

From the Mountains to the Sea

ROUTES 77 AND 146 CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



prepared for:

**The Route 77 and 146 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and
The Connecticut Department of Transportation**

The Route 77 and 146 Advisory Committee

The following individuals have participated in Advisory Committee meetings. Each of the First Selectmen were asked to appoint representatives of a cross-section of their community. In addition, representatives of various agency and stakeholder groups were asked to participate, or volunteered to participate in meetings:

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Sandy Rux, Economic Development, Town of Guilford
Tim Snider, resident of Branford
Martin Wright, Guilford Preservation Alliance

Yes, it is a land fair to behold; its feet in the salt sea, accessible to mermaids and it may be visited by the Flying Dutchman; its head in the clouds and sunshine affording regions from which one may view the pagentry of New England — pasture lots with stone walls, white farm-houses and whiter church spires, lakes filled with sweet waters, woods, mile beyond mile, distant hills like goldern patterns in the tapestry of the purple haze.

There are higher hills and mightier rivers and forests more vast. — There are not any more beautiful.

Charles D. Hubbard, Old Guilford, 1939

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cover photos: Aerial view of Quonnipaug Mountain (left) and vicinity of Leetes Island (right)

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The Connecticut Department of Transportation**

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December 1996

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Due to reproduction costs, not all technical appendices have been included in every copy of the final report. Full versions of the appendices have been provided to each town, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation.



Introduction

In the early Spring of 1996, a team of landscape architects, planners, and engineers, retained by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) with funding from the Federal Highway Administration's Scenic Byway Program, began working with an advisory committee appointed by the Selectmen of Guilford and Branford to find ways of conserving the scenic qualities of the state designated scenic segments of Routes 77 and 146.

While ConnDOT may be responsible for the road and right-of-way, the 'scenery' part is owned by each and every property owner along the way. Land use is a local issue under town control. Plus, there are many users of the road whose needs must be considered. To keep a scenic road "scenic", a conscious collaboration is needed – and everyone who 'owns' Routes 77 and 146 must be part of it.

That is not practical, so an Advisory Committee has been acting as a kind of 'surrogate community' with representatives of various town boards and commissions, property owners, small businesses, land trusts, preservation and historical societies. The Advisory Committee has helped the planning team in reviewing and revising goals and objectives for the plan, as well as the concepts and strategies.

With the Advisory Committee in place, the Planning Team began conducting extensive inventories to determine the 'intrinsic values' of Routes 77 and 146 – those special qualities of countryside and village – including stone walls, rows of mature trees, historic buildings and villages, mature roadside forests, high quality vistas, wetlands and coastal marshes. Inventory maps were prepared of the entire corridor. The team's engineers prepared a highway safety analysis to identify any potential trouble spots that needed to be considered as part of the planning process. The results of these inventories are included in Chapter II, Existing Conditions.

A well attended public meeting was held May 21 to identify issues and concerns about existing land use and management practices along the routes, as well as the difficult issue of increasing competition for the

use of the roads from bicyclists, joggers, tourists, and residents. The overwhelming desire of the meeting attendees and the advisory committee was to identify ways to guide the "uses" and the "users" along these two scenic roads, rather than adapting the roads to the changing demands being placed upon them.

Issues and Concerns

While most of the residents expressed a concern about how best to keep the scenic roads just the way they are today, a number of other issues were also raised:

- the purpose of the original designation as a scenic road (and the creation of the scenic road legislation) was for preservation rather than tourism development; and a major concern was expressed about the impact of large scale, inappropriate tourism development;
- uncontrolled development "will eventually extinguish the reasons people come here in the first place;"



Figure 1 - Inventory maps of the Route 77 and 146 Corridor were on display at the Spring 1996 public meeting at the Guilford Community Center.



Figure 2 - Advisory Committee members review goals and objectives at the Guilford Library.

In response to these and other issues, the study team and advisory committee developed an overall vision, and a set of accompanying goals and objectives to guide further development of the plan. These goals and objectives are located at the beginning of Chapter III, Planning Concepts.

Keeping in mind that the overriding vision, goals and objectives are to keep these scenic roads just the way they are today, the plan also recognizes that there must be a way to guide the activities of the users (including all modes of transportation) and the use of adjoining lands to adapt to the existing conditions of the road. The resulting corridor management plan includes four distinct groups of planning concepts:

- a community fund was needed to protect critical views and open space;
- concern was expressed for critical historic sites and districts, especially the stone barn along Route 77 that is close to the road and the four historic districts that are found along these two routes;
- traffic volume and traffic speed is a persistent problem, especially in heavily used pedestrian areas such as Limewood Beach and Stony Creek;
- bicycle safety is a major and growing concern, but the road should not be widened for bicycles, and a separated trail should be pursued;
- safer pedestrian access was needed to help people get out of their cars and enjoy the area on foot or by bicycle;
- utility lines were a major concern – especially those utility lines that interfered with particularly attractive scenic views;
- the electrification of AMTRAK was a big concern especially the impact of the paralleling station proposed along Route 146;
- light pollution was identified as an issue and ways were suggested to reduce the impact of roadway lighting on the night sky;
- concerns were raised about inappropriate roadside management, especially tree cutting without reasonable public notice and excessive widening of intersections and bridges;
- questions were raised about the Jersey barriers on Limewood Beach and if the appearance of them could be improved.

1. Resource Protection Strategies

- preserving visually prominent landscapes and high quality views;
- preserving stone walls and mature trees.

2. Strategies for Getting Around by Bicycle and by Foot

- directing visitors to appropriate places to enjoy the scenery;
- creating a few more places to pull off and get out of the car;
- finding ways to give drivers more clues that they are in a pedestrian oriented place and making it safer for people to walk around.

3. Design Guidelines for the Road and Right-of-Way

- working with ConnDOT to enhance the overall appearance of the immediate roadside environment (shoulders, signs, lighting, landscape maintenance and new planting)

4. Design Guidelines for Conserving the View and Context

- working with property owners to ensure that new development fits with the landscape and architecture that make Branford and Guilford unique.

Perhaps the biggest question raised by the advisory committee and attendees at public meetings is the question of how the plan will be implemented. This plan relies upon the commitment of each town, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and other state and regional agencies, neighbors, civic groups, land trusts and others, who must work together at coordinating the everyday decisions that shape the form and appearance of these two scenic routes.

The first such coordination opportunity exists in each town's Plan of Conservation and Development, where key strategies in the corridor management plan can be incorporated into the overall policies that shape the use of land. The second opportunity is in the pursuit of funds to implement high priority early action projects, such as improving pedestrian circulation in the vicinity of the Montowese St. Bridge or pedestrian safety improvements around the Guilford Green.

The third, and most important, opportunity is in how the plan can be incorporated into the day to day activities of those that use, live nearby, or visit these two scenic roads. For those that are responsible for the maintenance and management of the road and right-of-way, it means incorporating some of the plan's recommendations into general roadway maintenance activities, such as upgrading guiderails

to a more attractive style when they need replacing. For those that live along the road it means working together with neighbors to clean up litter and coordinate plantings along the road to achieve an overall greater effect than would be possible if each person were to act individually. For those that visit these places, it means encouraging people to park their cars and explore them on foot or by bicycle.

The Towns of Branford and Guilford are fortunate in that there is a strong track record of community and volunteer support for land conservation and civic improvements. The plan relies upon the continuation of current efforts to conserve open space, guide development to appropriate places, improve safety for pedestrians and bicycles, and continue to take great care in maintaining the beauty of the roadside environment.



Existing Conditions

Character and Quality of the Route 77 and 146 Scenic Road Corridor

The Route 146 and Route 77 Scenic Road Corridor parallels the rocky and marshy coastline along Route 146 for 12.6 miles from its intersection with Eades St. near the Branford Green to US Route 1, and then climbs the coastal slope of Connecticut for 11.56 miles from the Guilford Green to the Durham Town Line.

The features of the scenic road corridor include coastal views, extensive systems of salt marshes, over 35 historic sites and 4 historic districts, two traditional town greens, a few remaining active farms, an attractive river running parallel to Route 77, a heavily used recreational lake, and interesting geologic features. Many of the nearby trails along Route 146 are part of the annual walk around the Town of Branford. The Westwoods area in Guilford also includes extensive and popular walking trails. Along Route 77, the Bluff Head Mountain area has extensive walking trails and dramatic views. Both routes are heavily used by bicyclists.

More than just features, there have already been extensive efforts on the part of the Guilford Land Conservation Trust, the Branford Land Trust, the Towns of Guilford and Branford, the State Department of Environmental Protection, and other private citizens and interest groups to conserve lands for open space use, and improve opportunities for public access.

The section of the Connecticut Coast in the Branford and Guilford areas is part of the coastal segment between Lighthouse Point and Guilford Point (as classified by Arthur Bloom). According to Bloom, and as described in [A Moveable Shore. The Fate of the Connecticut Coast](#) by Patton and Kent, this segment consists of rock outcrops and only sparse glacial sediment. The coastline is predominantly marsh with few beaches. Route 146 traverses a

section of the Connecticut Coast that is unique for several reasons. Patton and Kent further differentiate this segment of the Connecticut Coast as having the “smallest percentage of sandy beach (13 percent, seven miles), the smallest percentage of glacial till (10 percent, three miles) and the greatest percentage of bedrock (57 percent, 16 miles).” They go on to site the bedrock knobs of the Thimble Islands (visible from Route 146) and the stability of the beaches (although the most severe erosion is also found at the mouth of the West River).

The gentle drop in the elevation from the north to the south of the Coastal Peneplain (see Figure 3) is also visible as you descend along Route 77 from Bluff Head Mountain past Lake Quonnipaug, to the great

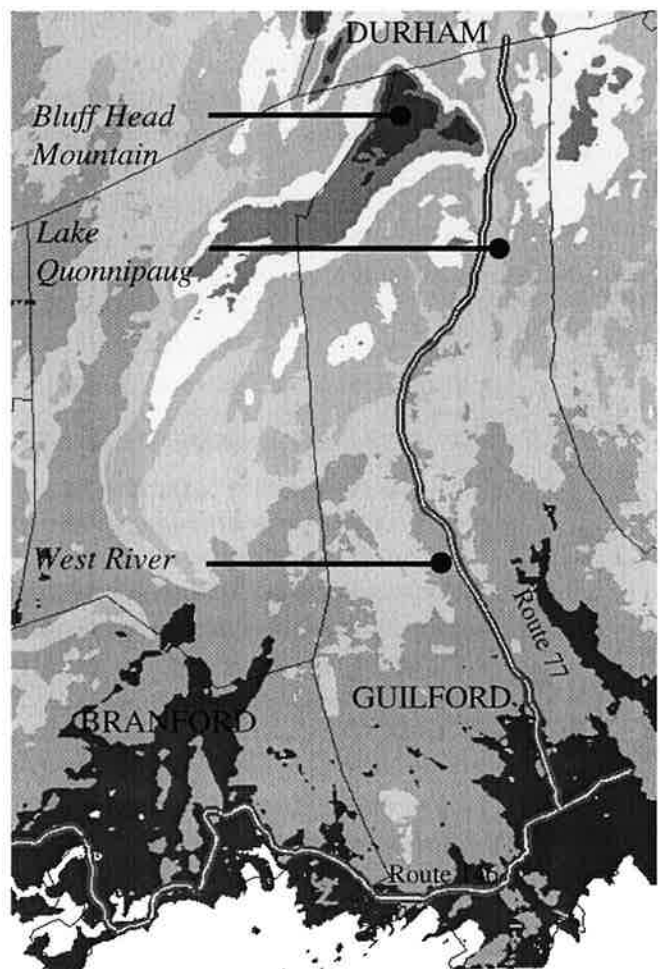


Figure 3 - Route 77 drops gradually in elevation from the north to the south across the Coastal Peneplain. Each progressively darker band of elevation represents an approximately 100 foot drop in elevation.

green valley at the head of the West River and then through the more tightly configured stream valley south of Route 80 — eventually opening up as the West River becomes influenced by the tides forming an extensive system of coastal marshes.

The study area — defined as the lands that can be seen from either Route 77 or Route 146 — is shown on Figure 4. While at first glance the land seems to be very gentle in slope, there are prominent landforms and shorelines that can be seen from many different places along the routes (darker gray areas on Figure 4). These visually prominent areas play a critical role in the overall perception of the traveler along both Route 77 and Route 146. Bluff Head and Mount Quonnipaug are particularly pronounced and can be seen for many miles. The more narrow West River corridor is defined by the stream valley. The coastal area also has prominent landforms which are mostly the rock outcroppings perpendicular to the shore — creating a series of smaller “outdoor rooms” framing attractive coastal views.

The study area has been broken down into eight sub-areas or road segments. These sub-areas are identified in Figure 5, and are as follows:

BRANFORD

Branford Center	Eades St. to Sybil Ave. (at the sharp turn)
Shoreline Communities	Limewood Ave., Hotchkiss Grove Rd., Elizabeth St., Pine Orchard Ave. (section of Rt. 146)
Inland Loop	Blackstone Ave., Totoket Rd., Stony Creek Rd. (Route 146 section)
Leetes Island Road	Leetes Island Road to Town Line

GUILFORD

Leetes Island Road (cont).	Leetes Island Road, Water St. (to West River crossing)
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Guilford Center	Route 146 - Water St. from West River to Green, Boston St. to Boston Post Road (at end of scenic designation)
West River Corridor	Durham Road (I-95 to Route 80)
North Guilford	Durham Road (Route 80 to Lake Drive - northern end of Quonnipaug Lake)
Bluff Head Mountain	Durham Road (northern end of Quonnipaug Lake to Town Line)

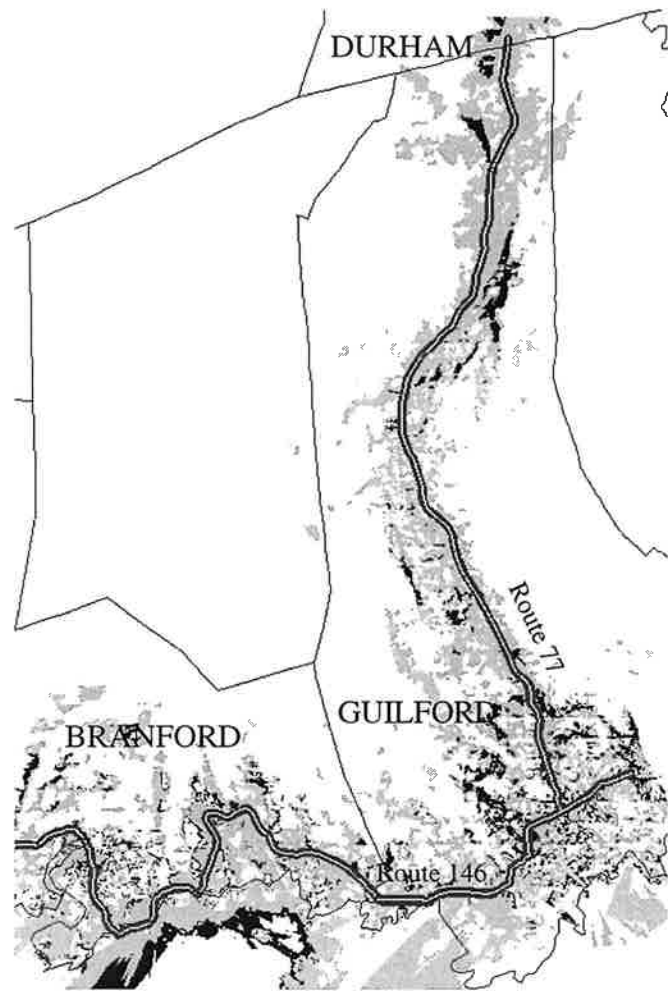
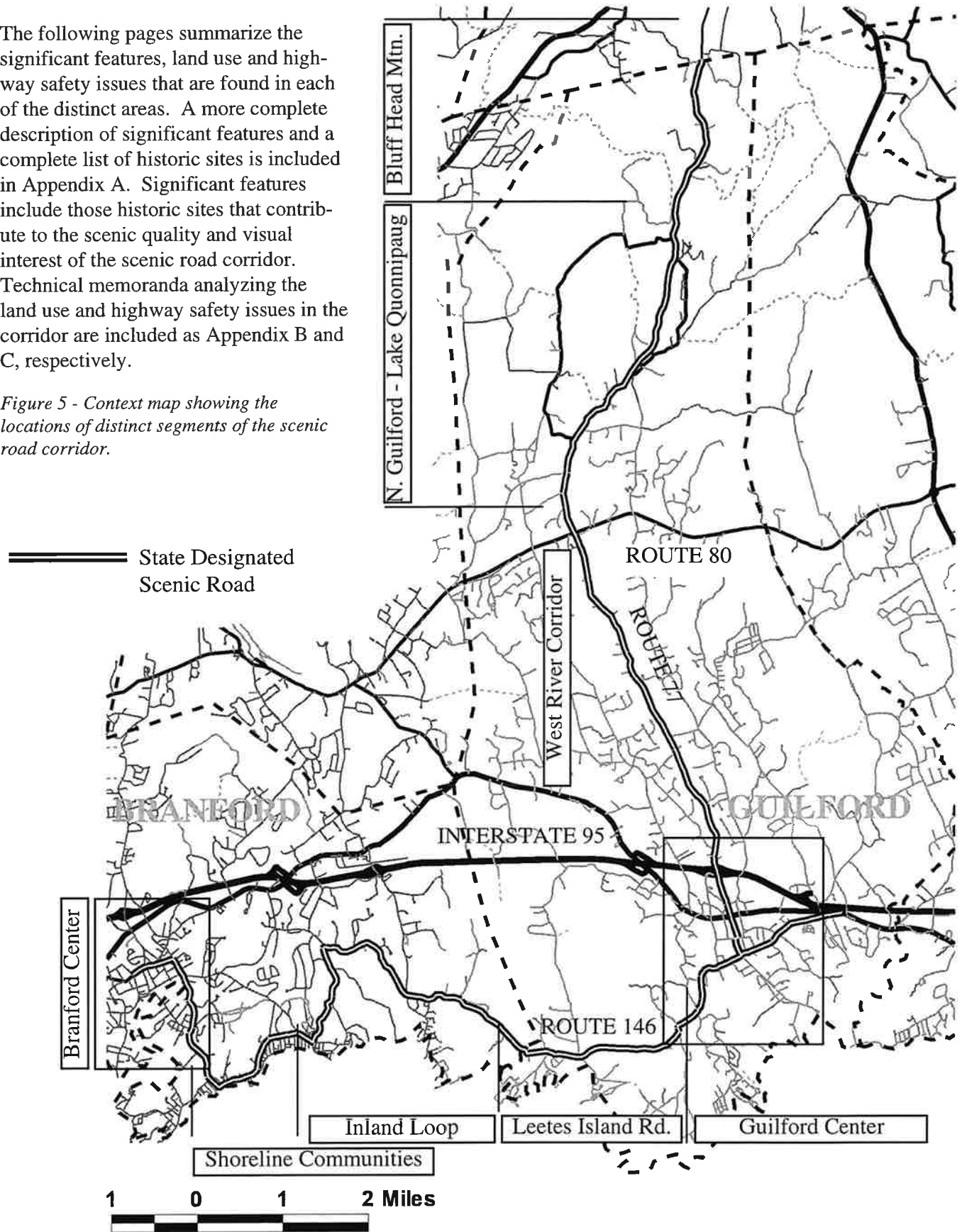


Figure 4 - The study area is defined by the viewshed, or what can potentially be seen from the road (grey areas).

The following pages summarize the significant features, land use and highway safety issues that are found in each of the distinct areas. A more complete description of significant features and a complete list of historic sites is included in Appendix A. Significant features include those historic sites that contribute to the scenic quality and visual interest of the scenic road corridor. Technical memoranda analyzing the land use and highway safety issues in the corridor are included as Appendix B and C, respectively.

Figure 5 - Context map showing the locations of distinct segments of the scenic road corridor.



Existing Conditions: Route 146

Branford Center: Branford Green to Indian Neck

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES:

- The massive Beaux Arts Blackstone Memorial Library serves as a gateway to the historic town center prior to entering the scenic road corridor (part of the *Branford Center Historic District*).
- The district includes 18th to 20th century commercial, institutional, and residential structures, many of high architectural quality -- the core of the community's public and private institutions.
- Continuing along the southern edge of the Branford Town Green, are views up to the churches, Branford Town Hall, and Branford Academy on the Green. Glimpses of retail and commercial buildings are visible to the north across the Green.
- Along this retail section are a number of compatible new in-fill buildings, enhanced by many street improvements, including attractive lighting fixtures, signage, brick sidewalks and crosswalks, and benches along the street and Green.
- Turning south along Montowese Street, immediately visible is the interlaying of residential character, from early 19th century to later (early to mid 20th century) buildings inserted.
- Crossing the Montowese St. Bridge over the Branford River there is an expansive view across the tidal flats to the southwest towards the ruins of the former early 20th century Malleable Iron Foundry which is now fronted by a large marina. (see discussion of pull-off below).
- Along Indian Neck Road the drive is through fairly dense suburban type housing ending at the Indian Neck School, a new structure built behind the original building (#3 on map) which has been substantially altered.
- Continuing south, modest early 20th century housing is located along both sides of the road including newer structures and condominiums.
- Entering Indian Neck, a change is apparent with the feel of an older ocean front village. The triangular intersection is filled on all corners by country and fish markets,



PHOTO COURTESY OF HIGGINS & QUASEBARTH

Figure 6 - Route 146 near the Branford Green.

Lenny's, a local eating institution, and the Indian Neck Co. 9 Firehouse. There are expansive views south and west across the tidal basin flats and onto the ocean.

- A point of interest nearby is the Linden Shores area — with many resort and estate homes of historic interest.

LAND USE AND DESIGN ISSUES:

- How do you get to the scenic road?
 - Identifying a way to get from 1-95 to Route 146 (Exit 54 seems to be the best solution).
 - A more defined entrance is needed, reinforced by informational and directional signage as well as landscaping.
- How do you know you are there once you get there?
 - The Branford Town Green as a whole should be the western gateway to the corridor, the first major element of the scenic roadway — as the central common space, it represents the Town as a whole, and is the logical starting point for scenic drives and bicycle touring.
 - it appears to have an agreed-upon plan, with design guidelines and design review — thus ensuring a long-term continuity.
- The proposed development of a pull-off at the reconstructed Montowese St. bridge over the Branford River (a joint project of the Branford Land Trust and the various civic organizations) will provide an important and safe place to view the scenery.

- The Route 146 link to Indian Neck contains a variety of uses and views:
 - mostly 'in-fill' residential or commercial development, with some potential for improvement of street trees, defining curb cuts, improving pedestrian circulation and using landscape to more clearly define the intersections.
- Of particular interest is the view from Lenny's Restaurant, the appearance of adjacent development, and opportunities for improving the parking lot as a public/private effort.

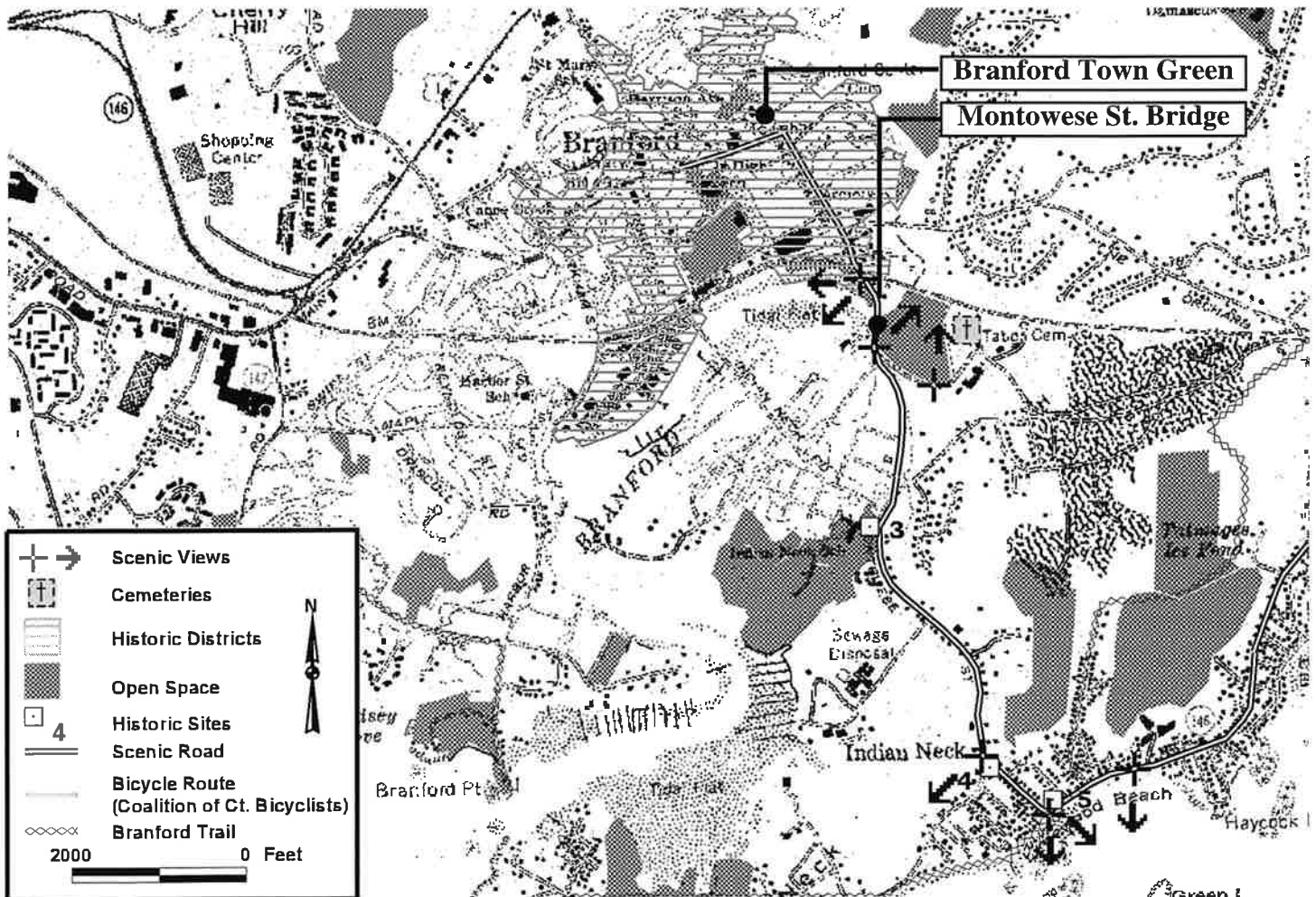
There is an apparent need to coordinate the pedestrian circulation to connect the neighborhoods along Montowese St., with Branford Center across the new bridge and under the AMTRAK line, and to link additional Branford Land Trust properties on the East side of the Montowese St. Bridge.



