

APPENDIX A7

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES



Introduction

The Town's public facilities and services include a number of building locations and related services. They are: Town Hall/Government Center; Town Schools; Emergency Services including Police Protection, Emergency Medical Services, and Fire Protection; the Darien Library; Darien Senior Activities Center; Town Garage; Utilities--Sewers Services and Water Supply; and the Depot—the teen center.

Town Hall/Government Center

The Town Hall which moved into the former Darien High School and Mather Junior High School building on Renshaw Road in the 1980s, is used for a variety of purposes, nearly 16 hours a day on many weekdays, and on a substantial number of weekends throughout the year. The building includes Town Government and Board of Education Offices, the Darien Arts Council, and a gymnasium. Recently, Youth Options and the Darien Housing Authority have moved into the basement of the building. The building also has an auditorium, which provides a large meeting space for Committees and Boards such as the Representative Town Meeting (RTM), as well as for various theater shows.

In recent years, a number of offices within the building have been refurbished. These include the Parks and Recreation Department/Youth Commission, Health and Social Services, and the Assessor's Office. Scheduled next are renovations to the Town Clerk's Office. The combination of certain Departments such as the Health Department and Social Services Department, as well as the need for more office space for more personnel has resulted in a reduction in the number of conference rooms. There are tentative plans to combine the office space of the Building Department and Planning and Zoning Department. This may limit the use of the conference room now known as room 213. To compensate, there are plans to convert the balcony of the auditorium for a replacement conference room.

As space needs have increased, the Town has moved two functions into the basement, areas, which had been previously been used for storage only. The Housing Authority moved into the basement in the late 1990s, and Youth Options moved into the basement in 2002. This space provides the required confidentiality necessary for Youth Options. It is likely that any future space needs could require finishing of additional space in the basement, however, then there will be a need for additional storage space.

Other improvements have occurred to the building within the past few years, including but not limited to the following:

- Wireless internet access was established in rooms 206, 119 and the auditorium.
- The roof on the small gym will be repaired/renovated in 2005.
- All new chairs and tables were placed in the front of auditorium, which also received new shades, wireless microphones, and new paint.

Improvements which are needed to the building within the next ten years include:

- The main gym needs to be done in 2006.

- The main Town Hall roof will need to be replaced.
- The two entrances at the arts center need to be completely replaced (all new glass and new doors).
- The three garage doors in the back of Town Hall need to be changed.
- The elevator needs to be updated.
- Renovations are needed to the Room 119 meeting room. New furniture and a quieter air conditioning unit will improve this facility, which will get increased use as the number of meeting rooms decrease.

The Town should continue to pursue State grants, where available, to complete these renovations/improvements.



This photo shows the three existing garage doors that need to be replaced. It also shows a possible area of expansion of the Town Hall, which would be a second story addition over the garage.



The Arts Council occupies a portion of the Town Hall building. There is a need to replace the existing windows and doors in the atrium area.

Town Schools

Darien has seven public schools—five elementary schools; Middlesex Middle School; and Darien High School. In the late 1990s, changes were made to a number of Elementary Schools. That was followed by an addition to Middlesex Middle School a few years later. The Town is currently in the process of constructing a new Darien High School, and the existing high school was demolished in the summer of 2005, with the students attending the new school in early September 2005. Recently, private funds have financed a new multi-purpose turf field adjacent to the new school.

Issues

The Board of Education needs to ensure that schools are adequately sized to meet enrollment demands over the next ten years. Further information on projected enrollment is included in the Demographics Chapter of this Plan.

Improvements Needed

Recently, the Board of Education determined that it is more cost-effective to construct a new Tokeneke Elementary School and demolish the existing school, rather than renovating the existing school. The new school is currently in the design stages, with an expectation to be open by September 2007. Obviously, various approvals will be needed to construct the new school from the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Environmental Protection Commission.



The new Darien High School opened in September 2005.

