



# POSSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES FOR DARIEN

## Overview

This booklet has been prepared *to help guide discussion* of possible “infrastructure” strategies for the 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Darien, Connecticut.

The term “infrastructure” refers to services and facilities Darien might want to support conservation and development strategies and enhance the overall quality of life in the community. Infrastructure issues might include the following:

- Community facilities and services
- Transportation (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, etc.)
- Utility infrastructure

The following pages suggest strategies, policies and tasks to be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). Some of the strategies come from the 2006 POCD, some have been recommended by other boards and commissions in Darien and others have been suggested based on research and analysis conducted as part of this planning process.

*“Strategic investment in infrastructure produces a foundation for long-term growth.”*

**Roger McNamee**  
American Businessman

**PZC members should review this information and evaluate whether the strategy, policies, and tasks might be appropriate for the POCD.**

Community Facilities



Transportation



Utilities





# COMMUNITY FACILITIES

*Community facilities provide for desired services and enhance the quality of life in the community*

## Overview

Community facilities support functions such as education, public works, public safety, and recreation, all of which are important to maintaining the character and quality of life in Darien.

The Plan of Conservation and Development does not get involved in the day-to-day operations of individual departments. Rather, the Plan seeks to identify potential community facility needs (buildings and sites) so that they can be anticipated and planned for. The Plan also serves as a useful guide for referrals of proposed municipal improvements (as required by CGS Section 8-24) for review by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

## Address Community Facility Needs

GENERAL GOVERNMENT	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Hall</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(investigate renovation / expansion options)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Hall moved into the former Darien High School building in the 1980s</li> <li>Public spaces tend to be generously sized but department spaces tend to be cramped / inefficient</li> <li>Lack of storage / meeting rooms can be an issue</li> <li>Interest in improving safety and access amenities</li> </ul>

Town Hall



Town Hall Aerial



SAFETY / EMERGENCY SERVICES	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police Department</li> <li>Animal Control</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facility is expected to be adequate to the year 2025</li> <li>Parking is the biggest challenge on site</li> <li>Animal shelter appears adequate</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire Department</li> </ul>  <p><i>(maintaining volunteer staffing)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three fire stations staffed with volunteer personnel</li> <li>Have good array of equipment to handle local needs</li> <li>Use mutual aid / coordination</li> <li>Public water supply available to many areas although some areas have poor flow</li> <li>Equipment storage can be an issue</li> <li>Maintaining adequate volunteer staffing has been an issue in other communities</li> <li>Fire response can be challenged by few routes over/under railroad / I-95</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Medical</li> <li>Medical Transport</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency response provided by police / Post 53 / fire department /</li> <li>Post 53 staffed by high school students.</li> <li>Paramedic from Stamford, if needed</li> <li>Facilities adequate for community needs</li> </ul>

**Legend**

-  Generally expected to be adequate for community needs to 2025
-  May have some issues to consider
-  Attention appears to be needed to meet community needs to 2025
-  Not expected to be adequate for community needs to 2025

**Police Department**



**Darien Fire Department**



**Noroton Fire Department**



**Noroton Heights Fire Department**



EDUCATION FACILITIES	Assessment
<p><b>Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darien High School</li> <li>• Middlesex Middle School</li> <li>• Hindley Elementary</li> <li>• Holmes Elementary</li> <li>• Ox Ridge Elementary</li> <li>• Royle Elementary</li> <li>• Tokeneke Elementary</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(uncertain projections / use of portable classrooms )</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darien public schools are consistently ranked among the best public schools in Connecticut</li> <li>• Darien residents are firmly committed to neighborhood schools and often purchase based on districts</li> <li>• Some elementary schools have been using portable classrooms for many years</li> <li>• Enrollments have been increasing</li> <li>• BOE has three enrollment projections:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In-house</li> <li>○ NE School Development Council</li> <li>○ Milone and MacBroom</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Projections hinge on in-migration patterns</li> <li>• BOE using the highest projections (in-house) while other projections suggest a decline in enrollments</li> </ul>

**Darien High School**



**(High School Lane)**



**Middlesex Middle School**



**(Hollow Tree Ridge Road)**



**Hindley Elementary School**



**(Nearwater Lane)**



Holmes Elementary School



(Hoyt Street)



Ox Ridge Elementary School



(Upper Part Of Mansfield Avenue)



Royle Elementary School



(Lower Part Of Mansfield Avenue)



Tokeneke Elementary School



(Old Farm Road)



**Legend**



Generally expected to be adequate for community needs to 2025



May have some issues to consider



Attention appears to be needed to meet community needs to 2025



Not expected to be adequate for community needs to 2025

Darien Community Facilities

**GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

1. Town Hall

**EDUCATION FACILITIES**

2. Darien High School
3. Middlesex Middle School
4. Hindley Elementary School
5. Holmes Elementary School
6. Ox Ridge Elementary School
7. Royle Elementary School
8. Tokeneke Elementary School

**RECREATION FACILITIES**

9. Weed Beach
10. Pear Tree Beach
11. McGuane Park
12. Baker Park
13. Holahan Fields (Town Hall)
14. Cherry Lawn Park
15. Tilley Pond Park
16. Stony Brook Park
17. Selleck's Woods Nature Preserve
18. Woodland Park Nature Preserve
19. Frate Park
20. Diller Property
21. Cherry Street ROW

**SAFETY / EMERGENCY SERVICES**

22. Police Station / Animal Shelter
23. Darien Fire Department
24. Noroton Fire Department
25. Noroton Heights Fire Department
26. Post 53 EMS/ Ambulance

