

IV. ACHIEVING THE VISION

TRANSPORTATION

A. INTRODUCTION

An essential ingredient to maintaining a high quality of life in Newtown is a safe and efficient transportation system, consistent with the Town's desired community character. Newtown's transportation system is primarily comprised of a network of town roads, state highways, a limited sidewalk system, recreational trails, limited mass transit service and rail freight service, all of which combine to provide for intra-town and inter-town travel needs.

This portion of the POCD describes the current conditions of Newtown's transportation system, highlight areas for action and identify future needs. An in-depth discussion of Newtown's transportation system is provided in Plan Memorandum #7, Transportation and Circulation.

B. FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF NEWTOWN'S ROADWAYS

There are five levels of roadway classification which are used to define the use characteristics of roads within Newtown. These classifications include; Principal Arterial- Interstate, Principal Arterial, Minor Arterials, Collectors Roads- Major and Minor, and Local Roads. The classification of a road may change along different segments of its length and in some instances may operate differently than its assigned functional classification. Roadway classifications are tied to various Federal, State/Regional and local funding programs for planning, engineering, construction and maintenance activities. The Federal/State functional classification process also incorporates urban and rural area designations, which affect the distribution of Federal transportation monies.

Classification Inconsistencies: There are numerous inconsistencies between the functional classification of roads by the Town of Newtown and by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT). This issue was raised in the 1993 POD and has not been resolved. This issue is important to the Town because the functional classification used by ConnDOT can affect transportation planning policies and programming and as well as eligibility for ConnDOT and Federal transportation improvement monies.

Newtown has been one of Connecticut's faster growing municipalities for the past 20 years. The Town is encouraged to enlist the assistance of the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) to pursue adjustments to ConnDOT's functional classification of roads in Newtown to more accurately reflect current highway conditions. The Town will continue to use the functional classification map contained in the 1993 POD until these adjustments have been completed to the Town's satisfaction.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Route 25

Route 25 is an arterial highway that begins at Route 7 in Brookfield and extends southeastward to I-95 in Bridgeport. Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Route 25 in Newtown in 2001 ranged from 8,400 ADT at the Brookfield town line, 17,500 ADT just north of the Flagpole, 20,200 ADT just south of Mile Hill Road and 18,500 ADT at the Monroe town line.

While it is classified as a minor arterial from the Brookfield town line to the Flagpole and a major arterial from the Flagpole to the Monroe town line, Route 25 also functions as the Town's Main Street and as a local service road with numerous curb cuts that provide access to the many businesses, institutions and residences located along its length in Newtown.

Figure 6 – Current Functional Road Classification

Figure 7 – Current ConnDOT Functional Road Classification

Route 25 Expressway: For many years, ConnDOT planned for the construction of a Route 25 expressway which would have provided expressway linkage between I-84 in Newtown and I-95 in Bridgeport. Portions of this expressway were constructed, extending from the Route 8 Expressway in Bridgeport to the vicinity of Route 111 in northern Trumbull. Over the years, many route alignment alternatives were considered to complete the balance of the expressway to I-84 in Newtown. Extensive environmental analyses were conducted and there were numerous public meetings to discuss the needs for and consequences of extending the expressway northward through Monroe and Newtown. In 1993, ConnDOT announced that it would no longer pursue the completion of the expressway, due to a lack of sufficient financial resources. Newtown's updated POCD concurs with ConnDOT's current position on the Route 25 Expressway.

Route 25 Widening: In 1998, ConnDOT proposed the widening of Route 25, within its current ROW, to a four lane cross section from Route 111 in Trumbull to Wasserman Way in Newtown. Neither the Town nor the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) have supported this proposal. This widening project can not proceed, using Federal monies, without HVCEO's endorsement. In the 2002 Inventory of Newtown Traffic Issues, HVCEO suggests that Newtown "advocate for intersection oriented safety improvements along the (Route 25) corridor one by one, as can be justified by traffic engineering studies." Newtown's updated POCD concurs with this HVCEO suggestion.

Route 25 South Safety Issues: Previous analysis of Route 25 from the Flagpole to the Monroe town line resulted in recommendations for intersection improvements and a curb cut management plan to address safety issues. The Newtown Planning and Zoning Commission has adopted the curb cut management plan. The Route 25 intersections recommended for improvements to address safety issues and, in some instances, address intersection capacity issues include: Swamp Road; Botsford Hill Road; Elm Drive, north and south; Pecks Lane, north and south; Borough Lane; and Route 302/Glover Avenue. Several of the recommended intersection improvements are minor in nature, such as re-striping of lanes to improve turning movements and might be accomplished by ConnDOT District 4 working directly with the Town of Newtown.