Police Protection

The Darien Police Department, located at 25 Hecker Avenue, is a two-story brick structure, originally constructed in 1932 to house Police Headquarters and the Circuit Court. The Department presently consists of 51 sworn officers and a staff of seven civilians, including a full time fleet mechanic. The Department handles in excess of 20,000 calls annually, not including the dispatching of all three fire departments and Post 53, which is also done through the Police Communications Center. Demands placed upon Communications officers continue to increase and the need for additional personnel in Communications remains an issue.



The Darien Police Department is located on Hecker Avenue.

Issues

Police Headquarters was extensively renovated and somewhat expanded in 1987. While this renovation was a vast improvement over previous conditions, the Department still has outstanding needs. The rapid development and incorporation of technology into the daily operations, while offering a wide range of benefits, presents an ongoing challenge to present space configurations and utilities infrastructure. These technologies require utilization of space not configured for it. A previous funding request for renovations to the Detective Bureau to address some of these concerns was not funded and was submitted again for consideration in FY2006/2007. Storage of evidence requires dedicated space capable of being secured in an appropriate manner; current evidence storage areas are at or nearing capacity. Present configurations of interior space should be reviewed and altered as needed to maximize efficiency.

Improvements Needed

Female locker facilities, although presently adequate, could become an issue as the Department can reasonably be expected to hire additional female officers in the future. In addition, the current training classroom should be expanded and updated to accommodate current training methods and the extensive use of computer assisted training methods. This training room also serves as the town's Emergency Operations Center and needs to be updated to fulfill that role in the manner expected. The Department's exercise facility, used on a nearly daily basis by various officers, is in need of updating to encourage expanded usage geared toward promoting overall officer fitness.

Indoor and outdoor storage remains a pressing need. Present interior space is fully and intensively utilized. Serious consideration should be given to expanding the present building over the existing garage area and reconfiguring space to accommodate present and future needs. It is also recommended that a suitable storage facility be erected within the fenced in outdoor range area to store found bicycles, seized vehicles, bulk maintenance items such as tires and fluids, traffic signs, as well as the outdoor shooting range supplies currently housed in a small metal shed. The outdoor shooting range, used on a regular basis for firearms qualifications, is in need of rehabilitation to meet present training methods and needs. The cellblock needs to be upgraded to modern standards.

As stated in the 1995 Plan, the adjacent vacant property to the east of Police Headquarters offered the only viable method of expanding beyond the existing property lines. With the recent acquisition of this property by the Darien Library, and plans to build a new library there, this option has been rendered moot. The last remaining alternative to extensive renovation and additions to the present building is the relocation of Police Headquarters to a new site.

Darien Emergency Medical Services

Emergency medical care in Darien is a team effort involving police, ambulance and fire personnel - all working together with the single goal of providing the highest possible level of pre-hospital care for the town's citizens.

When citizens call 911 for a medical emergency they activate a coordinated, tiered level of response. First on scene within 2-3 minutes is a trained medical First Response Darien police officer followed shortly by a Darien EMS--Post 53 Advanced Life Support EMT-Intermediate (EMT-I) in a fly car and then one of the three Post 53 ambulances. The fire department responds when needed, providing additional trained medical response personnel as well as scene protection and extrication expertise, especially at motor vehicle accidents. In potentially life-threatening situations, paramedics are dispatched simultaneously, arriving on scene within minutes of a 911 call.

The core of Darien Emergency Medical Services is the nationally known, award winning young adult organization, Post 53, composed of 50 highly trained Darien High School students who, with their adult Advanced Life Support advisors, deliver free round-the-clock emergency ambulance service to the citizens of Darien. Career paramedics from Stamford Emergency Medical Services (SEMS) provide drug and advanced airway interventions when needed. Paramedics respond to approximately 40% of all emergency ambulance calls in Darien following rigid, hospital-approved dispatch criteria.

Issues

Extensive and continuing training is crucial to the high quality of patient care at every level. Membership in Post 53 is highly competitive with 15 members selected from each high school class. The young adults then receive approximately 150 hours of training to become certified at age 16 as Emergency Medical Technicians. Adult member EMT-Is receive another 80 hours of training and are certified to provide an advanced level of cardiac, airway management and shock treatment. Darien Police are trained and certified as medical First Responders by Post 53 Instructors. Since March 1998 they have been equipped with and trained in the use of the Automated External Defibrillators (AED) which, when applied early in some cases of cardiac arrest, can reverse potentially fatal heart rhythms.