**PUBLIC WORKS**

27. Public Works Garage / Recycling / Refuse Center

**HOUSING AUTHORITY**

28. Old Town Hall Houses (30 units)
29. The Heights at Darien (106 units)
30. West Avenue Houses (2 units)

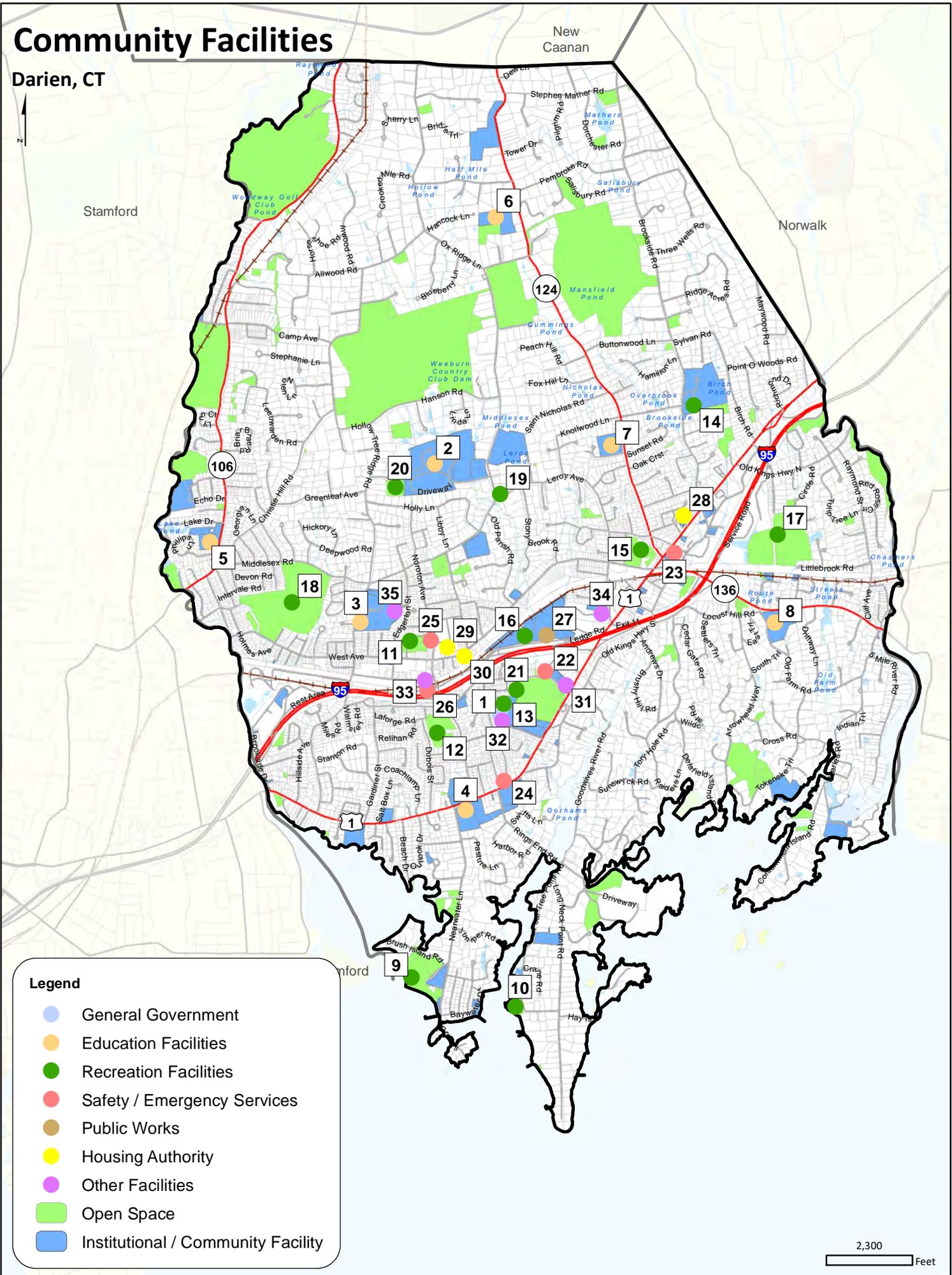
**OTHER FACILITIES**

31. Darien Library
32. Mather Senior Center (Town Hall)
33. Depot Teen Center
34. BOE Offices
35. Former Senior Center

Note- Municipally owned or operated parking facilities are addressed in the Transportation section of the POCD.

# Community Facilities

Darien, CT



## Legend

- General Government
- Education Facilities
- Recreation Facilities
- Safety / Emergency Services
- Public Works
- Housing Authority
- Other Facilities
- Open Space
- Institutional / Community Facility

2,300

Feet

**Private Facilities**

Darien also has a number of private recreation facilities which help meet community needs and desires:

- Darien Country Club
- Wee Burn Country Club
- Woodway Country Club
- YMCA
- Ox Ridge Hunt Club
- Middlesex Club
- Noroton Yacht Club
- Darien Boat Club
- Tokeneke Club

RECREATION	Assessment
<p><b>Beaches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pear Tree Point</li> <li>• Weed Beach</li> </ul> <p><b>Active Outdoor Recreation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baker Park</li> <li>• Cherry Lawn Park (community gardens)</li> <li>• Holahan Fields</li> <li>• McGuane Park</li> </ul> <p><b>Passive Outdoor Recreation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frate Park</li> <li>• Selleck’s Woods</li> <li>• Stony Brook Park</li> <li>• Tilley Pond Park</li> <li>• Woodland Park</li> </ul> <p><b>Indoor Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town / School Buildings</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cherry Street Property</li> <li>• Diller Property</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <p><i>(updated Master Plan needed)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The two beaches are considered to be the “jewels” of the Darien park/recreation programs</li> <li>• Community participation in recreational activities is high so demand for facilities is high</li> <li>• Since Darien is mostly built out, the challenge will be to make the most effective use of the active outdoor recreation facilities the Town currently has:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Resting turf fields (challenging due to use)</li> <li>○ Artificial turf to withstand use / extend seasons</li> <li>○ Lighting to extend daily use / extend seasons</li> <li>○ Irrigation to withstand use</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Would like to acquire land, especially if adjacent to existing facilities</li> <li>• Park And Recreation Master Plan has not been updated since 1996</li> <li>• Master Plan should be updated</li> <li>• Interest has been expressed in a community pool facility (indoor or outdoor,</li> </ul>

**Weed Beach**



**McGuane Park**



**Cherry Lawn Park**



**Woodland Park Nature Preserve**



**Legend**

PUBLIC WORKS	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Works Garage</li> <li>Recycling / Refuse Center</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p> <p><i>(expand public works garage)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site used by public works, schools, parks</li> <li>Public works garage is inadequate for repair and storage of equipment</li> <li>Addition is being planned</li> <li>On site storage of materials is also challenging</li> <li>Recycling/refuse operations appear to work well</li> <li>The transfer station appears adequate for community needs</li> </ul>

- Generally expected to be adequate for community needs to 2025
- May have some issues to consider
- Attention appears to be needed to meet community needs to 2025
- Not expected to be adequate for community needs to 2025

**Public Works Garage**



**Public Works Facility Aerial**



HOUSING AUTHORITY	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Old Town Hall Houses</li> <li>The Heights at Darien</li> <li>West Avenue Houses</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">●</p> <p><i>(demand expected to increase due to aging population)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently have 138 units                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 units at Old Town Hall Houses</li> <li>106 units at The Heights at Darien</li> <li>2 units on West Avenue</li> </ul> </li> <li>Heights was recently expanded</li> <li>DHA intends to redevelop Old Town Hall site</li> <li>Waiting lists are closed</li> <li>There may be demand for additional units based on projected growth of senior population</li> </ul>

**Old Town Hall Houses**



**The Heights At Darien**



OTHER FACILITIES	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darien Library</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p><i>(seek to expand parking options)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New facility opened in 2009</li> <li>Ranked as one of the top 10 public libraries in the country for its size</li> <li>Parking area can be inadequate due to heavy use</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mather Senior Center</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facility opened in 2014</li> <li>Helps Darien residents, age 60 and over, fulfill their social, physical, emotional and intellectual needs</li> <li>Desire has been expressed for parking more convenient to the entrance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depot Teen Center</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former train station building repurposed into a teen center</li> <li>Activities programmed by a student governing board</li> <li>Includes a “Safe Rides” service</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former Senior Center</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p><i>(consider how to repurpose the site)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built as an elementary school</li> <li>Used as a Senior Center from 1980s to 2014</li> <li>Building could/should be demolished</li> <li>Site could/should be retained for possible future school site</li> </ul>

**Darien Library**



**Mather Senior Center**



**Depot Teen Center**



**Former Senior Center**



Overall, it appears that Darien is doing a good job identifying and addressing community facility needs. In the future, it may be beneficial for Darien to investigate ways to regionalize some services if it will help meet local needs affordably.

**Legend**



Generally expected to be adequate for community needs to 2025



May have some issues to consider



Attention appears to be needed to meet community needs to 2025



Not expected to be adequate for community needs to 2025

Address Community Facility Needs		
Possible Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Maintain existing community facilities.		
2. Continue to ensure that community facility needs are met by considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upgrading or renovating existing buildings;</li> <li>• adding on to existing buildings; and/or</li> <li>• constructing new buildings, where appropriate.</li> </ul>		
3. When land becomes available adjacent to existing facilities, evaluate the purchase of that property as quickly as possible in order to be able to provide for future expansion of existing facilities, if or when needed.		
4. Continue to monitor school enrollments and dynamics.		
5. Continue to encourage volunteer participation, especially for emergency services.		
6. Anticipate a future increase in demand for elderly housing units based on projected growth of senior population.		
7. Upgrade existing elementary schools (and eliminate portable classrooms) as opportunities present themselves.		
Possible Initial Tasks		
8. Expand the highway garage.		
9. Update the Park and Recreation Master Plan including investigating community support for a swimming pool.		
10. Analyze the space needs at Town Hall in order to evaluate options for possible future renovation / expansion.		
11. Investigate parking options for the library.		



# TRANSPORTATION

## Overview

The road system in a community like Darien is functionally important to the day-to-day life of community residents, visitors, and businesses as well as being an important component of its character and self-image. .

This section of the Plan of Conservation and Development looks at the overall configuration of the vehicular transportation network and other transportation modes (pedestrian, bicycle, bus, rail, etc.).

Roadways



Roadways



Pedestrians



Bicycle



## Address Overall Circulation

For the most part, Darien has a good overall system of major roads providing access to and between all parts of the community. While historical development patterns and topographical constraints result in some situations where these roadways are not optimally configured, the basic circulation needs of the community are met.

The main challenge to overall circulation is the limited number of crossings over the railroad tracks and I-95 and limited functionality of some of these crossings:

### Legend



Crossing functions well



Crossing has some functional issues (height, width, flooding, etc.)