Route 25- Hawleyville: In 1997 the Town of Newtown, working with HVCEO, completed the Hawleyville Transportation and Development Study. This report addressed the land use and transportation issues associated with the Town's longstanding desire to encourage economic development on the lands near the I-84 Exit 9 interchange. The land use and transportation recommendations of this analysis, including intersection improvements and a curb cut management plan, were subsequently incorporated into Newtown's Plan of Development. ConnDOT's I-84 Corridor Study, completed in 2000, updated recommendations for the configuration of Exit 9 ramps and associated Route 25 intersection improvements.

In 2000, Newtown applied to ConnDOT for assistance in planning for improvements to the intersection of Route 25 with Currituck and Obtuse Roads. That analysis was recently completed, with ConnDOT concluding that signalization of this intersection was not currently needed. Any future improvements to the design of this intersection will be affected by the presence of a former schoolhouse, listed on the National Register of Historic Sites and two natural gas transmission lines, all located on the north side of the intersection.

Route 6

Route 6 is a two lane arterial roadway that enters Newtown at the Bethel town line as Mount Pleasant Road and proceeds eastward, joining Route 25 in Hawleyville and becoming Main Street near its intersection with School House Hill Road. At the Flagpole, Route 6 proceeds down Church Hill Road to join I-84 at Exit 10.

Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Route 6 in 2001 ranged from 8,800 ADT at the Bethel town line, 10,800 at the northern intersection with Route 25, 17,500 ADT just north of the Flagpole, 7,700 between the Flagpole and Queen Street on Church Hill Road and 16,300 ADT just east of Commerce Road before the I-84 ramps.

ConnDOT has given Route 6 the functional classification of Minor Arterial from the Bethel town line to the Flagpole and the classification of Major Arterial from the Flagpole to I-84. While Route 6 has the classification of an arterial road, a portion also functions as the Town's Main Street and as a busy local service road along Church Hill Road, with numerous curb cuts that provide access to the businesses, institutions, schools and residences fronting on this highway.

Route 6- Hawleyville: The 1997 Hawleyville Transportation and Development Study that addressed land use and transportation issues in this area of Newtown made recommendations for intersection improvements and included a curb cut management plan. This report concluded that the Hawleyville intersection of Routes 6 and 25 will need to be upgraded to accommodate the implementation of the economic development activities planned for this area.

Route 6- Main Street: ConnDOT's Traffic Accident Surveillance Report (TASR) does not indicate any major problem intersections or road segment issues on Route 6 from the Bethel town line until reaching the Flagpole. The Flagpole intersection also involves Route 25 and is discussed below as a separate road issue. Pedestrian activity is an important Main Street consideration. Main Street has attractive sidewalks setback from Route 6. However, pedestrian crossing of Route 6 is a challenge, due to the width of the road and the volume and speed of traffic. The Town, working with ConnDOT has achieved good pavement markings and signage, alerting motorists of pedestrian activity and encouraging pedestrians to cross in marketed crosswalks. The Newtown Police Department has also implemented education and enforcement activities to improve pedestrian safety. Any proposals for the improvement of the Flagpole intersection should include recommendations which address pedestrian mobility and safety along Main Street and Church Hill Road, linking with Queen Street.

Route 6- Church Hill Road: The portion of Route 6 between the Flagpole and I-84 is designated by ConnDOT as a major arterial. It also functions as one of Newtown's busier streets by directly serving many retail businesses, the Hawley School, Queen Street and its shopping areas and by connecting to the many businesses located on Commerce Road and Edmond Road. This portion of Route 6 provides two lanes of travel, with turn lanes provided at the Queen Street and Commerce Road intersections. Traffic exiting Commerce Road and traveling east was noticed to be using the dirt shoulder to facilitate right turns and bypass traffic turning left onto Church Hill Road west bound.

Figure 8 – ConnDOT Proposals for Improvements to I-84 Exits 9 & 10

Route 6 also provides access to Interstate 84 at Exit 10. A curb cut management plan was prepared by HVCEO in 1988 for this segment of Route 6 but has not been incorporated into the Borough or Town's zoning regulation.

The railroad overpass on Route 6 has been a subject of concern for several decades. Over the years, dozens of over-height trucks have hit the overpass, stopping traffic in both directions. After many false starts, construction of a new \$4,000,000+ overpass was completed in 2002, eliminating this traffic hazard.

For many years, the section of Route 6/Church Hill Road from Commerce Road easterly to I-84 Exit 10 has been at the top of the Housatonic Valley Region's list of most problematic road segments, in terms of traffic safety. The high accident rates in this area have been attributed to the combination of high traffic volumes and numerous turning movements. In 2000, Newtown requested State assistance to address this safety issue and ConnDOT subsequently proposed improvements to this segment of Route 6. The Town should continue to pursue improvement efforts to this portion of Church Hill Road, which may include the alignment of Edmond Road with Commerce Roads.

Route 6 – I-84 Exit 10: In 2000, ConnDOT concluded an analysis of the need to upgrade I-84 from the New York border to the Housatonic River. This study calls for the widening of I-84 to three travel lanes in each direction, with significant interchange improvements. Improvements proposed for Exit 10 are designed to convert the interchange to a modified "diamond" configuration to address capacity and safety issues.