Post 53 is a 100% volunteer organization not supported financially by the Town of Darien or the United Way. Post 53 members earn a portion of their annual operating budget through fundraising events such as the Fall Art Show and the Memorial Day Food Fair. When patients need the services of paramedics, they are billed at a State approved rate for services.

The Darien EMS headquarters is located at Zero Ledge Road at the corner of Noroton Avenue and Interchange 10 entrance to the Turnpike. The original 7,400 square foot facility, built in

1989, was expanded in 2002 by approximately 600 square feet to enlarge the existing first-floor bathrooms, enlarge the two existing “studies” to provide separate sleeping quarters for male and female high school EMT crews, and create a third private room and bathroom for an adult EMT supervisor. The original building and the expansion were paid for by private donations. No further expansion of the building is projected. The building will require normal maintenance and replacement of key components such as air conditioners, furnaces and roofs. Costs for these replacements are expected to be covered by fundraising events (described above) and annual giving by the residents of the town. Other operating expenses continue to increase due to escalating equipment costs, and new requirements established by the Occupational Safety and Health Department and the Connecticut Department of Health Services.

In 2004, the Town of Darien began implementing an enhanced 911-priority medical dispatch system to provide ambulances with additional information about a patient’s condition prior to their arrival on scene and to provide pre-arrival instructions to bystanders at the scene in skills such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation.



The Post 53 building on Ledge Road was added onto in 2002.

Working together as an efficient, highly trained team within the statewide EMS system, Darien Emergency Medical Services responded to 1177 calls in 2003. Exhibit 7-1 shows the breakdown of calls by type

**EXHIBIT 7-1
 DARIEN EMS CALL STATISTICS 1999-2004**

	<u>1999-2000</u>	<u>2000-2001</u>	<u>2001-2002</u>	<u>2002-2003</u>	<u>2003-2004</u>
Medical	616	620	620	620	667
Trauma	556	550	550	550	510
<u>Combination</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	
Total # of Responses	1205	1200	1200	1200	1177

Note: Time frames are based on the July 1-June 30 Fiscal Year.

Source: Town of Darien Annual Reports

Fire Protection

Darien's fire protection is provided by three highly trained, all volunteer staffed fire departments. Located in center of town is Darien (founded in 1895), along the southern section is Noroton (founded in 1896) and western part of Darien is Noroton Heights (founded in 1903). In addition, a Fire Training Facility, used by all three departments, is located on Ledge Road to the rear of the Refuse Disposal Center. The three departments are each administered independently. There also is a nine member Board of Fire Commissioners whose function is to establish policy and coordinate fire protection services. In addition, they are supported to a minor degree by a career staffed Fire Marshal's Office located in Town Hall.

Each volunteer fire company owns the land and building which it occupies and receives an annual appropriation from the Town for equipment maintenance, partial operating expenses and insurance. The equipment is not entirely owned by the Town, as some ownership is by the fire companies themselves.

The fire stations occupied by these departments are all post-war brick structures in sound condition. One floor in each firehouse is used for fire-fighting equipment and the other floor is used for meeting rooms and other accessory functions. All three departments report that the location and size of the respective headquarters sites will be generally adequate for the foreseeable future, with the exception of additional storage areas for equipment, and the desire to build sleeping quarters (as noted below).

Issues

All three fire stations are already limited on space, and some equipment is being housed outside in their respective parking lots. This may result in the need to seek additional storage space for apparatus and equipment. Over the next ten years, there may be a need for additions to one or all of the three fire houses in order to accommodate sleeping quarters for the volunteers.

The fire companies have noted certain impediments to fire emergency response in Town. Speed humps and bumps and road barricades, for instance, were minor distractions in some private roads in years past, and they continue to be a hazard for apparatus and personnel as the humps have been installed even on public roadways recently to attempt to calm traffic. The continuing request from residents for these and other traffic calming devices can and will lead to longer response times. The restricted heights of the railroad underpasses at Raymond Street and Leroy Avenue continue to be barriers to some of the larger equipment, and alternative response routes are used when necessary. The pre-emption system used by the Fire Departments for the traffic signals on the Boston Post Road and the West Avenue-Noroton Avenue intersection has occasional technical problems.

