals for Freight Street include featured Class A office space, upscale high-rise apartment complexes and a supporting retail component. However, recent discussions have focused on a major medical facility, possibly as a joint venture of Waterbury Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital.

Existing and proposed development in the Freight Street area are likely to be affected by the proposed Jackson Street connector between Thomaston Avenue/West Main Street intersection and the Bank Street/Jackson Street intersection, as well as by the proposed improvements to the Route 8 interchange, both of which could substantially change traffic patterns in the area.

West Main Street Corridor

Several private rehabilitation projects are currently underway along both sides of West Main Street from Route 8 to Meadow Street. These projects involve interior rehabilitation and are slowly being undertaken as time and money permit. The buildings along this corridor are four-to-five stories and have ground floor commercial spaces, with upper floors used for residential purposes. Additional private rehabilitations have also taken place Willow Street from the West Main Street intersection.

Bender Plumbing Supplies Company

This project would involve the construction of a 50,000-square foot wholesale and distribution facility for the Bender Plumbing Supply Company. The site is in the Cherry Street Industrial Park and is located at the corner of North Elm Street, Cherry Avenue, and Maple Street, about ¾ mile from the station. The project is currently in the design phase, and WDC is assisting the developers with the acquisition of four underutilized/vacant properties necessary to accommodate the building. Although the site is beyond the quarter mile study area, it is a major commercial construction project within walking distance of the station with the potential to attract Waterbury Branch commuters.

Loyola Development Project

The Loyola Development Project is located on both sides of South Main Street from Benedict Street on west side to Mill Street on east side, and from I-84 on north side and Jewelry/Bond Streets on south. The project was conceptualized by a priest at a local church and is planned to be a mixed use development that would include single family homes with some commercial development like banks, a drug store, or food establishments. Although the site is about a half mile from the station, it is a major development that could provide TOD opportunities within walking distance of the station.

70 Bank Street

A developer is currently completing a four-story, 13,000-square foot building with 18 new residential dwelling units in the Waterbury central business district. Although the site is just beyond the quarter mile study area, it is a major residential development within walking distance of the station.

City of Waterbury Redevelopment Sites

Five sites within the quarter mile study area are identified for redevelopment in the City of Waterbury's GIS database:

- **Site 1**

This site, located on Judd Street, is approximately 0.16 acre. The site is identified as a vacant land to be used for the construction of one-to-three story apartments.

- **Site 2**

Site 2, located on Gilbert Street, is approximately 0.04 acre and is slated for two-family residential use.

- **Site 3**

Site 3, a 0.07-acre site located on French Street, is currently developed and identified for single-family residential development. The site though very small in area when developed could add to the transit oriented development.

- **Site 4**

Site 4, located on the corner of French Street behind West George Street, is approximately 0.12 acre. The site is currently developed and identified for three- to four-family residential uses.

- **Site 5**

Site 5, located at the corner of Willow Street and Grove Street, is approximately 0.18 acre. The site is currently developed and is identified for one- to three-story apartment use. The site is the largest of the five sites identified for redevelopment in the City's GIS database.

3.3.2 Other Potential TOD Sites

In addition to the sites already identified by planners and developers, six potential TOD sites were identified by the Waterbury and New Canaan Branch Lines study team.

Site 6

Site 6, located on Meadow Street, is approximately 1.4 acres. The site is comprised of eight parcels that includes a portion of Brown Place. All eight parcels are identified as vacant land zoned under the zoning district IG. The site is currently used as surface parking, probably by Triumph Church of Christ and Waterbury Assembly of God, which neighbor the site. Based on the zoning regulation, the permitted uses on the site are heavy industry uses. Because the sites are currently used as parking facilities, any new development should incorporate parking in its development plans.

The close proximity of the site to the Waterbury Station makes it ideal for TOD, with Meadow Street providing pedestrian access to the site.

Site 7

Site 7 located on Meadow Street is less than a quarter mile from the Waterbury Station. The 0.3 acre site is comprised of a single parcel and is currently used as a surface parking lot.

The site is zoned under the CBD zoning district, which encourages intensive development with mixed land uses. Because the site is currently used for parking, any potential development on the site should incorporate parking.

The site is less than a quarter mile from the Waterbury Station, a convenient walk to the station for people living or working at the site.

Site 8

Site 8 located on State Street, is less than a quarter mile from the Waterbury Station. The 0.7-acre site is comprised of five parcels and is currently used as a surface parking lot.

The identified land use for the site is “surface parking not ancillary to use,” and a small parcel in the site is identified as vacant land. The site is zoned under CBD, which encourages intensive development with mixed use. Because the site is currently used as a parking lot, any proposed development should incorporate parking.