Route 302

Route 302 is a two lane roadway entering Newtown from the west at the Bethel town line, as Dodgingtown Road, and proceeding easterly, becoming Sugar Street and ending at Route 25 (South Main Street) in the Borough of Newtown. Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Route 302 in 2001 ranged from 7,700 ADT west of Hattertown Road, 5,500 east of Hattertown Road, 7,500 east of Key Rock Road, 8,500 west of Boggs Hill Road, 10,800 east of Boggs Hill Road and 10,500 just west of Elm Drive and Route 25.

ConnDOT has given Route 302 the functional classification of Minor Arterial from the Bethel town line to its intersection with Route 25. As such, this arterial connects the center of Newtown with the center of Bethel. This low volume State road provides access to several small commercial uses and the Dodgingtown hamlet near the Bethel town line. Route 302 also connects with numerous Town roads that provide access to western Newtown and passes through a very scenic area containing two operating dairy farms.

The Route 302 intersections with Hattertown Road and Key Rock Road have been identified as possessing alignment and/or sight line safety issues. These problems are of such a nature that it may be possible to address them through the coordinated efforts of Newtown's engineering and public works personnel working with ConnDOT's District IV staff.

Route 34

Route 34 is a two lane arterial roadway that enters Newtown from the south at the Monroe town line as Berkshire Road and proceeds northwesterly, ending at the I-84 mainline overpass. ConnDOT has given Route 34 the functional classification of Minor Arterial. Route 34 connects Newtown with the lower Naugatuck Valley, the greater New Haven area and I-95.

Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Route 34 in 2001 ranged from 8,800 ADT at the Monroe town line, 11,800 south of High Rock Road, 13,000 south of Pole Bridge Road, 15,200 between Pole Bridge Road and Toddy Hill Road, 19,600 between Toddy Hill Road and Wasserman Way and 5,700 just northwest of Wasserman Way.

Route 34 Bridge: An issue which may affect the future utilization of this roadway is a ConnDOT proposal to improve the bridge crossing of the Housatonic River. Route 34 currently crosses the Housatonic River on top of the Stevenson Dam, which is located in Monroe approximately 1.25 miles south of the Newtown town line. The narrowness of the roadway on top of the dam, combined with the short turning radii of the approaches at either end of the bridge and the curve in the roadway near the east end of the dam prohibit the side by side passage of large tractor trailer trucks in these three areas of the bridge. On occasion, opposing trucks must back away from one another to enable passage over the dam. Route 34 represents the most direct route for trucks traveling between the New York State/Danbury I-84 corridor and the New Haven/I-95 area. It is likely that the reconstruction of this bridge or the building of a new bridge over the Housatonic River will result in increased truck traffic on Route 34.

Route 34 –The Hill: Route 34 is quite unique in Newtown and the Housatonic Valley Region in that there are no commercial businesses fronting on this State highway from the Monroe town line to just east of Pole Bridge Road, a distance of nearly 5 miles. This section of Route 34 passes over a hill that presents a significant climb for heavily loaded trucks traveling north bound. Trucks often slow to 25 miles per hour as they proceed upgrade, causing significant backups of following traffic during AM peak flows. Consideration was given to adding a slow vehicle lane to permit passing, however this option was rejected due to the taking of front yards that would be required to accommodate the additional lane. If the proposed upgrade of Route 34's crossing of the Housatonic River does result in additional truck traffic, it can be anticipated that the idea of adding climbing lanes on this section of Route 34 will be raised once again.

Route 34- Pole Bridge Road to Wasserman Way: The section of Route 34 from Pole Bridge Road to Wasserman Way has Newtown's second highest traffic volumes (for non-expressway roads), as well as two curves, changes in roadway elevation, poor sightlines and intersections with two busy town roads. North bound morning peak hour traffic on Route 34 was observed to back-up from south of Pole Bridge Road, through the Toddy Hill Road intersection and through the intersection of Wasserman Way, to the I-84 Exit 11 on-ramp. South bound traffic on Route 34 was observed to be backed-up behind vehicles turning left into Pole Bridge Road, on a narrow corner with poor sight lines.

Route 34 – I-84 Exit 11: In 2000, ConnDOT concluded an analysis of the need to upgrade I-84 from the New York border to the Housatonic River. Significant improvements were proposed for Exit 11, including a ConnDOT proposal to provide a direct link to the I-84 onramps through a redesigned intersection with Toddy Hill Road, addressing morning peak hour congestion and safety issues on this roadway segment.

Wasserman Way

Wasserman Way is a new State numbered (SR 490 and SR 860) roadway connecting Route 34 and I-84 Exit 11 on the east with Queen Street, Mile Hill Road and Route 25 on the west. ConnDOT classifies Wasserman Way as a collector road. The portion of Wasserman Road from Route 34 to Nunnawauk Road is SR 490. SR 490 continues on Nunnawauk Road from Wasserman Way to the Garner Correctional Facility. The portion of Wasserman Way from Nunnawauk Road to Mile Hill

Figure 9 – ConnDOT Proposals for Improvements to I-84 Exit 11

Road is SR 860. A ConnDOT commuter parking lot with 78 spaces is located on the east side of Wasserman Way, between Route 34 and the I-84 ramps.