Figure 7 - Aerial view of Branford Center with the Branford River in the background.

HIGHWAY SAFETY ISSUES

- There were 11,400 vehicles (Average Daily Traffic or ADT) at the area of Montowese St. and Meadows St., and 13 accidents were recorded between 1992-1995 at the intersection of Montowese Street and South Main Street and 10 accidents during the same period at the intersection of Eades St. and South Main Street.



Existing Conditions: Route 146

Shoreline Communities: Indian Neck to Pine Orchard

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES:

- Immediately, sweeping views of Long Island Sound and the Thimble Islands are everywhere as one turns southeast at Limewood Beach.
- There is the feel of a summer colony with densely settled Shingle style 19th century cottages opposite the beach (#5 on map). Again, the historic resources are interlayered with later 20th century housing.
- Continuing along to Hotchkiss Grove Beach are small private streets perpendicular to 146, filled with cottage type residences expanded and altered for year round living, again interlayered with newer structures. Hotchkiss Grove was designed with a road fronting the beach to give access to all people in the community.
- Looking south down these streets are occasional glimpses of Blackstone Rocks and Long Island Sound.
- Turning east toward Pine Orchard, another change is imminent: larger and more gracious early 20th century homes and a sprinkling of large estate type housing. Glimpses down private streets perpendicular to the road also offer some views of the Sound. Pine Orchard (the “Newport of Connecticut”) was filled with expensive homes (8 bedroom summer cottages). The original pines are located at the corner of Spring Rock and Route 146. The Young family developed the area, having purchased it from the Blackstone Family.



Figure 8 - Dramatic view of Long Island Sound and islands with dangerous pullout as the only place to stop.

HIGHWAY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

ISSUES

- The initial segment of this road contains some of the scenic roadway’s most important views but also characterize some of its most contradictory safety features:
 - The first view of the Sound and associated rocky islands, at the 90-degree Limewood Beach turn in the road, is so dramatic as to be dangerous.
 - The roadway along the private Limewood Beach continues those views but is in poor shape, stabilized with a Jersey Barrier.
 - Houses on the land side of the road are extremely close and there is little pedestrian access.

Land Use and Design Issues:

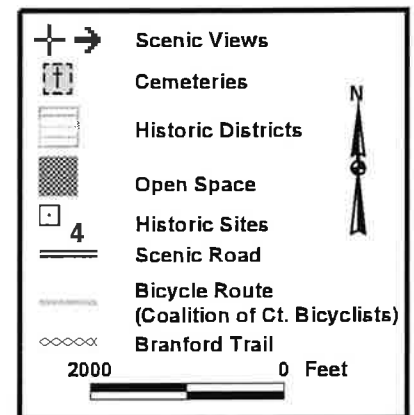
- This shoreline segment, through Haycock Point, Hotchkiss Grove, and Pine Orchard has more intimate views of trees and homes:
 - Private roads in Hotchkiss Grove are unique in that one of the roads fronts the waterfront, creating a semi-public beach for the residents, but the general public can only get glimpses of the waterfront area.
 - An issue of residents may be a concern about increasing tourism traffic and the potential for an increase in unauthorized public use of the private roads.



Figure 9 - Aerial view of Haycock Point and edge of Limewood Beach. (left)



Figure 10 - Aerial view of Young's Pond.



Existing Conditions: Route 146

Inland Loop: Pine Orchard to Leetes Island

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- The transition point from the Shoreline Communities to the Inland Loop with its curving narrow roads, is marked by a small pond as one turns north on Totoket Road.
- At this intersection, the view across the Pond to Pine Orchard Union Chapel (#6 on map) affords views of the well-groomed, large and gracious high-style, early 20th-century waterfront houses.
- Young's Pond Park and the golf course to the north are attractive visual features that offer potential for a more designated place to pull off and learn the story of the Young family's role in the development of Branford.
- There is also potential for public pedestrian pathways (and possibly bike paths) adjacent to but not within the right-of-way.
- The northern section of Totoket Road is the location of two notable residences built almost 100 years apart: the 1747 Isaac Hoadley House (#7 on map) and across the street, the circa 1860 Italianate house (#8 on map).
- Damascus Cemetery is a byway feature marking a sharp turn in the route toward Stony Creek. Better signage is needed to mark this turn.
- This was an area of few farms so historic resources are relatively scarce along the segment between Damascus Cemetery and Stony Creek, with a few early residences (#9 and #10 on map) interlayered with later, 20th-century houses.
- The Trolley Line Trail and properties managed by the Branford Land Trust provide extensive walking trails (and additional interpretive opportunities). At the Vedders Memorial there is a dramatic view of Long Island Sound.
- The western edge of Stony Creek is another transition point, where Route 146 becomes Leetes Island Road. It is marked by a small group of early houses, most important of which is the circa 1790 Edward Frisbie Homestead (#11 on map), glimpsed on a slightly elevated site at the triangular intersection of Route 146 and Leetes Island Road. Just beyond the intersection is the



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- Stony Creek Cemetery (#14 on map), within the Stony Creek/Thimble Island Historic District.
- This is the northernmost edge of the *Stony Creek/Thimble Island Historic District*. Most of the district is south of the byway and not visible from it. Resources in the district include the Stony Creek village center; fine examples of Stick-style late 19th-early 20th-century resort architecture; and quarry industry-related sites including quarries, modest workers' housing, stone waterfront wharves, etc. Improved signage is needed to provide direction to the district from the byway.
- The western end of the *Route 146 Historic District* is directly adjacent to the northeastern edge of the Stony Creek/Thimble Island Historic District. This linear district coincides with the designated scenic segment of 146. This part of Route 146 between Stony Creek and Guilford is known as the "old road to Guilford". The district is significant for its many examples of vernacular rural architecture from 18th to 20th-century, and the road's reconstruction as an early example of Connecticut's new "State Aid Program" between the mid 1920's and mid 1930's. The road is considered to be one of the best and most intact examples of this period of highway construction.
- Upon leaving Stony Creek, the rural ambiance is immediate with the siting of the Uziel Cook House (#15 on map) and soon after, the John Rogers House (#18 on map), both examples of 18th century frame houses.
- The sense of the historic coastal highway is also directly evident, with northern views near the residence at 626 Leetes Island Road providing glimpses of a waterfall and small ponds.
- Looking south are sweeping views across to Hoadley Neck affording views of the tidal marshes towards Long Island Sound.
- A sharp turn under a railroad bridge (#17 on map) gives evidence of the adjacent railroad line, first constructed in 1852. The line parallels the scenic road both north and south as one continues toward Guilford.

LAND USE ISSUES

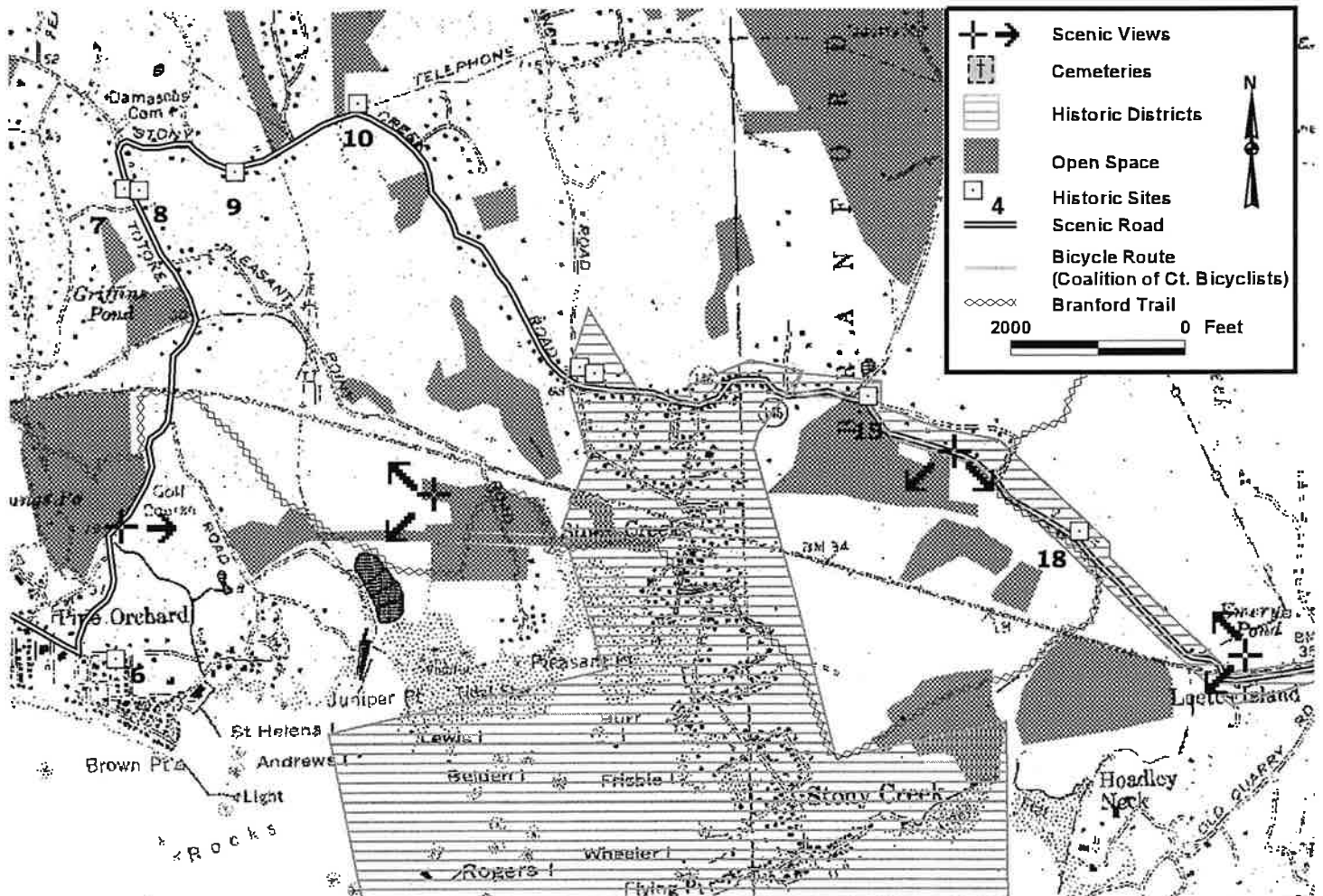
- The area around the 146 intersection with Leetes Island Road may be prone to new development:
 - Residential development pressure from the

- north at I-95 may increase traffic.
- Tourism pressure on Stony Creek (ferry service, etc). may also increase with scenic road travellers if not carefully anticipated and controlled.
- Along 146 to Leetes Island, some but not all views of coastal marshes and adjacent farms have varying degrees of protection ranging from land trust purchases, to National Historic District designation, to preservation-oriented private ownership.

HIGHWAY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ISSUES

- Route 146 in this segment is difficult to follow, especially where the name of the road changes multiple times, or where it abruptly turns 90 degrees north.
- Additional signage would be helpful if carefully designed to fit in with the character of the neighborhood. The existing scenic road signs are too large. A change in signage may require extensive involvement from ConnDOT — some smaller version may be useful.

- The pond area at the intersection of Pine Orchard Road and Blackstone Avenue is attractive but it is unclear who actually owns the land. (There were 10 accidents at this intersection recorded between 1992-1995).
- Golfers crossing the road may present a safety issue.
- There are two intersections that make it difficult to follow Route 146:
 - The Stony Creek Road/Damascus Road/Totoket Avenue intersection (a three-leg intersection with stop control on Totoket Avenue) requires a sharp right turn with little warning.
 - The Stony Creek Road/Leetes Island Road/Thimble Island Road intersection (a four-leg, four-way stop intersection) has skewed angles that require the Route 146 driver to continue in an easterly or westerly direction, but change from Stony Creek Road to Leetes Island Road. In addition to the change in names and confusion about how to continue on Route 146, it is difficult to know who has the right-of-way in the intersection.



Existing Conditions: Route 146

Leetes Island Road: Leetes Island to West River

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- The intersection of the scenic road with the Westwoods trail system (north of the rail line at Sachems Head Road) is a well utilized parking area and presents another opportunity to encourage scenic drivers to get out of their car and enjoy this attractive natural area.
- Attractive nearby roads afford the potential for forming a network of local scenic routes — many of which are more suitable for bicycles — rather than focusing on a single State designated scenic route.
- Crossing the town line into Guilford, one arrives at the intersection with New Quarry Road (to the north) and Old Quarry Road (to the south), reminding travelers of the role of the granite quarrying industry in community development. The Pelatiah Leete House, built circa 1745, is located nearby (#19 on map).
- The coastal views continue with low tidal marshes seemingly everywhere looking south towards Joshua's Bay and Island Bay and north into a series of inlets such as Emery's Pond and Lost Lake.
- The characteristic mix of rural coastal Connecticut and new industry of the 19th century is seen at a small farm complex sited close to the road on the south at Island Bay. A Greek Revival house with two red barns and the Edward L. Leete House (#20 on map), circa 1834, (barns built in the 18th and 19th century) are located on the south side of the scenic road. This property has been in the Leete family since the 17th century and has been continuously occupied by the family since 1705.
- Continuing along to West River, the natural resources of the coastal flats, marshes, ponds and sporadic rock outcroppings are the scenic road's prominent features upon which the railroad line and a variety of 19th and 20th century housing have been built.

LAND USE ISSUES

- The crests of the rocky outcrop knobs found along the road may be vulnerable to future residential development (such as the Pinchot tract, now earmarked for Branford Land Trust purchase, although the willingness of other owners to cooperate in a bargain land sale, such as the one for the Pinchot tract, may not be so universal).
- Views of coastal marshes (looking south) are vulnerable to the impacts of AMTRAK electrification (additional structures and electrical distribution lines, clearing of vegetation, etc). Mitigation efforts were requested and should be monitored by the Towns of Branford and Guilford.

HIGHWAY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ISSUES

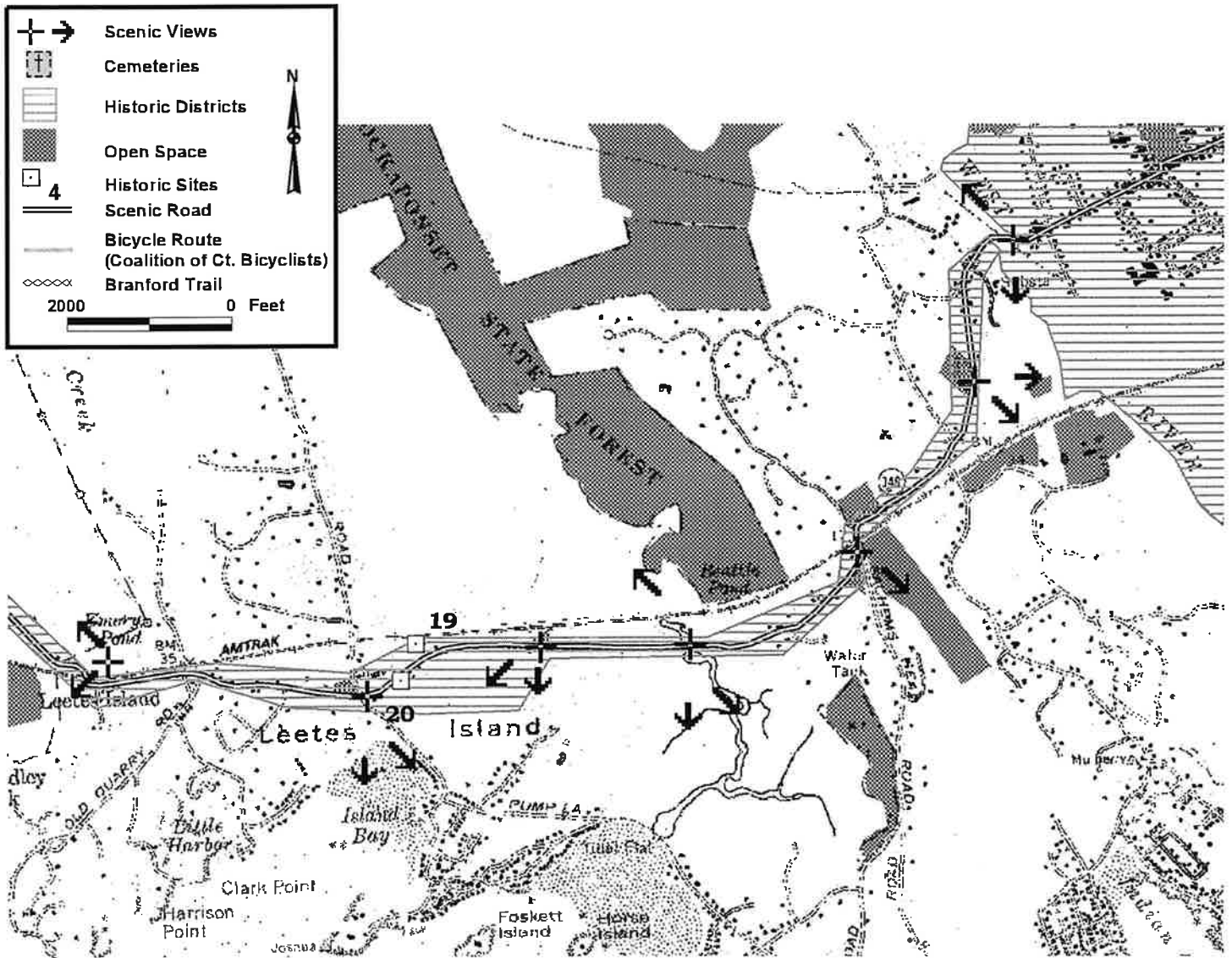
- The underpasses at the rail line are circuitous and narrow (sharp 'S' curves):
 - They may require special design treatment to warn and slow oncoming traffic.
 - Bikeway routes may need to be developed on new or adjacent rights-of-way rather than on the roadway to avoid these crossings.
- There are few if any pull-offs available to appreciate the scenery. The Branford Land Trust owns one parcel (between #15 and #18 on the feature map on page 13) with frontage along Route 146. They would like to define more clearly the area for cars to limit the further compaction of the soil. Medlyn Farm also serves as a place to stop along the way (hopefully to buy early tomatoes and other specialty crops!)
- There are additional winding sections of road with fixed objects close to the roadway (rock outcrops, trees, etc).



Figure 11 - Aerial view showing Lost Lake (foreground), the rail line, and Route 146 passing through tidal marshes.



Figure 12 - Bicycling through coastal marshes and inlets along Route 146.



Existing Conditions: Route 77 and Route 146

Guilford Center: Route 146 - West River to Route 1

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

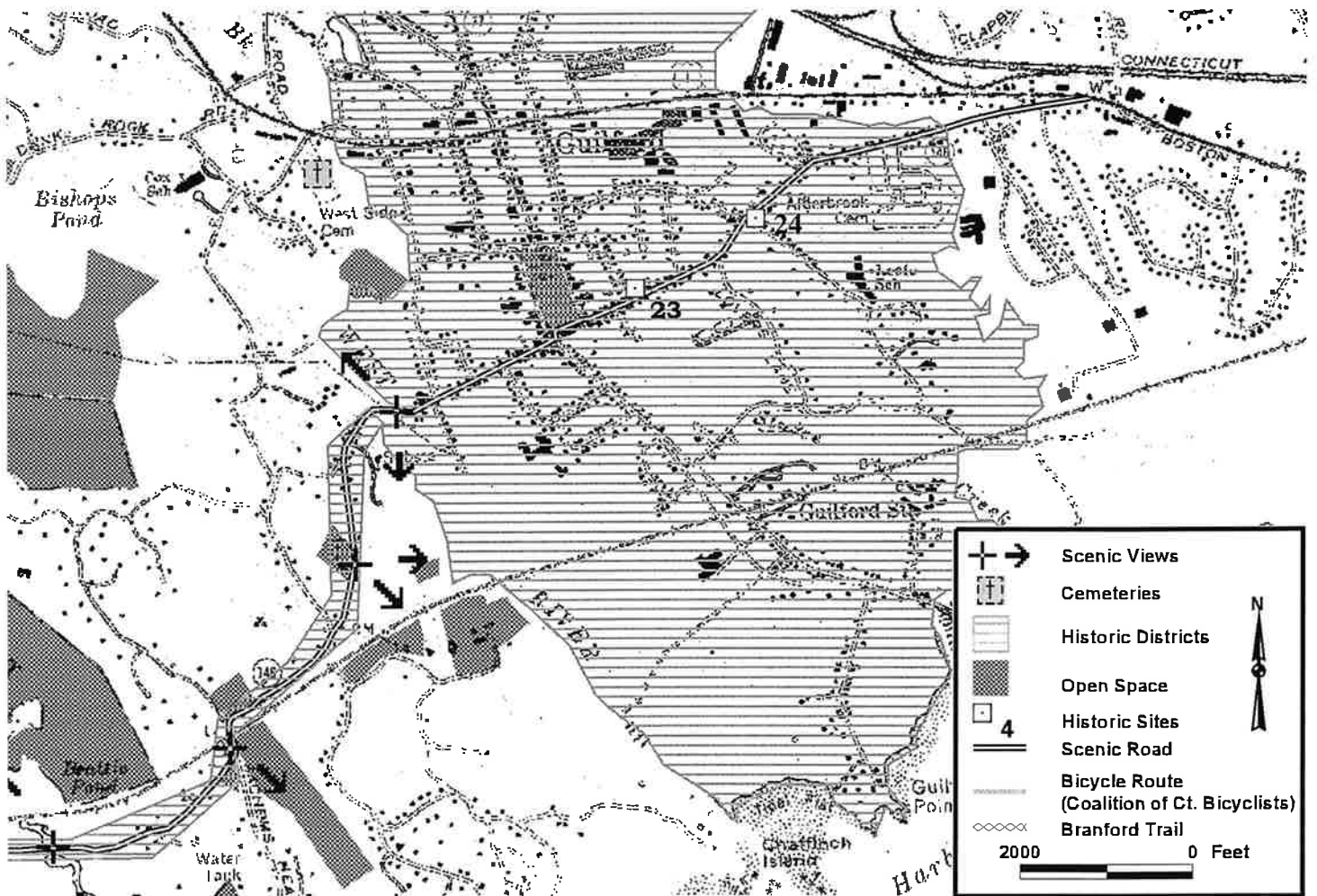
- The West River, the coastal marshes end and the dense built environment of Guilford becomes evident. The scenic road is the main coastal corridor into the historic downtown area. This is now the *Guilford Town Center Historic District*, from the river east to Route 1, the end of this scenic road.
- This segment of the scenic road begins with the industrial property east of the bridge over West River. It runs east toward the Guilford Green past numerous 19th century residential buildings which retain the sense of style and massing of the period.
- Guilford Green is the striking focal point of the community as well as a vital center of activity. It is surrounded by substantial public and private institutions like the Town Hall, Public Library, the Episcopal, Christian Science, Roman Catholic (newer building) and Congregational churches, with professional offices mostly to the east and north, and a range of commercial and retail uses found primarily along the scenic road and west of the Green. Across the Green to the north is the prominent steeple of the First Congregational Church.
- Additional signage to the south of the Green could note the nearby existence of the shoreline and recreational uses, as well as the intersection of the two scenic corridors.
- Continuing east, a range of 17th to 20th century housing stands close to the road including several colonials, the earliest being the Hyland House (#23 on map) which is an altered 1660 residence, followed by several 18th century houses like the Thomas Griswold House (#24 on map) built in 1774 and now a museum. This end of the scenic road clearly illustrates the interlaying of styles over several hundred years, most of which are residential.



