

DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TASK 5

ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

STATE PROJECT 302-008



SECTION 11: PRIME FARMLAND AND ACTIVE FARMLAND

MAY 2009

SECTION 11. PRIME FARMLAND AND ACTIVE FARMLAND

INTRODUCTION

This section discusses existing Prime Farmland, farmland subject to the Connecticut Purchase of Development Rights Program, and local active farms within the study corridor in accordance with the scope.

Prime Farmland Soil

Prime Farmland is a soil classification described as having the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses. In general prime farmland has the ability and quality to sustain high yield crops, in land that could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland or forestland, but not highly urbanized land or water.

Connecticut Purchase of Development Rights Program

Agricultural conservation easements can be donated, usually to a non-profit land trust, or sold to a public agency or qualified conservation organization through a “purchase of development rights” (PDR) program. Connecticut’s primary PDR program, administered by the Department of Agriculture, is called the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program. Originally launched in 1978, the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program has a set goal of acquiring agricultural easements in order to protect 130,000 acres of Connecticut’s farmland.

Regulatory Context

The federal and State laws which apply to Prime Farmland and active farmland are discussed below.

At the Federal level, the following legislation is relevant:

The FPPA, which is intended to minimize the irreversible conversion of prime farmland into non-agricultural land, was enacted as part of the Agricultural and Food Act of 1981. The FPPA requires federal agencies to review the possible effects from any of program activities that would convert farmland. Agencies are responsible to evaluate if land contains farmland based on a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment system.

At the State level the following legislation is relevant:

Only landowners may apply to the Connecticut Farmland Preservation program, and the program may pay up to 100 percent of the appraised value of the development rights. Currently the state adheres to a policy of paying no more than \$10,000 per acre for development rights on farmland. In order to maximize farmland preservation funding the State of Connecticut places a high priority on protecting clusters of farmland that are in close proximity to other active farmland and preserved landscapes. The agricultural conservation easement that is placed on this land limits and/or restricts development in order to protect natural resources.

Methods and Data Resources

The Prime Farmland soils layer from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was used as a baseline. This layer was adjusted to 70% transparency and overlaid on the DOT orthophoto base maps. Remote sensing with High-resolution 2008 aerial imagery from NAVTEQ and Pictometry International Corp. were used to examine the prime farmland soil layer within the 1,000-foot study area for signs of development including any area which displayed man-made features such as houses, outbuildings, developed recreational areas, roads or any surface features not consistent with natural terrain. Undeveloped areas of the Prime Farmland Soils layer were digitized, creating a new layer identified on the maps as “Prime Farmland”. This layer represents areas that receive protection under the FPPA.

Upon discussion with the staff at the State of Connecticut Department of Agricultural it was determined that there are no lands subject to the Connecticut Purchase of Development rights program within the study corridor.

The land area actively being farmed this year (2008) in the study area was located by remote sensing and digitized to produce the Local Active Farmland layer for the maps. Sources for data on active farms included:

- The Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Connecticut Farm Bureau
- Litchfield County Extension Service
- USDA- Farm Service Agency
- New Milford Farmland Preservation Committee
- New Milford Zoning Maps
- Owners of local area farms
- Connecticut State Rep. Clark Chapin, intern at the USDS-FSA in Torrington

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Farmlands Subject to Protection Under FPPA

Farmland soils subject to protection are included in the attached maps numbered 1 to 14, and identified below by town. Parcel area is recorded in acres. These are listed numerically from south to north.

Norwalk: No prime farmland soils have been located in Norwalk

Wilton: There are ten parcels of prime farmland located in Wilton. Six of these parcels, ranging in size from 1.5 to 9.9 acres, are located on the west side of the corridor. On the east side of the corridor are four parcels, from 0.4 to 1.5 acres.

Redding: There are three prime farmland parcels located in Redding. On the west side of the corridor are two parcels, 1 acre and 5.7 acres. On the east side of the corridor is one 7.0 acres parcel.

Bethel: There are two prime farmland parcels located in Bethel. One, west of the centerline is 6.8 acres and one east of the centerline is 4.7 acres.

Danbury: No prime farmland soils have been located in Danbury

Brookfield: There are two prime farmland parcels located in Bethel. One, west of the centerline is 23 acres and one east of the centerline is 2.0 acres.

New Milford: There are twenty prime farmland parcels located in New Milford. Twelve parcels are on the west side of the corridor ranging in size from 1.0 to 7.0 acres. On the east side of the corridor are eight parcels, ranging in size from 1.7 acres to 5.3 acres.

Farmland Subject to the Connecticut Purchase of Development Rights Program

According to Mr. Joseph Dipple of the Connecticut Department of Agricultural as of March 24, 2009 there are no lands subject to the Connecticut Purchase of Development Rights Program within the study corridor. However, according to Mr. Dipple there are two farms subject to the Connecticut Purchase of Development Rights Program located within the study municipalities. The two farms are the former Josephy farm containing 119.3 acres on Plumtree Road in Bethel and the former Smyski farm containing 210 acres on Tamarack Road and Merryall Road in New Milford.

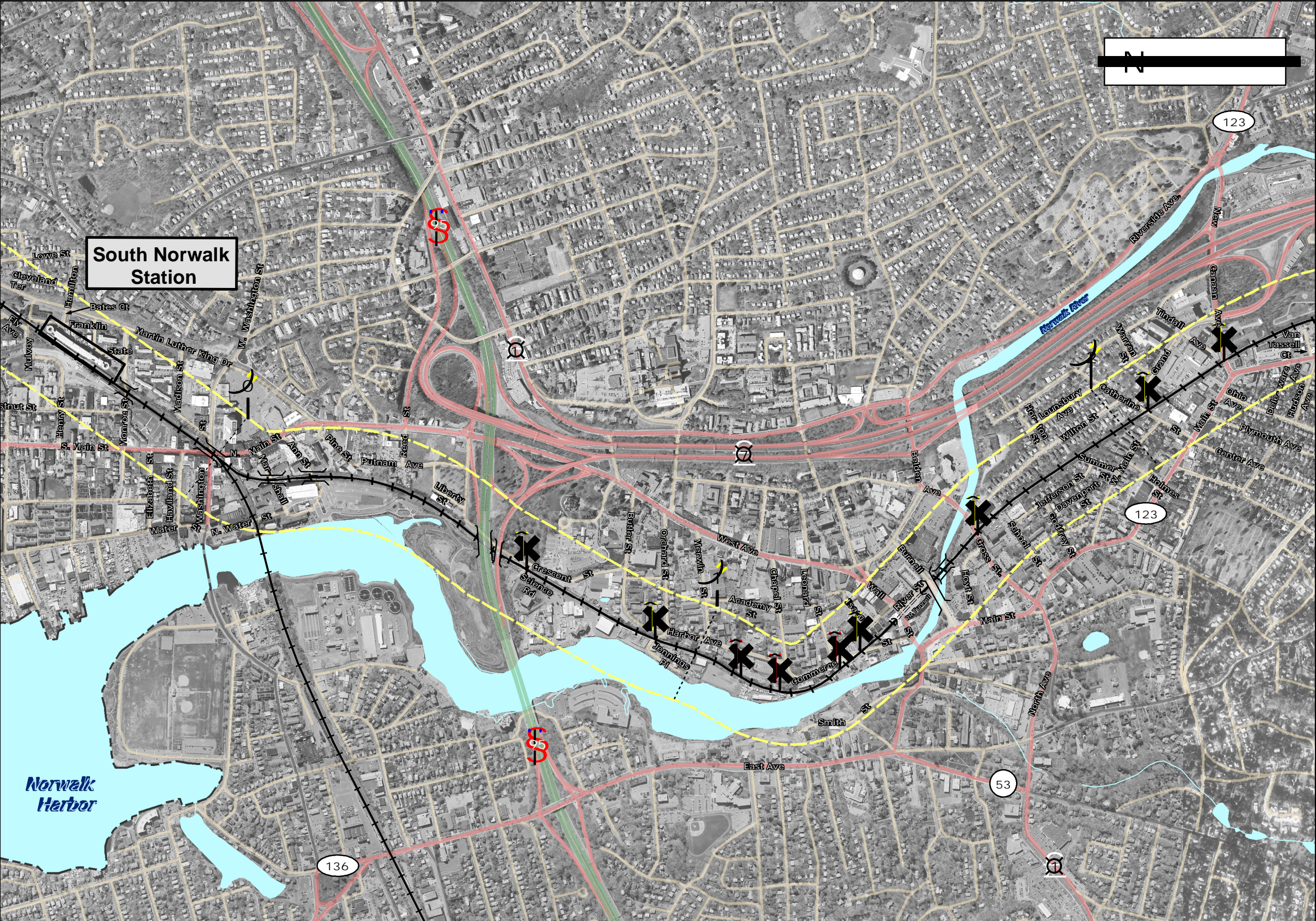
Active Farmland

The only lands identified within the study corridor as being actively farmed are located in Bethel, Brookfield and New Milford. These lands are small orchards, Christmas tree farms and hay fields. Areas mapped are identified below:

Bethel: There is one small Christmas tree farm located in Bethel just over the Bethel—Redding town line, north of Mile post 18.