Wasserman Way was constructed at the Town's request to develop an alternate route serving the central area of Newtown. It passes adjacent to the former Fairfield Hills Hospital Campus, which the Town is currently negotiating to purchase from the State. Based upon 2001 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes recorded by ConnDOT, the construction of this roadway has been well received by motorists. ADT volumes on Wasserman Way in 2001 ranged from 16,900 vehicles between Route 34 and the I-84 Exit 11 ramps, to 9,800 vehicles west of Nunnawauk Road to 12,200 vehicles between Mile Hill Road South and Route 25. The need for future improvements to the intersections along Wasserman Way are part of the Fairfield Hills Master Planning process, which should be incorporated into the POCD as they are completed. The Town should consider extending Commerce Road to Wasserman Way to provide for an alternate connection to Church Hill Road (Route 6).

Glen Road

Glen Road is a State numbered road (SR 816) and is classified by ConnDOT as a minor collector road. At one time Glen Road was a part of Route 6, the major east-west arterial serving Newtown. Glen Road provides secondary access to Southbury, bridging the Housatonic River. Traffic volumes on Glen Road increase substantially whenever I-84 is shut down for accidents or construction activity. Average Daily Traffic volumes on this road in 2001 ranged from 2,400 vehicles at the Housatonic River bridge to 3,900 vehicles just north of the intersection with Church Hill Road. Glen Road passes through the narrow northern end of the Pootatuck River valley and this section of roadway has been long recognized for its scenic qualities.

“The Flagpole”

The Flagpole in the middle of the Main Street intersection of Route's 6 and 25 and the two legs of West Street has been described as the “emotional heart” of Newtown. The Flagpole, sometimes referred to as the “Liberty Pole,” and its predecessors date from 1876. The current 100' high flagpole was erected in 1950.

Because the Flagpole sits in the middle of a busy intersection with five roadway legs, it has been the site of many accidents, which tragically include fatalities. The recent downward trend in accidents at this intersection may be related to reduced traffic volumes on Route 6 east of the Flagpole on Church Hill Road and Route 25 south of the Flagpole, possibly resulting from the construction of Wasserman Way. It can be anticipated that these volumes will increase in the future, as a result of continued population growth in Newtown and surrounding communities.

Over the years, proposals to improve safety at this intersection, such as moving the Flagpole out of the roadway or signalizing the intersection, have been met with resistance from the Community because they would have adversely affected the historic community character of this intersection. One proposal to improve safety and the flow of traffic at this intersection, which has not been formally pursued, is the creation of a modern roundabout that would feature the Flagpole as a prominent community monument in the middle of a landscaped circle, in the middle of the roundabout. Modern roundabouts are not traffic circles or rotaries. They are increasingly used successfully to address the issues of traffic flow, traffic safety and community character. This proposal was advanced by HVCEO in the 2002 Inventory of Newtown Traffic Issues.

Local Road Issues

Newtown has 226 miles of local roads. While Newtown has many miles of new roads built to serve the numerous subdivisions developed during the past twenty years, most of Newtown's local collector roads serving the new subdivisions are considerably older. These older, narrower collector roads were originally built to handle low volumes of traffic traveling at relatively low speeds.

The Town has recognized the necessity to upgrade its local road network to meet the needs of a growing community, addressing such issues as drainage and bridge improvements, road bed and pavement improvements, road alignments, sightlines and intersections. The Town is currently fourteen years into a 20 year capital plan to address these roadway items. In a community growing as rapidly as Newtown, some local roads and intersections that were once adequate to handle traffic can develop safety issues. When these issues arise they are addressed by the Town in a manner that protects the safety of the traveling public.

Pole Bridge Road: An example of an intersection that is no longer adequate to safely handle increased levels of traffic is the intersection of Pole Bridge Road with Jeremiah and Philo Curtis Roads. This intersection has been identified by the Newtown Police Department, the Town Engineer and the Public Works Director as possessing safety issues relating to sightlines, road alignment and traffic control. These issues are currently being addressed by these Town departments.

Queen Street at Glover Avenue: As documented in the 1988 Center Area Traffic Plan, the Queen Street Glover Avenue corridor is used as a shortcut for traffic moving between Church Hill Road and Route 25 south and Route 302 west. The problems associated with the intersection of Queen Street with Glover Avenue have been identified by the Town Engineer, the Director of Public Works and the Police Chief. This intersection was also identified in the 1993 POD as "problematic due to congestion or high accident occurrences."