Figure 13 - Aerial view of the Guilford Green and Historic District.



Figure 14 - Scenic view of the Guilford Green.



Existing Conditions: Route 77 and Route 146

Guilford Center: Route 77 - Guilford Green to Interstate 95

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- With its striking location at the northern end of the Guilford Green, the First Congregational Church (#3 on map) marks the entry to Route 77 and the northern section of the *Guilford Town Center Historic District*. The scenic road maintains its dense historic architecture complementary of the Green up to Route 1, where it abruptly ends.
- On the west side of the Green, prior to heading north on the scenic road, a sign might be added to highlight additional historic and cultural resources. Heading west along Broad Street through elegant streets of primarily 19th century residences, one ends at the entry gate of the Guilford Land Trust with sweeping views over the marshlands towards Bishop Pond. This area also has a mix of commercial uses including a historic foundry.
- Beginning with the Guilford Academy (#4 on map), directly behind the Church, the Route 77 corridor is marked with a variety of 19th and early 20th century buildings.
- Beyond Route 1, the change is immediate from the historic downtown to a more suburban/rural feeling. There is a mix of historic and newer structures and uses. These range from medical offices, and retail stores to a public school and private residences north to Interstate 95 where the National Historic District boundary ends.

LAND USE AND DESIGN ISSUES

- Adjacent uses around the Guilford Green are protected by National and Local Historic District designations:
 - Adjacent utility rerouting or undergrounding is desired by the Town to improve the visual quality of much of the green and surrounding streets (such as Route 77 north).
- Along 146 both west and east of the Green, and along 77 to the north, the roadway is characterized by a mix of historic and pleasant but more ordinary structures:
 - In-fill or renovation standards would be of use here.
 - Certain key but vulnerable sites near the Route 146/Route 1 intersection, the

Route 77/Route 1 intersection, or the Route 77/I-95 intersection may require more attention than other sites.

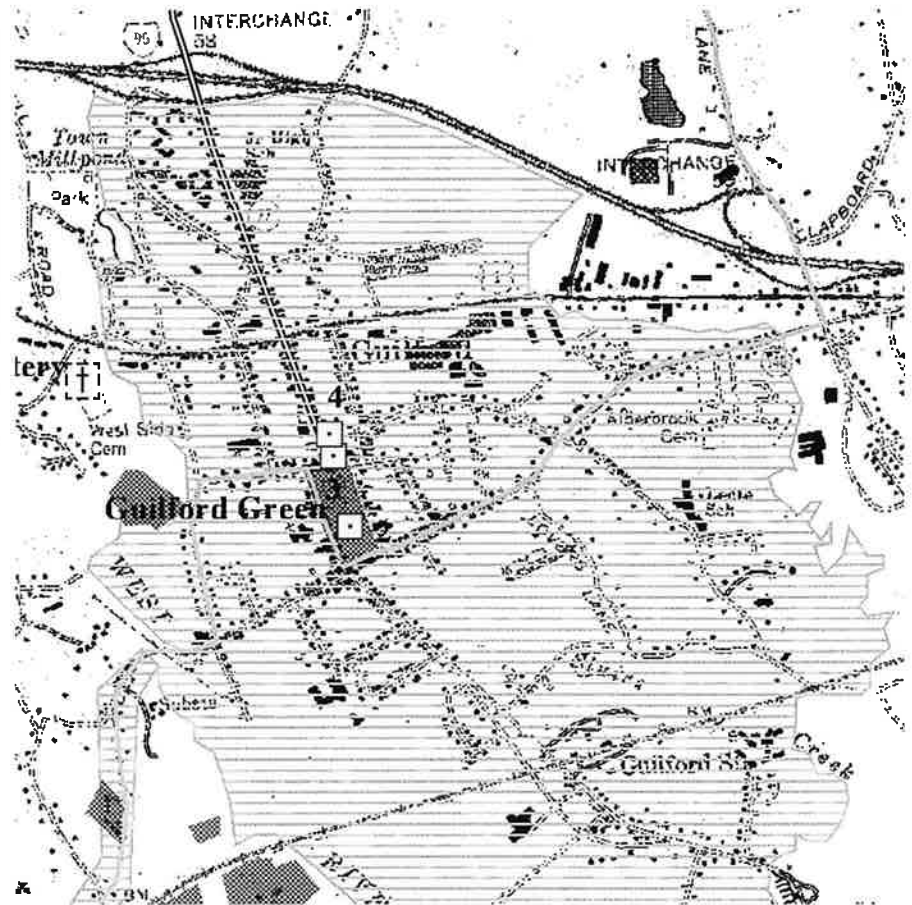
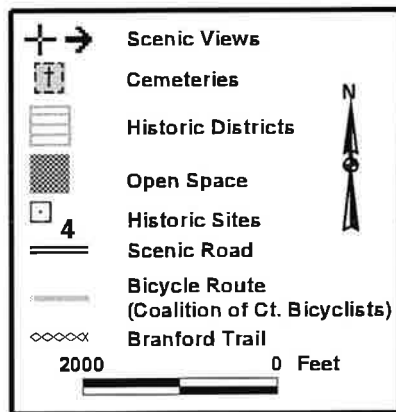
- As with the Branford area, the question of entry into this eastern corridor area is an important issue:
 - Identifying a way to get from I-95 to a central information point at the Guilford Green (Exit 58 seems to be the best solution, although the Route 1 entry from the east at Exit 59 is also an important gateway).
 - Defining at these locations a formal entrance, with proper informational and directional signage as well as landscaping will require extensive coordination from ConnDOT.

HIGHWAY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ISSUES

- The intersection of Boston Street and US Route 1 is a 3 leg intersection with stop control on Boston Street (which is also skewed at an angle). According to the Town of Guilford, numerous pedestrian accidents have occurred at this intersection.
- From Park Street to west of the intersection of Whitfield Street and Route 77 there have been approximately 35 accidents over the three year period between 1992-1995.
- From I-95 to the Guilford Green, traffic volumes on Route 77 are very high and some consideration should be given for encouraging lower speeds through the densely developed area.
- Heavy intersection movements are an issue throughout the area.
- The intersection of Route 146 and 77 is dangerous for vehicles and pedestrians; although past attempts to solve this problem have resulted in no change to the intersection.



Figure 15- Aerial view of the Route 77 intersection with I-95 and Route 1.



Existing Conditions: Route 77

West River Corridor: Interstate 95 to Route 80

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Bittner Park is a heavily used park with potential greenway linkages (trails) to Timberland and Lake Quonnipaug.
- The West River corridor would make an ideal greenway corridor since it parallels Route 77 and an extensive amount of land between 77 and the river is heavily constrained by slope and floodplain.
- Initially, the scenic and historic qualities of the route contrast with the newer commercial and large buildings like the retail stores and racquet club. Continuing north, large lot residences, primarily 20th century are located on both sides of the scenic road.
- Five buildings along the corridor are mapped from the Guilford 1981-82 historic survey (#5 - 10 on map). Most visually notable is the Rebuzzini Barn (#8 on map), a large stone building on the edge of the road.

LAND USE AND DESIGN ISSUES

- Property immediately surrounding the I-95 interchange is zoned commercial/ industrial, with retail uses held to the south of the interchange:
 - New development to the north is expected to be office-related.
 - Major large-scale sites on the east side of the roadway are for sale. Their detailed design and development may visually impact the roadway.
- The uses along Route 77 to the north are mostly large-lot residential — of varying quality but for the most part buffered by vegetation:
 - Where the West River winds close to the west side of Route 77, it provides a natural buffer, beyond which clusters of most types of housing look attractive.

HIGHWAY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ISSUES

- Area of steep slopes to the river have extensive amounts of guide rail – old wire rail with wood posts, much of which is in need of repair. Consideration should be given to the use of steel

backed wood guiderail throughout.

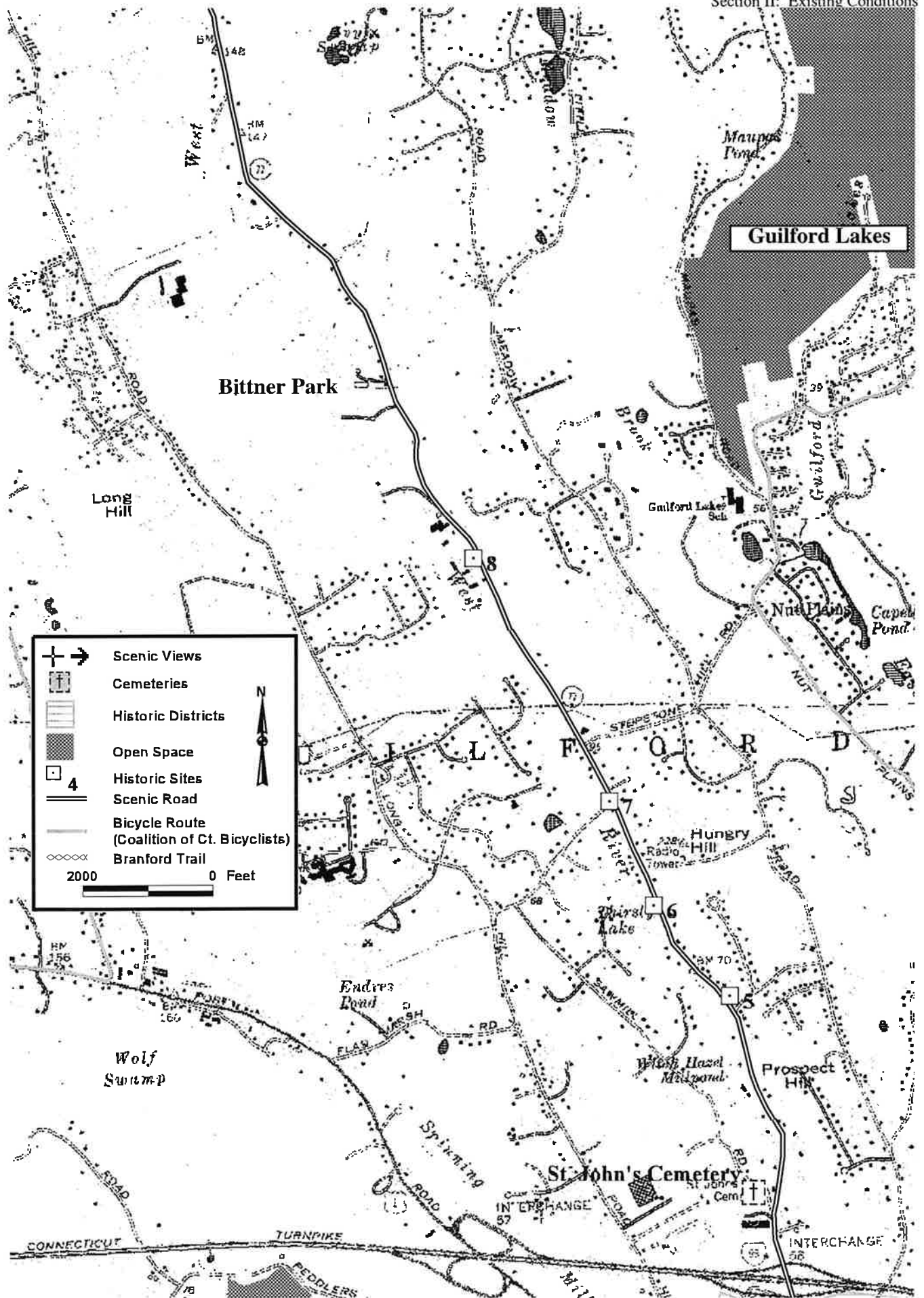
- Traffic volumes are not excessive, but much higher at intersection with I-95.



Figure 16 - Rebuzzini Barn is an important historic feature of Route 77 in Guilford.



Figure 17 - Aerial view of the West River Corridor showing the natural open space separating Route 77 from rural residential homes.



Existing Conditions: Route 77

North Guilford: Route 80 to Lake Quonnipaug

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- A visual change is felt yet again north of the intersection of Route 80. The upper end of the West River forms a dramatic green valley in contrast to the more narrow shaped valley south of Route 80. The landscape is more rural with the historic sense of Connecticut farmlands interspersed with views across the hills and the West River, punctuated by dense forest and rock outcroppings
- At the intersection of Schoolhouse Avenue is the 19th century farmhouse and outbuildings (#13 on map) noted as “Insulting Manor” on a barn. This striking complex with views across surrounding fields retains a highly intact image of a 19th century rural farm.
- Schoolhouse Avenue could be marked with a sign to encourage visitors to head west up the hill to the *Meeting House Hill Historic District* which is not visible from the byway. This tiny district of five buildings and a Green and Cemetery, located on Ledge Hill Road, affords a glimpse in time to a rural community of the 18th century through the late 19th century. Two Federal style churches are particularly notable; the Green and Cemetery are earlier, dating to 1705 and 1719, respectively.

LAND USE AND DESIGN ISSUES

- The land is characterized for the most part by rural large-lot zoning:
 - Development along the Lake Quonnipaug waterfront is the exception to this condition.
 - The presence of developable sites on roads parallel to 77 to the east and west take much of the development pressure off 77 (some properties even front along both roadways).
- Land use change may be more incremental in nature, but some issues need to be carefully considered and monitored:
 - The approved proposal for a gravel dredging operation/ pond creation on a site immediately south of the Lake, may have negative short-term impact but a positive long-term impact.
 - A rumored cluster development proposal north of the Lake needs to be monitored.

HIGHWAY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ISSUES

- Areas where horizontal alignment is substandard in terms of required sight distances and possibly degrees of curvature may need to be examined to determine if improvements can be made without detracting from the scenic quality.
- Rock faces and cut-banks sloping right to the pavement edge limit sight distance and present a hazard within the clear zone at the northern end of the Lake.
- Pull-offs and boat ramp are potential hazards.
- Route 80/77 intersection does not seem to have any particular problems. Sight distances are adequate and the volumes are not too high. There is a low occurrence of accidents.



Figure 18 - The Dudley Farm anchors the Northeast quadrant of the intersection of Route 80 and 77.



Figure 19 - Aerial view of the upper end of the West River Valley below Lake Quonnipaug.

Existing Conditions: Route 77

Bluff Head Mountain: Lake Quonnipaug to Town Line

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Bluff Head Mountain supports an extensive trail system created through the joint efforts of the Guilford Land Conservation Trust, the Town of Guilford, the water company, and the Audubon Society.
- Views across Lake Quonnipaug are an important visual break along the scenic road; vistas of housing along the eastern shore continue the length of the lake with the most prominent being the Deacon Simon Chittenden House (#18 on map).
- The scenic road itself is sparsely settled, primarily with a few 19th century buildings which have been altered to varying degrees (#'s 17,18, 19, 21, and 22 on map).
- The most significant historic resources are the Bluff Head Cemetery (#20 on map,) barely visible on a hill surrounded by trees but marked by a white picket fence, and the Samuel Russell II House/Bluff Head Farm complex (#23) sited on open land with Bluff Head Mountain to the west.

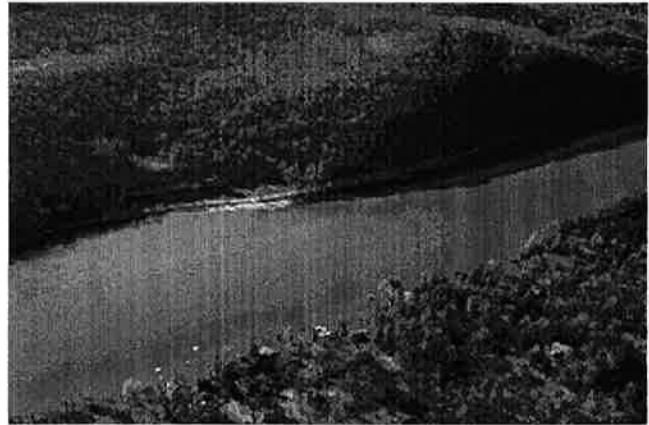


Figure 20- Aerial view of the upper end of Lake Quonnipaug and Bluff Head.



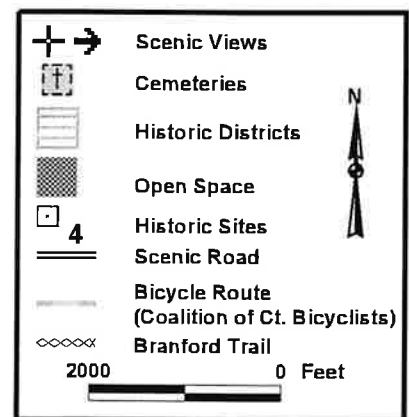
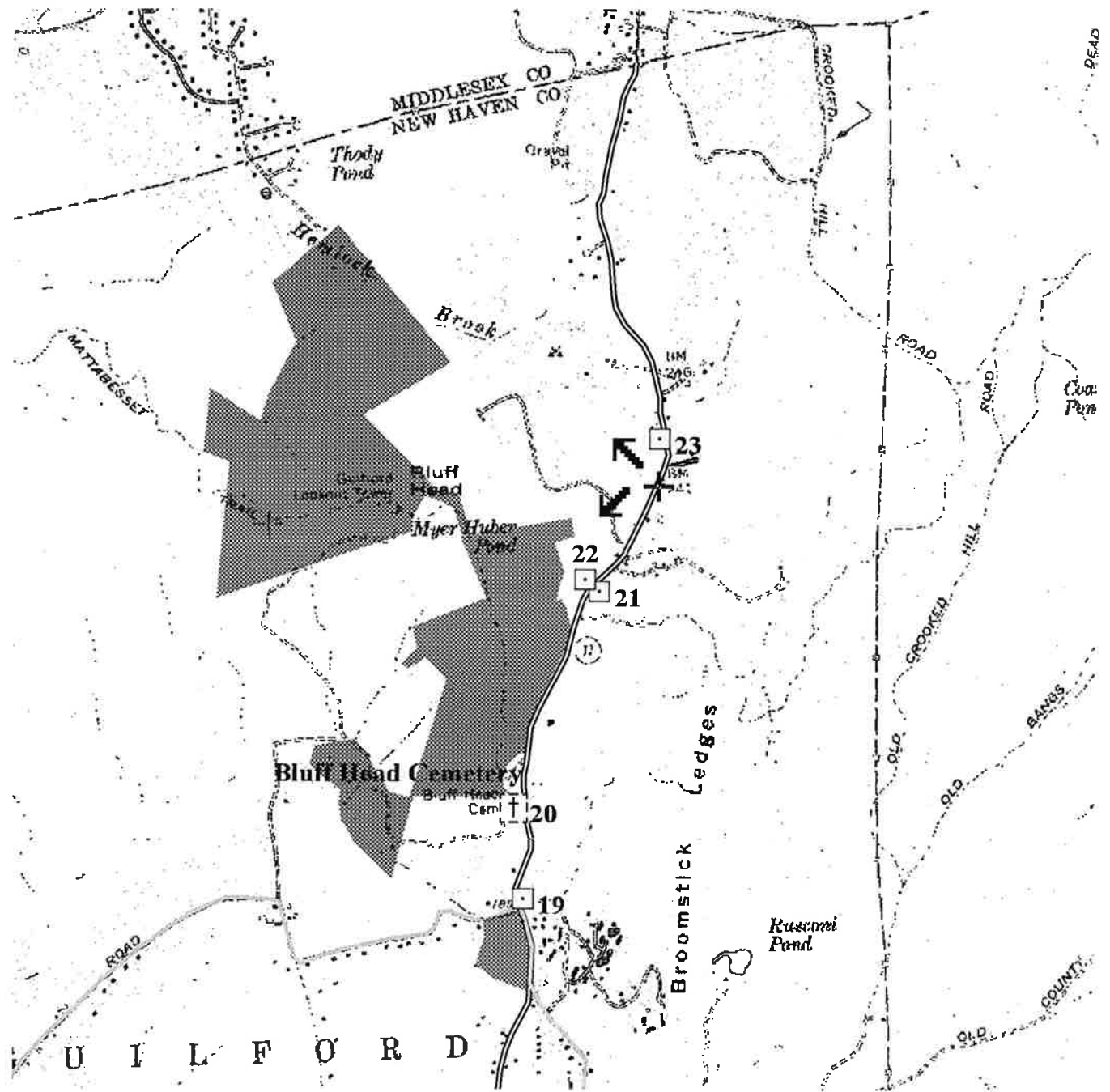
Figure 21- Open agricultural views characterize the northernmost section of Route 77.

LAND USE ISSUES

- At the northern end of the scenic road corridor along Route 77, the issue of entry/ gateway must be considered:
 - Consideration should be given to extending the scenic road designation north into Durham, where it would also encompass an attractive rural town green providing a more rational starting and ending point (from town green to town green).

HIGHWAY SAFETY AND PEDESTRIAN ISSUES

(Similar issues as described in previous section – North Guilford).





Planning Concepts

The formulation of the planning concepts described in this Chapter are based on a vision statement, goals, and objectives crafted with the Route 77 and 146 Scenic Road Advisory Committee, with input from a public workshop held on May 21, 1996 with over 50 people attending from Guilford and Branford. The results of this workshop represent a clear consensus that the people of Guilford and Branford would like to see these two roads stay pretty much the way they are today. In fact, Public Act 87-820, the State Scenic Roads legislation, stipulates that the character of the road be preserved. Therefore, the purpose of this plan is to lay out the kinds of strategies that will help these two towns keep this place just the way it is today -- including both the preservation of the view and context, and the preservation of the road. The plan proposes the following:

- strategies for identifying and conserving scenic, natural, and cultural resources found along the route;
- strategies to assist people in getting around the area by bicycle and on foot (information points at gateways, coordinated signage, places to get out of your car, walking paths, pedestrian safety enhancements, and promotion of greenway linkages to other parts of each town);
- roadside enhancements to some of the older built up areas to improve their appearance (Montowese Street, Limewood Beach, the approaches to the Guilford Green, and the area just north of Interstate 95);
- strategies to give drivers more clues that they are entering a pedestrian oriented place (through signs, landscape, shoulder definition, utility line relocation, curb extensions, and possibly minor adjustments to the traffic patterns);
- some general design guidelines for the roadside environment such as landscape, signage, lighting, shoulders, and guiderails;
- some general design guidelines for guiding new construction (in-fill development, new commercial development near 95 and cluster housing).

VISION: “KEEP IT AS IT IS!”— CREATIVE PRESERVATION OF COASTAL VIEWS, URBAN GREENS, AND UPLAND VISTAS

Route 146 is a ‘seaside’ scenic corridor that captures the essence of coastal New England—the exceptionally intact historic towns of Guilford and Branford, dramatic upland vistas, and views of the Sound and marshy estuaries as the curvy road meanders up the rocky coast line. Route 77, which runs north from Route 146 in Guilford, is a ‘countryside’ scenic corridor bordered by 18th and 19th century agricultural landscapes, many with their historic farm houses and barns still intact.

In the decades ahead, Guilford and Branford will continue to preserve the existing character of the “roadside” and “countryside” along Routes 77 and 146. This can be accomplished only through a common vision and understanding of the qualities that make these corridors so very special, and a collaborative commitment to managing the number and types of uses found along the roads to the roadway capacity as it exists today.

To succeed, those responsible for Routes 77 and 146 future must:

- manage, minimize, or redirect the growing traffic volume as it relates to the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motorists;
- preserve the marshes and healthy ecology of the coastal landscape;
- provide ways for visitors and residents to admire the scenery safely
- preserve the residential use and quality of life symbolized by the many historic houses and farms that give the setting such a strong character;
- keep the strong distinction between town and countryside;
- ensure that new construction contributes and does not conflict with scenic quality;

...all without detracting from the present character of the roadside experience and quality of the views.

Guiding the Plan

Goals & Objectives for the Route 77 & 146 Scenic Corridor

1. VIEWS AND VISTAS:

CONSERVING SCENIC BEAUTY FOR THE FUTURE

Conserve the scenic, historic, natural and cultural resources found along the different areas of the Route 146 and 77 scenic roads, including but not limited to the following examples:

- *the active Branford and Guilford town greens, related institutional uses, shops, and historic environs;*
- *the open space associated with the coastal marshes and shorelines;*
- *the farmlands, green fields, forests and ridgelines associated with the West River and Lake Quonnipaug in North Guilford.*

- 1.1 Distribute maps showing the characterizing views and resources within each area, defining a common base of data to be used by the Connecticut DOT, Boards, commissions, and other residents, merchants, and civic leaders when making land use and transportation decisions along Routes 146 and 77.
- 1.2 Assist local municipalities, various land trusts, and other conservation organizations by prioritizing important contributing resources to the scenic roads and identifying a range of conservation strategies that support ongoing efforts.
- 1.3 Identify obstacles that must be overcome (such as inheritance tax), and develop appropriate techniques to help relieve economic pressures on desirable open space uses—a situation which would otherwise result in inappropriate land subdivision or development.
- 1.4 Develop simple and easy to understand ‘scenic corridor’ design guidelines to guide the appearance of development at appropriate locations within the corridor, along with appropriate incentives or other means of encouraging compliance.