Improvements Needed

Most importantly, the water service provided by the Aquarion Water Company of Connecticut has recently seen some minor improvements to water flows through some of their capital projects. They have worked on some improvement in terms of volume and available pressure in some of the known localized problematic areas. Existing main sizes must be upgraded in various parts of Town and an improved pumping station must be provided at the Chestnut Street facility. This increased pumping capacity is critical to the maintenance of pressure. Increased pipe

diameter is critical in transmitting greater volumes of water. The Water Company is replacing outdated systems and components, and is currently addressing several of these problems.

Other improvements needed in the area of fire protection are: ensuring interoperability with our neighbors in the region (Stamford, New Canaan and Norwalk); and having the three fire departments establish a computer-aided dispatch system with mobile terminals to improve efficiency and response time.

Recognizing the above-mentioned issues and needed improvements, each of the three volunteer departments provides excellent fire protection for the Town. This translates into the best insurance rating for communities served wholly by volunteer departments.



Possibility for adding on to existing Noroton Fire House is an addition over the existing flat roof. There is no basement, and thus, there is a need for storage. An elevator will need to be installed to meet current handicap accessibility requirements.

Darien Library

The current Darien Library is located on the west side of Leroy Avenue between Hale Lane and Old Stone Road. Although this structure had additions constructed in 1974 and 1988, the activity at the Library has proven that the Library has outgrown this location.

Issues

As of this writing, the Library has purchased the property at the corner of Boston Post Road and Hecker Avenue. This property is shown in Exhibit 7-2 on the next page.

Improvements Needed

The needs of the future library should include a room dedicated solely for teens, meeting space appropriate for the community to supplement meeting space which now exists in Town Hall, additional space for quiet study and traditional library pursuits, increased space for technology, full handicapped access, and a design that allows the library to continue its role as a comfortable space which invites the whole community. Parking should be adequate to accommodate both everyday use, as well as have overflow parking nearby for special events such as speakers and programs.

This relocation would then bring up the logical question of the status of the existing Library building, which is very close to downtown Darien. The reuse of this building could be used for providing for the expansion and needs of other current public facilities and services outlined within this Chapter, or other needs, as noted elsewhere within this document.