Crossing does not provide an overall circulation function

Note: Several of these recommendations have been in Darien Town Plans since at least 1982.

Crossing Location	Railroad Crossing	I-95 Crossing
1. <b>Brookside Drive</b> – a <u>dead-end</u> street with I-95 underpass (at the Stamford Line) providing emergency access to the I-95 rest area		 Underpass
2. <b>Hollow Tree Ridge Road</b> – high traffic <u>volume</u> with <u>narrow</u> overpass of railroad tracks in close proximity to I-95 overpass, driveway to Avalon development, access to station parking, and Heights Road	 Overpass	 Overpass
3. <b>Noroton Avenue</b> – high traffic <u>volume</u> with <u>narrow</u> of railroad tracks and I-95 in close proximity to Ledge Road, Heights Road, and access to station parking and Post 53 ambulance station	 Overpass	 Overpass
4. <b>Leroy Avenue</b> – Opening under railroad overpass is <u>narrow</u> and very <u>low clearance</u> with multiple turning movements	 Underpass	
5. <b>Boston Post Road</b> – Route 1 travels beneath I-95 overpass.		 Underpass
6. <b>Boston Post Road</b> – Route 1 underpass dips below railroad with <u>low clearance</u> and cannot accommodate some long vehicles. <u>Floods</u> in storm events. High <u>volume</u> with multiple <u>turning</u> movements	 Underpass	
7. <b>Old Kings Highway South</b> – Roadway travels beneath I-95 overpass.		 Underpass
8. <b>Tokeneke Road</b> – Roadway travels beneath I-95 overpass.		 Underpass
9. <b>I-95</b> – Interstate 95 crosses over railroad tracks.	 Overpass	
10. <b>Old Kings Highway North</b> – Roadway travels over I-95.		 Overpass
11. <b>Raymond Street / Cliff Avenue</b> – Opening under railroad overpass is <u>narrow</u> with <u>low clearance</u>	 Underpass	

**Brookside Drive**



**Hollow Tree Ridge Road**



**Noroton Avenue**



**Leroy Avenue**



**Route 1 @ I-95**



**Route 1 @ Railroad**



**Old Kings Highway South**



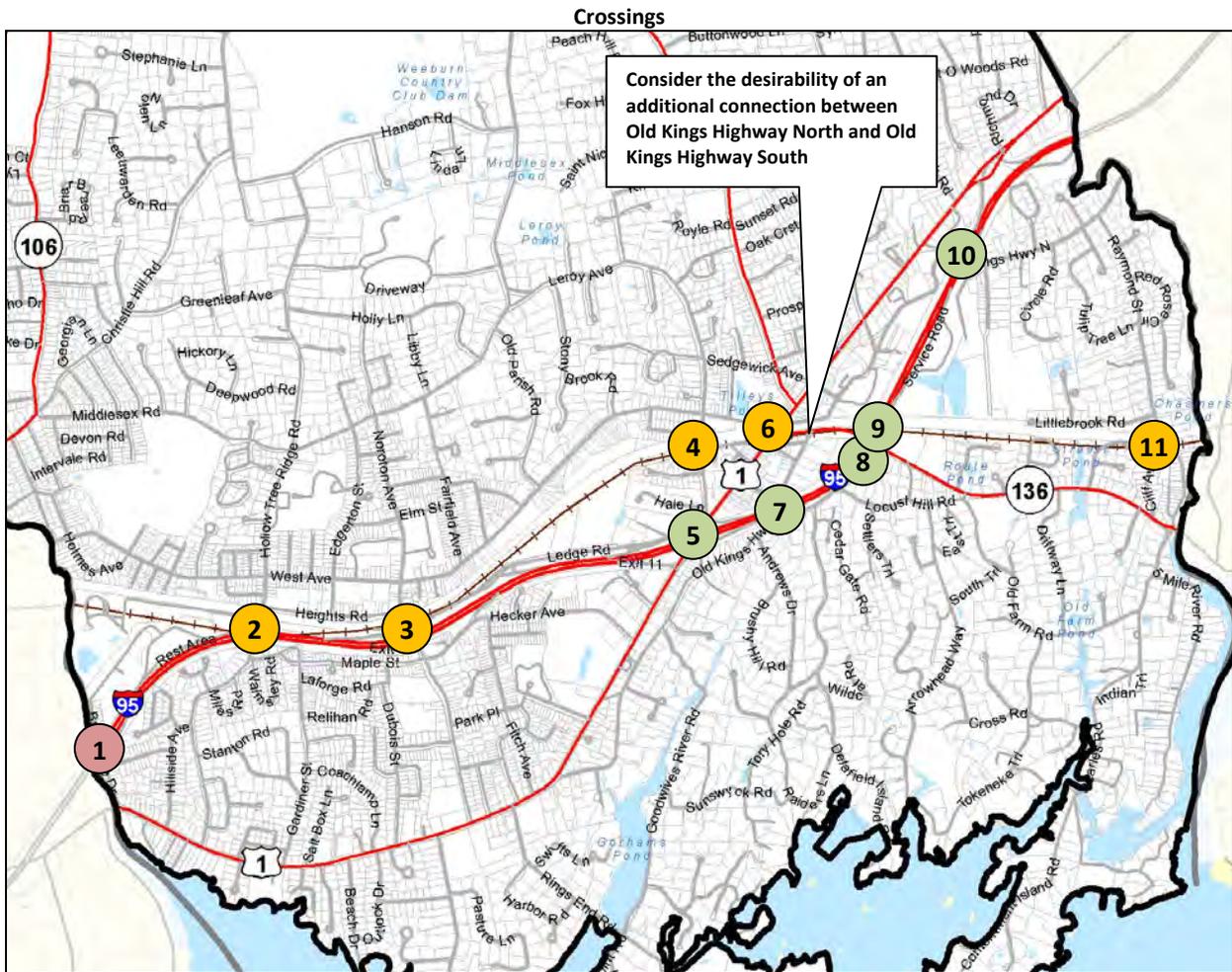
**Tokeneke Road / I-95**



Old Kings Highway North



Raymond Street / Cliff Avenue



**Route 1 Study**



In 2013, the regional planning agency (SWRPA at that time) completed a Route 1 Corridor Study in Darien. The work was conducted by Clough Harbour and Associates.

The study contains recommendations that address identified issues in the study area and that provide for transportation system enhancements and economic growth opportunities.

The most significant constraints occur at:

- Hollow Tree Ridge Road (#2),
- Noroton Avenue (#3),
- Leroy Avenue (#4),
- Route 1 at the railroad overpass (#6), and
- Raymond Street (#11).

Since these locations involve coordination with regional, state, federal, and quasi-public agencies on some of the busiest travel corridors in the country, it will likely be challenging to have improvements made on a timely basis. Still, opportunities to remove the constraints at these locations should be pursued since this affects overall circulation in the community and such things as emergency access (police, fire, ambulance).