Brookfield: There are two Christmas tree farms located in Brookfield: Waidlich Tree Farm, located just north of Milepost 30, near intersection of Silvermine Rd. and Oak Grove Rd; and Caesar's Nursery and Christmas tree farm located south of Milepost 32, West of Tracks, on Federal Road/ US. Also, there is a small fruit orchard, on Old Middle Road, south of milepost 33 at the town line with New Milford, on the west side of the corridor.

New Milford: There are six hay fields located within the study area corridor in New Milford located as follows: 101 Aldridge Road, located on the east side of the corridor, north of the Brookfield—New Milford town line; located 0.5 miles north of milepost 33 on the west side of the corridor (two hay fields); Docktor's Farm, south of Old Pumpkin Hill Road, on the east side of the corridor (two hay fields); Sunny Valley Farm, north of milepost 36 on the east side of the corridor.



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

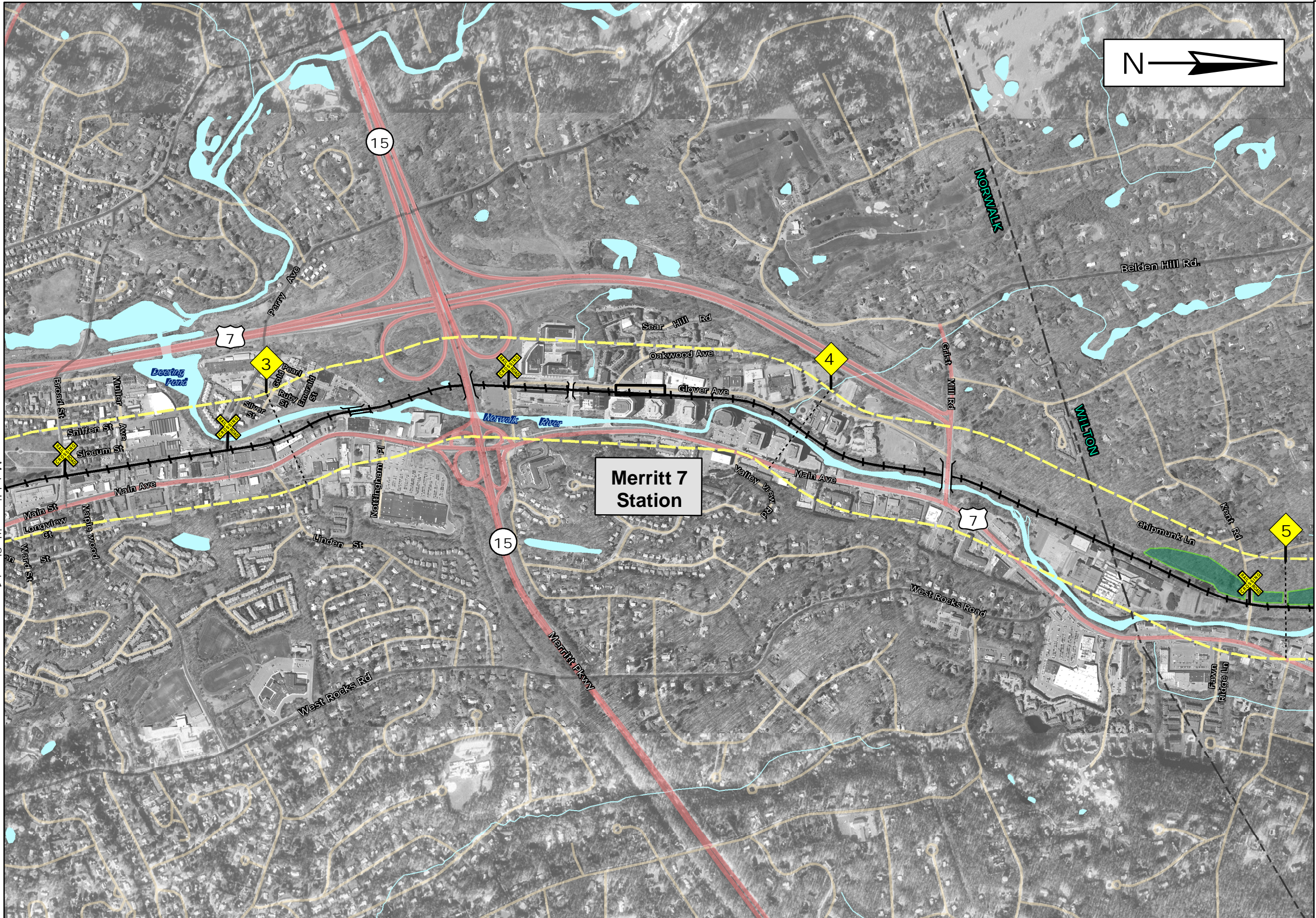
MAP SCALE

Feet

0 1,000 2,000

ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT	STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		TOWN(S): NORWALK	PROJECT NO: 302-008
				MAP NO: 5.2.8
GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION	DATE: 02/2009		MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS	SHEET NO: 1 OF 14



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

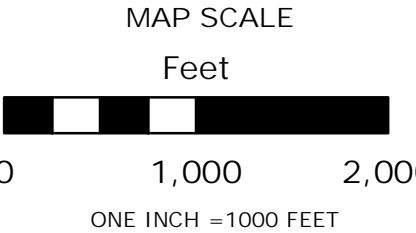
Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

