

CHAPTER 8

Traffic and Circulation

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

8 Traffic and Circulation

8.1 Goals and Objectives

The goals of the circulation element of this Master Plan are to :

- Study the adequacy of the existing roadway/circulation network of Westport's roadways
- Recommend the future framework for a Town-wide circulation system that forms a structure for the land use plan and which is functional, economical and pleasant to use for daily living. The system must meet requirements of the Town public safety officials and also integrate the needs of drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and other users, including commuters and recreational users.

The objectives of this circulation element which are to meet this goal include the following:

- Develop a classification system for all roads in Town;
- Prepare an inventory of Town roads to identify traffic usage, road conditions and deficiencies;
- Identify the Town's preferences regarding future roadway construction, subdivision roads, and dead-end streets;
- Identify areas of the Town circulation network that need improvements;
- Recommend by-laws and regulations regarding future road development;
- Identify potential locations of sidewalks;
- Identify potential recreational path networks both within Town and connecting to other towns; and
- Evaluate the need for public transportation.

8.2 Introduction

8.2.1. Existing Conditions

Automobile

The network of roadways within Westport provides a system for circulation of people, goods and services among existing land uses, and provides access to sites of future development. SRPEDD reports¹⁷ that there are 154.27 miles of roadways within Town. This road network is comprised of 98.77 miles classified as Local Roads, 36.54 miles of Collectors, 15.3 miles of Arterials, and 3.66 miles of Interstate. Because of the expense and impacts associated with construction of new roadways within the network, it is generally assumed that future land development in Town will utilize the existing roadway network, with the exception of relatively short access roadways for residential or industrial purposes, serving a limited use.

Because roadways are used by everyone, everyday, the road network of a Town is an important infrastructure element. Town roadways provide both access within Town and access to roads leading out of Town. Westport's roadway network is "anchored" by State Route 88, which acts as a north/south spine to provide direct access between local roads throughout town, and Route 6 and Interstate Route 195 near the north end of town. As such, most commuter traffic (and seasonal out-of-town beach traffic) utilizes Route 88, for trips out of town, instead of local north/south roadways. Route 6, Route 177 and Old County Road provide access to neighboring towns to the east and west.

¹⁷ SRPEDD Region Natural Hazard Disaster Mitigation Plan, April 2004.

Westport is conveniently located for commuters working in Fall River (eight miles north of Westport); New Bedford (eight miles east), Taunton (15 miles north), and Providence, (26 miles northwest). An increasing number of residents also commute to Boston (54 miles north). Westport is served by I-195, which passes through the northern end of Town and connects Westport with Fall River, New Bedford and Providence and also Route 24, which provides highway access to Taunton and Boston. State Routes 88 and 177 and 6, also serve Westport.

Access within Town needs to address convenience, as well as recognizing the unique nature of Westport. The “Westport quality of Life” is a significant issue with Town residents, and the Town roadway network needs to address this issue. Town residents value the “rural and historic” nature of the town, and as such, embrace roads which have rural characteristics, such as curves and stone walls. Also, because many of the Town roads (other than subdivisions) were originally laid out around private lots/farms, they often do not provide a “most direct” route between areas. Additionally, the East Branch and West Branch of the Westport River create obstacles for roadway layout, in that bridges are required. This causes inconvenience for users; however, most Westport residents are willing to tolerate some inconvenience in order to protect the rural nature of the Town.

Previous masterplans for Westport have focussed on maximizing efficiency of access within Town, including identification of possible new roadway routes, which would “connect” areas that are currently not directly accessible. These proposals are discussed in more detail in Section 8.3. However, in general, it is recognized that construction of any new roadways of significant length would require significant funding, as well as landtaking, and, as such, Town priorities at this time do not include addressing new road construction purely for in-Town accessibility.

