

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

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Overview

Infrastructure issues addressed in the Plan of Conservation & Development include:

- Transportation
- Utilities

Transportation

The transportation system in a community is an important factor in its growth and development. This element of the Plan is concerned with the means by which people and goods are moved from one place to another. It is designed to encourage, support, and serve the current and desired land use pattern for Derby.

Transportation was chosen by the Derby Planning and Zoning Commission as the most important issue to be addressed in this Plan because of the severe impact that traffic problems have on the community.

State Road Network

Expressway Route 8 - In March of 2000, the Connecticut Department of Transportation released a corridor planning study for the 12-mile stretch of this expressway through Shelton, Derby, Ansonia and Seymour. Average daily traffic volumes are over 60,000 vehicles per day in the vicinity of Route 34 and the Commodore Hulls Bridge and are expected to increase by 30% by the year 2020. Many interchanges are sub-standard and do not provide safe entrance and exit to the highway. Improvements recommended for Derby have been amended since the plan was distributed.

Infrastructure Goals

Improve the State Highway Network . . .

Expand Transportation Options . . .

Maintain Public Utilities . . .

The following interchange reconstruction projects will have the most significantly impact on Derby:

- *Reconstruction of Exit #16 and extension of Pershing Drive.*- Pershing Drive terminates at Route 8 with no connection to Main Street in Derby. Plans call for a new access road paralleling Route 8 to be built between Exit #16 and Main Street (in the vicinity of Route 8, Exit #15). Pershing Drive will be widened in the vicinity of Exit #16 and will connect to the access road. A northbound exit ramp will be built and the southbound ramp will be reconstructed.
- *Reconstruction of Exit #17 and southbound access* - The exit ramp intersection with Seymour Avenue will be reconstructed and new southbound access provided to Route 8. Hawkins Bridge will be rebuilt and the northbound interchange will be rebuilt.
- *Reconstruction of the northbound lane and ramp at Exit #18 in Ansonia* - Access to Westfield Avenue will be limited and there will be a new southbound ramp built.

Route 34 - Route 34 runs in an east/west direction through the entire City Of Derby. The Main Street section of Route 34 in downtown curves and changes elevation as it approaches Exit #15 of Route 8. High traffic volumes during peak commuter hours cause long delays. The 1997 Regional Transportation Plan highlights Route 34 as having the most high accident locations in the Valley Region. Plans to redevelop the southeast part of downtown Derby should include some traffic solution for the area based on the change in land use anticipated.

None of the options currently being considered are immediately preferable:

- Demolition of historic buildings and widening the road is an option, but losing some buildings *could* have a negative impact on the character of downtown.
- Eliminating parking on one side of Main Street along with some road widening will improve vehicular flow in Downtown Derby, but it will reduce pedestrian traffic and affect local businesses. This may be a viable solution if redevelopment plans include visible and convenient parking for historic commercial buildings on the southeast side of Main Street.
- Construction of a one-way bypass road along the riverfront may negatively impact the river and serve to further isolate the rest of downtown from the riverfront.

Route 243/853 - Routes 243/853 (Division Street) has two high accident locations on the Derby/Ansonia line. The 1997 Regional Transportation Plan calls for Division Street to be widened and reconstructed near Clifton Street and Route 8.

Local Road Condition

The primary function of the Derby Public Works Department is the maintenance of the 40 miles of city roads. A ten million dollar bond issue passed in the late 1990s allowed 75 percent (or 30 miles) of Derby's roads to be reclaimed. A bond issue for two to three million dollars is being prepared to reclaim six miles and resurface four miles of the remaining ten miles.

The Department is in the process setting-up a computerized pavement management system to plan for road maintenance and repair in the future. Implementation of such a system should eliminate the need for expensive bonding projects. A regular ten year cycle of prescribed inspections and preventive maintenance concentrating on crack sealing and resurfacing, may avoid expensive reclaiming.

Local Road Improvements

The following local road improvements were listed in the Valley Regional Planning Agency 2001 Transportation Update as priorities for funding in the ten-year plan:

- Realign Sodom Lane between the shopping center and the Orange Line with intersections brought to modern design standards.
- Replace the Canal Street bridge over the Derby Canal.