Site 9

Site 9, located between West Main Street and Mitchell Avenue is approximately 0.6 acre. The site is comprised of two parcels joined to form a single property and is currently open space. However, the land uses identified for the site are residential and vacant land, and the site is zoned for residential development under the RO and RH districts. Based on the zoning regulations, the maximum allowable build-up on the site would be a 12-story structure with 30% lot coverage for RH, and 30% lot coverage with building height not available for RO.

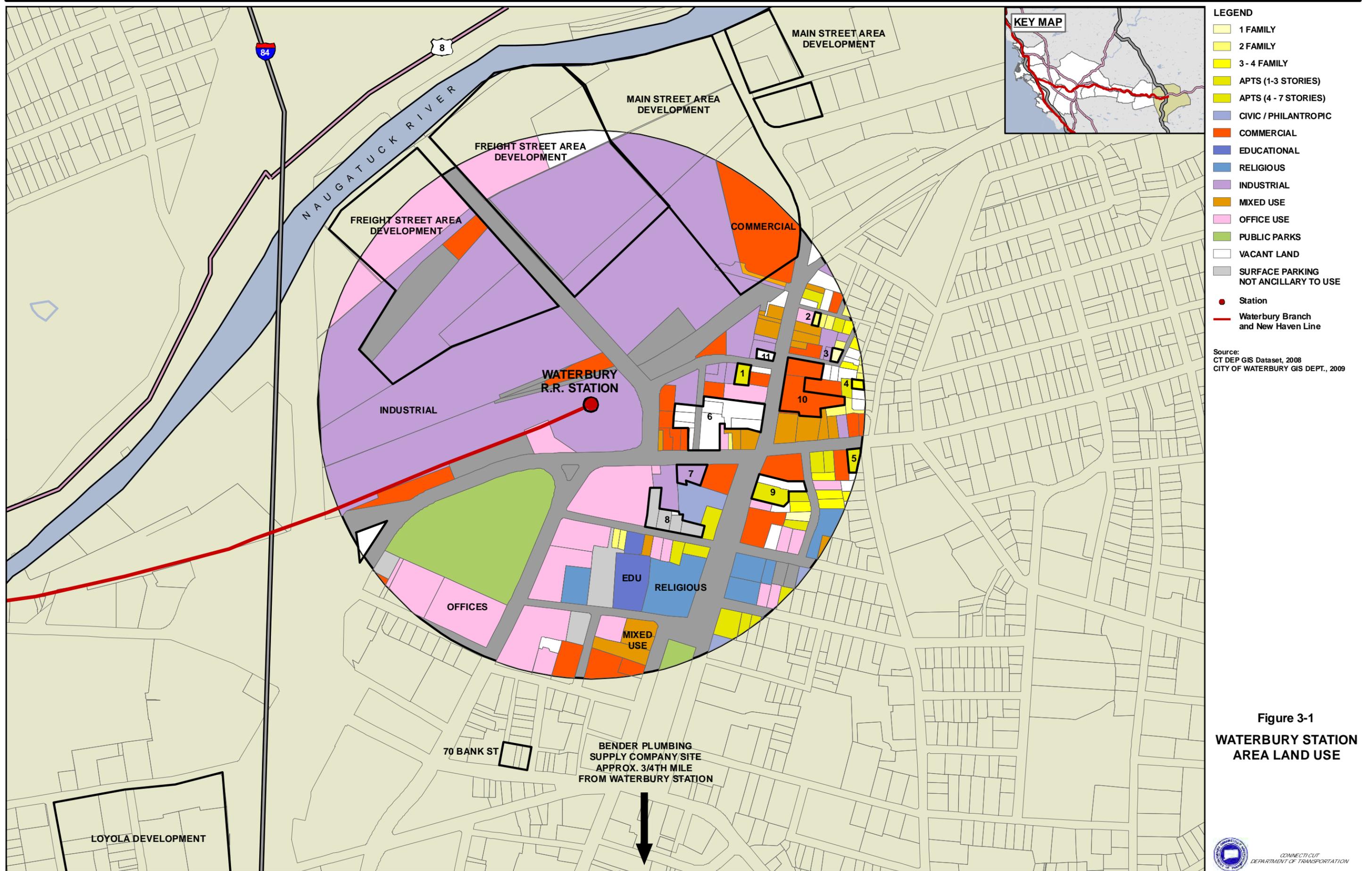
Site 10

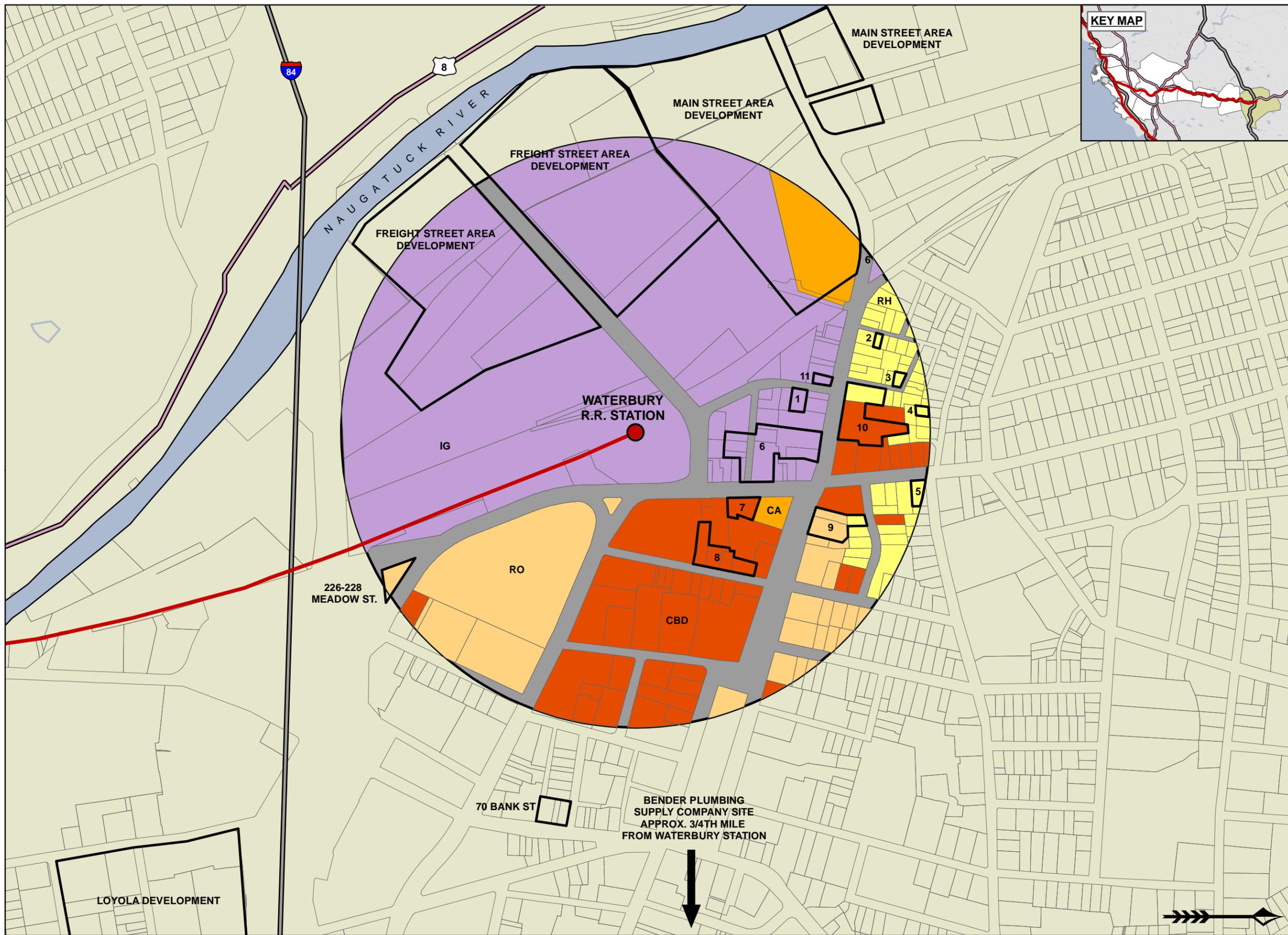
Site 10 located on West Main Street about 0.4 miles from the Waterbury Station. The area of the site is approximately 1 acre. The site is comprised of two parcels: one currently used as a parking lot, and the other the site of two vacant industrial buildings. The parking lot parcel is zoned under the CBD zoning district, which encourages intensive development with a mix of land uses, while the parcel is zoned RH, which allows medium- to high-rise multi-family residential structures. As a part of the site is presently used as a parking lot, any new development should incorporate parking.

Site 11

Site 11 located at the corner of Judd Street and West Main Street, is approximately 0.2 acre. The site is currently vacant and is zoned IG for industrial uses.

The neighboring land uses are industrial, commercial, and mixed use and include a worship center, lounge, and eating establishments, making the site appropriate for a range of uses. However, the small area of the site may limit the type and size development.