When new roadways are proposed, another consideration is the impact on nearby Town residents. In the past, plans recommended roadway connections between subdivisions; however, Westport residents have repeatedly indicated their disapproval of such proposals. Typical Westport subdivision roads, which usually include cul-de-sacs and meandering low-speed roadways, are valued for “family quality of life”, and connections of new roadways into existing subdivisions are perceived by many to decrease the quality of life by creating more traffic and safety concerns. Recommendations concerning new roadways are included in Section 8.7.

Identification of deficiencies in the existing roadway network, including hazardous intersections/ and/or roadways, and roadways requiring upgrading, will provide the Town with a checklist for road improvement projects. Also, identification of particular road improvements that will be required in conjunction with future land use will help provide the framework for future Town growth.

Rail Service

Commuter rail to Boston is accessible from stations at Lakeville and Attleboro. The extension of commuter rail to New Bedford and Fall River within the next ten years will place additional pressure on local roads. Passenger service via Amtrak is available from Providence to Boston and New York.

Bus Service

Westport is a member of the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA), which provides fixed-route service between Fall River, Westport, Dartmouth and New Bedford.

SRTA and the Council on Aging also provide transit services for the elderly and disabled.

Air Service

New Bedford Regional Airport is a Primary Commercial Service (PR) facility. Its services include general aviation, air cargo, scheduled passenger flights and military aviation. It has 2 asphalt runways 4,998 and 5,000 feet long, 6 hangars, an FAA contracted control tower, and Instrument Landing System. Approximately 100 aircraft are based there [Data from SRPEDD, see footnote 1].

Bicycle, Pedestrian, Equestrian

Westport has no public bicycle, hiking, or bridle trails. Sidewalks exist in limited areas of Town, such as the Central Village and Head of Westport, but are not connected into a meaningful network.

8.3 Past Master Plans

The first Master Plan was prepared in 1964, and another in 1972, which was then amended in 1983. Over the years, there have been some significant changes to the Town's roadway system, and the benefits to the Town have been overwhelming.

At the time of preparation of the 1964 Master Plan, Route 6 was a heavily traveled and high accident roadway, because it was "the major artery between Fall River and New Bedford, as well as for Cape Cod traffic". Route 195 was under construction, and the 1964 Master Plan anticipated that the new Interstate would improve conditions on Route 6 by reducing the traffic volume.

The 1964 Master Plan also noted that Route 88 had just been constructed and the Town was looking forward to the fact that beach traffic and commuter traffic would have a direct route through Town, instead of using local roads. However, because ramps to Route 177 from Route 88 were not originally constructed, nor was a signal installed at Briggs Road, the Master Plan recommended these improvements. As we know, these improvements were made and Route 88 has served as a major "backbone" of the Town, by keeping the majority of commuter traffic and seasonal beach traffic off local roadways, such as Main Road, Gifford Road, Drift Road, and Horseneck Road. Route 88 has provided Westport with the unique luxury of being able to preserve long stretches of rural stonewalls that border many local, relatively narrow roadways, because these roads are used primarily by local traffic.

The roadway recommendations from past Master Plans, which primarily addressed improvements for access, are listed below:

A new by-pass roadway constructed from the intersection of Hebrides Road and Main Road to connect to Adamsville Road, to provide a direct access for commuter traffic from Adamsville;

A new roadway connecting Roberts St. to Narrow Ave. and Sodom Road, to provide access around Devol Pond; and

A new on-ramp to Route 195 west from Sanford Road.

As discussed previously, the Town priorities for construction of new roads to improve convenience of access, at this point in time, are not high. Therefore, in order to ensure that the recommendations included in this Master Plan are relevant (and viable), proposals for the new roads discussed in past

master plans are not included herein. In particular, adding a new on-ramp to Route 195 west from Sanford Road is not recommended.