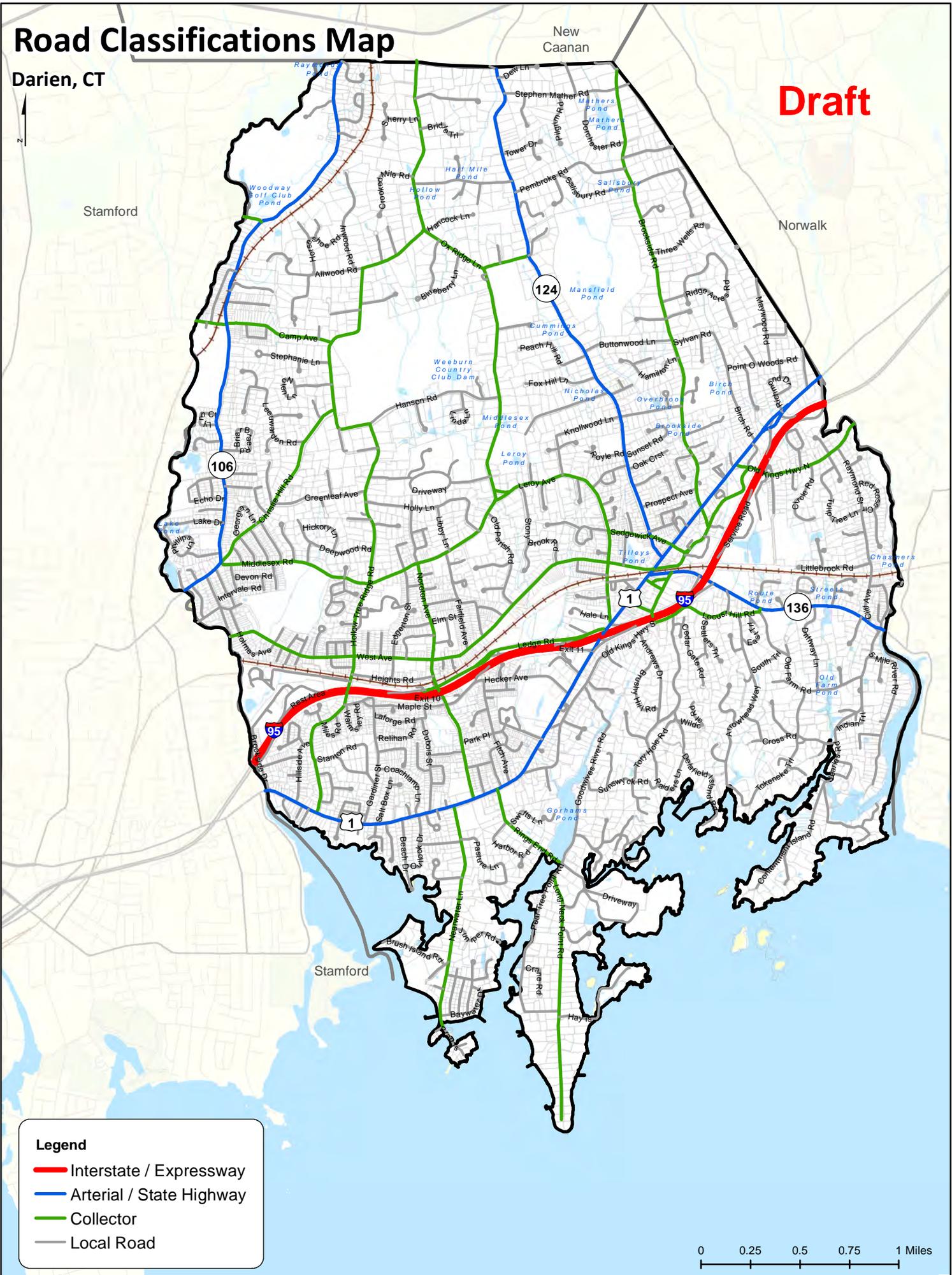
The only location where a new roadway crossing *might* be possible (and beneficial) would be to connect Old Kings Highway North and Old Kings Highway South under the railroad tracks in Downtown.

Address Overall Circulation		
Possible Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Work with CT-DOT, Metro-North Railroad, and WCCOG to address impediments / constraints at I-95 crossings and railroad crossings.		
2. Work with CT-DOT and WCCOG to implement the transportation recommendations of the Route 1 Study as opportunities present themselves.		
3. Continue the potential benefits of an additional roadway crossing in the downtown area by connecting Old Kings Highway North and Old Kings Highway South with a new tunnel under the railroad tracks.		
Possible Initial Tasks		
4. Initiate programs to improve overall circulation in the community and enhance emergency service response.		

# Road Classifications Map

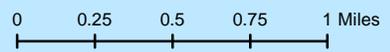
Darien, CT

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### Legend

- Interstate / Expressway
- Arterial / State Highway
- Collector
- Local Road



**Pavement Management**

Pavement management is an approach to maintaining a roadway system (pavement quality) as efficiently and economically as possible.

Since the life cycle of pavement can be evaluated and projected, maintenance and repair can be scheduled at the most appropriate times. In addition, the overall quality of the roadway system can be monitored over time.

Darien uses “pavement management” as an integral part of its annual Street Improvement Program.

**Address Other Vehicular Transportation Issues**

Other major vehicular transportation issues in the future are likely to include:

- Balancing traffic capacity (especially along arterial and collector roadways) with maintaining community character as roadway improvements are undertaken
- Addressing locations where unsafe or hazardous conditions may arise
- Reducing speeding and introducing “traffic calming”, where appropriate
- Maintaining existing Town roads in terms of pavement quality
- Utilizing “access management” strategies on Routes 1 to minimize curb cuts and maximize interconnections between properties, especially in business areas

<b>Address Other Vehicular Transportation Issues</b>		
<b>Possible Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
1. Move traffic as efficiently as possible, especially along arterial and collector roads while balancing traffic capacity with maintaining community character.		
2. Continue to work with WCCOG and CT-DOT to address locations on State highways where unsafe or hazardous conditions exist.		
3. Continue to address locations on local roads where unsafe or hazardous conditions may arise (including sight lines).		
4. Utilize “access management” strategies to minimize curb cuts and maximize interconnections between properties, especially in business areas.		
5. Continue to maintain existing Town roads in terms of pavement quality (pavement management).		
6. Reduce speeding and consider “traffic calming”, where appropriate.		
<b>Possible Initial Tasks</b>		
7. Initiate programs to address other vehicular transportation issues.		

### Possible Traffic Calming Techniques - Education



**Neighborhood Meetings / Newsletters** - A neighborhood meeting can raise awareness of the issue and involve residents in identifying possible approaches. A newsletter can share information about safety concerns, information on traffic speed and volume, and proposed responses. In addition, traffic and pedestrian safety basics can be covered.



**Radar Speed Sign** - These signs, which may be portable, use radar to provide motorists with an electronic display, alerting them if they are exceeding acceptable speeds increases driver awareness and motivates people to alter their behavior.



**Signage** – Traffic signage, if warranted, can inform drivers of school zones, pedestrian activity, school crossings, and bike routes. Installation of stop signs for speed control or unreasonably low speed limits is not recommended.

### Possible Traffic Calming Techniques - Enforcement



**Speed Enforcement** – Enforcement of speed limits and other traffic laws in neighborhoods can help slow traffic and help police learn when and where to focus their traffic calming efforts.

### Possible Traffic Calming Techniques - Engineering



**Narrowing Travel Lanes** - Wide travel lanes encourage faster travel speeds. Narrowing the travel lane through pavement markings, landscaping, or curbing can deter traffic whose destination is not in the neighborhood, slow traffic speed, and provide space for pedestrians and cyclists. Permanent constriction may be an issue for snow plowing and emergency response. Temporary constriction can be moved around as necessary.



**Textured/Colored Pavement** – Changing the texture / color of pavement for even a small area (or another type of “gateway” feature) can send a visual cue that a driver has entered a traffic-calmed area.



**Mini-Roundabouts** - A mini-roundabout is a street intersection feature which requires vehicles to slow down and navigate around the island in an intersection and yield to vehicles already in the roundabout.



**Speed Bump / Hump** – Temporary or permanent raised sections of roadway which can deter speeding and cut-through traffic. However, this can also create issues for snow plowing and emergency response.



**Road Closure** – A partial closure (diverter) or a full closure should only be used as measures of last resort and only considered if other less restrictive physical measures have failed.

**Major Parking Facilities**

**Town Owned Lot**

1. Leroy Avenue West
2. Leroy Avenue East
3. Squab Lane
4. Grove Street
5. Tilley Lot
6. Center Street South
7. Center Street North
8. Tokeneke Road
9. Mechanic Street

**State Lot / Town Run**

10. Darien Station - North
11. Darien Station - South
12. Noroton Heights Station – North
13. Noroton Heights Station – South

**Private Parking Lots**

14. Koon’s Lot
15. Lundberg Lot

**On-Street (not on map)**

- Boston Post Road north
- Boston Post Road south
- Corbin Drive
- Center Street
- Old Kings Hwy South
- West Avenue
- Tokeneke Road
- Mechanic Street
- Brook Street
- Day Street
- Grove Street

**Manage Parking**

Darien maintains several surface parking lots (see sidebar) and these are a key part of the overall community. On-street parking is generally limited to certain areas in Downtown, Noroton Heights, and Noroton. In other locations, parking is provided on private property.