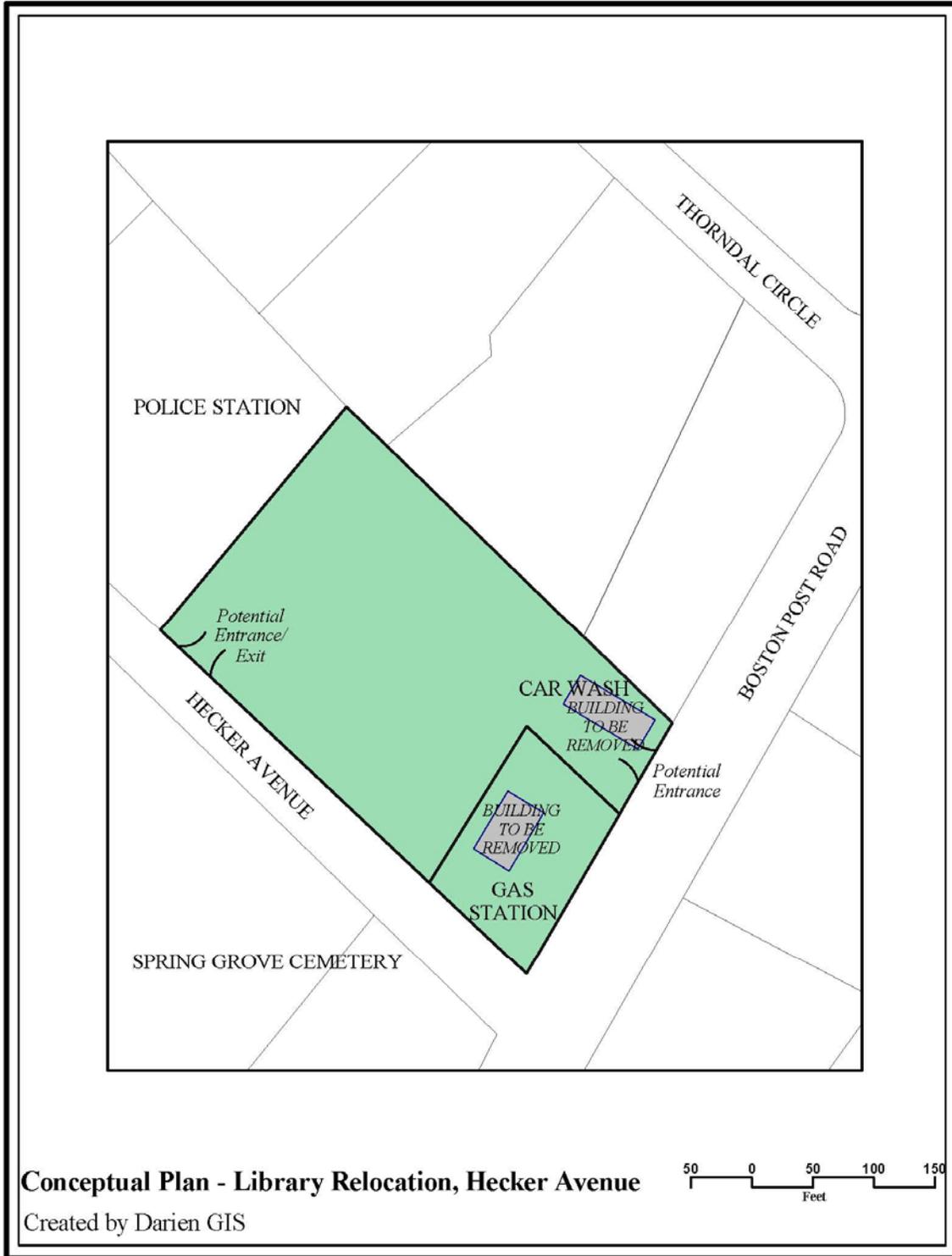


The existing Darien Library on Leroy Avenue.



The site of the new library on Hecker Avenue.

**EXHIBIT 7-2
PROPOSED LOCATION OF
NEW DARIEN LIBRARY**



Teen Center

The Depot is the teen center for Darien High School students and is located in the renovated 100-year old former Noroton Heights Train Station. It opened in 1990 and provides a safe, supervised, drug-free and alcohol-free environment where students can gather, socialize and participate in community activities. The Depot is governed by students and is open five days a week. The Depot was expanded in 1993 by incorporating a caboose into the facility and continues to enjoy strong community support. Safe Rides now bases its operations in The Depot.

Darien Senior Activities Center

For over 20 years, the former Hollow Tree Elementary School property located on Edgerton Street has been serving as the Town's senior activities center. The facilities have undergone substantial renovation to establish a well attended, functional facility.

Issues

Townspeople who are 62 years of age or older use the center for lunchtime dining, entertainment, charitable work, skill classes, and various forms of recreation. The dining facilities alone are oftentimes used at their full capacity of approximately 120 persons. The seniors also use the facilities to undertake contributions to the community such as repairing furniture for Person-to-Person, carrying out major mailings for local charitable agencies and producing items for charitable events. By all measures, the Senior Center has proved to be extremely successful.

An important policy decision facing the Town is whether to maintain this facility at its current location or establish an alternative site.

Issues

Significant repair work needs to be done to the Senior Center. A decision needs to be made as to:

- Whether to repair the building little-by-little;
- Whether to perform substantial renovations all at once;
- Whether to demolish the existing building and construct a new Senior Center—either in generally the same location, or elsewhere within the community.

Improvements Needed

The Senior Center is in need of significant roof repairs. This is regardless of whether the Center is moved to another location, as the roof repairs need to be done within the next year.



The Senior Activities Center is located on Edgerton Street.