Other recommendations included in past master plans addressed bridge crossings for access over the east Branch of the Westport River:

Maintain Hix Bridge or investigate a new bridge from Charlotte White Road to Pine Hill Road; and

Improvements to East Beach Road to alleviate problems with washouts during storm events, or a new bridge from John Reed Road to Horseneck Road;

Section 8.7 includes discussion and recommendations regarding recommendations included in past Master Plans.

8.4 Inventory of Existing Roads

By making an inventory of the existing roads in the Westport roadway network, a “report card” can be generated which tabulates traffic usage, roadway conditions, and deficiencies. The report card can then be used to identify priorities for road improvements and revisions, to coincide with the Town’s vision for the future.

Seventeen (17) roads in Westport have been classified by the State; improvements to these roads are eligible for State/Federal Funding programs. (See Table 8-4 in Section 8.6 for Roadway Classifications.) These roads usually connect to other Towns (regional) or connect heavily travelled roadways within Town. State numbered roads, such as Route 6, Route 88 and Route 177 have the highest traffic volumes, and therefore usually have the highest accident rate.

The regional planning agency which addresses studies of Westport's state roads is the “Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District” (SRPEDD), which compiles traffic volume and accident data for the state roads. SRPEDD also collects traffic data on local roads if the data is available from specific traffic studies. The traffic volumes (counts) identify the most heavily travelled roads in Town, allowing governmental agencies to then determine if a road’s physical characteristics are adequate for the traffic use. Accident data for roads and intersections may justify conducting engineering studies and implementing design improvements for hazardous locations.

8.4.1 Traffic Volumes

Traffic data for roads typically address “Average Daily Traffic “ (ADT), which is the traffic for an average 24-hour period. Because SRPEDD does not perform traffic counts annually on all the roads, SRPEDD provides data from different years. (See Table 8-1 SRPEDD ADT Volumes, below). In order to estimate the roadway volumes for a particular year, the volumes are projected by applying a growth factor. SRPEDD provided a growth factor of 2.4 %, which corresponded to growth between 1990 and 2000. This factor was used to estimate year 2002 traffic for the roads, and the following are the estimated traffic volumes for the year 2002. (No traffic data available: East Beach Rd., River Rd., Cross Rd., Tickle Rd., Old Bedford Rd., Horseneck Rd.).

Table 8-1. SRPEDD ADT Volumes (Vehicles per Day)

| Road | 2002 (VPD) |
|-----------------|------------|
| Interstate I-95 | 59,200 |
| Rte. 6 | 10,600 |
| Rte. 88 | 10,000 |

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Am. Legion Hwy (Rte 77) | 7000 |
| Sanford Rd. | 6750 |
| Old County Rd. | 5500 |
| Adamsville Rd. | 4850 |
| Main Rd. | 4000 |
| Hix Bridge Rd. | 3550 |
| Briggs Rd. | 3350 |
| Reed Rd. | 2400 |
| Charlotte White Rd. | 2350 |
| Blossom Rd. | 1900 |
| Old Pine Hill Rd. | 700 |

8.4.2 Accident History

8.4.2.1 Roadway Accidents

The following accident data for roads, provided by SRPEDD, covers the years 1996-1998, which is the most recent 3-year span for which data is available.

Table 8-2. SRPEDD: Westport 1996-1998 Accident Summary

| Location | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 3-Year Total |
|-----------------|------|------|------|--------------|
| Route 6 | 55 | 89 | 85 | 229 |
| Route 177 | 30 | 35 | 41 | 106 |
| Route 88 | 21 | 28 | 45 | 94 |
| Main Rd. | 29 | 37 | 24 | 90 |
| Sanford Rd. | 17 | 15 | 23 | 55 |
| Old County Rd. | 19 | 9 | 9 | 37 |
| Sodom Rd. | 11 | 12 | 13 | 36 |
| Pine Hill Rd. | 15 | 6 | 9 | 30 |
| Old Bedford Rd. | 3 | 11 | 16 | 30 |
| Gifford Rd. | 13 | 12 | 5 | 30 |

The accident data provided gives an adequate overview of the general accident rates for certain roads within Town. Unfortunately, the accident data does not specify the exact location or conditions of the accidents; therefore specific conclusions cannot be drawn regarding improving safety along the roads. Review and compilations of the individual accident data reports (at the Police Dept.) would enable pinpointing specific problem areas, if so desired, and could be tracked via GIS mapping.