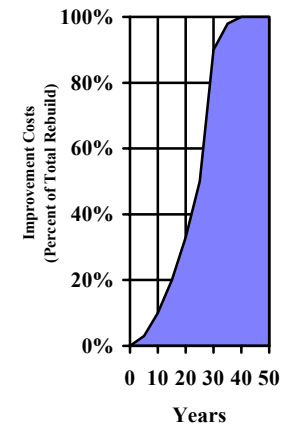
Trails and Bike Routes

The 1997 Consolidated Regional Plan calls for greater emphasis to be given to walking and bicycling as important modes of transportation. Transportation Enhancement Grants, distributed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation, address the value of bicycling and offers mechanisms by which bicycle and pedestrian facilities can be promoted and enhanced. Regional concept plans call for both a network of interconnected on-street bicycle route and special trails located on a separate right-of-way.

In Derby on-road bicycle routes include Route 243/Pulaski Highway connecting to Prindle Avenue in Ansonia, with eventual connection to a multi-use river greenway trail along the Naugatuck River. Seymour has already built a section of this greenway. Plans and funding are already in place to begin construction of a one mile portion of the greenway in Derby.

Road Maintenance

Derby will find it more cost effective to spend more on road maintenance in order to delay or avoid the additional expense of reclaiming and rebuilding roads. The chart below illustrates that without proper maintenance most roads will require almost total reconstruction after 35 years.



Mass Transportation

There are five providers of mass transit in the Derby area:

- The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro North) - commuter rail service to Fairfield County and New York City along the Waterbury Branch of the New Haven Line.
- Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA) – fixed-route bus service from downtown Bridgeport to the Derby Train Station with stops at such locations as Bridgeport Hospital and the Wal-Mart Shopping Center.
- Connecticut Transit - fixed route bus service from Downtown New Haven to the Derby Train Station.
- Valley Transit District (VTD) - shuttle bus service from the Derby Train Station to work locations on Commerce Drive, Long Hill Crossroad , Platt Road and a number of other locations.
- Valley Transit District (VTD) – demand-responsive “door-to door” paratransit service in the Valley Region.
- The Workplace, Inc– shuttle bus service from Bridgeport to Silvermine Industrial Park in Seymour with stops at Derby Station.

A July 2000 study by Urbitran Associates analyzed transit service in the Valley Region. The study primarily recommended more and better marketing of transit service. Publication of Valley Region Transit Maps and guides were suggested and seem to be in place now. The use of a Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), which can locate vehicles on route was suggested to increase the efficiency of the paratransit service. The VTD was also encouraged to take the leadership in arranging for formal transfer agreements and coordinated schedules among the various providers of transit.

The following two enhancement proposals listed in Urbitran’s Report focused on satisfying new travel patterns in the Valley region:

1. Expansion of the employment-based commuter shuttle service was proposed to connect with New Haven CT Transit service in Derby.
2. Increased service along the New Haven CT Transit Route F6 between East Derby and Downtown Ansonia was recommended.

Utilities

Utility infrastructure includes piped utilities such as public water and public sewer. Also included is wired utilities (electric, telephone, and cable television), and cellular communications. The location and capacity of infrastructure is important to the future growth and development of Derby since it can direct growth towards or away from certain areas.

Public Water Service - Derby is expected to have an adequate water supply throughout the planning period. Birmingham Utilities Inc (BUI), located in Ansonia, supplies water to Derby residents and businesses. A September 2000 water supply plan done by BUI indicates that “the water supply is more than adequate to meet the need of current customers through the year 2040”. Population and water consumption in both Derby and Ansonia have decreased since 1970. Existing water supply sources include the Housatonic and Derby well fields and connections to the Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority. The total safe yield of all sources is 8.0 MGD (millions gallon per day) and the average 1999 usage was 3.43 MGD. Water quality was consistent with state requirements. Future public water expansion could be expected in the industrial park zoned land in the western section of Derby.

Public Sewer Service - Derby is expected to have an adequate sewage capacity throughout the planning period. The Derby Water Pollution Control Authority operates public sewers and 95 percent of the city is provided service. The Sewer Authority has a capacity of 3.5 MGD (million gallon per day) with an average daily usage of 1.5 MGD. There are some areas in the downtown and east side of Derby where overflows are a problem causing untreated sewage to enter rivers at times of heavy rains. A Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Study is being done to determine the causes. The system was not designed to filter some of the modern chemicals now being discharged to the sewage treatment system and this will also be looked at in the study.