Town Garage

The Town Garage facility is currently located on Ledge Road, and houses a variety of equipment and vehicles for Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Board of Education, and miscellaneous vehicles used by Town Hall employees.

Improvements Needed

The existing facility is full, and there is a need to create an empty repair bay, to allow for servicing and repair in-house of vehicles and equipment. The existing program of in-house servicing and repair results in significant costs savings for the community. Because the garage is also used for parking, limited space exists currently for a dedicated repair bay. Leaving vehicles and equipment outdoors rather than indoors subjects them to the weather and possible vandalism, and shortens their life span.



The Town Garage on Ledge Road has a number of bays for repair and for vehicle and equipment storage. It is shared by the Board of Education, Parks and Recreation Department, and the Public Works/Sewer Services Department.

Sewer Services

Over 70% of the Town of Darien is served by sanitary sewer system. Recent sewer extensions have occurred in one of two manners: 1) through the Sewer Commission's initiative; and 2) through private developers. As shown in Exhibit 7-3, below, recent Sewer Commission initiated extensions have included Tower Drive, Peach Hill Road, Ring's End Road and Harbor Road; Long Neck Point Road, Pear Tree Point Road, and Crane Road. Although Great Island and Coon Point Road received approval for sewer extensions, those were later removed from the plans. Developer's extensions have occurred on Mansfield Avenue, Boston Post Road, West Avenue, Andrews Drive, off of Hollow Tree Ridge Road (for the Avalon Darien project), Bishop's Gate, and along Hanson Road.

EXHIBIT 7-3 TOWN SANITARY SEWER EXTENSIONS SINCE 1996

YEAR	LOCATION
1996	Raymond Street, Tulip Tree Lane
1997	Circle Road
1998	Nolen Lane
1999	Fairmead Road, Swift's Lane, Nickerson Lane
2000	Pratt Island, Nash Island, Tower Drive, Tower Lane
2001	Peach Hill Road
2002	Tower Drive
2003	Ring's End Road, Harbor Road
2004	Long Neck Point Road, Pear Tree Point Road, Crane Road
2005	Coon Point Road, Great Island Road, Hanson Road

The existing pump station near the Noroton River on the edge of the Avalon Darien property should be formally abandoned, and the Town should consider selling or giving away the property to be used for green space or landscaping purposes. It now serves no useful purpose.

At this time, the Sewer Commission is considering sewer extensions to serve Five Mile River Road, Brushy Hill Road and Andrews Drive, St. Nicholas Road, and the Goodwives River Road area. The Sewer Commission should establish a formal policy on the criteria for approving sewer extensions including where developer's extensions should be allowed to occur.

The Sewer Commission is currently undertaking a capacity study of Stony Brook pump station which could lead to a new force main or new pumps in that vicinity. It should be determined whether existing capacity is adequate to handle additional proposed flow. Improvements have been made at a number of the sewer pump stations within Town. These include new paint, new doors, new windows, and safety and emergency lighting. Over the next ten years, there will need to be some updating at a few of the pump stations, and the Nearwater Lane and Stony Brook pump stations can be enhanced through new landscaping/shrubbery.