As discussed, state roads tend to have the highest accident rates, primarily due to their high traffic volumes. As seen in Table 8-2, Route 6 has the highest accident rate for Westport. In addition to the high traffic volume on the roadway, the number of driveways and intersecting side streets contribute to conflicts related to turning vehicles, which also tends to increase accidents. The physical make-up of Route 6, (a divided highway with a median strip), is considered one of the safer roadway designs. This is because the median restricts turning to “right turn only” for cars entering Rte. 6 from most driveways and side streets, thereby eliminating the problems of turning left across traffic. One condition on Route 6, however, which

may contribute to accidents are at the “median cuts” which are used for U-turns. Because there are not “left turn lanes” for vehicles waiting to turn left, vehicles tend to slow down, then stack in the left through-lane of Rte 6, which creates the potential for rear-end accidents. Section 8.7 contains suggested roadway improvements to decrease accidents.

8.4.2.2. Intersection Accidents

The following SRPEDD Intersection Accident Data also covers the years 1996 – 1998. The chart below summarizes accidents by typical categories according to severity:

P = Property Damage Only

I = Injury Resulting

F = Fatality (No fatalities occurred in the study period.)

Table 8-3. SRPEDD: Westport 1996-1998 Intersection Accident Summary

| Location | 1996 | | 1997 | | 1998 | | 3 Year Total |
|--------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------------------|
| | P | I | P | I | P | I | |
| Route 6/ Sanford Rd. | 11 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 47 |
| Route 88/ Briggs Rd. | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 17 |
| Route 88/ Old County Rd. | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 13 |
| Route 88/ Route 6 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 12 |
| Route 88/ Hixbridge Rd. | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 11 |

The intersection with the highest accident rate in Westport is the intersection of Route 6 and Sanford Road, with 47 accidents in 3 years. This intersection also ranked 4th highest within the 100 “Most Dangerous” intersections in the total southeastern Massachusetts region (which includes the cities of Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton, as well as numerous towns). The highly dangerous ranking of this intersection regionally indicates significant safety concerns, which should be addressed by an improvements project. Currently, there are no separate left-turn lanes at the intersection, and the signal timing does not include separate left turn green phases. Recommended actions for improvements at the intersection are included in Section 8.7. The Town is currently working with Mass. Highway on plans for this intersection.

Four intersections that had the next highest accident rates in Westport were all signalized intersections of Route 88 with intersecting streets; however, the number of accidents (11 to 17 in the three-year period) was significantly fewer than at the Route 6/Sanford Rd. intersection. At signalized intersections, most accidents are associated with turning vehicle conflicts. Because much of the Route 88 traffic is associated with intersecting roads, the number of turning vehicles at the intersections is quite high, as reflected by the accident rates at these locations. Another condition at the Route 88 intersections that may contribute to accidents is the current pavement striping on Route 88 at the intersections, which allows two lanes for through traffic on the intersection approach. This creates confusion because the extra lane drops immediately beyond the intersection, creating an unsafe condition because the two through-moving vehicles must merge into a single lane. This condition is especially dangerous during the summer season when beach commuter traffic is using this highway, since it encourages speeding and risky maneuvers. Recommended study topics for improvements at the Route 88 intersections are included in Section 8.7.