Solutions to the traffic safety issues associated with this intersection have been advanced, including signalization, but none have gained favor as they would have resulted in alterations to the "island" located in the middle of this intersection, altering the character of the adjacent residential neighborhood. It is recommended that an analysis of past traffic accidents and future traffic volumes be performed and that design alternatives for this intersection be prepared, with public involvement, to result in safety improvements to this intersection that are sensitive to the residential characteristics of the adjacent neighborhood.

As Newtown continues to grow, additional segments of the Town's existing roadways and intersections will need to be improved to handle increased traffic volumes. The process to address these needs appears to be well established.

Scenic Roads: Newtown has a scenic road ordinance for Town roads that was adopted in 1997, with revisions in 1999. The purpose of the ordinance is to "...provide a balance between the need to provide safe and convenient public transportation as well as other public safety needs along with preserving the scenic and rural values."

Newtown's scenic roads include: Sanford Road, which is a narrow, winding dirt road extending from Tamarack Road to Echo Valley Road; Zoar Road, also a narrow winding dirt road running from Route 34 to Bennetts Bridge Road; and the recently approved 4,000' unpaved portion of Pond Brook Road, between Hanover Road and Lake George Road.

Pedestrian Circulation and Bikeways

Sidewalks: Considerable interest has been expressed for improved pedestrian facilities, especially as relates to activities within the Borough and the Sandy Hook Village area. The Town and the Borough have completed a planning process that resulted in proposals for improved pedestrian movement along Queen Street.

A planning study for the revitalization of the Sandy Hook Village area has been completed with recommendations calling for improvements that will result in enhanced pedestrian mobility and safety. Recommendations for pedestrian improvements to Queen Street in the Borough and the Sandy Hook Village area have been endorsed by the Planning and Zoning Commission for incorporation into the POCD.

Trails: Because of Newtown's low density character, most local roads do not have sidewalks. However, Newtown has a very extensive network of walking trails that have been documented in a booklet prepared by Mary Mitchell and Albert Goodrich and published by the Cyrenius H. Booth Library. This booklet, titled Newtown Trails Book, contains 18 detailed maps which identify the location and condition of publicly accessible walking trails.

A recent trail proposal made by the Town's Ad HOC Open Space Task Force recommended the development of a multi-purpose trail between Fairfield Hills and the Upper Paugussett State Forest which has been incorporated into the POCD. This trail will facilitate a pedestrian connection between Fairfield Hills and the Sandy Hook Village Center, as well as to the Upper Paugussett State Forest.

Bikeways: There are currently no dedicated bikeways within Newtown. Suggestions have been raised concerning the extension of the Monroe rails to trails pedestrian/bikeway facility into Newtown and there was a proposal for the construction of a bike lane on Glen Road (SR 816) that would connect the Sandy Hook Village center with Southbury. This latter proposal has not moved forward, as there are no accurate maps of the right of way along this State numbered road that would permit preliminary engineering work and the development of cost estimates to assess the feasibility of this idea.

Public Transit

The Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) is the entity responsible for providing fixed-route and elderly and disabled public transit service within the Housatonic Valley Region. Newtown is not currently served by fixed-route bus service. The nearest fixed-route bus service ends at the Bethel town line, on Route 6. HART does provide "SweetHART" bus transportation service for Newtown's seniors (age 60 or older) and persons of any age with disabilities. SweetHART provides door-to-door bus service Monday thru Friday, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, with a dial-a-ride reservation system.

There have been considerations for establishing fixed-route bus service in Newtown. In 1993, HART prepared for HVCEO the Newtown/New Fairfield Bus Service Feasibility Plan. This report recommended a trial demonstration of fixed-route bus service that would serve major traffic generators such as the senior center, Church Hill Road, Queen Street, Main Street, Nunnawauk Meadows and Route 25 as far south as Sand Hill Plaza. This service would represent an extension of HART's Route 6 bus line in Bethel. No action was taken on this proposal.

As part of the process to update Newtown's Plan of Conservation and Development, a Community Planning Survey was conducted to understand residents concerns for Newtown's future. When responding to the question "Please provide us with two or three ways quality of life in Newtown might be improved?" the second most frequent response was "more mass transit."

Rail Service

In the early 1900's Newtown had an extensive system of rail lines and historic accounts indicate 153 freight and passenger trains stopped or passed through Newtown daily. Today, Newtown has one rail line, the Maybrook Line, which originates in Beacon, New York ends in Derby, Connecticut. This line is used exclusively for rail freight service. The Maybrook Line intersects with other rail lines, which provide connectivity to the national network of rail lines and rail services.

The Maybrook Line enters Newtown in the Hawleyville area, passes through the east side of the Borough, continues east of Route 25 to the Botsford area where it turns southeasterly to the Stevenson section of Monroe. The Connecticut portion of the Maybrook Line is owned by the Housatonic Railroad Company, which currently provides rail freight service to two Newtown companies; Rand-Whitney Containers on Edmond Road and Georgia Pacific warehouse, located at 201 South Main Street. There are four additional railroad sidings connected to Newtown business locations, which are not in current use.