**Downtown Parking** - In the downtown area, a recent parking study found 205 on-street spaces and 451 off-street spaces (656 total public spaces).

The parking spaces are posted for different types of parking (15-minutes, 1-hour, 2-hour, daily permit, etc.) to strike a balance between shoppers, visitors, employees, and commuters. The general approach has been to designate on-street and off-street spaces closest to retail establishments for short durations with longer durations in less convenient locations. As the parking dynamics of downtown have changed over time, the type of parking in certain areas has changed. For example, the Grove Street parking lot was recently changed to favor shoppers over commuters. These approaches have served the downtown area well and should be continued (on-street parking, shared parking, shorter duration in more convenient areas, rebalancing parking allocations based on demand, etc.).

**On Street Parking**



**Off-Street Parking**



**Surface Parking**



**Parking Structure (Walnut Creek, CA)**



Darien should consider where and how to provide for well-designed parking structures to help address the future parking needs. As downtown activity increases and redevelopment occurs (including residential units), it may not be possible to accommodate the amount of desired parking with surface lots.

Some communities have been very successful at integrating parking structures into their communities by placing “liner buildings” in front of them or devoting the street level façade of the parking structure to active uses such as restaurants and retail shops. Other communities have established attractive parking structures near train stations or off main streets. Darien could consider doing the same.

### Parking Discussion

Strategies related to parking will also be discussed in a subsequent booklet on Downtown and Noroton Heights.

One issue for discussion might include an appropriate mixed use parking standard related to gross floor area regardless of use.

This will include removing or revising the perpendicular parking spaces accessed from Route 1 near Corbin Drive and from Heights Road.

These spaces create safety and operational hazards for those traveling on the public street, including pedestrians,

**Downtown Parking (including Darien Station)**



**Noroton Heights Parking**



**Possible Parking Ratios**

The Downtown Parking Study suggests the following parking ratios may be appropriate in certain mixed-use downtown areas:

Use	Spaces
• Multi-family residential	1 space / unit
• Office	2 spaces / 1,000 SF
• Retail	3 spaces / 1,000 SF
• Restaurant	6 spaces / 1,000 SF

In addition, the report suggests that off-setting peaks associated with different uses may allow a 30% reduction in actual parking use as opposed to adding the peaks together.

**Noroton Heights** - While Noroton Heights has public parking lots for the train station, private development is supported primarily by off-street parking facilities. This pattern emerged when the business areas along Heights Road were established in the 1950s when the original Noroton Heights village area was removed by the construction of I-95.

**Parking Studies**

Two parking studies have been undertaken for Darien since the 2006 POCD:

- 2007 Parking Study
- 2015 Downtown Parking Study

2007 Parking Study - The 2007 Parking Study was conducted for the Planning and Zoning Commission by Fitzgerald-Halliday Inc. Recommendations from that Study included:

- Identifying target locations for public parking facilities in the downtown area (including parking structures),
- Consolidating / updating parking standards in the Zoning Regulations,
- Add criteria and standards for parking waivers and reductions contained in the Zoning Regulations,
- Add options for meeting the parking requirements in the downtown area through a Special Permit process, and
- Provide clear directions for developers to meet Darien’s parking objectives (such as providing on-street parking spaces in the downtown), and
- Create a single responsibility for oversight / planning of parking.

Downtown Parking Study - The 2015 Downtown Parking Study was undertaken for the Parking Authority (Board of Selectmen) by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates. The first part of the study evaluated existing conditions (supply, management, demand/utilization, zoning requirements, and stakeholder input). Then, the study looked at projected conditions and opportunities.

Some of the key findings and recommendations *are expected to be* as follows:

- Modify the Zoning Regulations to consider using lower parking requirements due to off-setting peaks in the downtown,
- Modify the Zoning Regulations to consider the off-setting peaks of different parking users,
- Continue to expand the parking supply over time (on-street, public off-street, private developments),
- Consider strategies to provide for short-term availability of coveted spaces,
- Explore way-finding and signage to direct people to parking areas,
- Improve pedestrian, bike, and transit options, and
- Explore ways to reduce parking needs.

These recommendations were consistent with recommendations from the “Action Plan for Revitalization of Downtown” and the “Route 1 Corridor Study.”

Manage Parking		
Possible Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to address parking issues within the Downtown and at Noroton Heights, including the train stations.		
2. Continue to encourage or require on-street parking in the downtown.		
3. Continue to designate spaces closer to retail areas for shorter duration parking (and vice versa) in the downtown.		
4. Continue to rebalance the parking spaces for shoppers, visitors, employees, and commuters, as necessary in the downtown.		
5. Implement the recommendations from the 2007 Parking Study including consolidating / updating parking standards in the Zoning Regulations.		
6. Implement the recommendations from the 2015 Downtown Parking Study, including parking ratios in the downtown area and offsetting peaks.		
7. Initiate discussions about where and how to provide for future, well-designed parking structures in the downtown.		
Possible Initial Tasks		
8. Create a single responsibility for oversight / planning of parking.		
9. Develop a strategic parking supply plan.		
10. Explore way-finding and signage to direct people to parking areas.		

**Parking Dimensions**

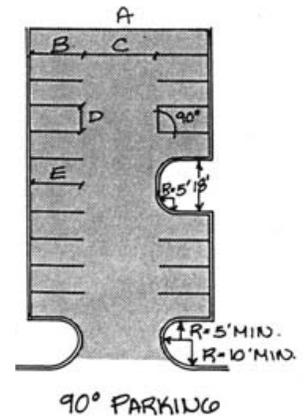
Most communities have adopted a parking stall requirement of 9 feet wide by 18 feet long with a 24-foot wide aisle.

Darien has a parking stall requirement of 9 feet wide by 20 feet long with a 24-foot wide aisle.

While the 2' difference (18 square feet) may not sound like much, it adds up considerably in a parking lot or a parking structure.

When Darien residents visit other communities, they likely park in 9x18 spaces.

A. Width of double parking bay	60 ft.
B. Depth of bay	18 ft.
C. Aisle width	24 ft.*
D. Width of space	9 ft.
E. Depth of space	18 ft.



Center Street North (Public)



Lot Next To Leroy Avenue (Private)



**“Complete Streets”**

For many years, roadways had been treated as the exclusive area for vehicles. This “singular” approach is now changing and communities around the country are seeking to establish “complete streets” which provide for a wider range of transportation modes including walking, cycling, transit, and other modes.

As stated by the National Complete Streets Coalition, “complete streets” are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

**Improve Pedestrian Options**

There is growing interest in walking and pedestrianism in Darien and this interest has accelerated in recent years. The Town has established a Pedestrian Infrastructure Advisory Committee to promote pedestrian activity that is safe, convenient, and attractive. These efforts should continue.