8.4.3. Identification of Roads and Intersections of Concern

8.4.3.1. Survey of Local Officials, Police Dept., Highway Department

In addition to SRPEDD accident data, Westport Town officials, who are intimately familiar with the Town's roads, were interviewed to solicit additional information on roadways and intersections safety problems. All officials recognized that the Route 6/ Sanford Road intersection is probably the most dangerous in Town. Fire officials noted that the traffic light at Briggs Road and Route 88 has an emergency pre-emption system that stops traffic when the emergency vehicles need to go through the intersection. This is beneficial in that the intersection signal stops all traffic except the emergency vehicles, thereby increasing safety. The fire officials also noted that if the Central Village Fire Station were located on Hix Bridge Road, it would be desirable for a pre-emption system to be installed at the Route 88/ Hix Bridge Rd. intersection also. Additionally, fire officials noted that fire trucks (and other large vehicles) have significant problems turning left onto Adamsville Road from Main Road. Therefore, if the new Fire Station were located south of Adamsville Road (such as on Hix Bridge Road) improvements to the intersection would be needed to accommodate left-turning fire trucks.

8.4.3.2. General Observations of Road/Intersection Deficiencies

Finally, general observations made by residents and traffic design professionals were gathered to identify other areas with potential safety concerns and/or which needed other improvements.

The following road issues were noted as needing additional study:

- Main Road/Adamsville Road Intersection – The existing islands cause confusion at the intersection. Also, the turning angle created by the island for vehicles turning left onto Adamsville Road is too sharp, and large vehicles have difficulty making the turn. The islands also cause safety concerns for vehicles turning left onto Main Road, because the trees on the island obstruct the line of sight.
- Main Road – Extending from Village Commons Plaza to Town Hall – Numerous driveways cause confusion/conflicts for turning movements.
- Route 6 – at some median openings, U-turning vehicles stack in the left through-lane, which creates a safety potential for rear end collisions.
- Route 6 / Route 177 intersection (at Dartmouth Town Line) – Route 6 westbound traffic turning left toward Route 177 stacks in left through lane, increasing the potential for rear-end accidents.
- Route 88 intersections with: Briggs Road, Old County Road, Charlotte White Road, Hix Bridge Road and Drift Road – Double through-lanes on Route 88 are striped at the intersection, then merge into a single lane after the intersection. This increases safety concerns relative to merging and “passing on the right”.

- East Beach Road – During major storm (hurricane) events, the roadway is overtopped by the ocean, particularly at the narrowest section of the causeway (the “Let”). The flooding destroys the roadway pavement, which requires significant repairs after such storm events. Additionally, local environmental and fishing groups have noted that it may be beneficial to “open the Let” to allow the free flow of water between the ocean and the East Branch of the Westport River, which may increase flushing and improve the water quality of the river.
- Rte. 177 intersection with Sodom Road - Left-turning movements of westbound traffic and line of sight problems.

Recommendations for addressing these concerns are included in Section 8.7.

8.4.3.3. Road Conditions

In general, the physical conditions of the roads in Town are adequate for their use. The roads with the highest traffic volumes – Route 6, and Route 88 are generally in good condition. Route 88 was recently improved by the State and it is in very good condition. Route 6 is considered fair to good, with no glaring deficiencies, although the pavement is cracked at some locations and the median and intersection curbing is in need of improvements. The other state-classified roads in Town are also in generally good to fair condition, as are the majority of the local roads.

The State is currently performing construction improvements to the two major bridges in Town – the Route 88/Fontaine Bridge and Hix Bridge. The bridge improvements are anticipated to improve the structural elements of the bridges, and new pavement, curbing and sidewalks will also be provided.

The only road in Westport that experiences significant deterioration is East Beach Road. During major storm events, the road is often over-topped by the ocean and the pavement structure is destroyed. Repeated repairs to the roadway have been made after storm events; however, since the road geometrics have not been improved, it is anticipated that the road will continue to be destroyed at uncertain intervals, coinciding with severe storms. Recommendations addressing improvements to East Beach Road are included in Section 8.7.