All four pump stations are older and need to be overhauled, but especially the Division Street and Roosevelt Drive Stations. As redevelopment is done new mains and interceptors should be considered in the downtown and other older areas of the city. Although there is adequate capacity at the treatment station there is however, a problem with the capacity of sewage pipes. The Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Study planned will determine where significant infiltration is impacting pipe capacity. Industrial-Park zoned land to the northwest part of Derby is part of the Fountain Lake Industrial Park, in Ansonia. Public utilities are expected to be provided to this area from Ansonia.

Storm Drainage – The Environmental Protection Agency is in the process of implementing new storm water drainage requirements (NPDES - Phase 2) which will require the mapping of storm drain systems in Derby and increasingly involved evaluation and education programs. While Connecticut has not decided exactly how to implement some of these requirements, certain provisions will begin to apply in 2003. This program will certainly require additional attention during the planning period.

Other Infrastructure

Yankee Gas provides natural gas service in Derby based on demand for the service for both commercial and residential use. Equifax Marketing noted that, in 1998, about 40 percent of the households in Derby heated with natural gas.

United Illuminating provides electrical service in Derby. The Connecticut Siting Council has indicated that the electrical utilities have access to supply resources to meet demand assuming that all the active generators committed to the New England Power Grid are available for continuing use.

Telemedia of Western Connecticut services Derby with cable television service from their Seymour office. Telemedia is currently installing fiber-optic cable lines in Derby that allow for high-speed computer access to the Internet.

Southern New England Telephone Service provides regular phone service in Derby. SNET is believed to have adequate capacity for local needs during the planning period.

Wireless communication is available from a number of different providers in the Valley. Currently there are cell tower locations along Route 8 providing service along this major transportation corridor. The greatest concerns to municipalities have been the aesthetic impact of towers, which have been typically regulated by zoning regulations. Recent approval by the Zoning Commission of the placement of antennas on an older industrial tower in Derby will ensure improved service by multiple providers and yet minimize the visual impact on the City.

Sewage Treatment



Water Service



Cellular Service



Infrastructure Plan

Infrastructure Strategies For Discussion

Transportation

1. Continue to work with Valley Regional Planning Agency and CT DOT officials to ensure that improvements to Route 8 interchanges in Derby and throughout the region are made.
2. Examine alternative solutions to decreasing traffic congestion on Route 34, in Downtown Derby, in relationship to planned land use changes prescribed by downtown redevelopment plans.
3. Seek funding as outlined in the Regional Transportation Plan to assist the City in planning the following road improvements:
 - Widening of Division Street near Route 8 and Clifton Streets.
 - Realigning and improving Sodom Lane in the vicinity of the Orange Town Line.
 - Replacing the bridge over the Derby Canal.
4. Complete work on the 10 miles of Derby's local roads, not included as part of the road improvement bonding project.
5. Complete installation of a computerized pavement management system to track local road condition.
6. Provide annual funding to maintain all roads in average or above condition rating based on pavement management classification.
7. Promote the installation of bicycle lanes on Derby roadways highlighted by the Regional Transportation Plan.
8. Implement plans to begin a multi-use river greenway in Derby to be eventually linked with greenways in adjacent towns.
9. Explore available funding to maintain and create less formal trails in open space and recreation areas.
10. Plan for expanded use of paratransit services by the elderly and handicapped as demand increases.
11. Ensure all rail and bus service in Derby is coordinated and well advertised.
12. Promote expansion of employment shuttle services by the Valley Transit District and expansion of the New Haven Line fixed bus route in Derby.

Utilities

1. Upgrade water pipes that may still be owned by the City of Derby to standards that would allow them to be transferred to Birmingham Utilities.
2. Fund improvements to the sewer system, to address capacity and overflow problems to be outlined by the planned Inflow and Infiltration study planned.
3. Plan for improvements to sewage pumping station in Derby, but especially the stations on Division Street and Roosevelt Drive.
4. Continue to encourage provision of natural gas service, especially to new commercial development.
5. Promote energy conservation methods wherever possible to reduce energy needs and maintain capacity.
6. Encourage all replacement and new wired utilities to be placed underground .
7. Work with utility companies to establish a reasonable tree-trimming schedule that balances reliability and community character.
8. Encourage efforts by local utilities to make high speed internet access available to all businesses and residents in Derby.
9. Maintain and enhance local regulations relating to the siting of communication towers, especially in regard to co-location on recently approved facilities.