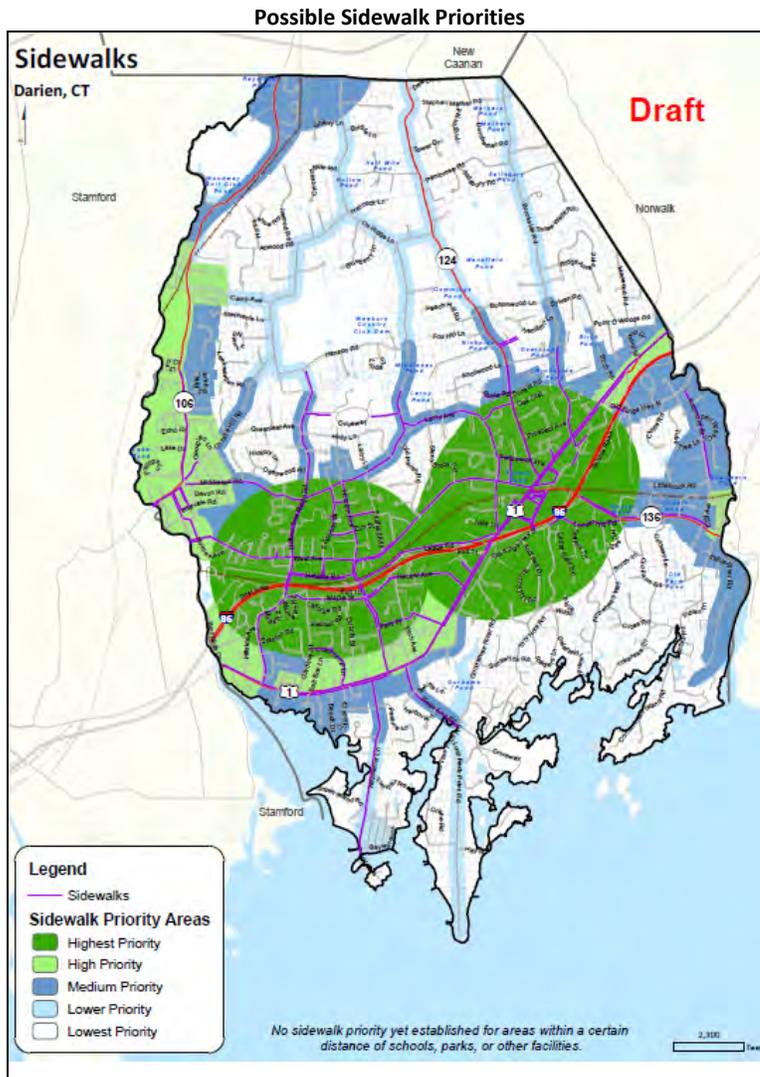
The POCD encourages and supports provision for pedestrians / walkers. The Sidewalk Improvement Program should be continued. There is a preferred sidewalk specification for downtown with brick pavers and other pedestrian amenities. A similar specification should be prepared for Noroton Heights.

The Town has been seeking to address “gaps” in the sidewalk system and has been utilizing a “sidewalk priority ranking system” to prioritize extensions. The Pedestrian Infrastructure Advisory Committee will be reviewing this approach. The map on the facing page suggests a possible hierarchy where “gaps” might be prioritized in order to address locations which might have the greatest benefit or serve the most people.

<b>Improve Pedestrian Options</b>		
<b>Possible Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
1. Continue to encourage and support provision for walking.		
2. Continue efforts to close “gaps” in the sidewalk system.		
3. Increase efforts to repair existing sidewalks, and construct new ones where needed and appropriate.		
4. Continue placing funds in the Capital Improvement Program on an annual basis to improve, renovate, and construct sidewalks.		
5. Continue the “model block” specification to Noroton Heights or develop a new specification.		
6. Continue to consider pedestrian access and amenities during the site plan review process.		
<b>Possible Initial Tasks</b>		
7. Develop and implement a sidewalk plan.		

Possible Sidewalk Priority Areas

<b>Highest Priority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/2 mile radius of Darien / Noroton Heights train stations</li> <li>• CBD zone and ¼ mile buffer</li> <li>• Noroton Heights Overlay zone and ¼ mile buffer</li> </ul>
<b>High Priority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other business zones</li> <li>• R-1/5 zone and R-1/3 zone</li> </ul>
<b>Medium Priority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1/2 mile radius of Talmadge Hill / Springdale / Glenbrook / Rowayton train stations (provided sidewalks are available in adjacent community)</li> <li>• Arterial and collector roads when located within 1-mile of CBD zone or Noroton Heights Overlay zone</li> <li>• R-1/2 zone</li> </ul>
<b>Lower Priority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arterial and collector roads located more than 1-mile from CBD zone or Noroton Heights Overlay zone</li> <li>• NRB zone</li> </ul>
<b>Lowest Priority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R-1 zone and R-2 zone</li> </ul>



Bicycle Route Sign



Bike Rack Project  
At Train Stations



## Improve Bicycling Options

The POCD supports provision for bicycles. Encouraging more bicycle use (and creating an overall system of bicycle routes on State and local roads, as appropriate) is strongly encouraged.

However, there may be challenges in Darien to accomplish this. Some roads in Darien may be too narrow, too twisty, or have limited sight lines preventing motorists and cyclists from comfortably co-existing with each other. As shown on the map on the facing page, the CTDOT has conducted a preliminary evaluation of State highways in Darien for bicycle potential (based on traffic speeds, traffic volumes, and/or shoulder width) and this may provide a starting point for further investigation. CTDOT is also in the process of evaluating reduction of its “travel lane width” standards and this may create new opportunities for bicycle usage on state highways.

Darien should undertake a process to:

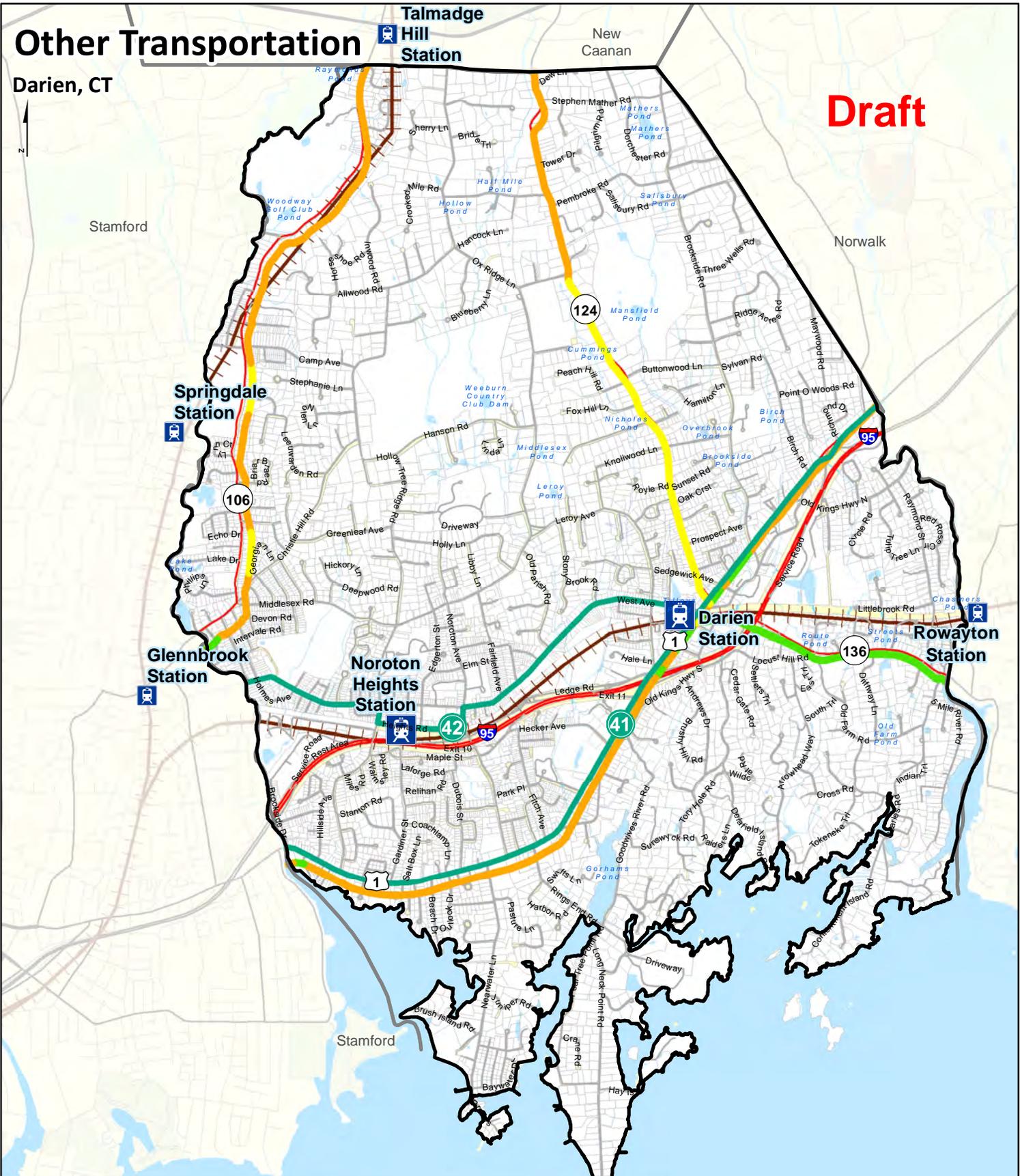
- identify streets with the most potential for bicycle use,
- provide bicycle amenities as appropriate (lane striping, signage, bike racks, etc.), and
- a program to educate motorists and cyclists about sharing the roadway.