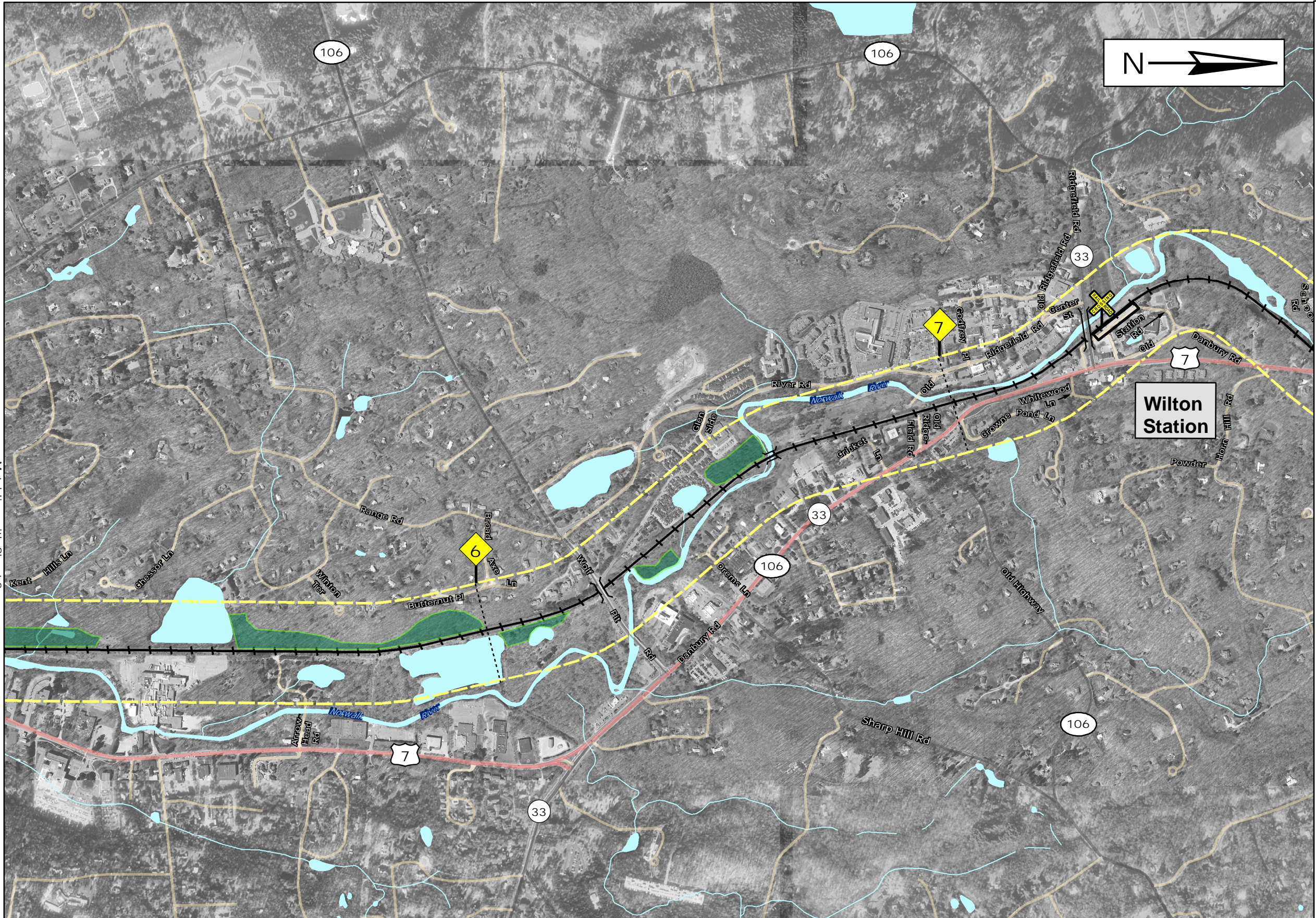
Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and
Grade Crossings: Metro-North
Track Charts



PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT	STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		TOWN(S): NORWALK, WILTON	PROJECT NO: 302-008
			MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS	MAP NO: 5.2.8
GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION DATE: 02/2009			SHEET NO: 2 OF 14	



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

MAP SCALE

Feet



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ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION

DATE: 02/2009

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



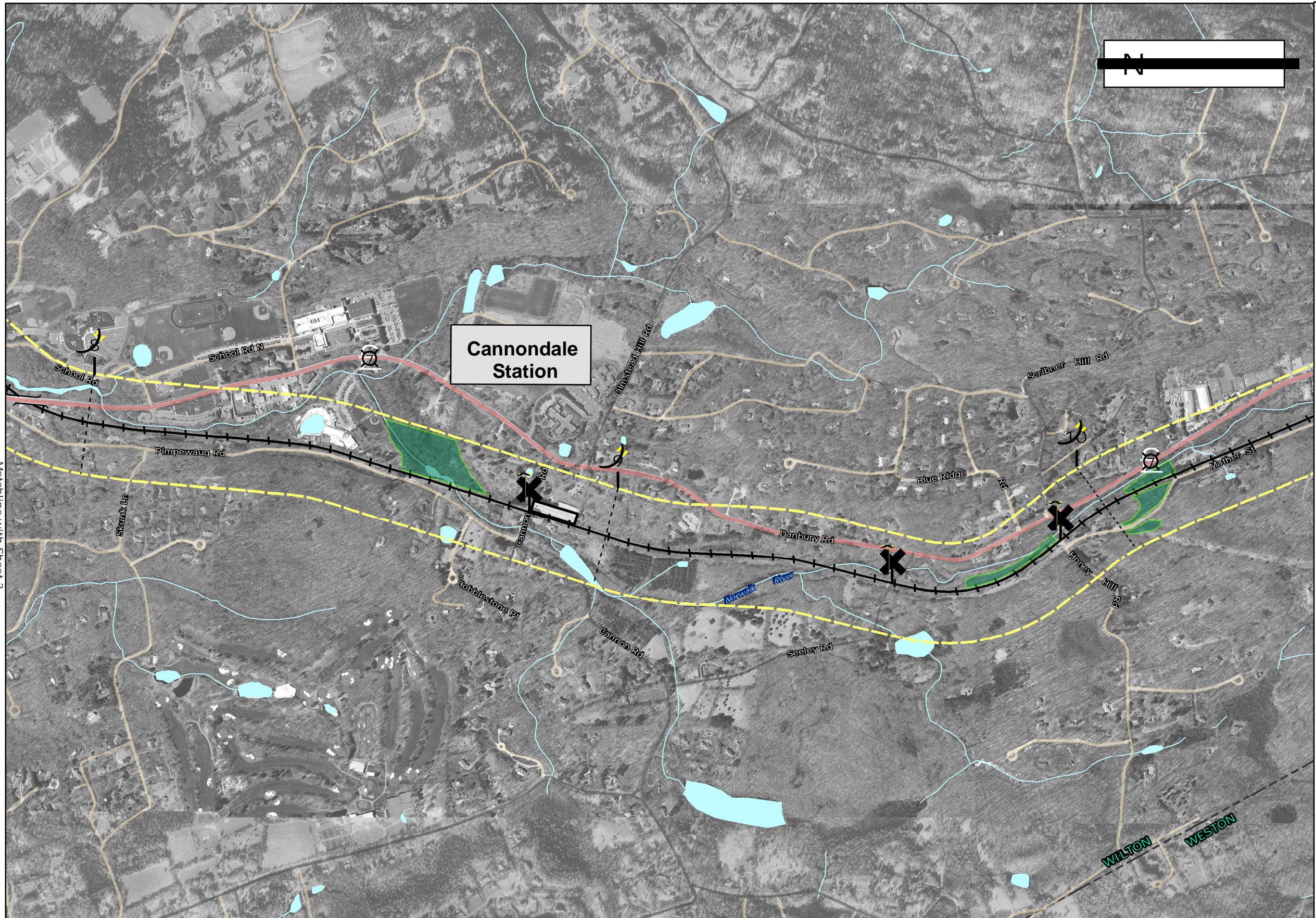
TOWN(S): WILTON

MAP TITLE:
PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS

PROJECT NO:
302-008

MAP NO:
5.2.8

SHEET NO:
3 OF 14



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

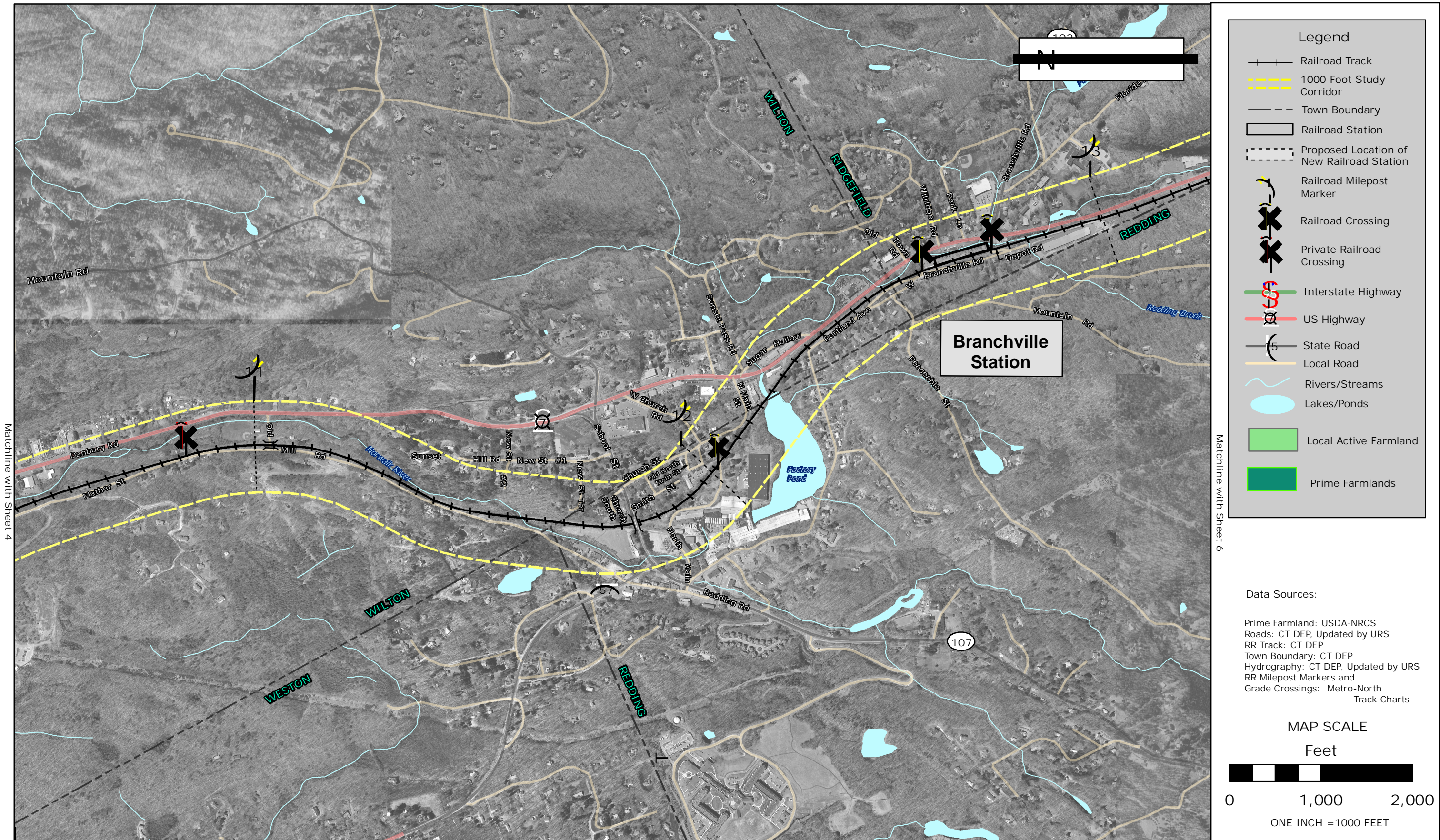
MAP SCALE


Feet

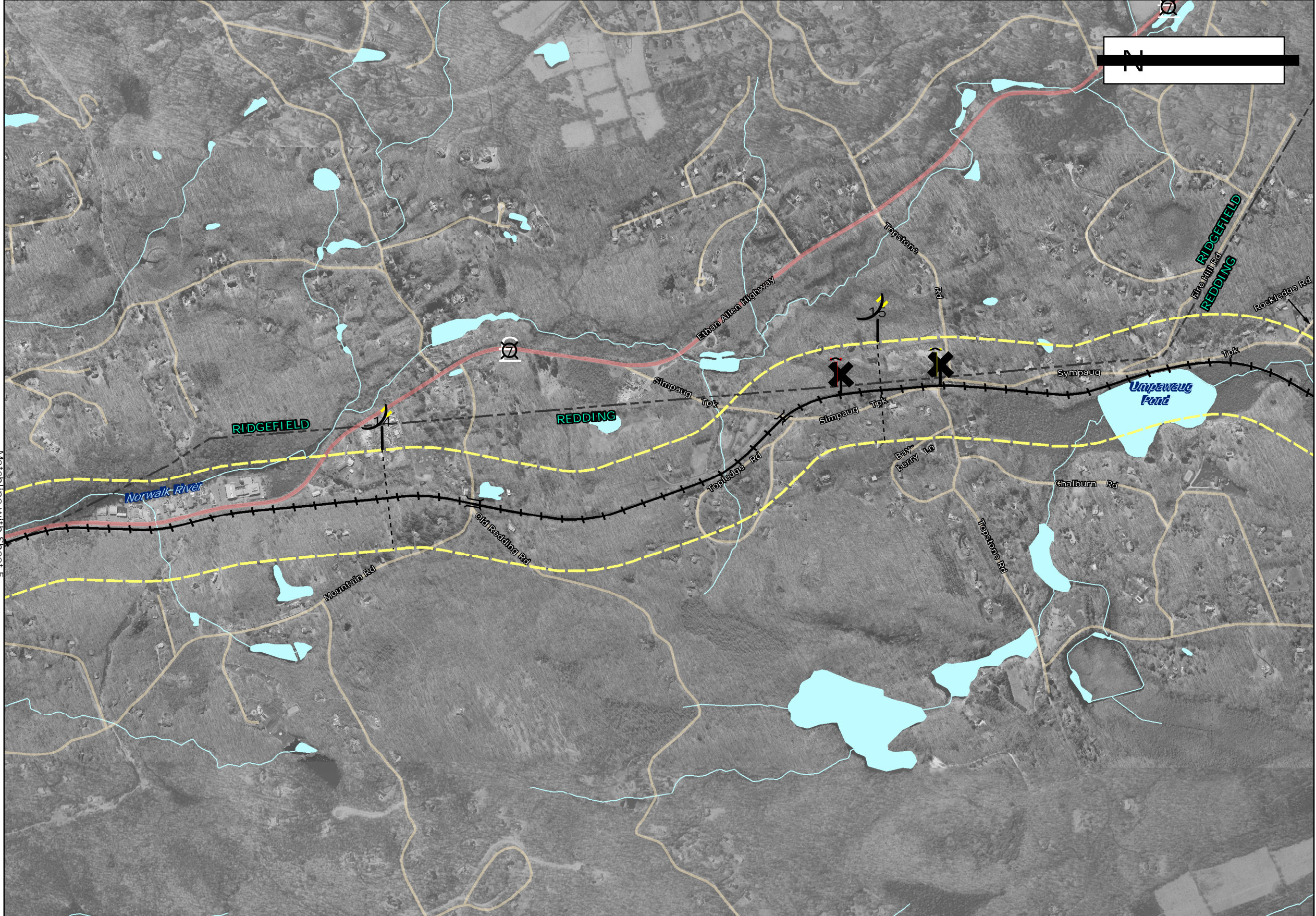
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PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT	STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		TOWN(S): WILTON, WESTON	PROJECT NO: 302-008
			MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS	MAP NO: 5.2.8
GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION DATE: 02/2009			SHEET NO: 4 OF 14	



PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT		STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		TOWN(S): WILTON, WESTON, RIDGEFIELD, REDDING	PROJECT NO: 302-008
GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION DATE: 02/2009				MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS	MAP NO: 5.2.8
				SHEET NO: 5 OF 14	



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

MAP SCALE

Feet

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ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION DATE: 02/2009