2. THE ROAD AND RIGHT-OF-WAY:

BALANCING SAFETY AND BEAUTY

Reinforce and support the intent of the state scenic roads legislation, Public Act 87-280, by developing alternative approaches to ongoing safety and maintenance issues — approaches that are sensitive to the Corridor’s scenic and other resources, that take account of safety concerns for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, and that discourage high speed through traffic.

- 2.1 Use land use and development guidance as a means of reducing the pressure for road widening or other improvements that may be inappropriate to scenic roads including measures to reduce the magnitude or impact of increased tourist auto traffic along narrow or delicate roadways
- 2.2 Assist tourist oriented facilities and programs to encourage alternate modes of transportation, such as developing strategically located pull-offs near walking trails and bicycle paths, improving pedestrian and bicycle linkages between the town centers and tourist destination points, and providing, if economically feasible, small-scale transit alternatives from park and ride areas to tourist destination points (i.e. van-pools).
- 2.3 Examine means of channeling pedestrian, bikeway or auto traffic as appropriate onto adjacent routes or towards desired tourism destinations in order to reduce potential conflicts between preserving roadside vegetation and maintaining a safe roadway environment.
- 2.4 Work to simplify design waiver procedures on scenic roads so as to allow design enhancements that balance auto convenience with preservation and pedestrian needs: slowing traffic through landscaping and road design, and careful maintenance and improvement of roadway and right-of-way landscaping, signage, guiderails, bridges, or other structures.
- 2.5 Develop a roadside tree management and replacement program for Routes 146 and 77 with Connecticut DOT and local public and private partners, as a means of reinforcing the recently-enacted roadside legislation regarding public notice for tree removal along public roadways.
- 2.6 Identify priority locations where undergrounding or alternative routing of utilities will improve critical views of coastal marshes, historic properties, town greens or other protected open spaces.
- 2.7 With Connecticut DOT, relevant utility companies, and local officials, develop an early warning system to notify key stakeholders of proposed design, maintenance, and safety improvements. When and if such improvements prove necessary, take greater care to ensure that the corridor’s fragile scenic and historic values are sensitively addressed throughout the design and construction phases.

3. **ECONOMIC/ TOURISM DEVELOPMENT:
HELPING STABILIZE AND SUPPORT THE
LOCAL TAX BASE**

Recognizing that many tourism attractions are found at or near the designated scenic Routes 77 and 146, identify opportunities for managing appropriate tourism within the Corridor as part of state and regional tourism district efforts, and work with Branford's and Guilford's evolving Plans of Conservation and Development to deal with these issues as they affect Routes 146 and 77.

- 3.1 Encourage appropriate welcoming and orientation facilities and associated commercial uses to locate around existing central downtown greens.
- 3.2 Manage tourist oriented traffic within appropriate levels, through development of carefully-defined tourist itineraries and routes, focusing on local historic and recreational resources, so as to minimize impact on scenic character.
- 3.3 Within the scenic corridor, carefully site, group, and/or buffer potential new development in order to provide maximum open space and views as a means of conserving the quality of life.

4. **COOPERATION AND MANAGEMENT:
BROAD INVOLVEMENT IN STRATEGY
IMPLEMENTATION**

Work closely with existing organizations to adopt the appropriate pieces of the corridor plan to avoid redundancy of effort.

- 4.1 Designate agreed-upon oversight responsibility to a new or existing group (or groups), whose role will be to coordinate the implementation of scenic corridor strategies and encourage the ongoing involvement and support of various constituencies from each town and the region.
 - Continue to involve local elected and appointed officials as well as regional, state and federal agencies, including the South Central Council of Governments. Local resources include selectmen, planning boards and historic and environmental/ conservation commissions.
 - Continue to involve private business interests and local property owners, especially those whose land or commercial/residential property abuts the designated scenic roads or would be impacted by new growth.

- Continue to involve public interest groups, educational and religious institutions, and not-for-profit and civic organizations in both the ongoing planning and the future management of the scenic corridor.

- 4.2 Use the corridor plan as a vehicle for coordinating among those who are responsible for the day to day activities along the corridor (transportation, communication, distribution, new development projects, etc). and those town and State officials who must maintain the overall quality and character of the corridor.

5. **INFORMATION AND EDUCATION:
SPREADING THE NEWS**

Work with local institutions, regional and state resources, and media to develop programs for educating residents and visitors about the area's unique heritage.

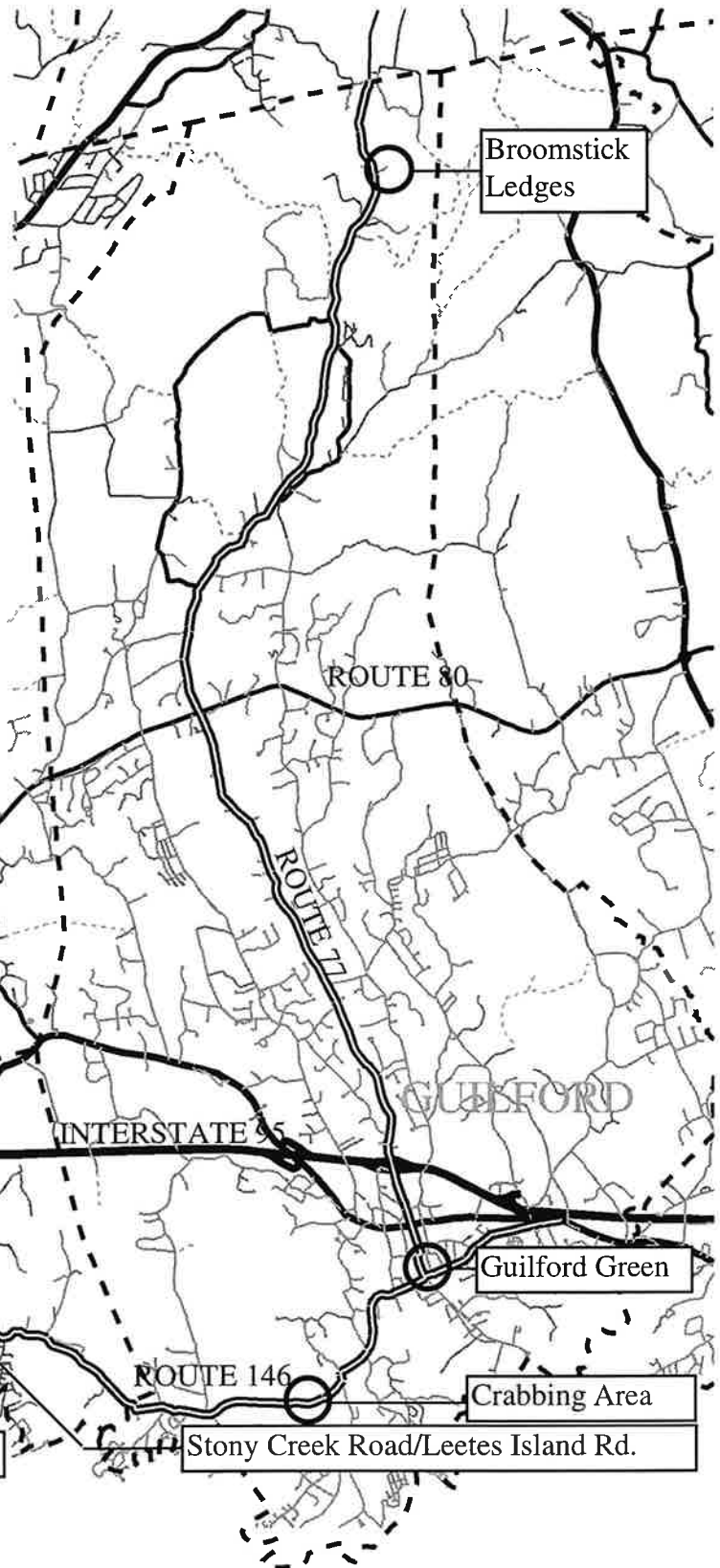
- 5.1 Use the scenic corridor as a mechanism to tell the story of each town's past and opportunities for future preservation and growth, through the use of accessible, centrally-located visitor facilities and services in each town, such as libraries, museums, historical societies, and others.
- 5.2 Use local libraries, newspapers and regional television or other media to disseminate information on other similar projects, publicize local efforts on Routes 146 and 77, and provide means for interaction and participation in the continuing planning and management process.
- 5.3 Work with utility companies, ConnDOT, U. Conn. Extension, and private nurseries to educate homeowners about the care and stewardship of roadside vegetation, surface drainage, lawn care and other maintenance activities that impact the overall character and quality of the scenic corridor.
- 5.3 Develop the corridor management plans for use as models that might be applied to local roads in Branford and Guilford as well as to roads throughout the state.

Figure 22

Case Study Example Site Location Map

Several case study examples have been developed to illustrate how the planning concepts and strategies might be implemented. The case study sites were selected because they best illustrate the application of the concepts. Some sites illustrate more than one concept. Two of the case study sites (Montowese Street Bridge and Guilford Green) were identified early on in the process as places where some immediate attention was needed. Other sites represent long-term management issues that were applicable throughout the corridor (such as the use of a hypothetical development plan for a tract of land in the vicinity of Broomstick Ledges). Other sites were selected to address issues that were not necessarily a problem now, but could demonstrate alternative approaches to solving problems that might be more sensitive to scenic and historic values (such as the traffic calming measures at Stony Creek).

The map at the right identifies the names and locations of the case study sites used throughout the report.



1. Resource Protection Strategies

This section outlines three strategies critical to preserving the view and context of Routes 77 and 146: preserving visually prominent landscapes and high quality coastal views; promoting greenways along the major rivers; and, establishing roadside conservation districts to call attention to critical stands of mature trees and stone walls.

One of the most critical issues facing the Route 77 and Route 146 Scenic Corridor (a recurring item for discussion at the first public workshop) is the preservation of the view and context. Fortunately, both the Guilford Land Conservation Trust and the Branford Land Trust have been very active in acquiring land and conservation easements to protect property from further development.

For the Route 77 and 146 Corridor Plan, the strategies suggested are intended to build upon the already successful actions of these land trusts, the Towns of Branford and Guilford, the State of Connecticut and many individuals. These dedicated people and groups have worked hard to conserve key parcels, especially tidal wetlands and successful trail systems at the Westwoods Area and Bluff Mountain.

For the Route 77 and 146 Scenic Road Corridor, three strategies are needed to ensure the long-term stewardship of the scenic resources:

- Place a high priority on the *preservation of visually prominent landscapes and high quality coastal or agricultural views* through the use of conservation easements and design guidance.
- Continue to encourage the preservation of a *system of connected open spaces*, referred to as “greenways”, especially along the Branford River, Sybil Creek, and the West River, and develop an early action greenway project to demonstrate the benefits of greenways (see Montowese Street Case Study)
- Establish *roadside conservation zones* in those places where mature trees and stone walls provide the majority of the scenic values along this route, and provide maps to ConnDOT’s district landscape and maintenance personnel, utility, cable and telephone personnel, and the tree wardens.

The following pages summarize the three strategies (detailed resource inventory maps are contained in Appendix D):

Preserving Visually Prominent Landscapes and High Quality Views

There are four types of critical views found along these two scenic roads that must be preserved to retain the overall scenic quality of the corridor:

- coastal views of the Long Island Sound and tidal marshes;
- the intervening rocky uplands that are typically perpendicular to Route 146;
- the narrow enclosed focal views found along the West River corridor north of Interstate 95 and south of North Guilford;
- the broad agricultural floodplain found along the upper end of the West River valley near Lake Quonnipaug.

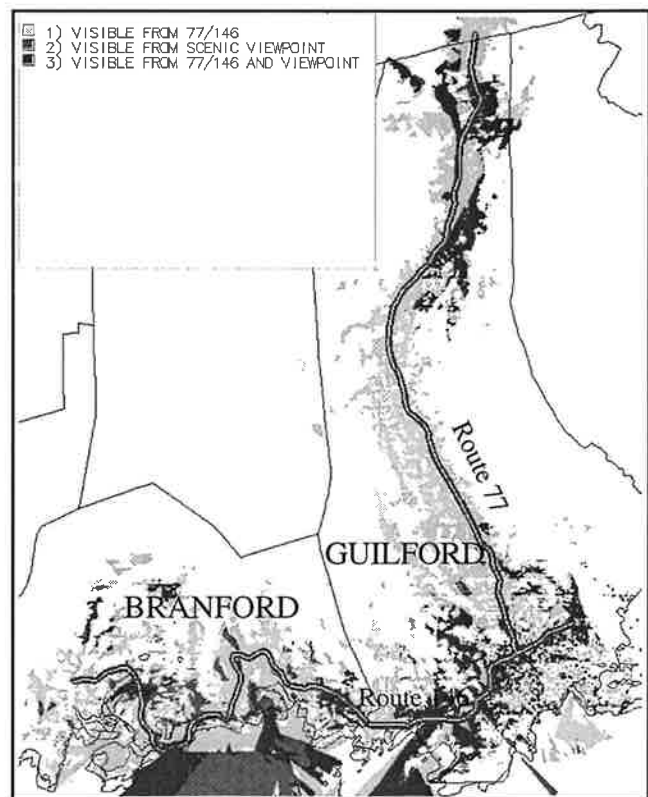


Figure 23 - Summary map showing areas that are generally visible from Route 146 or Route 77 (lighter gray), areas that are visible from scenic viewpoints in the vicinity of Route 77 or 146 (medium gray), and areas that are visible from scenic viewpoints on Route 146 (darker gray). More detailed maps are included in Appendix D.

The locations of critical views have been mapped utilizing U.S. Geologic Survey digital elevation models (DEM) and selecting representative points along the roads for each visually distinct area. The resulting map identifies the number of times a particular area can be seen and clearly shows the location of the most prominent upland areas (shown in darker gray) in figure 4 (page 6).

Mapping of the locations of critical scenic viewpoints was accomplished by identifying scenic areas in the field and preparing individual viewshed maps of each of the views. Scenic viewpoints include coastal views, enclosed focal views, and open agricultural views, as shown in figures 24 through 27.

Combining the visual prominence map (Figure 4) with the composite mapping of critical scenic views results in a map showing both the geographic extent of the lands that can be seen from typical views along Route 77 and 146 and also from particularly scenic viewpoints.

The land trusts, each town, other conservation organizations, and individuals will need to look at future opportunities to purchase or protect through conservation easements parcels that are in the vicinity of already existing protected land, making them larger or more cohesive. Open space enthusiasts must be prepared to act quickly, with outside assistance from organizations like the Conservation Fund, to preserve tracts using revolving loan funds. They can then sell the properties back with guidance on how to develop them in an appropriate manner (see page 56-57 for suggestions about how to guide the appearance of land development along the corridor). Each of the Towns may want to address the issue of design guidance in their current plan of development.



Figure 25 - Route 146 view of perpendicular ridge/wetland.



Figure 26 - View of Thimble Islands from Vedders Memorial in the vicinity of Route 146.



Figure 24 -Enclosed focal view along Route 146 at Stony Creek.



Figure 27 - View of open hay land along Route 77 in North Guilford.

Planning Concepts

Greenway Opportunities

Greenways are linear networks of open space that link together homes, parks, workplaces, and natural areas. Greenways often follow stream valleys, or other natural features. There are two important greenway opportunities along rivers: the Branford River, and the West River.

The Branford River winds its way through Branford Center and provides the first dramatic views from Route 146. In addition to its visual attractiveness, the Branford River provides recreational opportunities and serves as an important corridor for wildlife. The new Montowese St. Bridge provides a number of opportunities to highlight the Branford River and its greenway opportunities. Refer to page 40 for a more detailed description of these opportunities. As a long-term goal it may be possible to link Branford Center to Stony Creek along the old Trolley Line.

The West River in Guilford is another opportunity for creating a Greenway – in this case a continuous link between Guilford Center and Lake Quonnipaug. This long-term strategy would serve multiple functions for scenic road conservation: the West River parallels Route 77 between Guilford Center and North Guilford. Looking at the land ownership patterns it is possible to link Bittner Park with its nearby residential areas to the south, and to Town of Guilford Property and State Forest Land to the east.



Figure 28 - Aerial View of West River in the vicinity of Bittner Park.

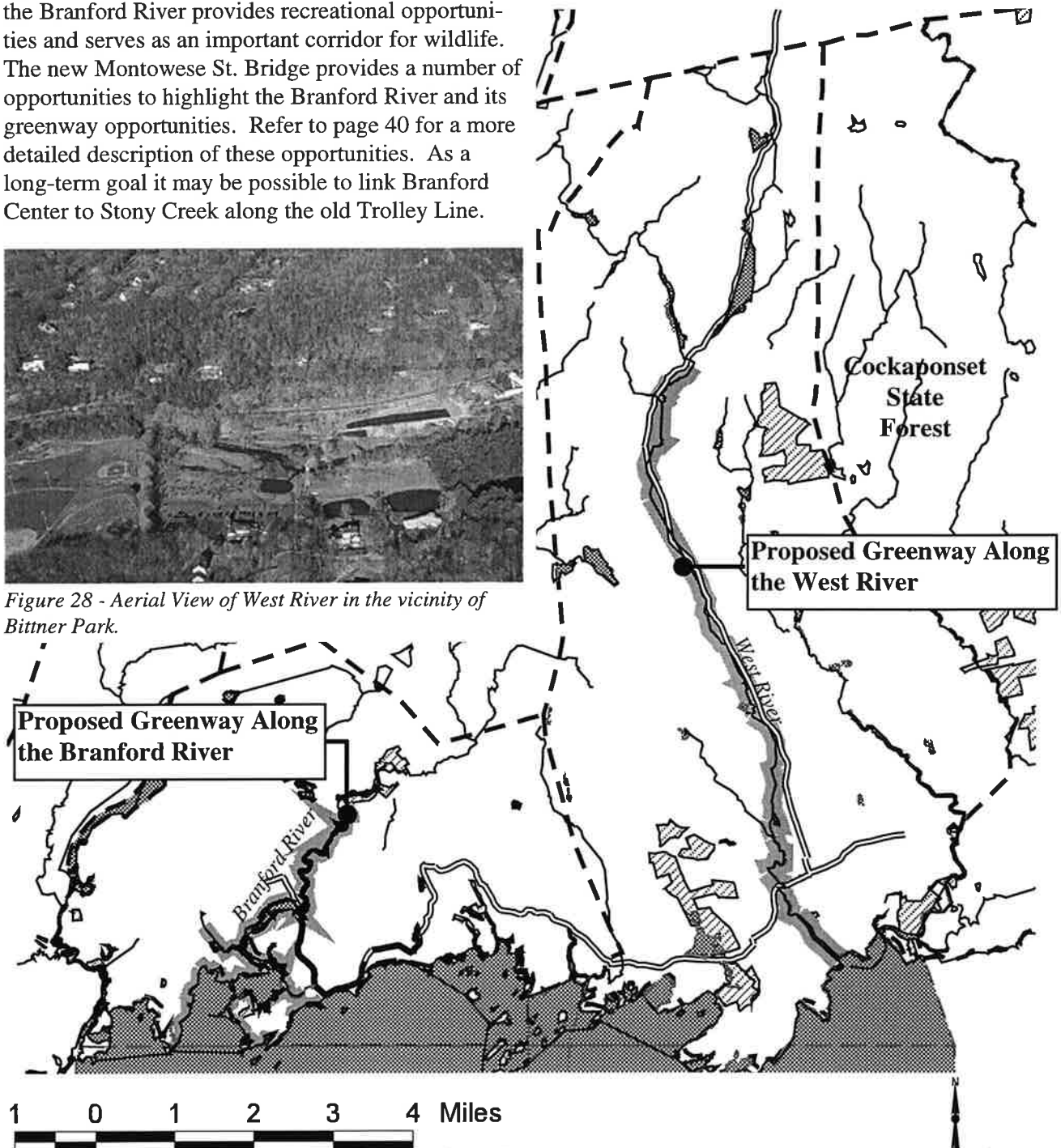


Figure 29 - Surface water features form the backbone of many greenway opportunities.

Planning Concepts

Conservation Priorities: View and Context

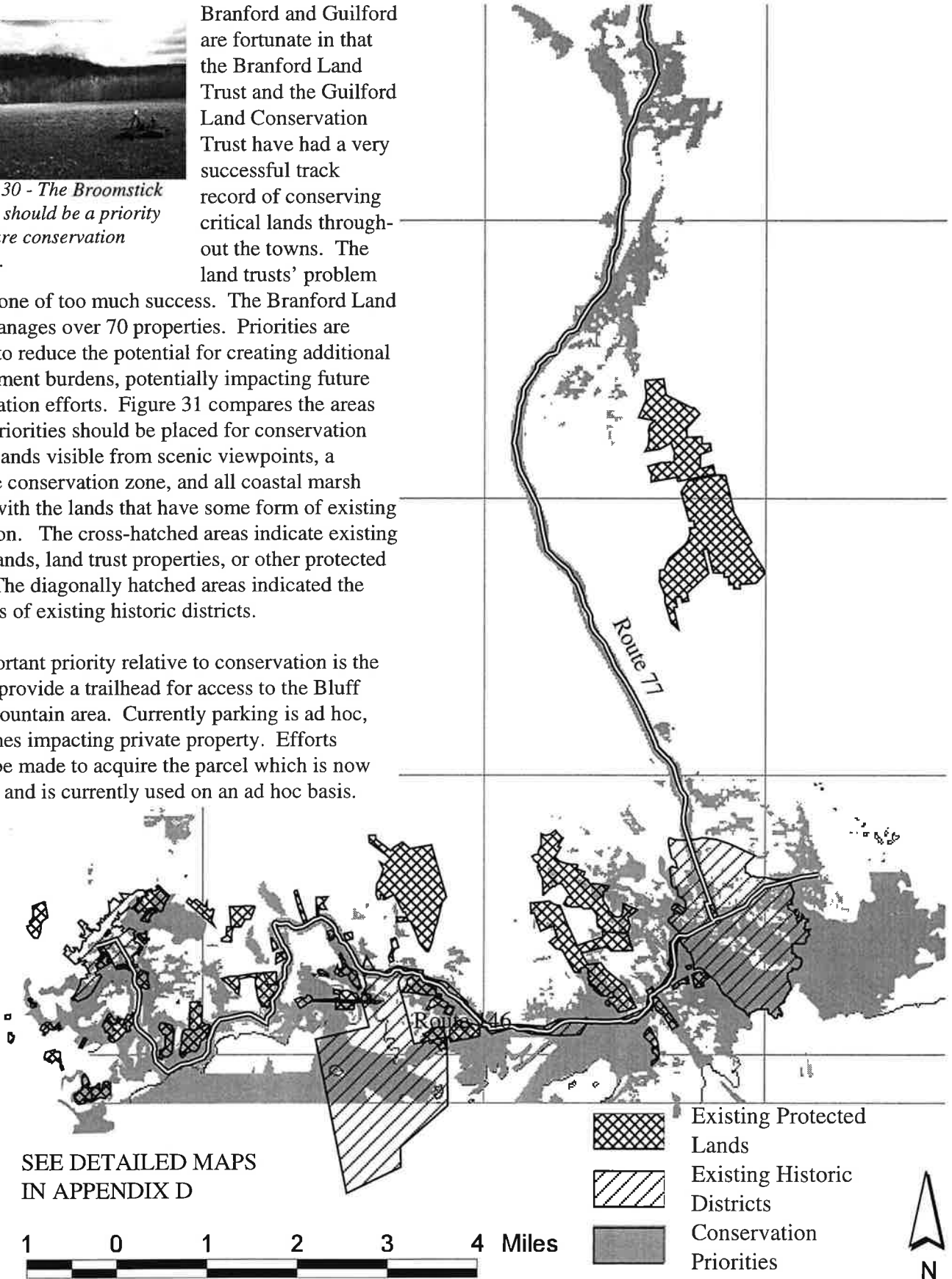


Figure 30 - The Broomstick Ledges should be a priority for future conservation actions.

Branford and Guilford are fortunate in that the Branford Land Trust and the Guilford Land Conservation Trust have had a very successful track record of conserving critical lands throughout the towns. The land trusts' problem

may be one of too much success. The Branford Land Trust manages over 70 properties. Priorities are needed to reduce the potential for creating additional management burdens, potentially impacting future conservation efforts. Figure 31 compares the areas where priorities should be placed for conservation action (lands visible from scenic viewpoints, a roadside conservation zone, and all coastal marsh areas), with the lands that have some form of existing protection. The cross-hatched areas indicate existing public lands, land trust properties, or other protected lands. The diagonally hatched areas indicated the locations of existing historic districts.