Improve Bicycling Options		
Possible Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Encourage and support provision for bicycling.		
2. Consider bicycle access and amenities during the site plan review process.		
3. Seek to establish a system of safe bicycle routes throughout the community.		
4. Evaluate bicycle potential as part of any roadway improvement or pavement striping project in Darien.		
5. Place funds in the Capital Improvement Program to establish and enhance bicycle routes.		
Possible Initial Tasks		
6. Categorize streets in Darien in terms of “bicycle-friendliness” in order to develop a system of bicycle routes where appropriate in the community.		
7. Seek recognition from the League of American Bicyclists as a bicycle friendly community.		

# Other Transportation

Darien, CT

Draft



## Legend

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Train Stations | <b>Bike Route Suitability</b>   |
|  Railroads      |  Less Suitable |
|  Bus Routes     |  Suitable      |
|  |  More Suitable |

2,300 Feet

Darien Station



Noroton Heights Station



## Improve Rail Services And Amenities

Darien has two stations (Darien and Noroton Heights) on the New Haven line of the Metro-North commuter rail system. The New Haven line provides service between New Haven Connecticut and Grand Central Station in New York City. In addition, there are four other stations in close proximity to Darien – one on the New Haven line (Rowayton station in Norwalk) and three on the New Canaan branch line (Glenbrook and Springdale in Stamford and Talmadge Hill in New Canaan). Darien is considered a higher level station than Noroton Heights and is served by about 17 more trips per day than Noroton Heights.

Overall, train service to and from Darien is excellent. While delays and cancellations are infrequent, they are tremendously frustrating to residents and local workers because people have become so reliant on the service.

The CTDOT is working with Metro-North to increase the number of train trips in the corridor and increase the level of service. The Town should continue to advocate for maintaining and improving the level of service at both stations.

The key issues associated with the train service are:

- the availability of parking, and
- the quality of the stations themselves.

Darien Station



## Train Station Parking

Parking is the biggest issue associated with the train stations even though there are about 1,200 spaces near the Darien train station (about 860 public and about 320 private) and about 810 spaces near the Noroton Heights station (about 780 public and about 30 private). This is because of the overall dynamics of the parking situation.

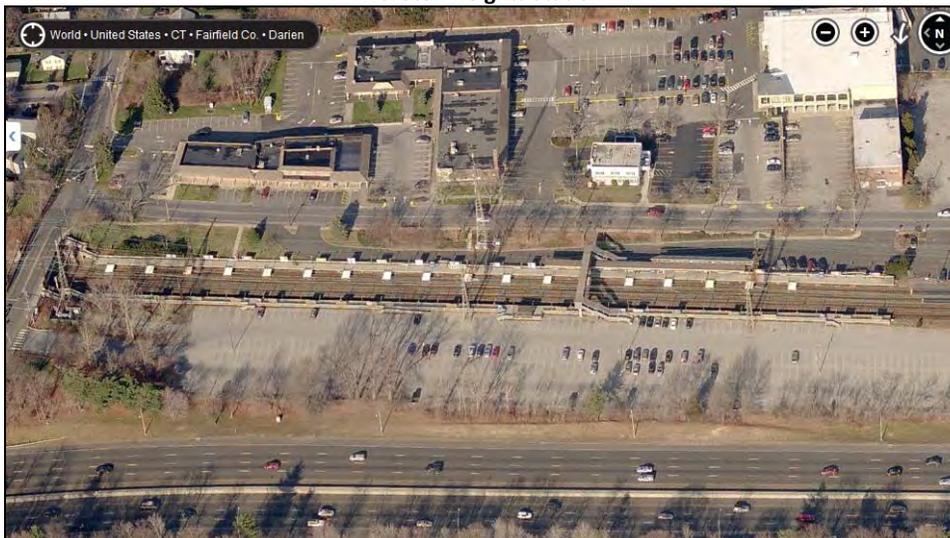
Based on historic usage, the Town sells a certain number of permits for the designated permit spaces. In fact, the spaces are oversold since experience shows that a number of people do not use their spaces every day. However, there is a limited number of permits available and strong demand for the spaces so there is a lengthy waiting period (up to 7 years) to be able to get a parking permit. Once people get a permit, they often keep it even if they will not use it regularly. These permits tend to be used by long-time Darien residents.

For people without a parking permit, there are two options. First, they can arrange with private parking operators near the stations for a parking space on a daily, weekly, monthly or annual basis. Second, they can utilize the daily parking areas at the stations. The daily spaces are available on a first come – first served basis. These arrangements tend to be used by newer Darien residents and by commuters from out-of-town who choose to use the Darien stations due to quality of service, ease of access, overall cost, or other considerations.

Historically, the cost of parking at the Darien stations has typically been lower than can be found at other parking locations along the New Haven line or at nearby stations.

The availability of parking can be increased by going to structured parking at either station (or both stations).

Noroton Heights Station



**Station Improvements**

The train stations in Darien are owned by CTDOT and operated by the Town under a lease arrangement. The Town collects the parking revenues and places these funds in a special account.

Under the terms of the lease, the Town could improve the stations using the funds in that account. Depending on the cost of the improvements, the Town could increase the parking fees to cover the cost of the improvements.

However, at the present time, the lease has expired and CTDOT has not offered a new lease or lease extension. As a result, the Town is not in a position to make improvements to the station until the lease provisions are clear.

**Station Amenities**

The Darien station was recently improved and, for the most part, meets user’s expectations. An additional pedestrian bridge would enhance the functionality of the station and accessibility to parking areas and downtown.

The Noroton Heights station, on the other hand, has not been improved in many years and does not meet user’s expectations:

- functionally obsolete structure,
- one pedestrian bridge in poor location,
- customer platforms in poor condition,
- inadequate bicycle / scooter parking,
- congestion for arriving and departing vehicles.

Station improvements should be undertaken, as needed. However, as discussed in the sidebar, the Town is currently not in a position to make the improvements desired.

<b>Improve Rail Services And Amenities</b>		
<b>Possible Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
1. Continue to work with CTDOT and Metro-North to increase the level of train service to and from Darien.		
2. Seek ways to improve the overall parking situation at train stations, including parking structures).		
<b>Possible Initial Tasks</b>		
3. Investigate increasing the supply of parking at one or both train stations.		
4. Investigate increasing parking prices in Darien in order to provide more amenities for users.		
5. Work with CTDOT to clarify the lease situation so that planning for station improvements can commence.		

## Enhance Other Transit Services

Darien is served by two Connecticut Transit bus routes (daytime service only):

- Route No. 41 provides service along Route 1 in Darien as part of its route between downtown Stamford and downtown Norwalk. Service is provided seven days a week with 15-minute intervals during rush hours, 30-minute intervals at other times on weekdays and on Saturdays, and 60-minute intervals on Sundays.
- Route No. 42 provides service from the Stamford Transportation Center, to the Darien train station via West Avenue, Noroton Heights station (via Hollow Tree Ridge Road, Heights Road, Edgerton Street), and back to West Avenue. Weekday service has a 30-minute interval with a 60-minute interval on Saturdays. No service is provided on Sunday.

Dial-a-ride service in Darien is available from “At Home In Darien,” a private non-profit organization that helps Darien Seniors live independently, comfortably and with dignity in their own homes.

Taxi service is operated by the Darien Eveready Cab Company. It is located at the Darien railroad station (1 Squab Lane).

Enhance Other Transit Services		
Possible Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Seek to maintain and enhance other transit services within Darien.		
2. Consider establishing a transit service that would offer, at peak commuter hours, home-to-station service (as has been done in Westport).		
3. Provide bus shelters and other amenities (such as posted schedules and route maps) to support transit users.		
4. Support the dial-a-ride service provided by “At Home In Darien.”		
5. Continue to work with WCOG on increasing the attractiveness of alternative transportation including, but not limited to, car pools, van pools, and ridesharing.		
Possible Initial Tasks		
6. Implement other programs to enhance transit services in Darien.		



## UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The availability of utility infrastructure – water, sewer, electricity, and communications, for example – has a significant influence on overall public health, safety, welfare, and quality of life. Even though some of these utilities may be provided by private companies, their availability is important for residents, businesses, and visitors to Darien.