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

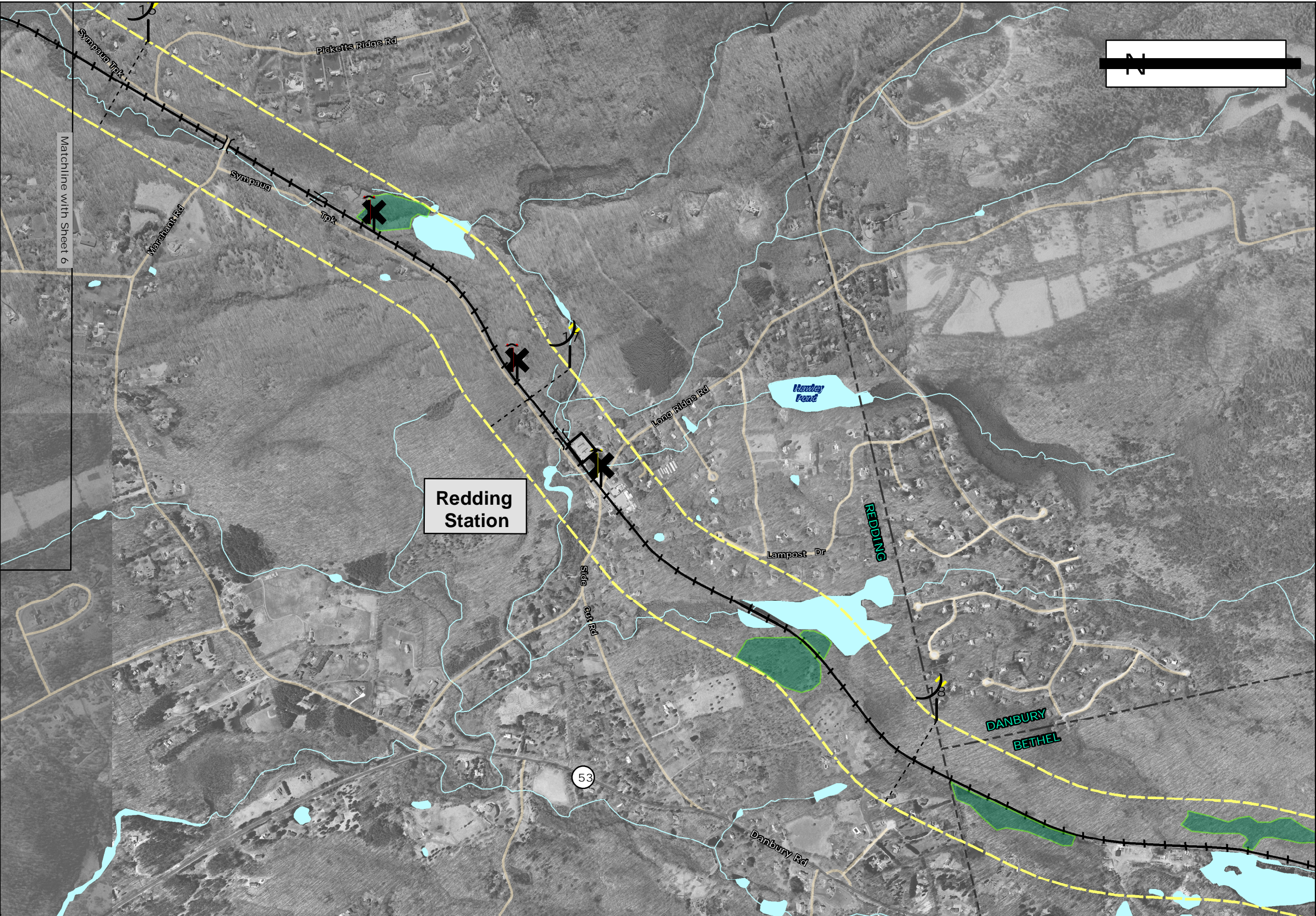
TOWN(S): RIDGEFIELD, REDDING

MAP TITLE:
PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS

PROJECT NO:
302-008

MAP NO:
5.2.8

SHEET NO:
6 OF 14



Legend

- Railroad Track
- 1000 Foot Study Corridor
- Town Boundary
- Railroad Station
- Proposed Location of New Railroad Station
- Railroad Milepost Marker
- Railroad Crossing
- Private Railroad Crossing
- Interstate Highway
- US Highway
- State Road
- Local Road
- Rivers/Streams
- Lakes/Ponds
- Local Active Farmland
- Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland (Soils) layer: USDA-NRCS
Roads layer: ConnDEP
RR Track: ConnDEP
Town Boundary: ConnDEP
Hydrography: ConnDEP
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

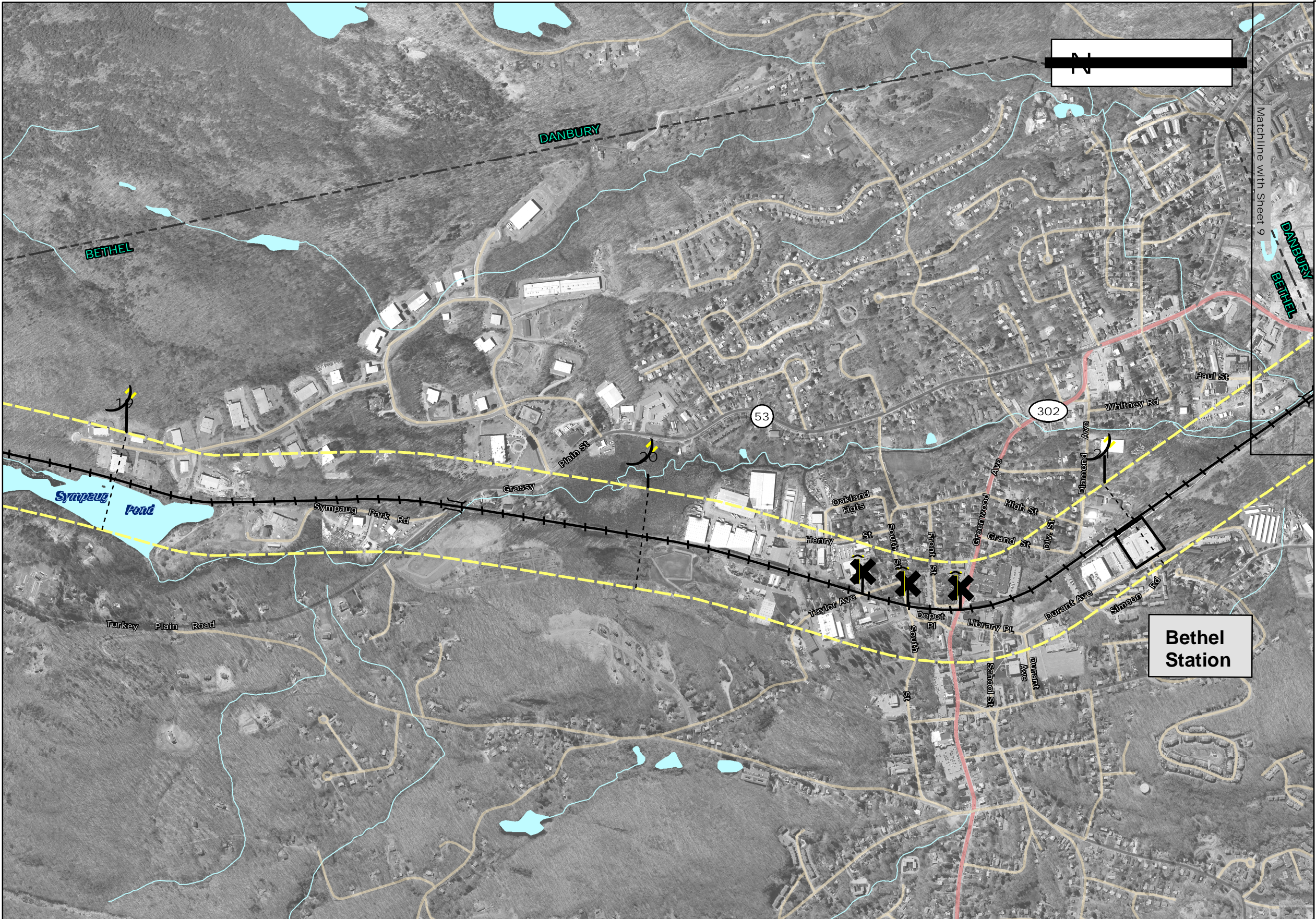
MAP SCALE

Feet

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ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT	STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		TOWN(S): REDDING, BETHEL, DANBURY	PROJECT NO: 302-008
			MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS	MAP NO: 5.2.8
GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION DATE: 02/2009			SHEET NO: 7 OF 14	



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and
Grade Crossings: Metro-North
Track Charts