An important priority relative to conservation is the need to provide a trailhead for access to the Bluff Head Mountain area. Currently parking is ad hoc, sometimes impacting private property. Efforts should be made to acquire the parcel which is now for sale, and is currently used on an ad hoc basis.



SEE DETAILED MAPS
IN APPENDIX D

Figure 31 - Conservation priorities for Routes 77 and 146.

Planning Concepts

Roadside Conservation Strategies

According to the regulations governing state designated Scenic Roads, “any alteration to a scenic road shall maintain these characteristics [at the time of designation], if practical”. The regulations offer special consideration for any changes to guiderails, paving, changes of grade, straightening or removal of stone walls, removal of mature trees, and maintenance, with the general intent that the existing road characteristics shall be kept as they were when designated.

Using Connecticut DOT “photo-logs” (photographs taken every 50 feet for road maintenance purposes), the locations of stone walls and mature trees have been identified and mapped. These maps are included in Appendix D. The following describes the specific actions that are recommended to make it easier to conserve the roadside environment along these two important scenic roads.



Figure 32 - Specimen trees such as this one at the trailhead for the West Woods area near Route 146 need special care and protection.

Roadside Conservation Tax Incentives

One of the most critical issues facing the roadside environment is the impact of new construction and development along the frontage of existing properties. Incentives are needed to encourage property owners to save roadside trees. One type of useful incentives is to establish a scenic conservation district, similar to an historic district, which makes properties eligible for small tax credits for preparing a tree conservation plan prepared by a certified arborist (International Society of Arboriculture). The plan should include an agreement to retain existing trees and provide for their care as specified in the plan in exchange for the tax credits. (See page 63 for more complete description of this concept.

Recently passed legislation requires that individuals wishing to remove specimen trees on state owned land give public notice. Although this legislation does not appear to apply to utility companies or ConnDOT, it will improve tree conservation efforts and can be used to inform owners of alternative approaches to development that may conserve trees

(see “Design Guidelines: The View and Context,” pages 54-57).

Register of ‘Big Trees’

Another technique to improve roadside conservation efforts is to create a town tree register which provides a place for residents to list the locations of specimen trees. This could be modeled on the American Forestry Association’s National Register of Big Trees. Through the office of the tree warden, residents could nominate specimen trees which could then be placed on a map and given to the utility companies and ConnDOT maintenance personnel. This would provide another set of ‘checks and balances’ that would give property owners some assurance that every effort will be made to give their special trees special care. The tree conservation areas mapped in Appendix D provide a starting point for such a registry. A computer data base tied to a Geographic Information

System would be an excellent way to record the locations of big trees and the locations of properties with tree conservation plans in place. A simpler approach may be to record locations on town tax lot maps and store them in a 3-ring binder as an official record of properties registering big trees (kept at the town offices).

Role of Scenic Road Advisory Committee

One of the most important coordination efforts is that of ensuring a reasonable amount of public notice about road and right-of-way maintenance or improvements proposed for scenic roads. Currently ConnDOT and the Connecticut Light and Power give notice to the First Selectman and the Tree Warden. This usually works. In some cases, however, not everyone who may be concerned about roadside trees is aware of the coordination efforts that have already taken place. Using a scenic road advisory committee appointed by the First Selectman (that includes the tree warden) to serve as a single point of contact for notice about proposed road and right-of-way work, is one way to ensure adequate notice for all who may be concerned.

2. GETTING AROUND BY BICYCLE AND ON FOOT

This chapter suggests ways to direct visitors to appropriate places to enjoy the scenery, create a few more places to pull off and get out of the car, and find ways to give drivers more clues that they are entering a pedestrian-oriented place.

One of the recurring themes at the public workshop was that the area needs to be made more friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists -- based on the need to encourage people to get out of their cars rather than speed on through. Additional issues raised at the workshop related to this topic include the following:

- It is usually difficult to cross the street in and around the Guilford Green, or at Stony Creek, especially in summertime.
- One of the problems with tourism in the area is that people are speeding on through just to look -- there needs to be some way to encourage people to stop, walk, shop, etc.
- Bicycle and jogging use is increasing, especially on a seasonal basis -- but this has pros and cons. Nobody wants to widen the road or create a separated path, so automobile drivers need to be encouraged to slow down and share the road. Bicycles also provide a way for people to enjoy the area at a slower pace.
- Traffic speed is a big issue -- more monitoring is needed, possibly a bicycle police patrol.
- Many people felt that increasing sight lines increases speed as well.

The following ideas should be considered as a means of addressing these issues:

- Creating "gateways" - places to stop and get information about how to see the area (Branford/Guilford Greens);
- Creating a system of signage which makes it easier to find appropriate pedestrian oriented places, including how to navigate the elusive Route 146;
- Create a few more places to pull off, especially where there are opportunities to see something interesting, take a walk, or park to get out and ride your bicycle;
- For bicycles -- improve signage, roadside conditions (shoulders, drainages) and find ways to enforce speed limits/encourage slower driving habits;
- At the town centers & villages find ways to give drivers more clues that they are approaching a pedestrian oriented place and making it safer for people to move around.

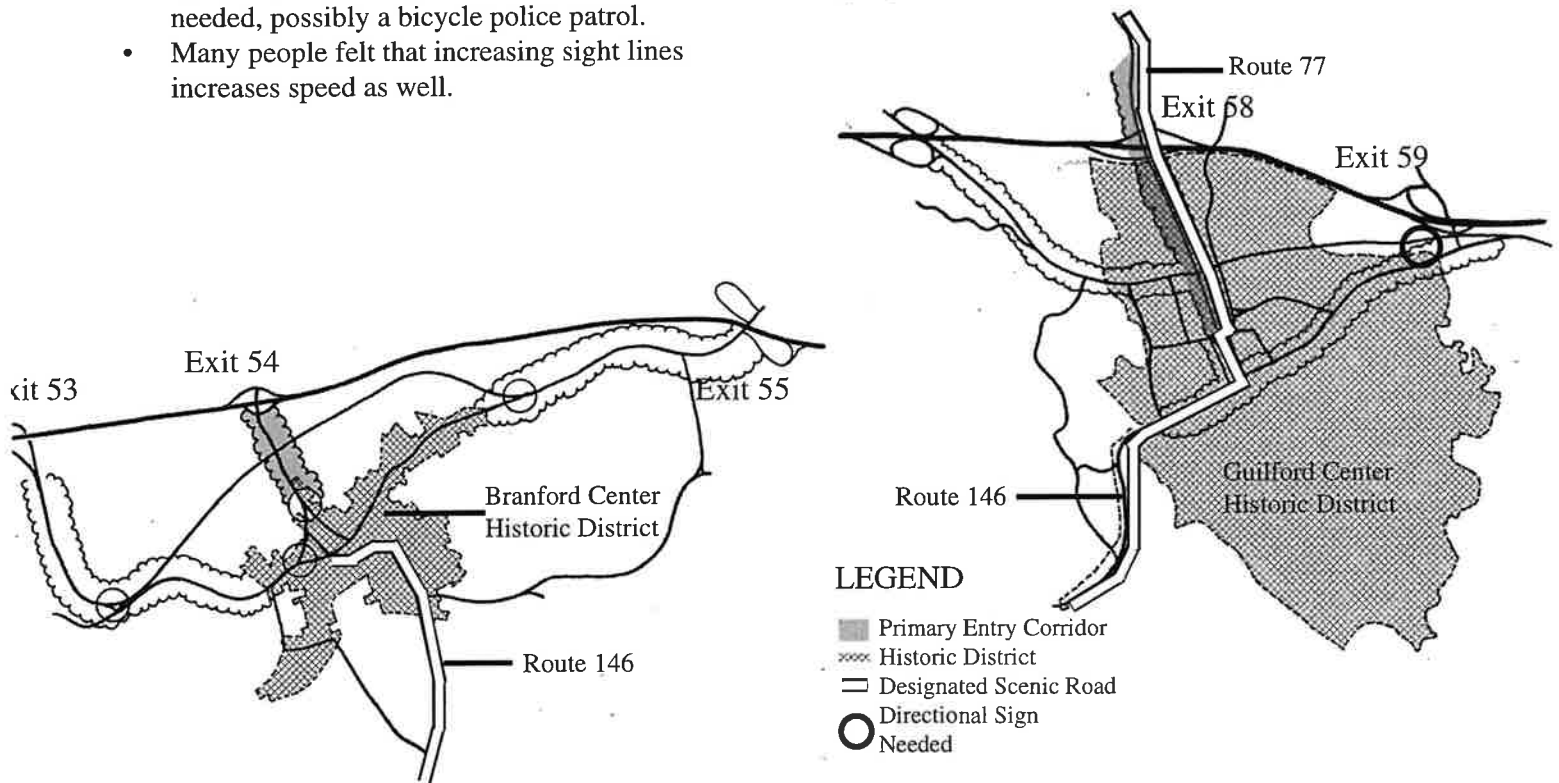


Figure 32 - Location of desirable entrance corridors approaching Branford Center and Guilford Center. Circles indicated key decision points where directional signage would be helpful.

Gateways

An important issue in need of immediate attention is that it is very difficult to find your way in Guilford and Branford to get to the scenic road or its nearby places of interest. A common sense solution is to direct visitors to specific places of arrival and give them information steering them to appropriate places in a way that has the least impact to residents.

One of the biggest problems is the signage to Branford Center, which brings drivers in from exit 54 on Cedar Street, but leaves them wondering which way to go when Cedar Street bears off to the west away from the town center. Additional signs are needed that lead visitors to a logical location to get information about visiting the area (such as the library or town hall). This would provide an opportunity to inform visitors about the best way to see the area, and provide information about sharing the road with bicyclists or automobiles.

The Town of Guilford also has some logical information center locations, including the library and town hall, or the existing community center (where visitor information is now dispersed).

Figure 32 illustrates the locations of entrance corridors approaching Branford Center (left) and Guilford Center (right). The continuing efforts to strengthen and beautify these corridors would also reinforce the goal of directing visitors to a more central location to get information. The circles represent decision points where additional directional signage is needed.

Bicycles

Given the rise in bicycle use in the corridor it would be useful to create more controlled places for bicycle trail heads as well. Being more friendly to bicyclists has some positive economic impacts for local communities. According to the Connecticut Coalition of Bicyclists, there are many people looking for safe and scenic places to ride a bicycle. Scenic roads that are friendly to bicycles improve the overall quality of life for residents as well -- providing an additional community amenity that has been shown to increase property values and market attractiveness of real estate.

Making the route more bicycle friendly would require only a few minor enhancements to the scenic

road:

- create new “bicycle trailheads” (and better recognize existing trailheads) that can both serve as a place to park cars and to give out information about bicycle safety, desirable routes and rides, and nearby facilities (such as food, restrooms, water, and service stations).
- clean debris from existing shoulders, and make “bike safe” drainages;
- improve bicycle signage -- using the message “share the road;”
- lower operating speeds both through enforcement and through approaches that improve driver awareness of pedestrians and bicycles.

Signs

Another important way to make the corridor more bicycle and pedestrian friendly is to create a simple system of signs that provides information about services and features using universal symbols. This could be done very simply, using a sign post similar in scale to the old mile markers found along old scenic routes. But instead of mile markers symbols could be placed referring to features found along the route. The Branford Land Trust already marks their land-holdings and trail heads with a similar type of sign. The system, if carefully designed and organized, could then reinforce the message provided at the gateway locations leading visitors to the most appropriate places to get out of their cars and see the landscape and coastline in a more personal way.

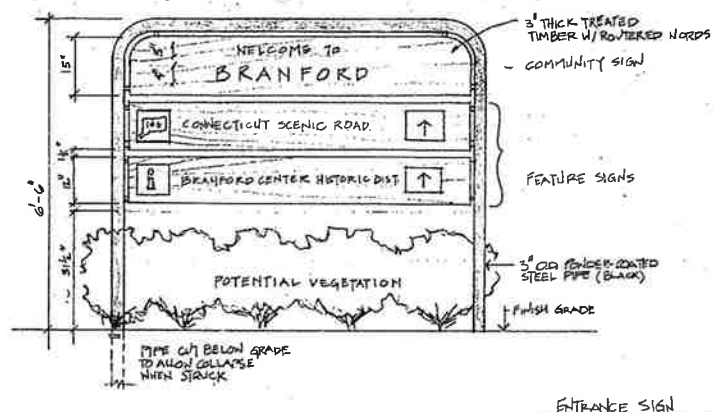
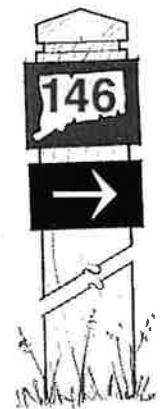


Figure 33 - A family of signs is needed to direct visitors to the right places.

Places to Pull Off and Get Out of Your Car

Another difficult issue facing the scenic road corridor is how to address the desire of residents and visitors alike to park their cars on the side of the road to gain access to the water, to fish, or to walk along a nearby trail. In many cases, these areas are either unsafe as pull-offs due to limited sight distances, or may perhaps disturb neighbors, resulting in the placement of “no parking” signs as a means of control. Is it possible to create better places to pull off and close down the unsafe locations?

First, the places where people should get out of their cars, take a walk, or simply enjoy the view need to be defined. Great care must be taken, however, to site the pull-offs in places that have adequate sight distances not requiring any modification (such as additional clearing, grading, etc). Pull-offs should only be sited in places where it would serve to solve an already existing access problem.

A number of basic design principles can be established to guide the placement and design of pull-offs:

- Work with the topography - only provide space for cars that can fit comfortably on the site. In the case of the crabbing site (Figure 35) by limiting the number of cars to four, balancing cut and fill, and working with the topography, minimal disruption to tree cover and grade can be accomplished. Site lines are a problem at this site and need to be examined in greater detail,



Figure 34 - Parking at the side of the road near water is a problem.

with better topographic maps to determine if it can be made into a safe place to pull off.

- Use wood posts or steel backed wood guiderail to control access rather than the more prevalent W-beam guiderail. The wood will blend in with the landscape and have a more park-like appearance.
- Use simple, porous surface materials, such as small diameter crusher run, or using by-products from the local granite quarry, rather than asphalt to minimize excess runoff.
- Replant with low native shrubs to screen cars without limiting visibility into the site (being sure to retain adequate sight distance). Fill in the canopy edge where trees were removed using small trees to minimize windthrow.

The following pages illustrate how many of these concepts can be pulled together in one location -- the Montowese Street Bridge area.

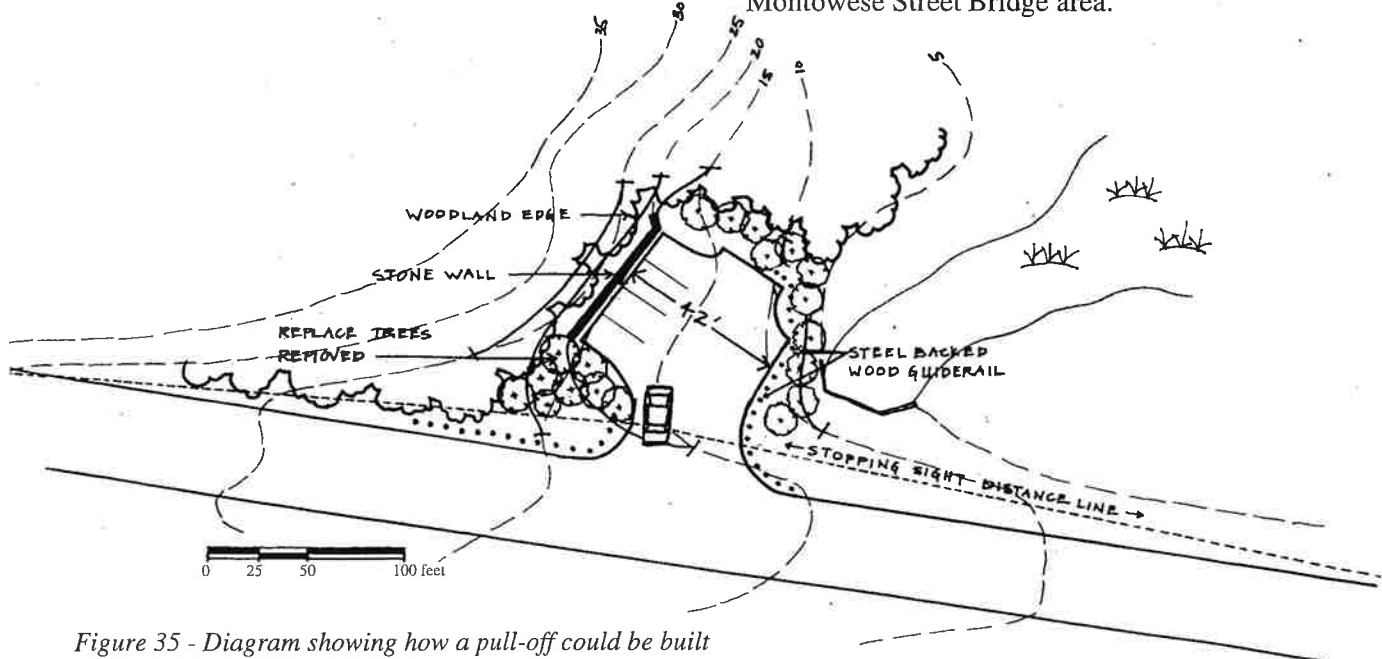


Figure 35 - Diagram showing how a pull-off could be built at the crabbing site.

Case Study

Montowese Street at the Branford River

After leaving the Branford Green, one of the first views encountered is the Branford River with its diversity of landscapes and tidal marshes. This site provides an opportunity to create a very visible “park” out of a collection of now unrelated lands and uses. The reconstruction of the bridge, once seen as a liability, can be turned into an asset by improving safety for pedestrians walking between the neighborhoods south of the bridge and Branford Center.

There are a number of potential opportunities that can be combined into the first ‘pearl’ along a possible greenway ‘necklace’ running the entire length of the Branford River (refer to concept plan, page 40):

- widening and extending the sidewalk on the east side of Montowese Street from the Montowese St. Bridge to the Pine Orchard Road intersection (A).
- The Branford Land Trust proposed pull-off on the Western side of Montowese Street (B).
- State of Connecticut land on the eastern side of Montowese Street at the bridge that could be turned into another pull-off (C);
- the potential to both improve the intersection of



Figure 36 - Aerial view of the Montowese Street Bridge under construction at the Branford River.

Tabor Drive and Montowese Street and create another place to pull-off (D).

- Additional Branford Land Trust property within the marsh system (E);
- Tabor Cemetery with views over the marshes (F);
- the old trolley line crossing of the AMTRAK rail line (the bridge abutments are still there and may be adapted for use as a pedestrian overpass (G);
- the beautiful rock outcrops along the eastern bank of the Branford River (H);
- the small park donated to the town and maintained by the Foote family between the new and old Pine Orchard Road (I); and,
- bridge abutments on old Pine Orchard Road (J) could possibly be used to support a pedestrian bridge (structural integrity must be examined);

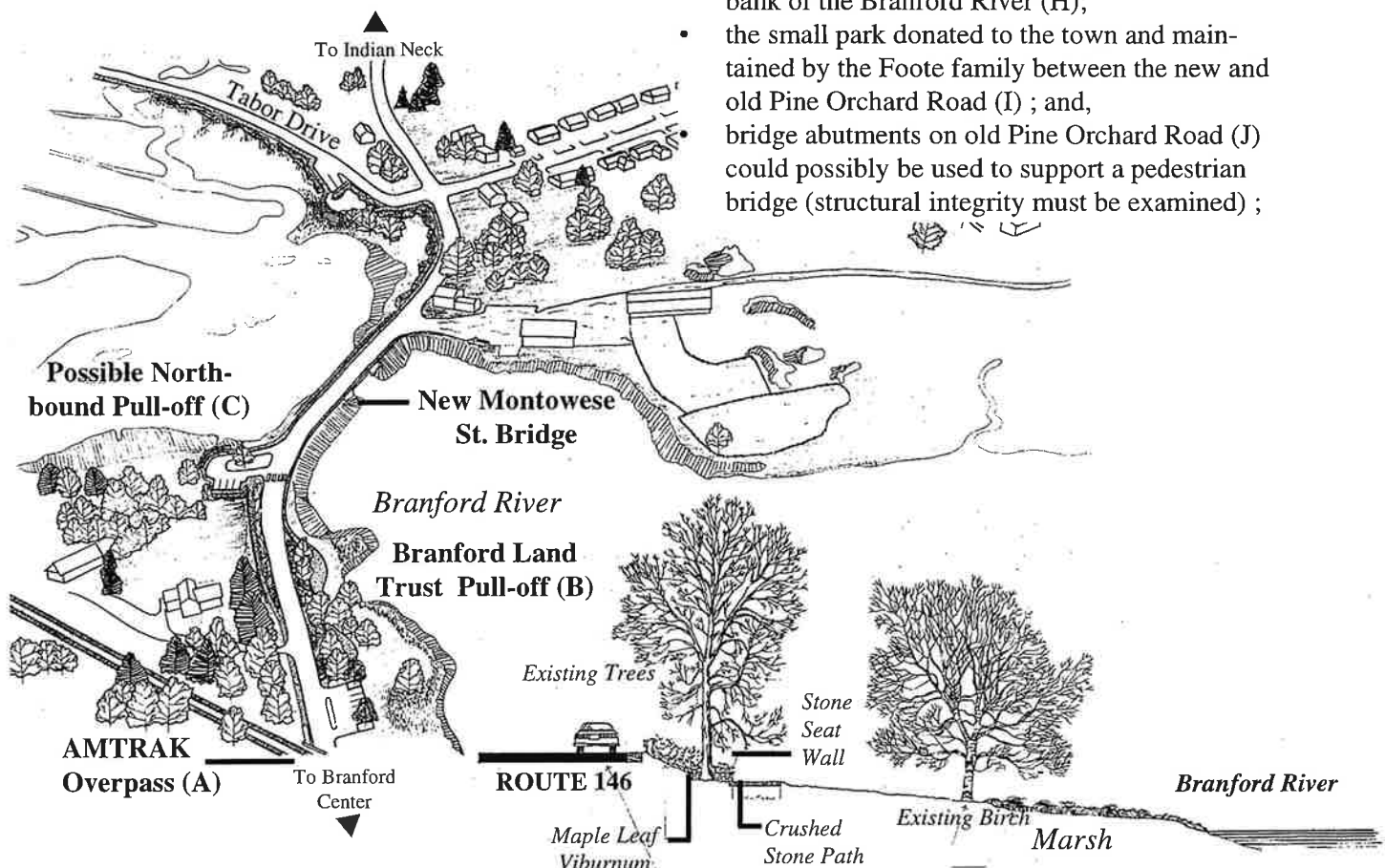


Figure 37 - Linking together a series of open spaces along Montowese Street at the Branford River.

SECTION B: LOOKING SOUTH

Why go to all the trouble to create something out of a collection of now unrelated places? First of all, it would enhance the existing character of this street, which serves to link the Branford Green to the spectacular view at the end of Indian Neck Road.

But more than just enhancing the view, it would create an amenity for the many people who live in adjoining neighborhoods, it would also create a place to give out information about the area and provide a possible trailhead location for seeing the area by bicycle, foot, or small water craft.

There are some potential problems that must be overcome if the concept is to work, some of which are significant:

- getting over the AMTRAK lines using the old Trolley Line trestle location is the most significant problem -- now is the time to ask for such a crossing given that AMTRAK is seeking to electrify the train tracks.
- another problem is the four private residential properties that would have to give permission to use the back side of their properties for a trail easement -- although such access has plenty of precedent in the area.