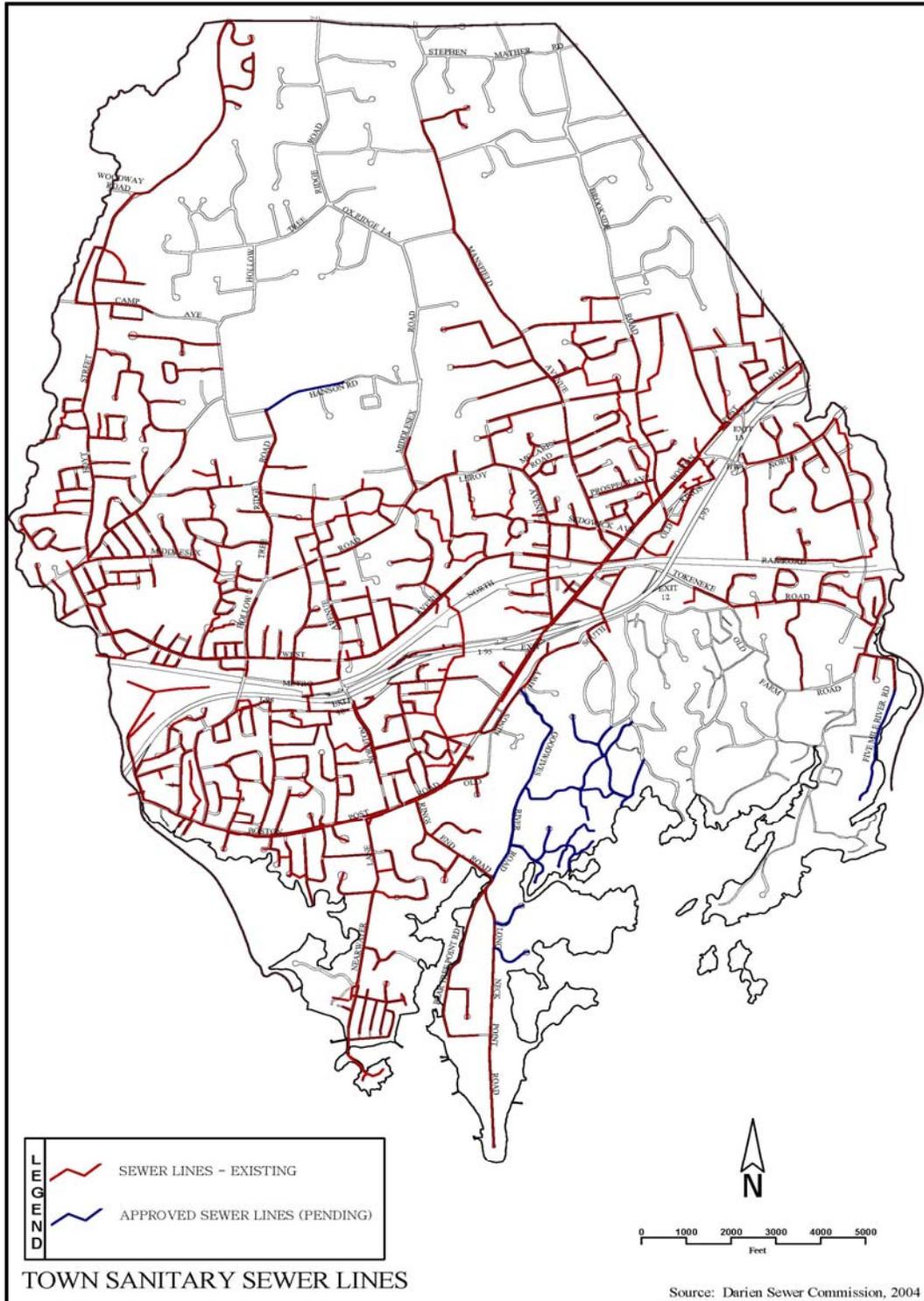
The location of existing sanitary sewer lines is shown in Exhibit 7-4, and a map showing sewer properties within Town is shown in Exhibit 7-5 on page A7-17. These maps reflect that the only remaining areas not served by the Town's sanitary sewer system are north Darien, Tokeneke, Delafield Island, and Goodwives River Road.