MAP SCALE

Feet



ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION

DATE: 02/2009

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



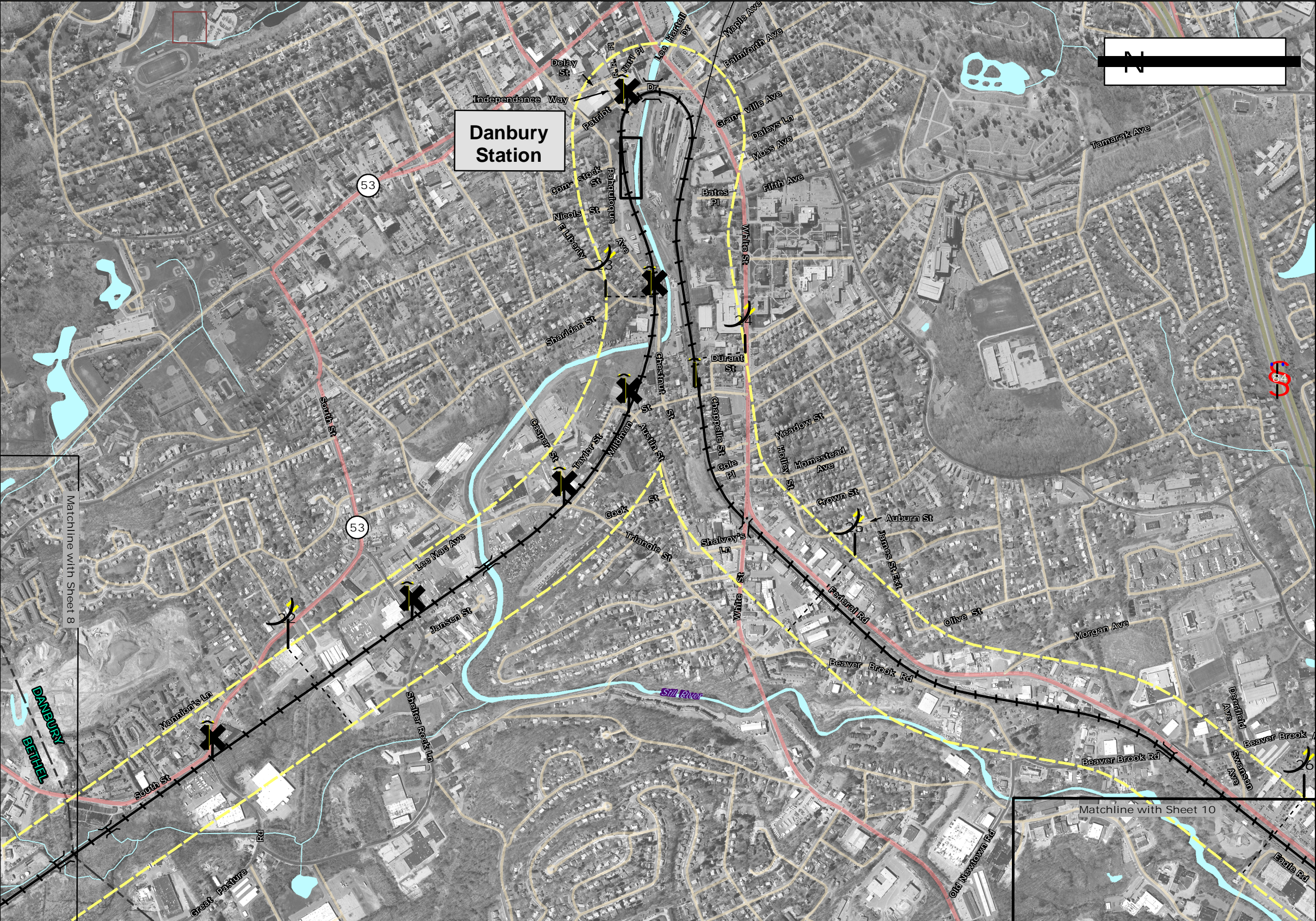
TOWN(S): BETHEL, DANBURY

MAP TITLE:
PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS

PROJECT NO:
302-008

MAP NO:
5.2.8

SHEET NO:
8 OF 14



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

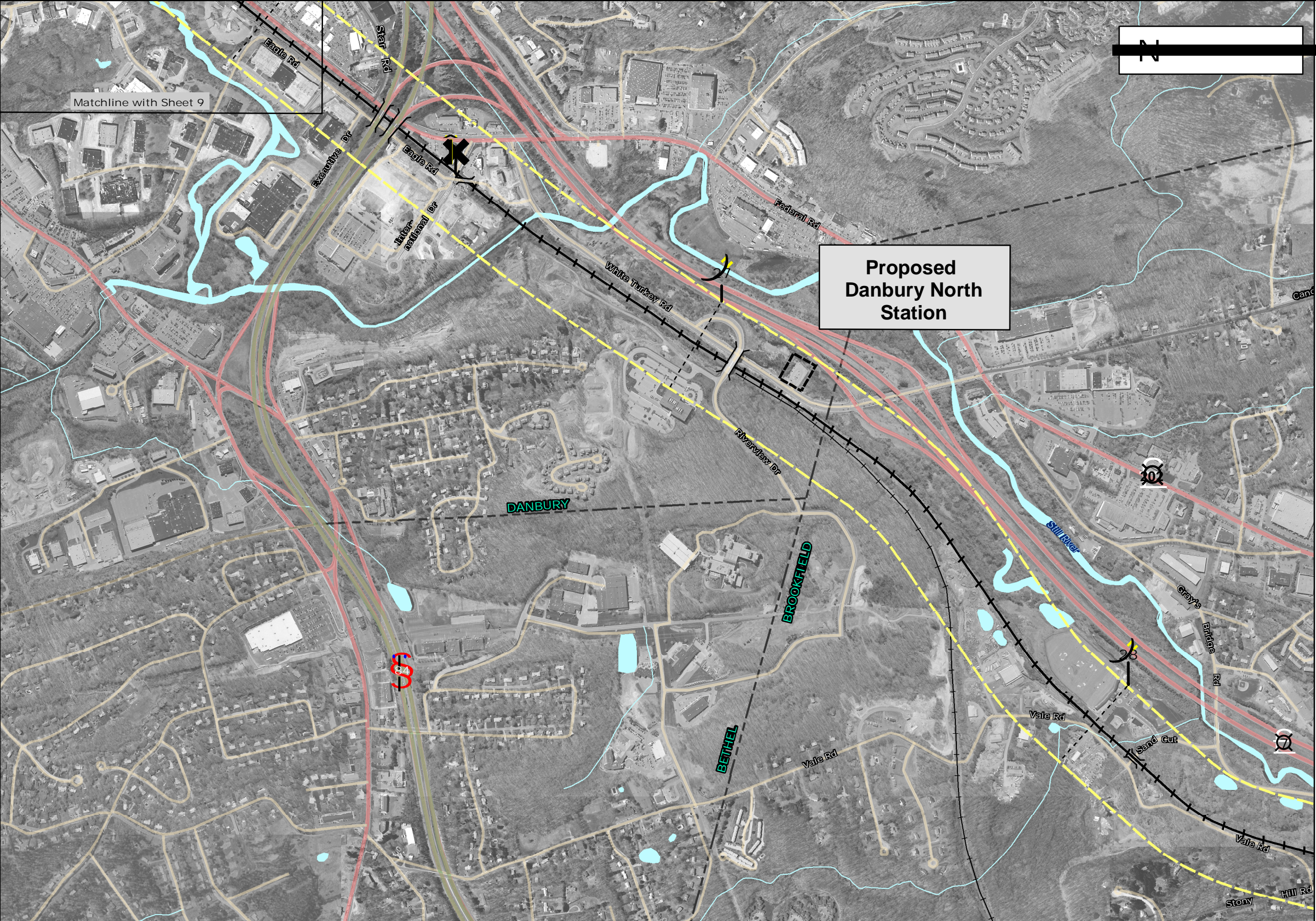
MAP SCALE

Feet

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ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT	STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		TOWN(S): DANBURY, BETHEL	PROJECT NO: 302-008
			MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS	MAP NO: 5.2.8
GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION DATE: 02/2009			SHEET NO: 9 OF 14	