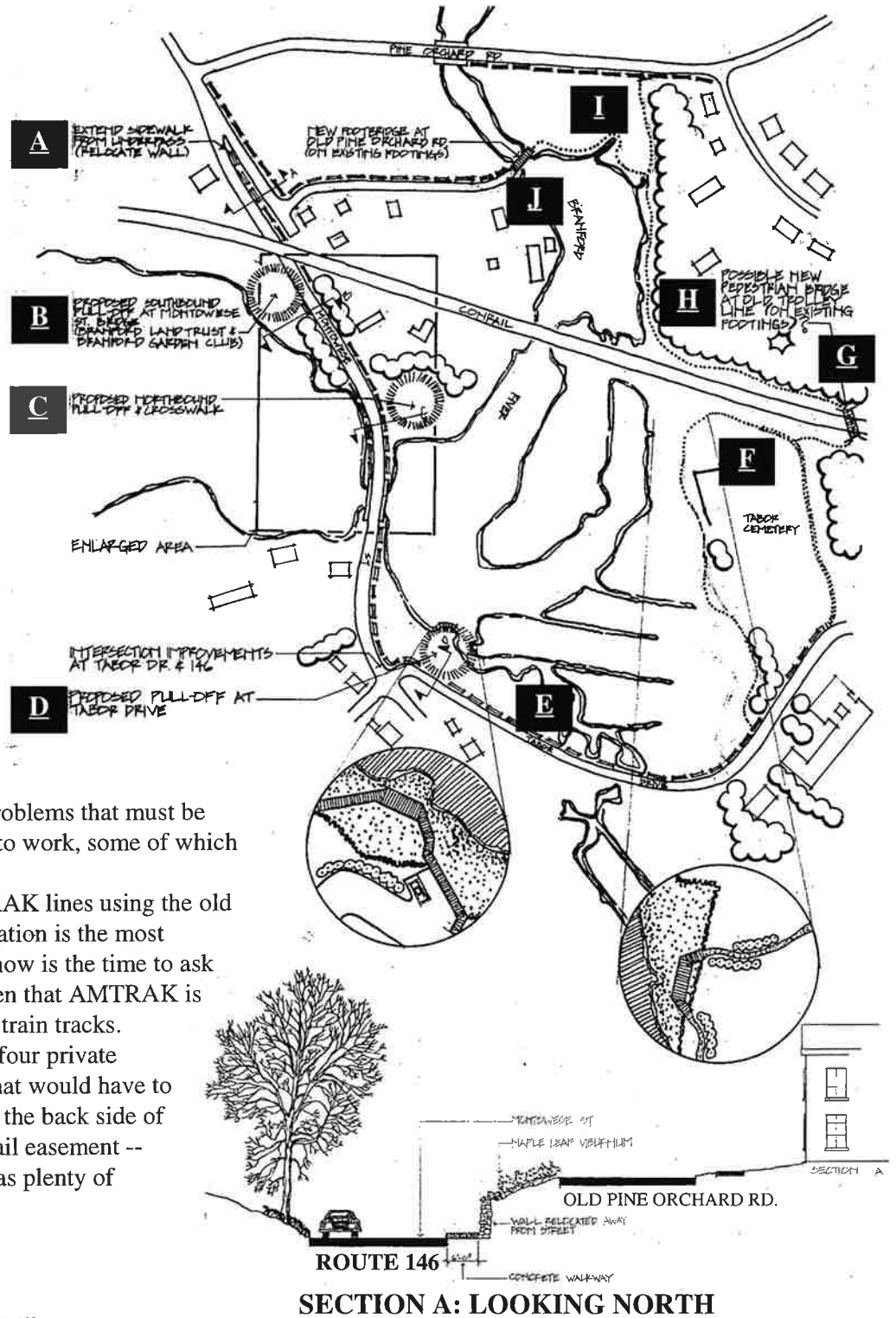


Figure 38 - Concept Plan (top) illustrates long term approach to enhancing the Montowese St. Bridge area into a key focal point for a Branford River Greenway. Section A shows how the existing wall could be moved back to make room for a wider sidewalk enabling pedestrians to walk more safely into town. Section C shows how a pull-off could be constructed on the north bound side of Montowese St. to provide better access to the Branford River.

In order for the project to succeed, there will need to be a partnership between ConnDOT, AMTRAK, the Town of Branford, neighbors, DEP, the Tabor

Church and Cemetery, and the Branford Land Trust. The result of such an effort would be an important community asset for both resident and visitor alike.

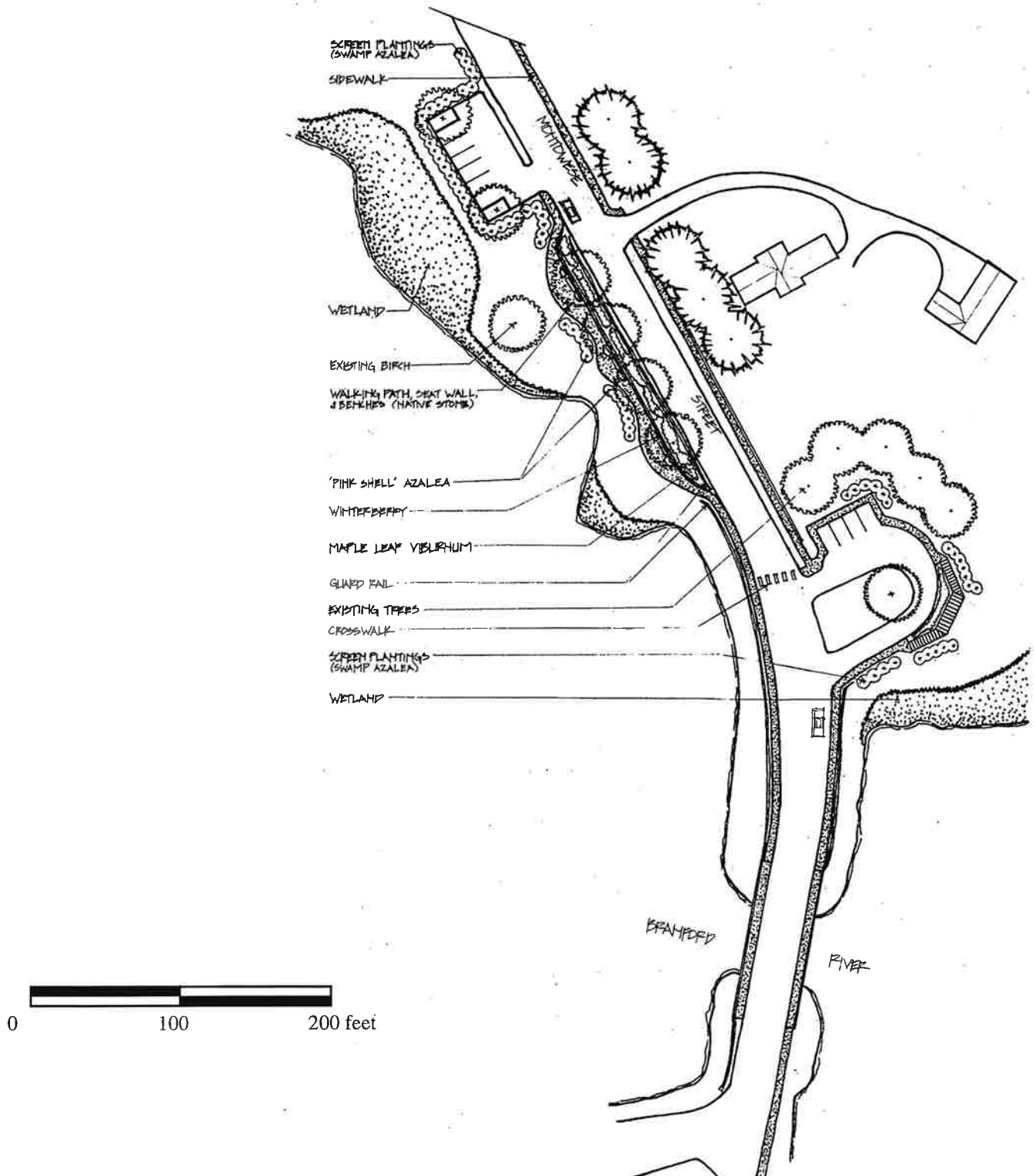


Figure 39- detail plan showing enlarged area with two pull-offs.

Case Study

Limewood Beach



Figure 56 - existing Jersey barrier at Limewood Beach.

One specific area where an improvement was requested at the public workshop was the Jersey barrier at Limewood Beach. Barriers were placed to protect the roadway from wave action during hurricanes and Northeast storms. It is questionable whether the Jersey barriers are attached to the existing deep piles placed approximately 12 to 16 feet apart. Some people requested that whatever barrier is used as a replacement in the future should continue to serve the same function for flood reduction (reducing minor floods). Requests were also made to underground the utility wires along this shoreline segment. Undergrounding in this section would greatly improve the quality of the coastal view and may benefit the reliability of service given the exposure to storms.

There are two possible approaches to modifying the Jersey barriers:

- Create a new cast-in-place concrete barrier and walkway supported on the existing piles, as shown in figure 56. Planter boxes could be placed alternatively with benches to provide a seat wall on the inside of the barrier system. A more decorative concrete finish could also be designed. Plants, such as wild roses, or ivy for more year round effect, could then also be placed in the planter boxes to add seasonal interest.
- A second option would be to simply hang a steel and wood “boardwalk” onto the existing concrete piers using galvanized tubes, as shown in figure 57. The same benches and planter boxes could be placed in between the piers, but the existing Jersey barriers would remain. The Ivy then would be trained along the Jersey barrier to increase the visual interest.

However, it is unlikely that a steel and wood boardwalk attached to the existing concrete piers would survive major Northeast storms. The first option would be a more permanent solution to pedestrian safety and wave action impact issues along the beach. This would require more detail design that is beyond the scope of this study

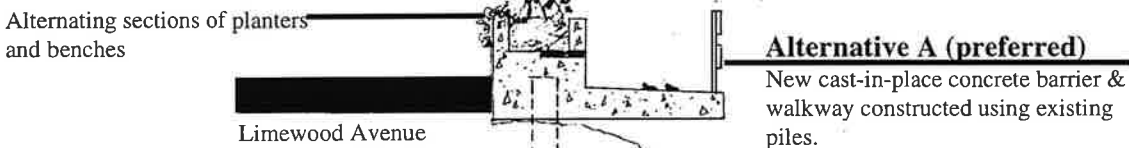


Figure 57 - Alternative A, replacement barrier using cast in place concrete.

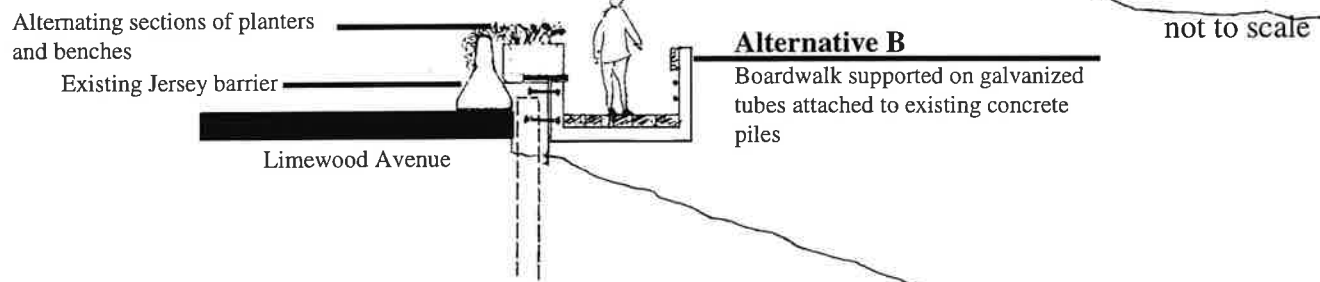


Figure 58 - Alternate B, Jersey Barriers remain with boardwalk, benches and planter boxes.

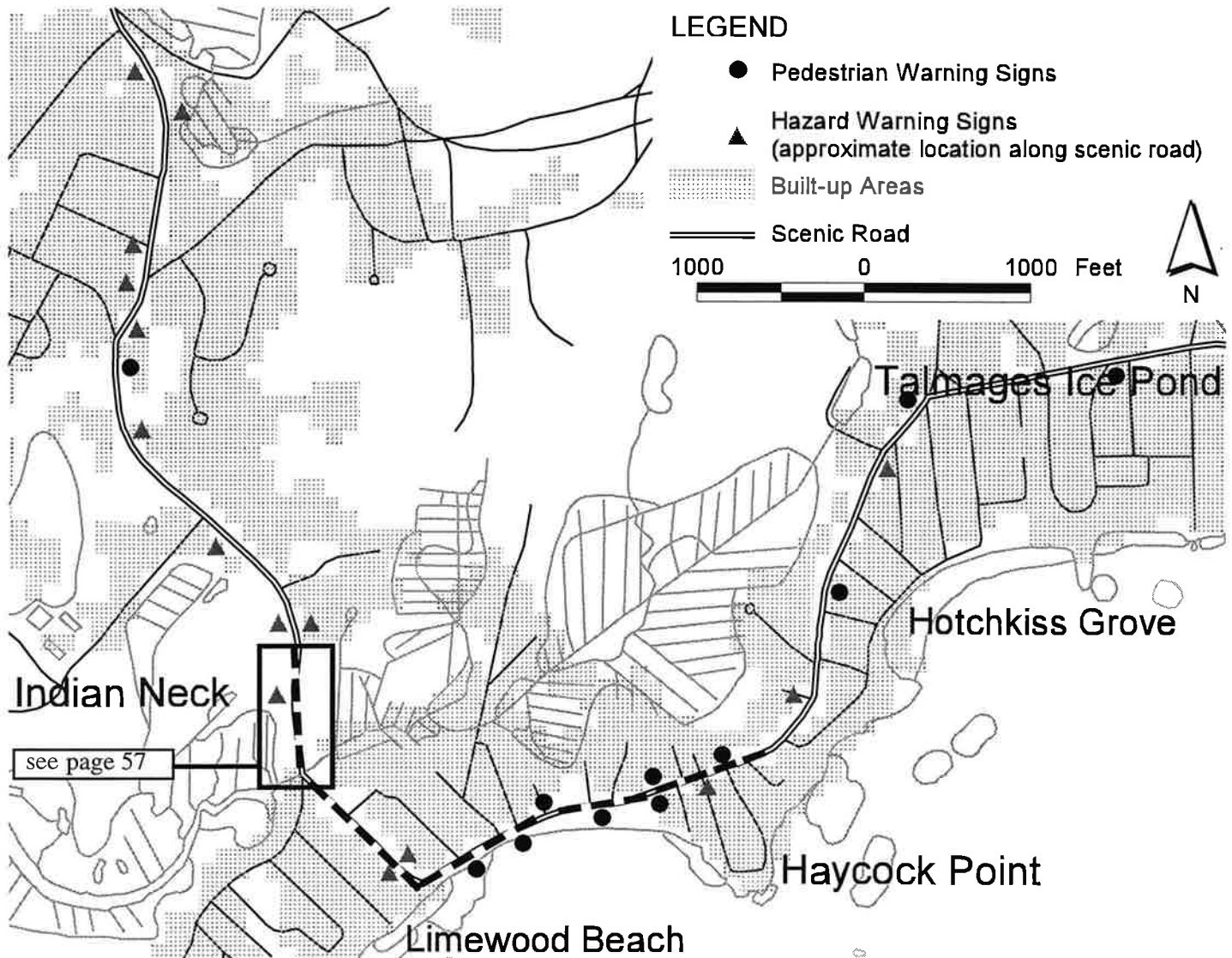


Figure 59 - Improved driver awareness of the approaching 90 degree turn and pedestrian crossings needs to be started earlier (dashed lines).

Improving Driver Awareness of Warning Signs

Another difficult issue along Route 146 is the need to find a way for drivers to improve their awareness of warning signs. Often the background behind the signs makes it difficult to see the sign. Two options worth considering, especially for the sharp 90° turn at the end of Sybil and Limewood Avenues is to use pavement markings and landscape to mark the locations of warning signs. First, evergreen shrubs could be planted behind the yellow caution signs to make them more visible. Second, the fog line could be moved in slightly, in combination with shoulder darkening (with adequate transition) in the vicinity of the sign to mark its location.

Critical to the success of this approach would be to

ensure that the landscape planting would not create an obstruction and block sight lines (they should be small upright evergreen shrubs). Changes to the pavement markings would have to be made in such a manner as to make sure that the lanes still had adequate width for the volume and speed of the traffic.



Figure 60 - Simulation illustrating the visual effect of pavement marking variation at the fog line and darkening shoulders to improve awareness of hazard warning signs.

Case Study

Stony Creek Road/Leetes Island Road Intersection

A design issue that is difficult to address is that of the intersection of Stony Creek Road, Leetes Island Road, and Thimble Island Road in the Village of Stony Creek. The intersection is at a skewed angle, with enough distance from the stop controls to cause drivers to be unsure of who has the right of way. From a long-term perspective it is worth looking at some options ahead of any future growth in traffic. If there is ever a need for improvements, there should be a plan in place to address that need in a more sensitive manner than standard practices might dictate. The following is only intended as a look at ways to address a problem that may arise in the future.



Figure 61 - Aerial view of Stony Creek (right).

Thimble Island Road leads to the town dock and a small retail area with a large seasonal variation in use. Leetes Island Road heading north leads to Interstate 95. Stony Creek Road is designated as Route 146, as is Leetes Island Road, heading east from the intersection. The Average Daily Traffic Volume in 1992 for this intersection was recorded at 1800 for Leetes Island Road heading out of the intersection (east).

village. Some people have suggested that buses should drop tour participants off at the intersection, and shuttle them down in smaller vehicles.

The preferred option for addressing the problems of this intersection (should traffic volumes or the number of accidents increase over time) is to tighten the geometry, reduce the amount of distance between the stop control points on each leg of the intersection, and reduce the total amount of pavement (figure 63).

Another important issue is the truck traffic from I-95 heading to the nearby stone quarry on Leetes Island Road. Many of the truck drivers get lost and have difficulty turning around. Tour buses are also a potential problem which has been raised by residents in relation to tour boats that leave from the town dock in the

This would require acquisition of a portion of the parcel in the northeast quadrant of the intersection. If there is a land sale or an attempt to develop the

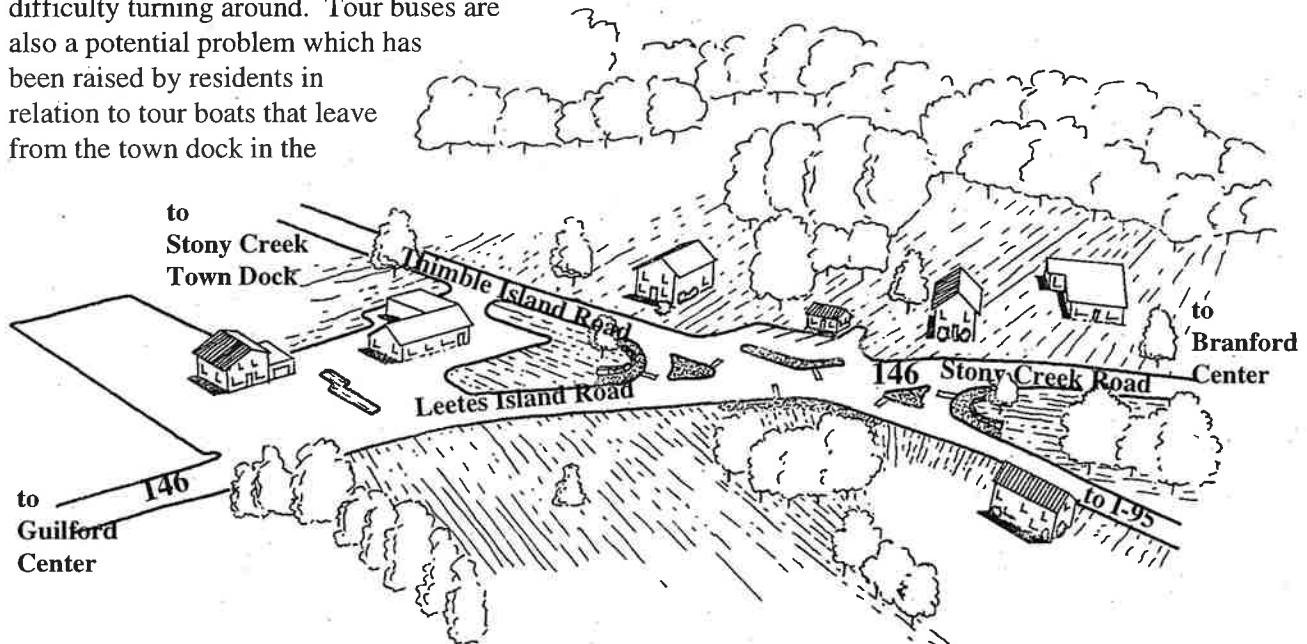


Figure 62 - Aerial sketch (looking southwest) of how tightening the geometry and reducing pavement can improve safety and slow speeds at the intersection of Leetes Island Road and Stony Creek Road.

property, efforts should be made to reserve the needed part of the right of way in exchange for a slightly higher density of housing to compensate for the loss of land. If this approach were to be pursued by the community, efforts would have to be made to preserve the trees between the house and intersection. The following sketch illustrates the principles that should be followed to implement the concept, if needed.

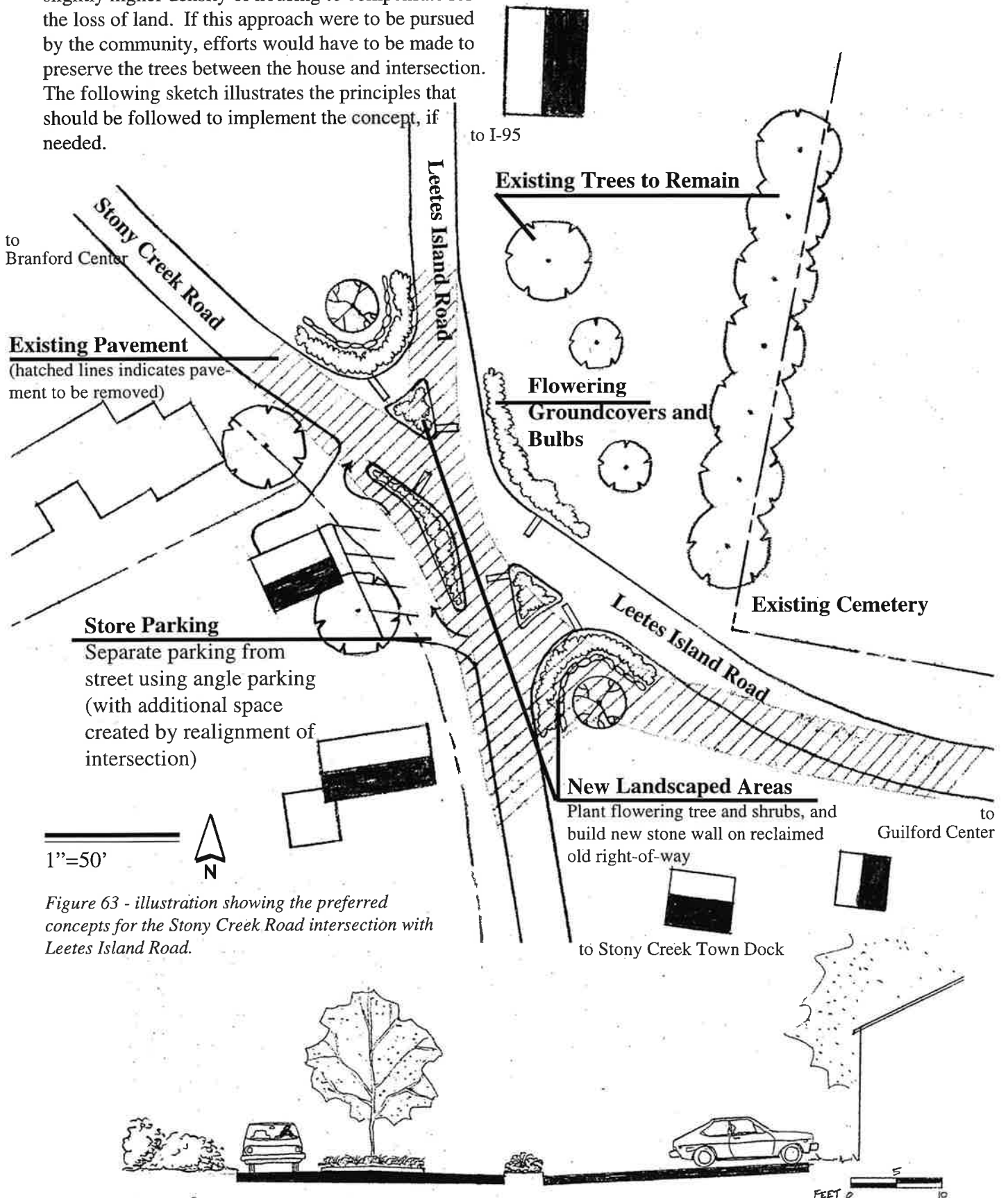


Figure 63 - illustration showing the preferred concepts for the Stony Creek Road intersection with Leetes Island Road.

Figure 64 - Section through package store parking, looking south, illustrating character of proposed enhancements.

4. Design Guidelines for the View and Context

Landscape Guidelines

The dramatic coastal landscape along Routes 77 and 146 is highlighted by views of Long Island Sound, woodlands, stone outcrops and broad agricultural valleys. Variety is abundant and distinct patterns of vegetation add to the unique qualities of the corridors. Native woodlands cover steep slopes along both routes while many salt marshes are visible from 146. As one travels north along 77, the landscape opens and broad floodplain meadows are visible as well as Lake Quonnapaug. The healthy and vigorous vegetation along 77 and 146 helps to create the unique scenic character. Long-term planting and management programs are needed to maintain healthy roadside vegetation and preserve the scenic quality of the corridors.

The entire region is dominated by the Oak Forest plant community. Three distinct variations in the pattern of plant species occur which are related to the amount of moisture available in the soil. With drier conditions dominating hilltops and uplands, moist conditions in midslope positions, and the wettest conditions occurring in low slope and valley areas, plant species adapted to each condition dominate, creating unique plant communities.