Shepaug Reload Center: The Housatonic Railroad Company also owns and operates the Shepaug Reload and Distribution Center, which is located in Hawleyville, on the east side of Route 25. This facility enables area lumberyards to pick-up bulk shipments of lumber.

Hawleyville Transload Terminal: The Housatonic Railroad Company is in the process of expanding this facility into the Hawleyville Transload Terminal to allow for the intermodal transfer of non-hazardous bulk materials, such as flour and starch. This facility will enable area companies that do not have a rail siding to receive bulk shipments of raw goods used for manufacturing.

The Hawleyville Transload Terminal will have the capacity to load or unload forty rail cars, with storage for an additional 100 rail cars. This terminal may also have the potential to support trailer on flat car service. The construction of this facility is partially funded by a grant of State of Connecticut monies through ConnDOT.

Passenger Service: The 1997 I-84 Hawleyville Transportation and Development Study examined the potential for passenger rail service in Newtown. That analysis concluded that there was not enough potential rail ridership to justify an extension of Danbury Branch Line rail service to Newtown.

D. TRANSPORTATION: ISSUES, GOALS AND ACTION AGENDA

The following is an identification of the key issues and goals related to Newtown's transportation system and a supporting action agenda for the attainment of those goals.

ISSUE #1: FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF ROADWAYS

1. There are numerous differences between ConnDOT's and the Town's functional classification of roadways within Newtown.
2. The functional classification of roadways by ConnDOT can affect transportation planning policies and programming as well as eligibility for ConnDOT and Federal transportation improvement monies.

- The rapid development over the past 20 years justifies a town-wide review of both the local and ConnDOT roadway classification in Newtown.

Goal: Achieve the appropriate functional classification of state roads in Newtown.

Strategies:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|---|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN1 | 1. | Critique the local functional classifications of Newtown’s roadways and establish an updated local functional classification system. | BS | PC | PZC | |
| TRAN1 | 2. | Enlist the assistance of the HVCEO to develop the information necessary to convince ConnDOT to update the state’s roadway classifications in Newtown to better reflect their current and future functional classifications. | BS | PC | PZC | |
| TRAN1 | 3. | Critique the Newtown Roadway Ordinance to identify necessary updates and to ensure that it is consistent with current functional classification system. | BS | LC | PC | PZC |

Entity Abbreviations - BB- Borough Burgess; BE- Board of Education; BF – Board of Finance; BFC- Board of Fire Commissioners; BM- Board of Managers (Edmond Town Hall); BS- Board of Selectmen; BZC- Borough Zoning Commission; CC- Conservation Commission; CA- Commission on Aging; EDC- Economic Development Commission; LC- Legislative Council; OS- Open Space Committee; PBSC- Public Buildings and Site Commission; PC- Police Commission; PRC- Parks and Recreation Commission; PZC- Planning and Zoning Commission; TSB- Transportation Strategy Board; WPCA- Water Pollution Control Authority; YSB- Youth Service Board. **Section Abbreviations** - COCH- Community Character; CANR- Conservation and Natural Resources; OPSP- Open Space; TRAN- Transportation; HOUS- Housing; ECDE- Economic Development; COFA- Community Facilities. **Definition of Responsibilities** - **Leader:** Responsible to lead and coordinate the evaluation and, if justified, implementation of the strategy; **Required Support:** To accomplish the evaluation and/or implementation, this entity needs to provide support to the Leader

ISSUE #2: ROADWAY CONGESTION AND SAFETY

- Current areas of traffic congestion and safety issues in Newtown have been described in a series of transportation planning documents.
- As Newtown and the surrounding areas continue to grow, Newtown’s network of State and local roads will experience increases in traffic volumes that are likely to create new points of congestion and additional safety issues.
- Newtown’s network of older local collector roads was not originally laid out to accommodate today’s traffic volumes and vehicle speeds.
- The Route 25 Expressway will not be constructed in the foreseeable future and should not be counted on to address Route 25 congestion and safety issues.
- Traffic volume on I-84 will continue to grow, partly in response to overflows from the congested I-95 corridor, growth in regional economic activity and the increasing demand for global transportation linkages.

Goal: Alleviate areas of congestion and address safety issues.