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

MAP SCALE

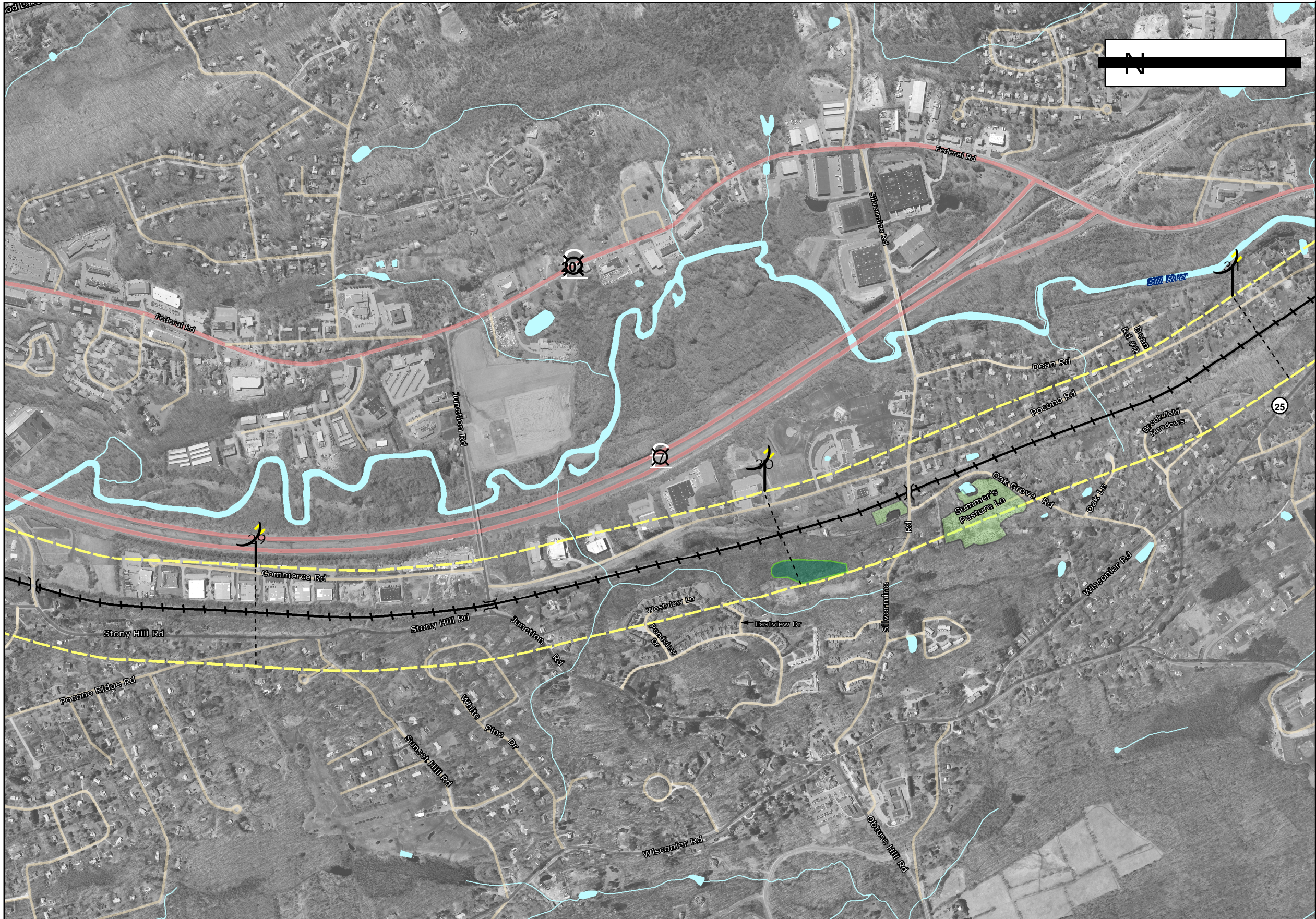
Feet

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ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT	STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	TOWN(S): DANBURY, BETHEL, BROOKFIELD	PROJECT NO: 302-008
			MAP NO: 5.2.8
GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION	DATE: 02/2009	MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS	SHEET NO: 10 OF 14





Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

MAP SCALE

Feet



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ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION

DATE: 02/2009

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



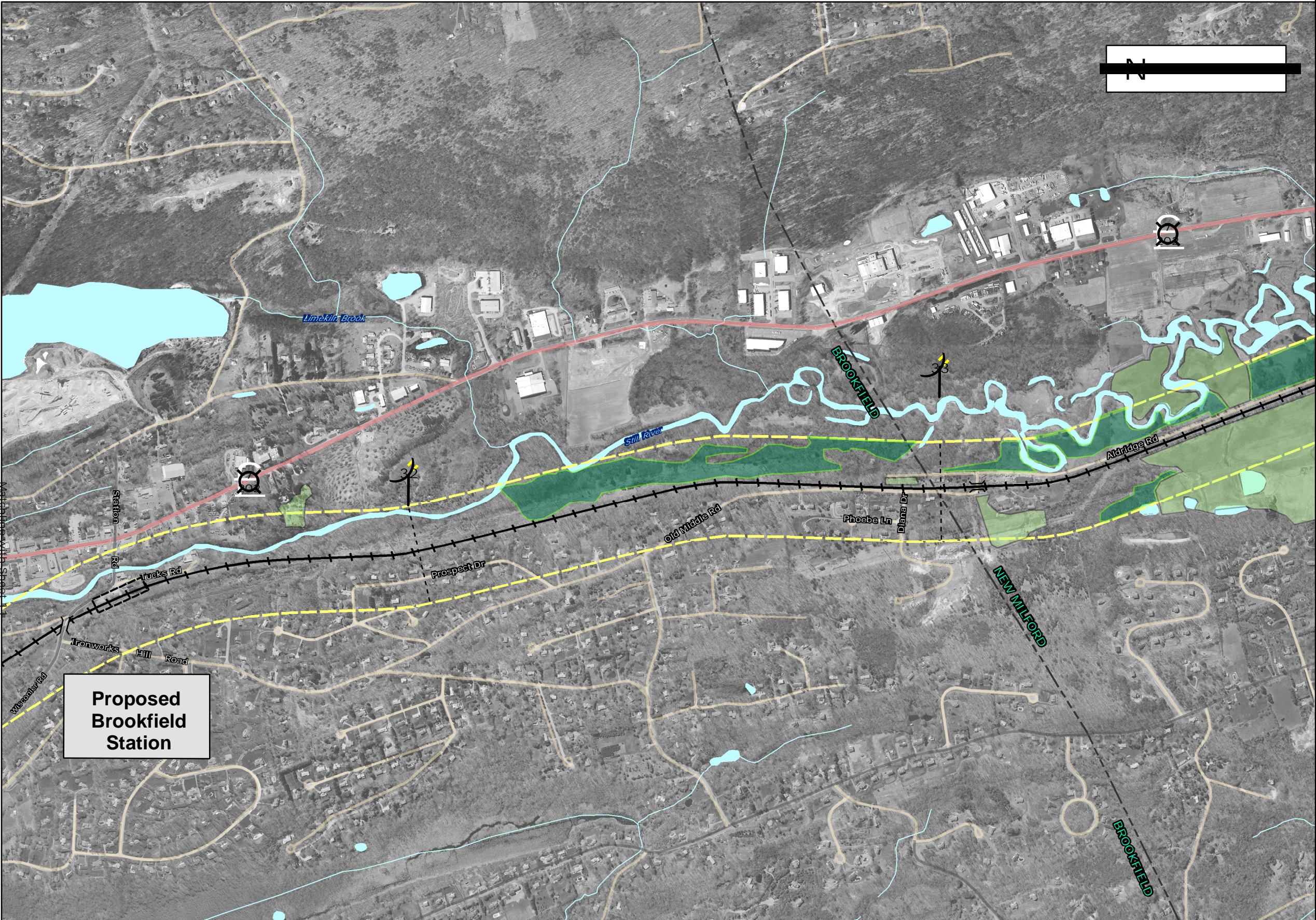
TOWN(S): BROOKFIELD

MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS

PROJECT NO: 302-008

MAP NO: 5.2.8

SHEET NO: 11 OF 14



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

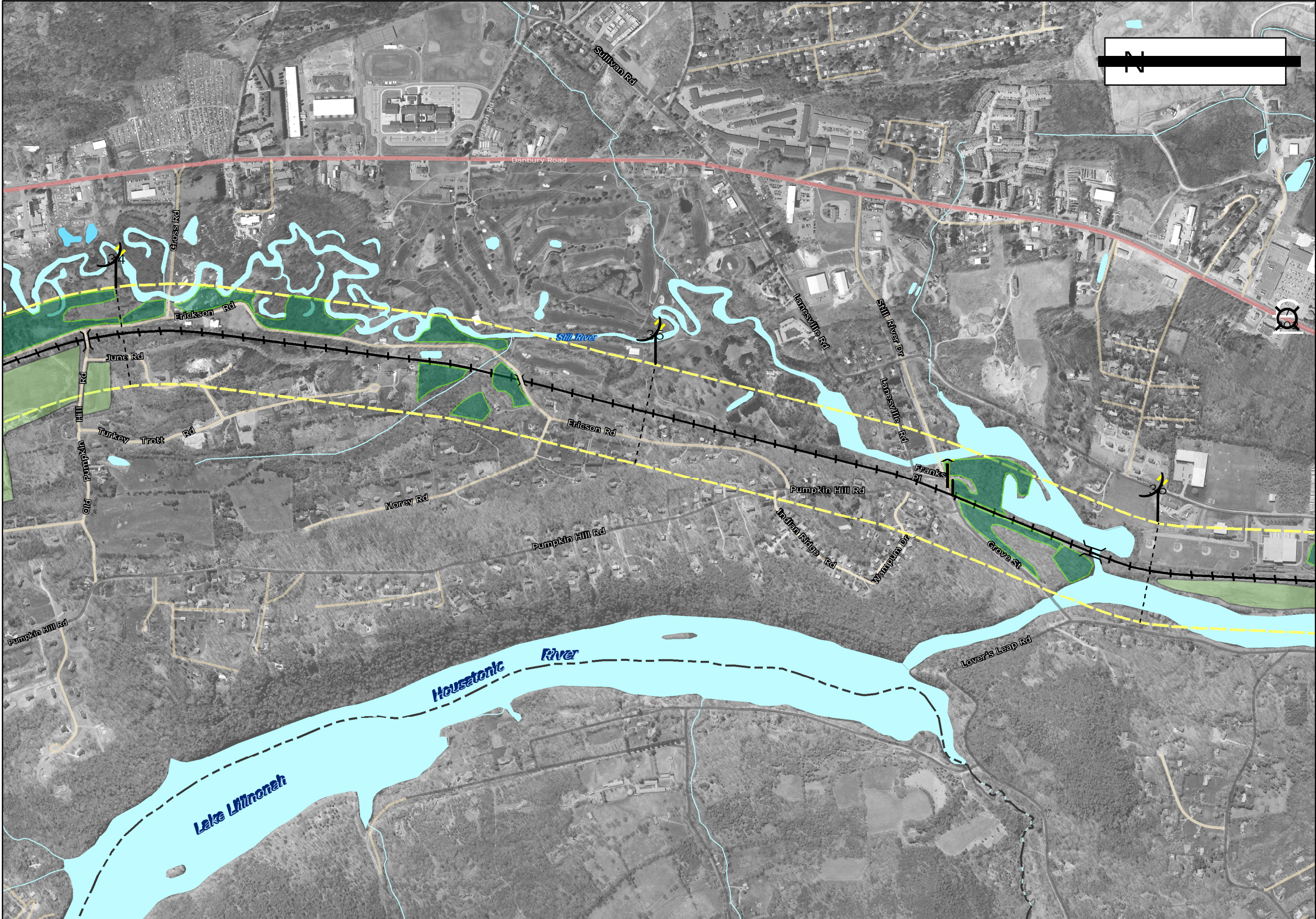
MAP SCALE

Feet

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ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT	STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		TOWN(S): BROOKFIELD, NEW MILFORD	PROJECT NO: 302-008
			MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS	MAP NO: 5.2.8
GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION DATE: 02/2009				SHEET NO: 12 OF 14



Legend

Railroad Track

1000 Foot Study Corridor

Town Boundary

Railroad Station

Proposed Location of New Railroad Station

Railroad Milepost Marker

Railroad Crossing

Private Railroad Crossing

Interstate Highway

US Highway

State Road

Local Road

Rivers/Streams

Lakes/Ponds

Local Active Farmland

Prime Farmlands

Data Sources:

Prime Farmland: USDA-NRCS
Roads: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Track: CT DEP
Town Boundary: CT DEP
Hydrography: CT DEP, Updated by URS
RR Milepost Markers and Grade Crossings: Metro-North Track Charts

MAP SCALE

Feet



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ONE INCH = 1000 FEET

PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION

DATE: 02/2009

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



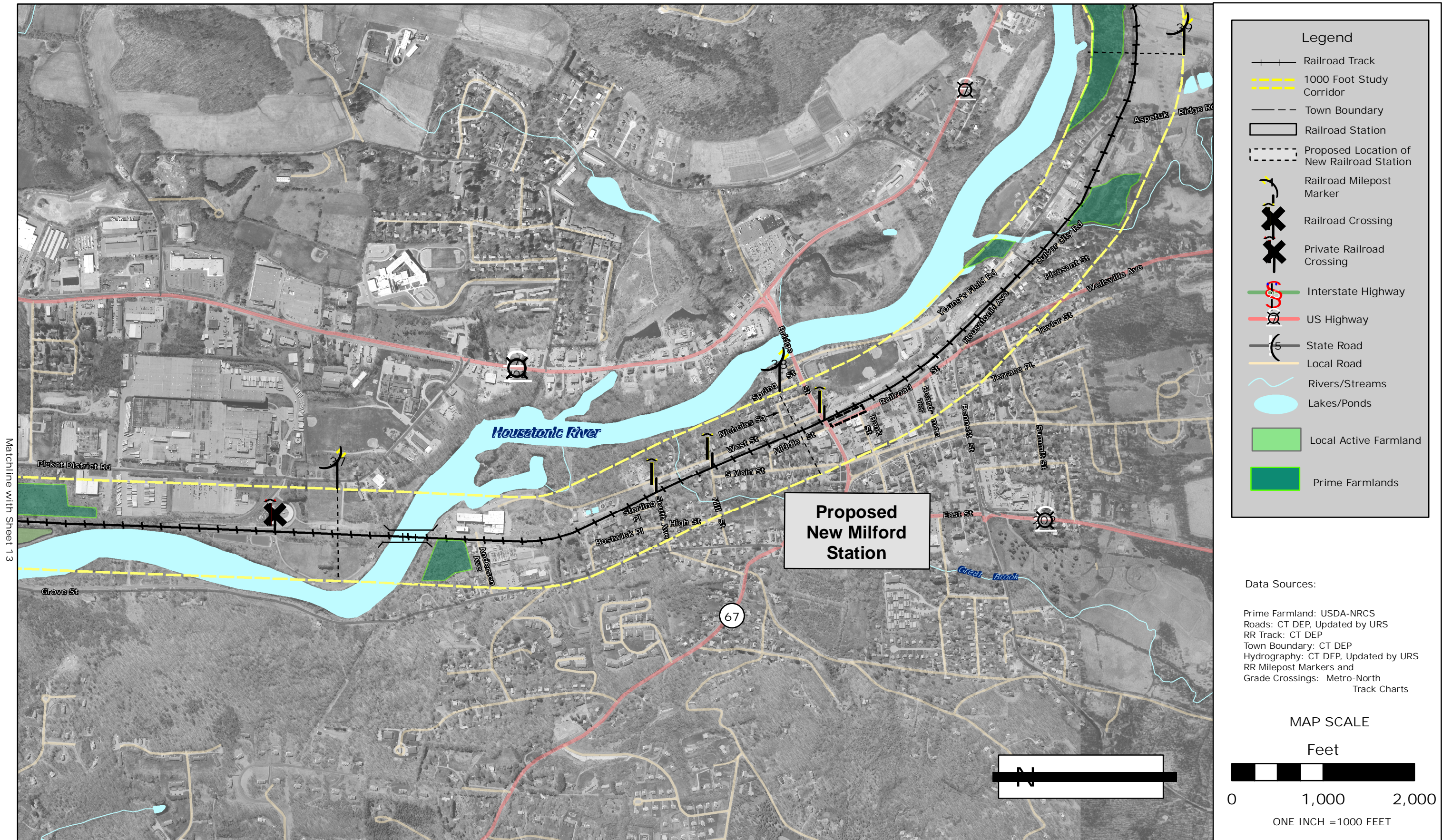
TOWN(S): NEW MILFORD

MAP TITLE: PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS

PROJECT NO: 302-008

MAP NO: 5.2.8

SHEET NO: 13 OF 14



PROJECT TITLE: DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & ELECTRIFICATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

GIS MAPPING BY: URS CORPORATION

DATE: 02/2009

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



TOWN(S): NEW MILFORD

MAP TITLE:
PRIME FARMLAND AND FARMS

PROJECT NO:
302-008

MAP NO:
5.2.8

SHEET NO:
14 OF 14