Soils are another important factor in vegetation patterns. Soils along Routes 77 and 146 range from very poorly drained organic soils in tidal marshes to steep, well drained soils with numerous outcrops and stones and boulders covering 15% of the surface. Glacial activity left only shallow deposits but outwash from meltwaters and subsequent rivers have deposited soils which are highly suited for development and landscape planting. Branford and Guilford were originally settled on outwash terraces utilizing these well-drained loamy soils located above deposits of sand and gravel.

Together with landscape position and slope aspect, soils and moisture availability determine the pattern of vegetation native to the landscape. Using this information, guidelines for landscape plantings have been developed. A map showing the location of plant communities along the scenic road (Appendix F) should be used as a guide to select planting and management regimes when installing or replacing landscape plantings throughout the corridor.



Figure 64 - View along Route 146 showing distinct patterns of vegetation rising up the slope.

TIDAL MARSH

This lowland landscape is characterized by poorly drained organic soils. The soil is wet, flooded daily, and contains a high salt content. The soil is not suitable for trees and supports only those plants adapted to tidal marsh conditions. These areas are fragile and are protected under the Connecticut Coastal Management Act. The communities of Branford and Guilford are both within the coastal zone established in this act. Planting in these areas would be minimal and maintenance limited to control of invasive exotics and preserving sight lines.

OUTWASH TERRACE

The outwash terrace landscape provides a well-drained soil suitable for development and a variety of landscape plantings. The communities of Branford and Guilford are located in outwash terrace areas. Soils are nearly level, well-drained loams underlain with sands and gravels. Favored tree species include:

- Eastern White Pine
- Sugar Maple
- Northern Red Oak
- White Spruce
- Norway Spruce
- Hornbeam

Favored shrub species include:

- Sheep Laurel
- Witch Hazel
- Highbush Blueberry
- Mountain Laurel
- Pink Azalea
- Mountain Azalea

SLOPE

This typology includes those areas ranging from gently sloping, well drained soils to steep, stony, excessively drained soils. Bedrock depth is minimal in places and rock outcroppings prevalent. The favorable trees recommended for planting are:

- Northern Red Oak
- Eastern White Pine
- Scarlet Oak
- Black Oak
- White Oak
- Pignut Hickory
- Black Birch
- Hop Hornbeam

Favorable shrubs include:

- American Chestnut
- Mountain Laurel
- Green-osier Dogwood
- Maple-leaved Viburnum

UPLAND

The glacial upland areas contain moderately well drained, stony soils with gentle slopes. Favorable trees include:

- Red Maple
- Sugar Maple
- Eastern White Pine
- Northern Red Oak
- White Spruce
- Chestnut Oak
- Scarlet Oak
- Black Oak
- White Oak

Favorable shrubs include:

- Huckleberry
- Lowbush Blueberry
- Sweet Fern
- Sheep Laurel

This description of the different landscapes that comprise Route 77 and 146 is intended to serve as a general framework for plant selection when considering new landscape enhancements along the road and right-of-way. Any planting within State-owned right-of-way requires a permit from ConnDOT (see Appendix F). Discussion of adopt-a-highway programs are contained in Chapter 4, Implementation.



Figure 65 - View along Route 77 showing succession within a glacial upland area.



Figure 66 - Historic trees are also important to consider such as this site of the original pines in Pine Orchard (behind deciduous trees along street).



Figure 67 - Wetland mitigation ongoing at marshes along Block Island Road are important projects to restore native ecosystems and to keep invasive species from overtaking an area.



Figure 68 - Homes along Montowese Street creating a cohesive edge contribute to community character. New houses in built-up areas should reinforce this character.

Guiding Land Use

Guiding new development is another important strategy for keeping Route 77 and 146 scenic. Both Branford and Guilford have had some successes at guiding development to preserve open space and community character. There are two distinctly different situations that may need to be addressed as part of each community's Plan of Conservation and Development: in-fill housing within an already built-up area, and new subdivisions in the more rural areas along Route 77 in North Guilford.

In-Fill Housing

Within already built up areas it will be important to look carefully at the context created by the pattern of development. Rather than encouraging small housing projects to set homes back away from the street, houses should be constructed along a 'build-to' line. Where economically feasible, new in-fill homes should be similar in size (building volume) and utilize the design characteristics of existing homes nearby (roof pitch, fenestration, and materials).

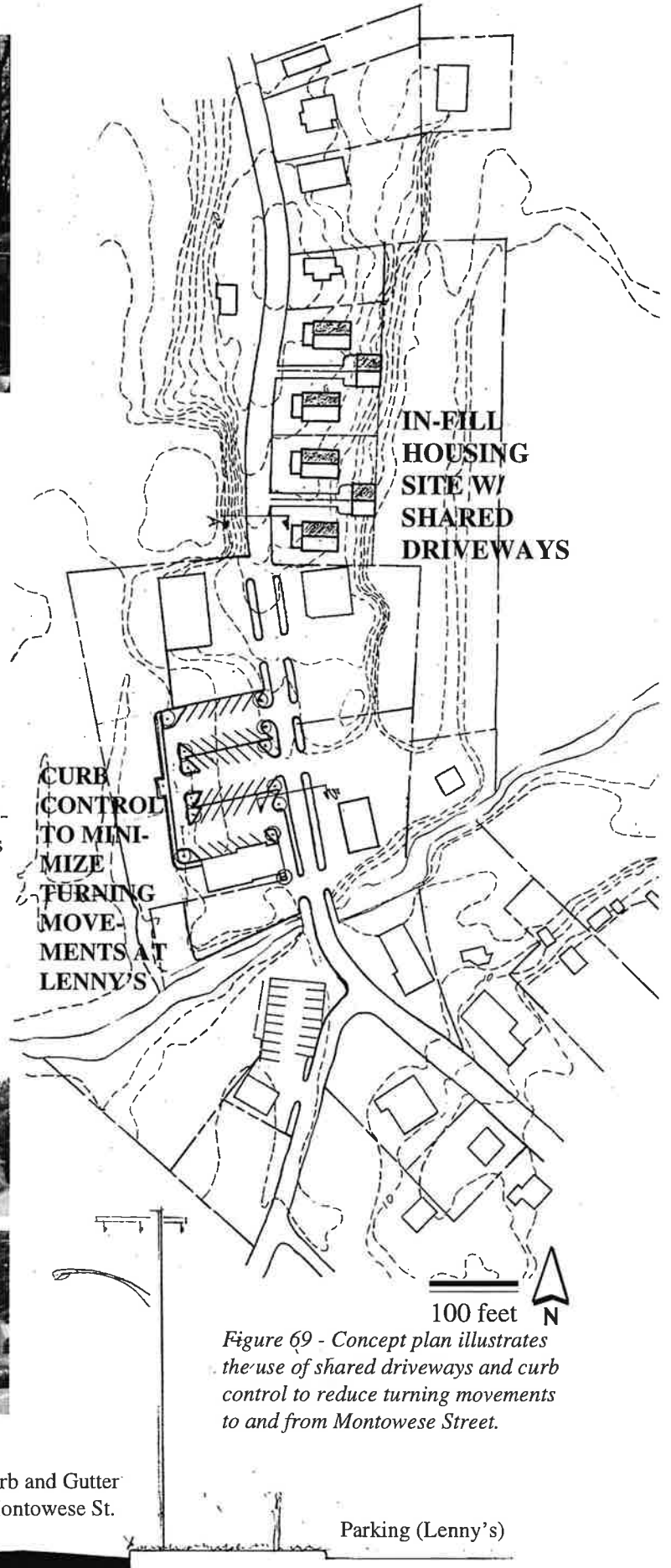
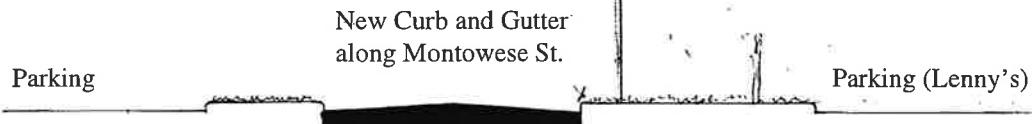


Figure 69 - Concept plan illustrates the use of shared driveways and curb control to reduce turning movements to and from Montowese Street.



Case Study

Broomstick Ledges View Conservation

Guiding land use does not have to mean limiting development. By working with property owners to ensure that new development fits with the landscape and architecture that make Branford and Guilford unique, it is possible to keep the view from these roads scenic, while still providing homeowners with a view of a rural landscape or a cohesive neighborhood. Of particular importance is the need to encourage the developer to group houses closer together. In addition, the following simple guidelines should be considered:

- Use narrower access roads or private drives, rather than standardized subdivision roads;
- Connect roads so that they form loops or blocks, rather than long cul-de-sacs;
- Preserve hayland and cropland in whole tracts so that the land can continue to be farmed;
- Group homes around a centralized common open space, with exterior views of open space;
- Sensitively integrate garages and parking so that they do not dominate the view of the home;
- Use hedgerows, woodland patches, and shade trees to provide each home with privacy.

The sketches (right) provide a hypothetical example of what would happen if these simple guidelines were followed on a tract of land in North Guilford.

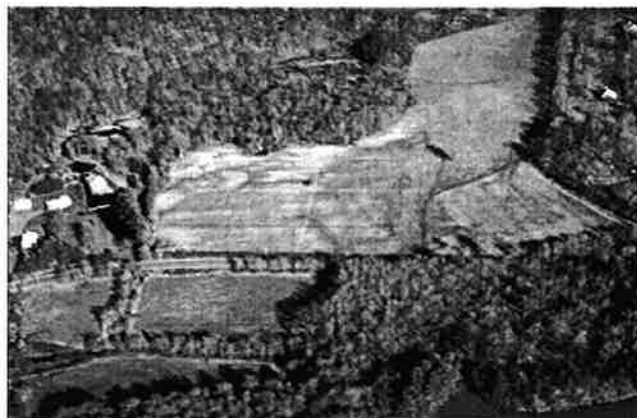


Figure 71 - One of the remaining parcels of land still being farmed along Route 77 in North Guilford.

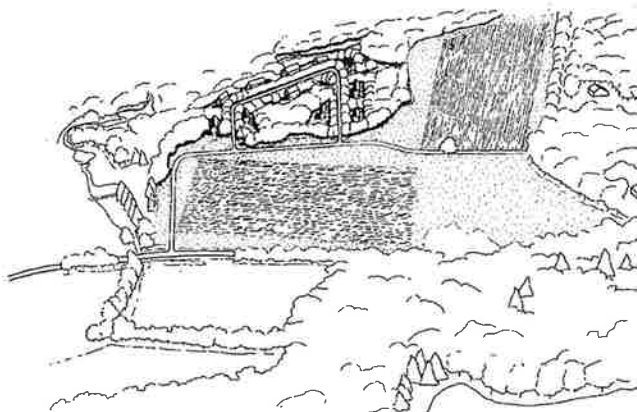
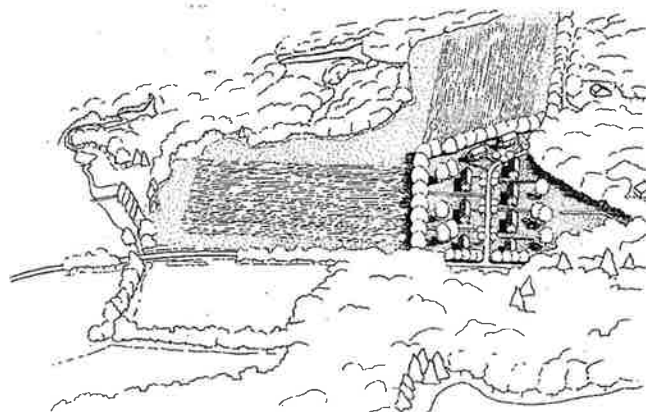
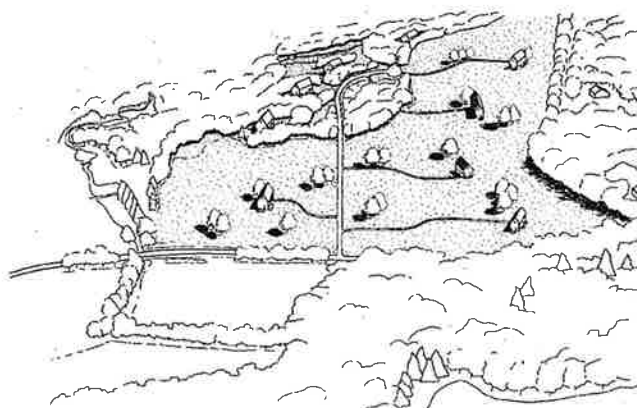


Figure 72 - Tighter groupings of houses are permitted under the Town of Guilford zoning laws. This hypothetical development plan illustrates the benefits of grouping houses closer together to retain existing hay land in production (bottom right) versus the standard practices of spreading houses evenly across the property (middle right) which precludes any hay production. Another option (bottom left) retains woodland areas as a trade-off for some hay land lost to production.



Implementation

The Branford/ Guilford Scenic Roads Committee: **An Umbrella Organization for Both Corridors**

Dealing with two separate but interconnected corridors in two separate municipalities is a complicated but soluble administrative challenge. As many of the scenic byway issues pertain to both corridors, in order to avoid redundancy and for better coordination, a single overall advisory body is recommended.

Immediately, the existing Route 77 and 146 Advisory Committee should be extended for an additional year in order to better define its role, procedures and responsibilities. In both the short- and long-term, however, there are several important benefits of making the committee a more permanent fixture:

- it can represent common local concerns from both towns regarding issues that relate to both corridors, providing a single place of communication about scenic roads;
- acting as a joint group, rather than as separate municipal bodies, committee participants can exert the maximum level of influence on state and local agencies and officials, as well as provide leverage with interest groups and private landowners;
- a single committee can most effectively and efficiently implement the plan, coordinating volunteer and funded efforts from a variety of public and private sources (such as is currently being done to preserve the Pinchot property by groups in both towns);
- such a committee can focus directly on scenic road issues that are not within the purview of other boards and commissions, complementing and coordinating, rather than duplicating, efforts of other valuable civic institutions.

For the first year, the committee should focus on the following initial steps for implementing the plan

- Gain endorsements of the plan from each towns relevant boards and commissions, interested civic organizations and user groups.
- Establish the committee as a single point of contact for ConnDOT, utility companies, and others responsible for the day to day management of the road and right-of-way, including defining mutually beneficial working relationships and areas of interest.
- Pursue grants and funding for high priority projects.
- Establish a single repository for resource inventory and data related to the scenic road (including the establishment of a tree registry and tree stewardship program).
- Work with each town's planning and zoning commissions to incorporate simple guidelines for scenic road conservation into standard development review procedures for properties within the viewshed.

Beyond the initial first year of the committee, and depending upon what form the committee takes (whether one or two towns, whether a subcommittee of an existing board or commission, etc). the primary responsibilities would need to address the following:

- Serve as a single point of contact for ConnDOT (and others) to carry out the intent of the scenic road legislation as it applies to Routes 77 and 146; as well as a single point of contact for implementing the provisions of the newly enacted state legislation requiring public notice for tree clearing by private developers on state land.

The intent is to increase opportunities for public involvement in scenic road management decisions, such as tree trimming or road maintenance, and to facilitate coordination with local government. The Com-

mittee would serve as a sounding board for the State Scenic Road Advisory Committee regarding proposed state projects and any potential impact on the scenic road and coordinating local review of any proposed actions. These can include open public meetings when appropriate to address key issues.

- Advise towns on how to coordinate policies and programs that are needed to preserve views and vistas adjacent to the scenic roads, such as coordinating with other local efforts on an overall visitation and graphics program, or working with land trusts, farm bureaus, or forestry organizations to provide incentives for preservation of agricultural land and open space.

The intent here is to make property owners aware of the kinds of voluntary efforts and local municipal programs that are available to help conserve the scenic views which characterize the two roadways and that they remain scenic into the future.

In each of these overall roles, the Committee has the opportunity to be not only reactive but proactive, proposing guidelines and concepts that represent community objectives, and working with highway engineers, maintenance personnel, town planning staff and commissions, landowners or builders to ensure appropriate development.

The geographic purview of the Committee's efforts will be twofold:

- the primary purview will be the Routes 77 and 146 road and right of way, monitoring and responding to potential road/right-of-way maintenance and improvements, and coordinating with ConnDOT, utility companies and relevant municipal staff;
- the secondary purview is that adjacent area of property fronting on the roads or within the corridor's viewshed, in which the committee should monitor potential land development with respect to existing planning and zoning, take the lead in helping implement specific partnership projects along the corridors as illustrated in this report, coordinate with local scenic road programs, and work with available programs and incentives to encourage open space conservation easements and complementary land development efforts.

The committee would serve as a clearinghouse as well as a watchdog – not taking on review of detailed issues or proposals, but ensuring that scenic road conservation issues are addressed as part of normal review procedures. Specific concerns having to do with the unique responsibilities or jurisdiction of each town – for instance, zoning controls and development policies, conservation issues, relationship to town roads, or concerns having to do with town services or utility infrastructure – would be referred back to the relevant Branford or Guilford commission or department.

Who Should Be Involved in the Scenic Roads Committee

The Committee should be seen as an outgrowth or expansion of the current Advisory Committee to the project with the same or similar representation and participation:

- local municipalities— elected and appointed officials and departmental professionals, such as representatives of the Board of Selectmen and Planning Commission, directors of planning, engineering and public works;
- civic groups— representatives of local land trusts, historic, environmental or preservation organizations, and neighborhood groups;
- private sector participants— utility company representatives, interested corporations, businesses or merchants;
- landowners and residents representing different geographic areas along the scenic road corridor;
- liaison with state agencies or elected representatives, including ConnDOT.

ConnDOT and Town Cooperation

The corridor management plan, when accepted by ConnDOT and endorsed by each town represents a blueprint for cooperation between the Connecticut Department of Transportation and local byway participants— landowners, town officials and staff, civic groups and land trusts. The corridor management plan identifies the benefits for all concerned. While the plan is not permanently cast in stone, it sets out an agenda for cooperation whose success depends on the mutual benefits of all parties.

As part of the planning process, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Towns of Branford and Guilford have recognized that:

It is in the best interest of the citizens of each town to agree to work cooperatively on creating the kinds of incentives and programs that will help preserve the corridor's scenic views and historic and cultural context,
and that it is in the best interest of the citizens of each town for the Connecticut DOT to work cooperatively on finding ways to adopt and undertake appropriate maintenance standards and improvements to the road and right-of-way that reflect its special standing as a designated scenic road.

As its part of the plan's implementation process, the Connecticut Department of Transportation would:

- adopt as Department Policy the scenic corridor's goals and objectives;
- adopt special maintenance standards and design practices appropriate to the scenic road corridors that reflect their special standing as a state designated scenic road;
- fully participate in the establishment of an entity to serve as a permanent link between Connecticut DOT and the town, to address issues of common concern;
- foster open, early and direct communication with key stakeholders.

As its part of the plan's implementation process, the Towns of Branford and Guilford would:

- adopt the goals and objectives identified in this report as part of the towns' Plans of Conservation and Development and as their input into regional plans of development;
- adopt appropriate planning concepts for the scenic road viewshed that will provide incentives to property owners to conserve its scenic quality;
- fully participate in the establishment of an entity to serve as a permanent link between the Connecticut DOT and the town and associated entities, to address issues of common concern.

In addition, both parties would agree to work together to:

- Identify cost-effective ways to manage and maintain the road and right-of-way in a more sensitive manner, including finding alternative sources of funding to pay for any added associated costs, and encouraging the local adoption of those road maintenance practices that exceed the available funds;
- Find the most cost effective way, including coordination of volunteer efforts, to manage associated features through appropriate improvements to signage, trailhead development, and interpretive exhibits.

Conserving and Enhancing the Road and Right-of-Way: **The Connecticut Department of Transportation Role**

The road and right-of-way strategies outlined in this report including roadside conservation, enhancement projects, maintenance, and adopt-a-highway efforts will require the full cooperation of the Connecticut DOT – both the District II office, and the State offices in Newington. Perhaps the most important implementation effort for ConnDOT is the adoption and approval of the use of various techniques outlined in the report to both conserve and enhance the appearance of the scenic road, including but not limited to:

- In consultation with the Towns of Branford and Guilford and the South Central Connecticut COG, review the distribution of speed limits, and if necessary, lower the overall speed limit on Route 146 to 25 mph in the Town of Guilford (Branford is currently 25 mph).
- recognition of scenic road legislation in the application of appropriate design standards for Resurfacing, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (3R) type work, especially in reviewing requests for waivers from these standards where appropriate and on a case by case basis;
- consider the use of various traffic calming measures in settled areas including shoulder treatments, traffic islands, landscape improvements, lighting, and pedestrian safety improvements as detailed in Chapter 3;
- use of alternative bridge guiderails that allow for views through to the water;
- use of the steel backed wood or dark brown or black galvanized box guiderail as a replacement for the standard metal guiderail;
- painting the backs of signs dark brown or black;
- use of soil bio-engineering techniques for slope stabilization, where appropriate;

The Connecticut DOT currently reviews the use of these types of special details on a case by case basis. Many are in use within the District already. Although a case by case review of the use of these details will continue to work, this report recommends that a family of details be selected for use in the corridor at one time so that engineers preparing future construction plans can be made aware of their use early in the process, and maintenance requirements can be assessed on a life cycle basis at the start of the design process.

Protecting the Views and Vistas:

Incorporation of Scenic Road Concerns in Public Plans

Both Branford and Guilford have sophisticated sets of land use regulations already in place, and seem committed to using them. Both towns likewise clearly place a premium on conservation and preservation goals, balanced with the need for future economic development. Each town has been pursuing these goals for years through the complex systems of land use regulation presently in place. Zoning and subdivision regulations are extensive and by most measures quite complete. The systems have been in effect for at least a generation, with considerable adjustments made in the intervening years.

Currently, each town has underway a state-required update to its Plan of Conservation and Development (PoCD). Interim outlines and goal statements suggest that in each case an enlightened, progressive plan will result, based on extensive public input.

Action:

The Connecticut Department of Transportation needs to consider adopting a set of design details for use along these two scenic road corridors to minimize individual requests for special design elements

Each town should adopt the goals and objectives of this plan as part of this evolving Plan of Conservation and Development. (These should be introduced by a description of the corridors' roles within the overall land use and circulation of each town). Adopting the goals and objectives is a simple, positive step that affirms the principles that will guide the Towns and the Committee in conserving the area's scenic qualities.

As zoning is updated to correspond to the policies and concerns of the new Plans of Conservation and Development, 'scenic road conservation districts' should be created as a means of consolidating and coordinating public policy related to scenic roads and view conservation along each corridor. The result would be a much simpler and more effective means of working with property owners to conserve resources and guide development.

Currently in each town, basic zoning districts are already augmented by additional 'overlay zones', layers of public review responding to different conditions, such as coastal areas, town center and historic districts. More detailed planning reviews are mandated in these instances – from any project impacting an historic area to any project generating a large amount of traffic.

For instance, Guilford's Design Review Committee (an adjunct of the Planning Commission) administers two overlay districts— in the central area historic district and in the Westside Economic Development Overlay Zone (WEDOZ). In each area, the Committee uses a design review approach to examine potential new development on a case by case basis.

Scenic road conservation districts would build on this existing approach in the following ways:

- Administration of these conservation districts would vary by town (as separate political bodies), but also by corridor and subarea as relevant. Review of roadway conditions, new development or other proposed changes within each area could be initially carried out by a Scenic Road Committee advisory panel, then acted upon by the relevant town planning commission.
- The conservation district would cover two distinct geographic areas (corresponding to the purviews of the Scenic Road Committee):
 - a primary zone, along the Routes 77 and 146 road and right of way, with concerns having to do with road engineering, maintenance, curb cuts, roadside landscaping and stone walls, and signage issues;
 - a secondary zone, based on extent and quality of the view from the road, which would be more concerned with ensuring that new development meet planning and zoning standards to preserve the view, and providing public or private incentives to make this feasible, including density bonuses, technical planning assistance, conservation easements, and other techniques.
- Within the conservation district, property owners would be eligible for a variety of incentives for view preservation:
 - for example, tax credits for adherence to a "tree conservation plan" (as discussed in Section III, page 35;)
 - or, receive priority for such items as public/private investments in conservation easements (through land trust and/or municipal participation, as discussed in the following section).

ACTION:

Branford and Guilford need to adopt the corridor plan's goals and objectives as part of each Town's Plan of Conservation and Development.