Strategies:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|---|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2 | 1. | Develop a comprehensive transportation and land use plan similar to the 1997 Hawleyville study to: | | | | |
| TRAN2 | 1a. | Identify current and future issues caused by further development and land use; | BS | EDC | PZC | BZC |
| TRAN2 | 1b. | Develop the preferred and alternative solutions to alleviate current and forecasted traffic problems for the town; and | PC | BS | PZC | BZC |
| TRAN2 | 1c. | Provide priorities for road changes and improvements. | PC | BS | PZC | BZC |
| TRAN2 | 2. | Request the Newtown Borough Zoning Commission adopt and implement curb-cut management recommendations for Church Hill Road between the Flag Pole and the railroad overpass. | BZC | PC | PZC | |
| TRAN2 | 3. | Consider the following actions: | | | | |
| TRAN2 | 3a. | As redevelopment of the Fairfield Hills campus occurs, plan to mitigate the impact that traffic caused by such redevelopment has on Newtown's roads; | PC | BS | | |
| TRAN2 | 3b. | Extend Commerce Road to connect Church Hill road and Wasserman Way; | BS | PC | PZC | EDC |
| TRAN2 | 4. | Implement traffic calming measures that address safety issues associated with traffic speeds that are not compatible for the character of the area through which the road passes. | PC | BS | | |
| TRAN2 | 5. | Remove the requirement that a Town road must be "unpaved" to apply for Town scenic-road status. | LC | BS | PZC | |
| TRAN2 | 6. | Support multi-modal (pedestrian, bike, etc.) solutions to help alleviate traffic congestion and address safety. | PZC | PC | BZC | |
| TRAN2 | 7. | Adopt and implement a town-wide access management policy. | PZC | BZC | BS | |

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Strategies for specific Routes:

Strategies - Route 25:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|---|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2-25 | 1. | Establish a Design District for Route 25 from the Monroe border to the Newtown Borough borders with the following objectives: | PZC | | | |

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|--|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2-25 | 1a. | Maintain the character of the corridor; | PZC | PC | EDC | |
| TRAN2-25 | 1b. | Allow mixed-use development in strategic locations along the corridor; and | PZC | EDC | | |
| TRAN2-25 | 1c. | Accommodate traffic volumes generated by proposed land uses. | PZC | PC | | |
| TRAN2-25 | 2. | Continue to implement the recommendations for curb cut management as previously adopted the Planning and Zoning Commission. | PZC | PC | | |
| TRAN2-25 | 3. | Advocate for intersection-oriented safety improvements along the Route 25 corridor, one by one, as justified by traffic engineering studies. | PC | BS | PZC | |
| TRAN2-25 | 4. | Work with ConnDOT District IV engineering staff to develop practical solutions to safety problems identified in previous transportation planning studies, which can be implemented by the joint efforts of District IV and Town staff. | BS | PC | | |
| TRAN2-25 | 5. | Enlist HVCEO's support and advocate with ConnDOT for the implementation of the recommendations of the Hawleyville Transportation and Development Study. | BS | PC | | |

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Strategies - Route 34:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|---|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2-34 | 1. | Establish the state Scenic Road classification for Route 34 from Monroe to Exit 11 of I-84. | BS | LC | PZC | |
| TRAN2-34 | 2. | Work with ConnDOT District IV engineering staff to develop practical solutions to the safety problems associated with the Pole Bridge Road intersection. | BS | PC | | |
| TRAN2-34 | 3. | Work with the ConnDOT/HVCEO to determine if any solutions, such as minor shoulder widening, exist to alleviate traffic congestion associated with slow-moving trucks on the Route 34. | BS | PC | | |

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| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|---|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2-34 | 4. | Town administration, planning staff, and engineering staff should follow proposals to improve the Route 34 crossing of the Housatonic River in Monroe and to understand the consequences to Newtown of the proposed improvements. | BS | PC | | |
| TRAN2-34 | 5. | Enlist HVCEO as an advocate to the ConnDOT for implementing the improvement of the Route 34 access to I-84 Exit11. | BS | PC | | |

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Strategies - Route 6:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|--|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2-6 | 1. | Establish a Design District for Route 6 from the Bethel border to the Newtown Borough. | PZC | | | |
| TRAN2-6 | 2. | Adopt zoning regulations and incorporate curb-cut management into local road ordinance pursuant to the Hawleyville Transportation and Development Study. | PZC | BS | LL | PC |
| TRAN2-6 | 3. | Enlist HVCEO's support as an advocate to the Connecticut DOT for the implementing the recommendations from the Hawleyville Transportation and Development Study. | BS | | | |
| TRAN2-6 | 4. | Recommend that the Borough Zoning Commission update the <u>Newtown Center Area Traffic Management Plan</u> , adopt zoning regulations to implement access management. | BZC | BB | PC | |
| TRAN2-6 | 4a. | Consider the preparation of a Traffic Management Plan for Church Hill Road from the Borough to the Sandy Hook Center. | PZC | BS | PC | |
| TRAN2-6 | 5. | Promote ConnDOT's efforts to realign Edmond Road with Commerce Road to help alleviate the traffic conflicts at the existing Edmond Road and Church Hill Road intersection. | BS | | | |

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Strategies - Route 302:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|---|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2-302 | 1. | Pursue the State Scenic Road classification for Route 302 from the Bethel Town line to the Route 25 intersection at Ram's Pasture. | BS | LC | PC | |
| TRAN2-302 | 2. | Work with ConnDOT District IV engineering staff to develop practical solutions to safety problems, which can be implemented by the joint efforts of District IV and Town staff. Two examples of this cooperative effort would be improvement of the Key Rock Road and Hattertown Road intersection with Route 302, accomplished by slight improvement of Town road approaches and ConnDOT improvement of intersection sight line. | BS | PC | | |