Water Supply

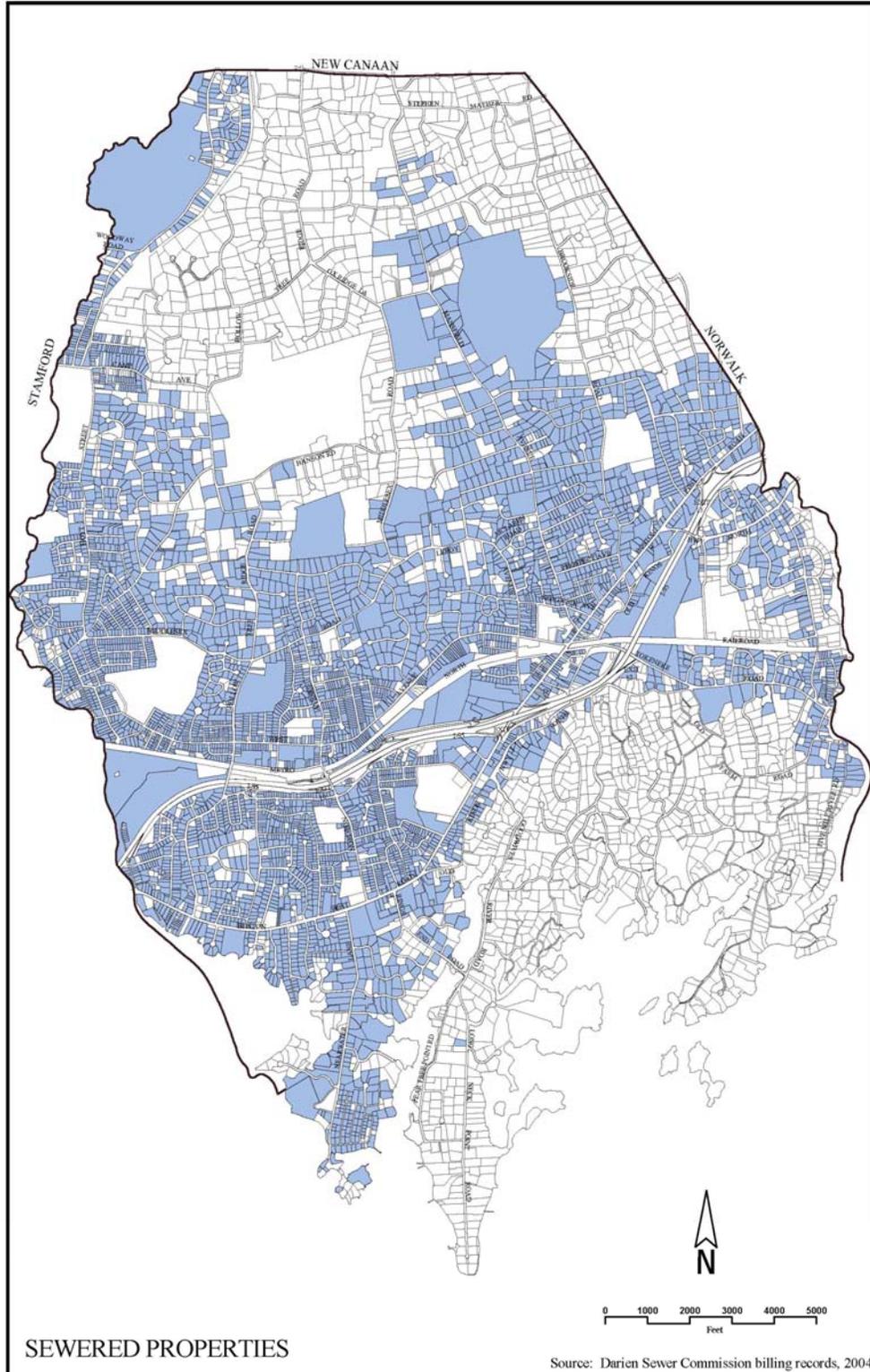
According to Aquarion, total gallons used per customer have been rising. However, Aquarion estimates that the overall demand for water in Darien will only grow about 1 percent per year over the next 20 years. According to Aquarion, about 10 percent of Darien's residents obtain their drinking water from private wells tapping into various aquifers in Darien.

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds (VOC) were detected in the Rewak Well with the primary source stemming from Stamford industrial land uses across the Noroton River. An air stripper was installed that works continuously to remove them and the problem is being corrected. Currently, sodium levels in the well are above acceptable levels (above 28 parts per million). However, since these levels do not pose a serious public health threat according to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, remediation efforts are not warranted. Residents are notified by the water company about the sodium levels for those people sensitive sodium intake (i.e. high blood pressure patients). According to Aquarion, the cause of the sodium is undetermined.

**EXHIBIT 7-4
SEWER LINES
AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2004**



**EXHIBIT 7-5
PROPERTIES SERVED BY PUBLIC SEWER
AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2004**



Source: Darien Sewer Commission billing records, 2004