ACTION:

A 'scenic road conservation district' should be created as a means of consolidating and coordinating public policy along each corridor

- For new development within the district, all that is needed is a set of simpler and less complicated planning and design guidelines to help owners wanting to preserve scenic values, but who may need to sell or develop their property. Such guidelines could be based on the examples in this report (see page 54, “Guidelines for the View and Context.”) and serve as a framework for a voluntary approach to open space and view preservation as follows:
 - guidelines should address whether new development patterns are sensitive to the form, line, color and texture of the landscape, and that new patterns of settlement are sympathetic to the traditional ways of building within the community (scale and site plan organization;)
 - guidelines should not address the design details which cannot be discerned by the casual viewer.
 - guidelines should provide public officials or local boards and commissions assistance in evaluating the potential impact of a proposed development on scenic values and offer ways to reduce those impacts;
 - guidelines should give property owners and developers clear direction as to those views and aspects of the scenic road that the larger community deems important.

ACTION:
Voluntary guidelines need to be developed to help property owners and each town's Boards and Commissions find ways to conserve scenic values in a cooperative manner.

Guidelines to illustrate desired development can vary by scenic road segment, but would have a common approach representing a framework for agreement between property owners and municipality. For example, the guidelines along Montowese Street (using a “build-to” line) would be necessarily different than the guidelines for the Inland Loop section where most of the houses are set back away from the road.

Examples of possible creative approaches for property owners include:

- siting to emphasize views, open space, and tree preservation (and new landscape planting)
- utilizing tighter groupings of houses, even on smaller projects
- reducing the number of curb cuts; sharing driveways
- “build-to” lines (similar but opposite to setback lines) at entries to town centers and crossroads, to define spaces with buildings
- location of major parking behind commercial structures, not on the road frontage.

Examples of possible incentives given by towns for using such creative approaches rather than developing as-of-right include:

- streamlined approvals process (faster approvals save money);
- greater building density allowed;
- flexibility in yard requirements, frontage requirements, etc.;
- site planning, landscape or building design technical assistance;
- flexible standards for building internal roads or utilities (reducing up-front costs of development).

In summary, each town’s role in preserving the view and context includes the following step:

- the first is to participate in the formation of the Scenic Roads Committee;
- the second is that each Town adopt the scenic byway goals and objectives as part of their evolving Plans of Conservation and Development.
- the third is to create ‘scenic road conservation districts’ and associated incentives and guidelines to coordinate public and private actions.

Protecting Views and Vistas

Local Interest Groups: Civic and Not-for Profit Sector

Land trusts in each town have acquired a variety of key properties adjacent to the scenic roads, and have established two new acquisition priorities along these two scenic roads: the Pinchot Tract, and Bluff Head Mountain. These efforts should be continued and expanded — especially examining purchase of conservation easements, which may extend scarce acquisition funds further than direct purchase. (In addition, because open space preserved through direct purchase does not produce tax revenue, wherever possible conserved open land should be retained for productive ventures such as farming or forestry— another argument for increased use of conservation easements which provide a way for the current owner to retain title to the land and still get the needed income).

Neither town has made extensive use of other State programs (such as agricultural preservation), although Guilford, for instance, has established (though not allocated budget to) a fund for open space purchase. This is an area where continued joint municipal/ land trust actions may be mutually supportive.

Land trusts or some national preservation organizations can also help property owners with the thorny issues of estate planning — the failure to properly deal ahead of time with the legal and financial requirements of maintaining property from generation to generation— is one of the major causes of forest, farmland and open space breakup. Many of the ‘linear subdivisions’ along farmland highway frontage are a result of the need to sell property to pay estate taxes, a situation that advance planning may have been able to resolve.

Although there are few large farms left along the two scenic roads, those that remain are key to the area remaining scenic. A recent survey in northeast Connecticut estimates that 68% of farmers have no estate plans in place for the future, and owners of forested lands are in a similar situation. Organizations such as the University of Connecticut Extension (or Natural Resources Conservation Service), the Timber Products Council, Farm Credit Banks, or the ‘Future of the Dairy Farm’ committee of the American Farmland Trust provide assistance to individuals, local organizations and public bodies about this issue.

Private Sector Coordination

A critical part of the implementation effort is the coordination of volunteers not only to maintain the roadside environment over and above the budgetary capacity of the Connecticut DOT or each Town, but also to help construct some of the small scale roadside improvements and landscaping.

The best approach to coordinating this activity is to use the “Adopt-a-Highway” model as an organizing effort. An example of the kind of agreement District II maintenance personnel have used for landscape work by private groups on state right-of-way is included in Appendix F.

Much of what is necessary to implement the landscape enhancements of this plan can rely on the cooperation of neighbors, agreeing to use a single plan for individual planting on private land and with permit, on state land. This method

ACTION:

Scenic conservation priorities need to be added to the list of ongoing efforts by private land trusts along these two roads.

has proven to be successful in communities throughout the United States for street tree planting, community gardens, school yards and other important civic landscapes. Using the section of road approaching the Guilford green as an example, the following steps would need to be taken to implement the plan:

1. Each of the property owners would need to sit down together and agree on a detailed planting plan that will meet the intent of the planning concepts (in this case to improve the appearance of the road and use landscape to give drivers more clues that they need to slow down).
2. With the town's assistance, plants can be bought at wholesale prices and stored for use. (Funding could be sought from utility companies, the America the Beautiful Program, or local businesses).
3. Individual property owners can then take on the responsibility for planting to the agreed upon plan and for maintenance.

The end result is a visual effect that could not have been achieved by each individual property owner acting alone – with much greater cost savings as well.

Finally, as with most planning studies, the best implementation approach is to 'just do it'— not to wait, for example, for an enlightened developer to completely accept scenic guidelines, but to work with local landowners to create a pilot project as an example to others. The Montowese Street Bridge project, described elsewhere in this report, is an example of such a project: it can preserve scenic qualities while adding needed value to property, and because action is taken pro-actively, it can maximize the benefits from partnership involvement with the public sector and/ or local land trusts.

ACTION:
The Connecticut DOT and each Town need to make it easier for property owners living along these routes or civic groups who use and care about its appearance to enhance its appearance through beautification projects and maintain what's there now through "adopt-a-highway" programs.

Managing Appropriate Regional and Local Visitation

The main message from Advisory Committee and public workshops regarding tourism in Branford and Guilford is a desire to “manage, not market” tourism. Appropriate levels and types of visitation should be targeted – so as to minimize environmental and traffic impacts while maximizing positive economic benefits. Rather than heavily promote tourism on an unstructured basis, specific actions are needed to deal with the out-of-town visitors that are here already.

Each town (plus Madison and Clinton) is already known as an attractive but low-key mecca for those who want to see ‘one of the last great places’ (as characterized by the regional tourism council) — intact working coastal towns with unique natural and historic features.

These attributes are best appreciated through leisurely investigation— not only by auto, but also by bicycle or on foot. And the towns’ historic and recreational features are not all along the state-designated scenic byways, but also along a variety of local roads.

Coordinated Town-Wide Programs for Visitors and Residents

In order to make sure that the scenic roads are not overwhelmed with visitors, the plan recommends that local economic development officials and the regional visitors council market the Towns of Branford and Guilford as a whole, focusing on the total various features within each town. As discussed on pages 36-37, signage and orientation would direct visitors to each central Green— the most prominent landmark and town symbol, a single and easily-found location for assistance. Each Green would become the logical taking-off point for walking tours and biking itineraries using routes not only along the state designated scenic roads but also along various local scenic or other appropriate roads.

This approach will allow the deliberate and strategic management of local tourism. With such management, the two communities can put the scenic corridors of Routes 146 and 77 into an appropriate

and controlled context of natural or visitor features, and organized pedestrian, bike, and auto touring itineraries. In this scenario, the proper balance of centrally-located and dispersed features can be carefully crafted:

- the urban emphasis is placed on the initial points of orientation — in or near the two central areas and their respective greens surrounded by historic buildings and shops;
- the rural ambiance takes place as the network of rides and walks (utilizing both state scenic byways and associated local roads) that meanders through the coastal or upland environment— the context for individual features and recreation features.

Orientation Centers

Visitors would be guided by highway signage off I-95 to orientation centers. These centers not only can serve as sources of printed material and advice about food and lodging services, historic, cultural and recreation features, and walking, biking, or auto tours, but also can act as focal points for residents to understand their own community’s past and its continuing program of current activities. Site selection criteria for such centers should include:

- sharing space with an existing and complementary institution, minimizing operating costs and making available existing facility maintenance and supervision;
- proximity to central area, especially to the town green and surrounding commercial development;
- availability of parking and support services.

In Guilford, the current ‘tourist information’ facility consists of a rack of brochures in the lobby of the town community center. Possible venues that could be investigated for a new and expanded center include the town library (on the Green; a room adjacent to the circulation desk is potentially available, which could also draw on the library’s ‘Guilford Room,’ devoted to local history), the new police station (utilizing the built-in community room), or the state-sponsored Whitfield House (which staffs its own visitors’ center on a seasonal basis).

Branford currently has no central information facility. Potential locations might include the centrally-located Town Hall (located on the Green; the Town Clerk currently distributes tour itinerary pamphlets), other public facilities such as the Blackstone Memorial Library, or at least on a seasonal basis, historic houses run by not-for-profit organizations (such as the Harrison House).

Such orientation centers would be valuable both to residents desiring an interpretive source of local history, and to visitors desiring a quick introduction to area features and their context. They can relate to nearby restaurants and shops as well to walking, biking or auto itineraries and tours.

The Branford and Guilford centers should be carefully coordinated:

- they should cross-market each other's material – related cultural, historic or recreational features for the two towns can establish a common base of activity that can encourage the sort of longer and more leisurely stay that is the ideal tourism/ economic development outcome.
- These common marketing approaches make more feasible the implementation of any physical improvements — governmental and private funding sources often give priority to well-coordinated, linked projects, and savings can be achieved through economies of scale.

Tour Itineraries: Auto/ Bike/ Walking

The definition and promotion of an overall itinerary network of scenic and historic tours (of which routes 146 and 77 are only a portion) will help put the scenic roadways in the appropriate context, and minimize unnecessary traffic. For instance, creation of a series of specific bikeway or walkway 'loops', using various 'trailhead' locations as starting and finishing points, can utilize local scenic or other roads as well as portions of state scenic roads, chosen with safety in mind as well as views and connections. A map showing potential routes is included in Appendix G.

Graphics and Signage

In order to establish local identity and provide order to what is now a rather ad hoc situation, the corridor management plan recommends implementation of an overall signage program for each town, which could also extend to a consistent graphic framework for brochures, handouts, and maps. Signing the scenic roads themselves also presents special issues.

Gateway/ Entry Corridor Directional Signs

The types of signs and directional information discussed on pages 36 and 37 have been implemented in other Connecticut communities, including Madison, Connecticut. This is a consistent problem on other scenic roads, and some coordinated action may be beneficial to other towns, and the Connecticut DOT who must approve this type of signage.

Along I-95, the brown signs indicating exits for tourist features are established through the Connecticut DOT traffic division, acting on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration and complying with the Federal standards. Qualification criteria for an interstate sign include amount of visitation, and the process can be complex and time-consuming (it took many years for the Whitfield House to achieve its sign, although recently the Thimble Islands got a sign more quickly). However, there is a demonstrable logic to a signage sequence leading from the highway to a central visitor location established as part of the scenic roads program.

Major issues in establishing such a signage system include:

- establishing a clear gateway/ point of entrance from the regional transportation system, and
- along the entry corridor, ensuring that at each decision point there is clear direction to the motorist, marked by signs of a consistent, simple and attractive design and color, avoiding the appearance of clutter.

Preferred entry routes are shown on page 36. In Branford, the Town of Branford should request from the Connecticut DOT, the placement of an entry sign for the most direct route to the town green/ central area— Exit 54 at Cedar Street. Official brown signs along I-95 from both east and west can indicate to the

motorist the upcoming turnoff, and provide direction south on Cedar at the end of the exit ramp. As one enters along Cedar Street, a consistent series of signs must anticipate potential choices and possible wrong turns, leading the motorist to a left turn onto Main Street and along it to the central area, green, and information center.

Similarly, the Town of Guilford should request entry signs to direct the motorist off the interstate at the Route 77 exit, and south along 77 to the information center and central Guilford Green area.

Brochures, Maps and Informational Signs

Supporting handouts and local signs and display graphics describing features and itineraries should also have the same level of visual consistency as the directional signs. Wherever possible, common graphic themes such as typeface, layout, or distinctive local logos should help link these various elements.

Brochures should be pursued through the district tourism office.

Signing the Scenic Byways

Along the byways themselves, the plan recommends a system of directional and informational signage that both defines and interprets the byway for users without calling undue attention.

Directional signs, featuring a consistent color and identity, are needed (especially on the complicated

Route 146 corridor) to inform motorists and bicyclists of the various turns and intersections along the roadway (see section 3, page 37, for examples).

Safety-related signs are also needed. Bicycling is now commonplace along 146 and 77, and creation of new bike lanes by widening the road is out of the question. Therefore, the de facto sharing of the right-of-way between auto, bike and occasional walker must be accepted and dealt with pro-actively—awareness of the need to slow down in order to anticipate other road users can be an important component of ‘traffic calming’. Route 146 issues have to do with twists and turns with poor visibility, while on 77 the problem is a consequence of increasing through traffic and potential speeding. Periodic signs can help lower speeds and heighten awareness – especially for heavy bicycle use areas.

The ConnDOT bicycle coordinator has requested permission to use a yellow diamond bicycle sign with a ‘share the road’ message beneath) that should be added at key locations along each route. An inquiry should be made as the status of the use of this sign by the Connecticut Coalition of Bicyclists.

Finally, interpretive signs can be placed at locations of features or views. These signs should be keyed and graphically linked to the local maps, printed material and brochures available at the information centers.

The first interpretive sign should be placed at the Branford Land Trust pull-off near the Branford River.

Funding Opportunities and Next Steps

The following table lists the specific conservation actions and enhancement proposals included in the plan. Along with each action or proposal is a list of logical ‘partners’, potential funding sources, and any specific implementation issues. This table can be used as a plan summary for use in working directly with the plan.

High Priority Enhancement Projects		Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities	Implementation Issues
MONTOWESE STREET @ THE BRANFORD RIVER				
Montowese St. Bridge Southbound pull-off (land owned by Branford Land Trust)	Branford Land Trust Branford Rotary Club Branford Men's Garden Club Branford Woman's Garden Club Town of Branford ConnDOT	Donated time and materials Branford River/DEP Fund Pursue Conservation Fund Greenway Project for interpretive sign (due end of December 1996, or wait until Dec. 1997.)	SEE PAGES 39-41 FOR PROJECT DESCRIPTION Current flat area attracts ad-hoc use, but sight distances are blocked by Bridge abutments creating potential hazard. Need curb control at pull-off to control access at point with best sight lines north to the AMTRAK bridge abutment. Coordinate w/Bridge construction - need to leave open possibility for removing section of guiderail for crosswalk from other side. Maintenance during establishment period - need group to step forward to "adopt" the area (weeding, watering, litter, etc.)	
Montowese St. Bridge Sidewalk Extensions	Town of Branford	Capital Improvement ISTEA Safety Grant	State bridge project includes sidewalks on both sides of bridge, but they do not go anywhere presenting a potential hazardous situation. People currently walk in street under AMTRAK overpass Must relocate existing wall on North side of AMTRAK overpass to make enough room (now covered with poison ivy)	
Montowese St. Northbound Pull-off and crosswalk	ConnDOT Town of Branford (Same as BLT property)	Same as southbound	Creation of northbound pull-off would provide access to Branford River on side with better pedestrian access and attractive view of marsh	
GUILFORD CENTER ENHANCEMENTS				
Guilford Green Pedestrian Safety Improvements	Town of Guilford/Guilford Tree Advisory Committee/Guilford Green Committee CT. Light and Power ConnDOT Guilford Historic District Comm.	ISTEA/Scenic Byway Program Fund ISTEA Safety Grant Private Sector Foundations	SEE PAGES 42-47 FOR PROJECT DESCRIPTION Emergency vehicles, snow removal, must be accommodated	
Guilford Green Lighting/Utility Lines	Town of Guilford/Guilford Tree Advisory Committee CT. Light and Power ConnDOT Conn./Guilford Historic District Comm.	CT. Light and Power Private Sector Foundations ISTEA/Scenic Byway Program Fund	Relocation of utility lines dependent upon private owners agreeing to pay for any service connection changes that may be required Lighting project dependent upon utility line relocation/undergrounding	
Guilford Green Approaches	Town of Guilford/Guilford Tree Advisory Committee/Guilford Green Committee CT. Light and Power ConnDOT Conn. Historic District Comm.	Scenic Road Program Grant Funding Town of Guilford America the Beautiful Private Sector Foundations	Time roadway enhancements with the next resurfacing project Some planting on private property assumes private property owners will agree to coordinate	

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** See Appendix H for listing and references to potential private funding organizations

Long Term Projects		Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities	Implementation Issues
CORRIDOR WIDE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS				
Scenic Easement Program (PAGES 31-34 AND APPENDIX B)	Branford Land Trust Guilford Land Conservation Trust	Private Sector Funding (see Appendix H for listing)	Continuation of on-going work of each land trust Management issue is critical for properties owned by land trust - seek conservation easements rather than direct purchase Conservation buyer program may also help	
Tourism Management Program - Branford Entrance Corridors - Guilford Entrance Corridors (PAGES 36-37 & 67-69)	State/Regional Tourism offices Town of Branford/Town of Guilford (Economic Development) Chamber of Commerce, Garden Clubs, Rotary, Clubs	State Tourism offices	Better coordination between state and local government Seek funding to coordinate visitor information Need to develop design and development standards, landscape plan, coordinate signage, etc.	
Share the Road (PAGE 37)	CT. Coalition of Bicyclists ConnDOT District II	Volunteer efforts coordinated through CT. Coalition of Bicyclists	Share the Road signs require Federal approval (apparently requested by ConnDOT) Adopt-a-highway coordination to maintain existing shoulders (focus on trouble spots) Gradually change drainage grates with resurfacing projects	
Management of roadside pull-offs (improving some, closing others) (PAGES 38)	ConnDOT Town of Branford Town of Guilford Branford Land Trust	Scenic Road Program Grant Funding ISTEA safety grants for closing	Group all pull-off projects into one safety improvement project -	
Road and Right-of-Way Design Guidelines (PAGE 49)	ConnDOT District II	Private Sector Foundations to establish permanent maintenance trust fund for Connecticut Scenic Roads (contact Scenic Rhode Island Foundation for potential model and possible funding -- see Appendix H) {use of non-standard details may require outside funding}	Coordination of routine maintenance and management actions with scenic road committee (guidetrails, change of lighting to cut-off lamps, repavement, etc.)	
Land Use and Design Guidance Program (PAGES 54-57)	Town of Branford Town of Guilford Property Owners	Implement as part of Plan of Conservation and Development	Seek to provide simple guidelines to better shape the appearance of new development along the scenic roads	
Traffic Management Program (PAGES 67-69)	ConnDOT SC CT. COG Town of Branford/Town of Guilford	The development approvals to traffic impact and capacity	Monitor large scale traffic generators for potential impact on use of scenic roads for other than local and recreational traffic	

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** See Appendix H for listing and references to potential private funding organizations

Long Term Projects		Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities	Implementation Issues
TOWN WIDE-PROJECTS				
Branford River Greenway PAGE 33	Town of Branford CT. DEP Branford Land Trust Property Owners AMTRAK	Conservation Fund - small project grant (Private Sector Foundation - see Appendix H))	Seek to create a series of linked open spaces along the Branford River connecting the Branford Center to the Long Island Sound, with highest priorities for those areas in the vicinity of the Montowese St. Bridge	
West River Greenway (PAGE 33)	Town of Guilford CT DEP Guilford Land Conservation Trust Property Owners	Conservation Fund - small project grant (Private Sector Foundation - see Appendix H)	Seek to create a series of linked open spaces along the West River connecting Lake Quonmpaug to the Long Island Sound with highest priorities for those areas in the vicinity of Route 146 and those that parallel Route 77.	
LONG TERM PROJECT ENHANCEMENTS				
Limewood Beach - Traffic Calming - Jersey Barrier - pedestrian walkway (PAGES 50-51)	ConnDOT Town of Branford Neighborhood Assoc.	Coastal Zone Grants - implement upon damage or replacement	Fog lines would help immediately Stop sign requested for 90 degree turn- ConnDOT needs to evaluate Jersey barriers need to continue role in flood reduction District has approval to use decorative barriers on Merritt Parkway	
Stony Creek Traffic Calming (PAGES 52-53)	ConnDOT Town of Branford Neighborhood Assoc.	only if needed	For use as an alternative approach to managing future growth in traffic - use only if needed in the future in lieu of a traffic light	

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** See Appendix H for listing and references to potential private funding organizations

Next Steps:

The initial first year of the plan's implementation is critical to its success. The following summarizes the steps that need to be taken to keep the plan moving forward.

1. Plan Approvals

The first step for plan implementation is to gain as many endorsements as possible from the various stakeholders, boards and commissions, and civic groups. At least the following should be approached:

Town of Branford Boards and Commissions

- Planning and Zoning
- Conservation Commission
- Economic Development Commission
- Town Center Revitalization Committee
- Young's Pond Commission

Town of Branford Civic Groups and Conservation Organizations

- Branford Land Trust
- Branford Men's and Women's Garden Clubs
- Architectural Preservation Trust of Branford

Town of Guilford Boards and Commissions

- Planning and Zoning
- Historic District Commission
- Conservation Commission
- Economic Development Commission
- Guilford Green Committee
- Tree Advisory Board

Town of Guilford Civic Groups and Conservation Organizations

- Guilford Land Conservation Trust
- Guilford Preservation Alliance
- Group of Seven

2. Get Organized

The second step is to establish the procedures and working relationships that will be needed to implement the plan:

- Pursue a small grant or donation (or contribution from each town) to fund the administration of the committee (share the workload) – mailing, meeting notes, correspondence
- Determine roles and responsibilities
 - Roadside conservation
 - View conservation
 - Enhancement projects

3. Coordination with ConnDOT/CL & P/Residents

The third step is to identify those areas where it is in the best interest of both Towns and those responsible for the day to day management of the road and right-of-way (ConnDOT/CL & P, etc). to develop cooperative relationships and work towards establishing a permanent entity to simplify coordination efforts.

- Requests for Changes in Traffic Management: Speed Limit Reduction/New Stop Signs/Traffic Calming
- Bicycle Safety Enhancements:
 - Share the Road Signs
 - Adjustments to Statewide Bicycle Map
 - Bicycle Safe Drainages
 - Adopt-a-Highway (Shoulder Sweeping)
- Enhancement Grants/TIP
 - Montowese St.
 - Guilford Green Approaches
- Project Review and Coordination w/State Scenic Roads Committee
- Maintenance/Tree Preservation/Roadside Conservation
 - (Register of Big Trees & Tree Stewardship Program)

4. Outside Funding/Volunteer Coordination

The fourth step is to pursue opportunities for outside funding (non-ISTEA) for high priority projects (see pages 70-73 and Appendix H):

The following summarizes specific funding opportunities that should be pursued during the first year:

Montowese St. Bridge Walkways

\$50,000

- Pursue ISTEA funds (for either Enhancement or Safety purposes) for the pathways along Montowese St. that will link the existing pieces of walkway together, including approximately 700 linear feet of sidewalk, relocating an existing stone wall, resetting the guiderail on both sides of the bridge to allow pedestrian use, bank stabilization behind the guiderail on the north side, and the necessary design and engineering services

Interpretive Sign at Pull-off

\$2500

- Pursue DuPont/Greenways for America Fund for an interpretive sign about the Branford River to be located at the Montowese St. Pull-off

Montowese St. Bridge Pull-off Landscape

\$7500

- Pursue Branford River Restoration funds for Stone dust path (280 linear feet, 8 foot wide) and planting for bank along Route 146 using native plants. [gravel parking area provided by ConnDOT]

Guilford Green Pavers at Intersections

\$60-180,000

- Pursue ISTEA funds for narrowing the travel way and resurfacing pedestrian areas with bituminous concrete or brick pavers (high end of price range for extensive amounts of brick work as a continuous surface). As an alternative, but requiring further discussion with fire marshall, the curbs could be extended to narrow travelway to the point that would still allow for fire trucks to turn safely. This would allow the use of grass and sidewalks, in the curb extension areas, rather than pavers on the street level.

Bluff Head Mountain Access (land purchase)

\$60,000

- Seek private funds for recreational access to purchase the property. Developing a small parking area would require additional funds and would be dependent upon the length of driveway needed and the conditions of the soil in that area (the soils are very moist in this area, and may require some drainage improvements).

5. Establish a Repository For Resource Information

There needs to be one or two places where data can be stored and cataloged for easy access

- Establish register of big trees in each town (in Planning and Zoning or Tax Assessment)
- Apply to ESRI for Geographic Information System geared towards Register of Big Trees
- Establish location for storing maps, slides, etc. (Library in each town)

6. Work with planning and zoning commission

Scenic road issues need to be incorporated into normal development review procedures. Policies and/or guidelines are needed to address the following in each town:

Branford

- infill development
- ridgeline development

Guilford

- ridgeline development
- subdivisions