LEGEND

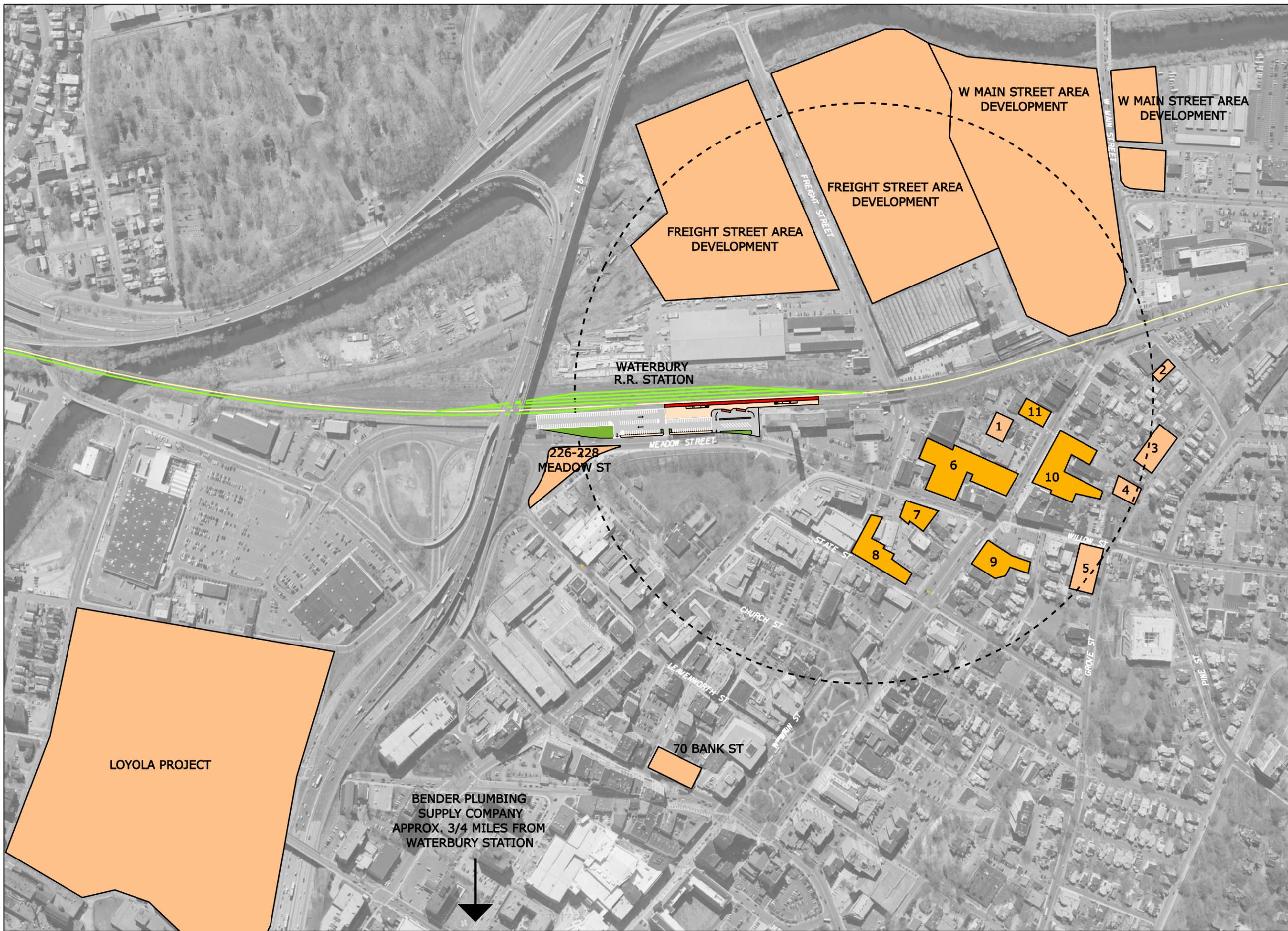
- CA
- CBD
- IG
- RH
- RO
- Station
- Waterbury Branch and New Haven Line

Source:
 CT DEP GIS Dataset, 2008
 CITY OF WATERBURY GIS DEPT., 2009



Figure 3-2
WATERBURY STATION
AREA ZONING





- LEGEND**
- EXISTING R.R. TRACK
 - SIDING/NEW R.R. TRACK
 - R.R. STATION PARKING
 - R.R. PLATFORM
 - ONGOING TOD INITIATIVES
 - OTHER POTENTIAL TOD SITES

FIGURE 3-3
WATERBURY STATION
ONGOING AND
OTHER POTENTIAL
TOD SITES

CROSSING DATA

MILE	CROSSING STREET/FEATURE
6.16	UG STAMFORD RD. 00

AG - AT GRADE
 UG - UNDERGRADE
 OH - OVERHEAD



WATERBURY AND NEW CANAAN
BRANCH LINES
NEEDS & FEASIBILITY STUDY
PROJECT NO. 170-2562

WATERBURY BRANCH LINE
WATERBURY R.R. STATION
TOD SITES