The Plan of Conservation and Development looks at the availability of these utilities (both capacity and location) to ensure they are adequate for community needs.

**Water Service**



**Sewage Service**



**Storm Drainage**



**Wired Utilities**



## Maintain and Enhance Piped Utilities

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### Maintain and Enhance Water Service

Water service in Darien is provided by the Aquarion Company as part of their water system in southwest Connecticut. Although Aquarion has not shared detailed information on their customer base, available information indicates that Aquarion provides water service to about 18,000 people in Darien.

Available information also indicates that Aquarion has ample supply capacity to meet local needs. Water quality is in accordance with State and Federal requirements. Water pressure can be an issue in some areas and the Town should continue to work with Aquarion to address these situations. The Town should also advocate for “color-coded” hydrant tops that clearly indicate the available pressure in different locations.

Overall, the water system is expected to be adequate for community needs during the planning period (2016-2026).



### Sewer Avoidance

According to the Public Works staff, no area of Darien is considered a “sewer avoidance area” at this time.

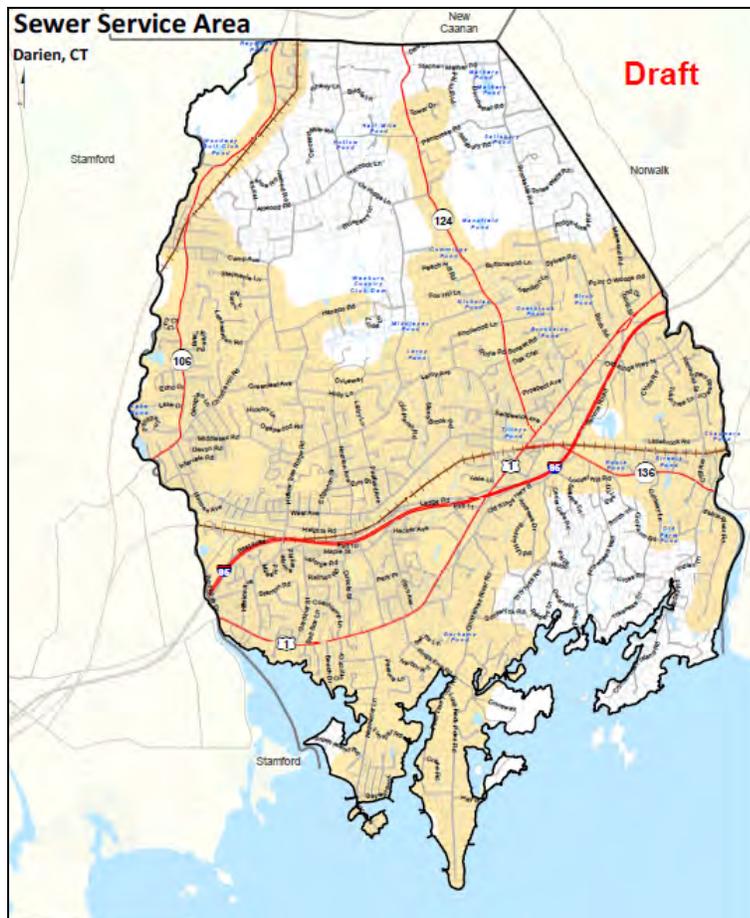
In other words, all areas of Darien may be eligible for public sewer service at some time in the future.

### Maintain and Enhance Sewer Service

Over 70% of the Town of Darien is served by a sanitary sewer system. The system collects sewage discharges from local properties and conveys them to the water pollution control facility in Stamford. Darien has an inter-municipal agreement with Stamford for the treatment of sewage waste. Operation of the sewer facilities in Darien is overseen by the Sewer Commission.

While there are not expected to be any major issues in Darien related to sewage capacity, one of the issues for the community to address in the future is related to possible future climate change and sea level rise. Sewers tend to be located in low lying areas (in order to collect sewage from nearby properties) and these areas are vulnerable to flooding. On the future, Darien will need to develop strategies to floodproof or protect sewage infrastructure (such as pump stations and manholes) from flood damage or water level rise.

Other issues to address in the future include inflow (discharge of non-sewer water from basement sump pumps, roof leaders, and other sources) and infiltration (seepage of groundwater into sewer pipes).



### Encourage Expansion Of Natural Gas Service

While natural gas service is not widely available in Darien at the present time, natural gas service is being considered for some of the major developments being proposed in Downtown and Noroton Heights. The introduction and expansion of natural gas service is encouraged since it can provide an alternative source of fuel to local residents and businesses. .

### Address Storm Drainage Issues

Storm drainage in Darien is addressed by a combination of structural systems (such as catch basins and underground pipes) in areas of newer development and by more natural approaches (ditches and swales) in other areas. Drainage and flooding issues can occur along a number of watercourses in the community since culverts and drainage facilities did not anticipate the level of development prevalent today.

While the Town has attempted to address some of the more difficult drainage situations, these proposals have sometimes been opposed by the abutting property owners. As a result, some of the problems have persisted for a long time and will likely persist into the future until some consensus or direction emerges among the affected property owners.

In the meantime, the Town is utilizing a drainage policy which encourages or requires detention on individual sites. This policy (called “go to meadow”) means that any new development is evaluate on the total drainage impact as if the site was an undeveloped meadow rather than an already developed site. In the future, it is anticipated that Darien will do more to implement “low impact development” strategies where attention is paid to treating runoff to remove pollutants and infiltrating it into the ground as soon as possible.

While this approach will certainly yield benefits over the long term, there are some serious drainage issues at the present time that will persist unless something is done.

Darien Flooding



Darien Flooding



<b>Maintain And Enhance Piped Utilities</b>		
<b>Possible Policies</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Partners</b>
1. Maintain and enhance water service.		
2. Seek to enhance water flows / pressure for fire suppression.		
3. Advocate for color coded hydrants (shows water flow/pressure).		
4. Maintain and enhance sewer service.		
5. Develop strategies to floodproof or protect sewage infrastructure (such as pump stations and manholes) from flood damage or water level rise.		
6. Continue to investigate and address inflow and infiltration of non-sewer water.		
7. Encourage expansion of natural gas service.		
8. Continue to investigate and address drainage and flooding issues.		
9. Continue comprehensive master drainage planning.		
10. Maintain the “go to meadow” drainage policy.		
11. Continue to address storm drainage issues.		
12. Implement “low impact development” strategies where attention is paid to treating runoff to remove pollutants and infiltrating it into the ground as soon as possible.		
<b>Possible Initial Tasks</b>		
13. Implement programs to maintain and enhance piped utilities.		

**Rain Garden**



**Pervious Pavement**



## Maintain and Enhance Other Utilities

### Wired Utilities

Electrical service, wired telephones, and cable television / internet are the main wired utilities. The reliability of these systems is an important consideration since they can be vulnerable to service interruptions from storm events and other disruptions since the wires are exposed.

In areas such as Downtown and Noroton Heights, wired utilities should be placed underground. In other areas of Darien, the Town should continue to seek an appropriate balance between electrical reliability and the impacts on community character / environmental health from trimming of tree branches.

Expanding internet capacity is also a recommendation of the Plan.

### Wireless Utilities

People are increasingly relying on wireless services for voice and data. Wireless services can also enhance public safety since people can call for assistance from anywhere service is available. People are often concerned about wireless services because of the perceived visual impact of new towers.

Darien should seek to balance the demand for wireless services and the public safety benefits with the visual and other impacts of new tower installations.

### Streetlights

Some communities are purchasing and then managing and maintaining local streetlights.

Darien may wish to consider this approach in order to maintain the street-lighting system as cost-effectively as possible.

This could also include a conversion of streetlights to LED technology.

Maintain and Enhance Other Utilities		
Possible Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to seek an appropriate balance between reliability of wired utilities and community character / environmental health.		
2. Consider acquiring the street-lighting system and operating it as cost-effectively as possible.		
3. Seek to balance the demand for wireless services and the public safety benefits with the visual and other impacts of new tower installations.		
4. Work with property owners and utility companies to bury utility wires, especially in Downtown and Noroton Heights.		
5. Seek to expand internet capacity and wireless coverage while maintaining community character.		