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Strategies - The Flagpole:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|--|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2-FP | 1. | Examine the merits of HVCEO's proposal to address safety and traffic flow issues at this intersection. | BB | PC | BS | BZC |
| TRAN2-FP | 2. | Explore the possibility of building a modern roundabout that features the Flagpole as a community monument in the middle of a landscaped circle. | BB | PC | BS | BZC |

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Strategies - Sandy Hook Center

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|--|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2-SHC | 1. | Work with the Connecticut DOT to improve the four-way intersection in Sandy Hook Center for motorists and pedestrians. | BS | PC | EDC | |

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Strategies - Glen Road (SR 816):

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|--|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2-GR | 1. | Pursue State Scenic Road status for Glen Road. | BS | LC | | |
| TRAN2-GR | 2. | When updated ConnDOT right of way maps become available, continue to investigate the possibility of developing a bike path from the Housatonic River to the Sandy Hook village center. | BS | OS | CC | |
| TRAN2-GR | 3. | Request ConnDOT's cooperation in stabilizing Black Bridge Road and the bank along the Pootatuck River where storm water drainage from Glen Road is causing severe erosion. | BS | CC | | |

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Strategies- I-84:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|---|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN2 I-84 | 1. | Continue 1993 POCD endorsement of expanding I-84 to three through travel lanes in each direction. | BS | | | |
| TRAN2 I-84 | 2. | Work with HVCEO and ConnDOT to prepare an "Incident Management Plan" that addresses State and local actions designed to respond to the closure of I-84 due to accidents, maintenance and construction activities that result in an influx of traffic on roads within Newtown. | BS | | | |

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ISSUE #3: PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The desire for improved pedestrian facilities has emerged as a planning issue for the Borough and the Sandy Hook village areas.

Goal: Improve Opportunities for Pedestrian Activities

Strategies:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|--|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN3 | 1. | Establish a long-range plan and priorities for sidewalks located in the Borough, the Sandy Hook Design District, and Fairfield Hills. | BS | BB | PC | PZC |
| TRAN3 | 2. | Identify existing and desired pedestrian circulation routes, and where sidewalk gaps exist, plan for the construction of new sidewalks, with new sidewalks in the Borough and Sandy Hook Center as priority areas and include the following: | BS | BB | PC | EDC |
| TRAN3 | 2a. | Implementation of the 2003 Pedestrian Safety Improvement Plan for the Queen Street corridor. | BS | BB | PC | |
| TRAN3 | 2b. | Develop a plan for and implement a continuous sidewalk on Church Hill Road extending between the flagpole and Sandy Hook Center. | BS | BB | PC | |
| TRAN3 | 3. | Consider bike paths as a means to travel to and from the center of Newtown and to and from the major playing fields. | BS | BB | PC | |

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ISSUE #4: PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

1. Newtown is not currently served by fixed-route public transportation service for the general public.
2. The results of the Community Planning Survey indicate that there is a desire for public transportation service.
3. The Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) has the capacity to provide fixed-route, public transit bus service for the general public in Newtown.
4. The issue of fixed-route, public transit service in Newtown has already been studied and found to be technically feasible.
5. The CT Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) is expected to examine a Danbury to Bridgeport link. The long desired Danbury to Newtown service could be a component of the new interregional service benefiting Newtown

Goal: Initiate fixed-route bus service in Newtown on a trial basis.

Strategies:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|-------------------|-----|---|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN4 | 1. | Develop an overall long-range public transportation plan involving bus and rail travel. | BS | PZC | | |

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|---|-----|---|--------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN4 | 2. | Work with HART, HVCEO, ConnDOT and the TSB to establish fixed-route bus service on a trial basis to determine the viability of public transit as an alternative mode of transportation for Newtown residents and employees of Newtown businesses. | BS | BB | | |
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ISSUE #5: RAIL SERVICE

1. Newtown is fortunate to have an active rail line that is capable of providing freight service for area businesses with rail sidings and the utilization of bulk material rail terminals located in Hawleyville.
2. Freight service is an important asset to the economy of Newtown.
3. Rail passenger service is not a current mobility option for Newtown residents, but may become viable in the future.

Goal: Maximize Rail Mobility Opportunities

Strategies:

| Section/ Issue | No. | Strategy | Leader | Required Support | Required Support | Required Support |
|---|-----|--|--------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| TRAN5 | 1. | Take an active role in rail-freight planning activities with ConnDOT and the Housatonic Railroad Company to ensure that Newtown's economy is satisfactorily served and that resulting activities are compatible with affected neighborhoods and roads. | BS | EDC | | |
| TRANS5 | 2. | Preserve the capacity along Newtown's existing rail line to implement future rail passenger service | BS | EDC | Regional Planning Agencies | |
| TRANS5 | 3. | Limit development around Newtown's former train stations if future passenger rail service appears possible | PZC | Regional Planning Agencies | | |
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