The Town Highway Surveyor prioritizes improvements to roadways in Town, utilizing the Highway budget and State Chapter 90 funds; this system appears to be generally functional for keeping the roadways in adequate condition. Improvements to State roadways are prioritized by the Town and the State, and sometimes require involvement of State representatives to bring the need for particular road projects to the attention of State government. In addition, Westport may need to be competitive in meeting the "smart growth" policies of the Commonwealth Capital program to be competitive in receiving state funding.

8.5. Non-Motorized Travel Issues

Demands for the following improvements were revealed during the initial and on-going public meeting during the Master Planning process – opportunities for non-motorized travel and recreation – including pedestrians, bicyclists, and rollerbladers.

8.5.1. Sidewalks

Sidewalks provide a safe area for walkers – both for recreational/exercise and people walking to a destination, such as school or shopping. A well-constructed sidewalk enables seniors who might have difficulty navigating uneven surfaces to walk for exercise and errands, and increases the independence of those who can no longer drive.

Sidewalks also contribute to a “village-type” character, may promote slower vehicle speeds, and reduce traffic when people walk between destinations instead of driving.

Currently, there are few sidewalks in Westport, with the majority being located within the Westport Point village area, in the Head of Westport area, and along Old County Road between the Middle School and the Head of Westport. Typically, when people walk in Westport, they must use the roadway shoulder or the adjacent unpaved areas. It is recognized that the majority of local roads have “tight” right of way widths, often bordered by stonewalls, within which both the roadway and utility poles must be located. Since the road pavement is generally centered in the right of way, there is often not adequate clearance to provide sidewalks beside existing roads.

Some of the “state” or wider local roads, however, do have clearance for sidewalks and the Town should consider the addition of sidewalks at some locations, based on current and future pedestrian traffic.

Some general observations regarding potential sidewalk locations are:

Old County Road - Between Route 88 and the Middle/Elementary School. Currently, there is a sidewalk that extends approximately 200 feet east of Route 88, and then abruptly ends. Children often walk along this road between the High School and the Middle School, Town Library, and the Head of Westport village. They are forced to use the unpaved grass areas next to the road, which have uneven surfaces and are not maintained. A sidewalk on one side of Old County Road, extending from the end of the sidewalk near Route 88 to the Middle School would provide a safe way for all pedestrians using this section of roadway. Also, because a sidewalk currently exists between the Middle School and the Head of Westport, a sidewalk would provide a continuous pedestrian route between the Head of Westport and the High School. Because children are the majority of pedestrians on the road, for their safety and welfare, construction of this sidewalk should be considered a priority.

Main Road - Within the Central Village “business” district between Kirby Lane and Hix Bridge Road. Currently, given the layout of existing commercial establishments and inconvenience of pedestrian accessibility, there is not much pedestrian activity in the Central Village area. Pedestrians must utilize the side of the road, which presents safety concerns. Construction of sidewalks within Central Village should be considered to promote a “village-type” character and to allow and encourage safe pedestrian travel between the commercial uses, the community/civic centers (Town Hall, and recreation opportunities at Town Hall Annex) and senior housing on Main Road. Sidewalks would also help define future “pedestrian-friendly” business opportunities and village development along Main Road, within the business- zoned district.

8.5.2. Bicycle Paths / Multi-use Trails

Bicycling is another important means of non-motorized travel and, due to their wide use along Town roads, improved accommodations for bicyclists should be considered. “Sharing the road”

is the primary condition of bicycle travel in Westport, and this requires adequate pavement width, in addition to mutual respect between bicyclists and motorized vehicle operators. Westport's local roadways are generally wide enough to allow two vehicles and "single file" bicyclists. Granted, a wider roadway is desirable for bicycles, but many roads in Town have narrow right-of-ways, which restrict widening unless stonewalls and poles are moved or removed. The two modes of travel can coexist, if bicycles stay in single file and if drivers slow down to safely pass them. There are, however, safety concerns for bicyclists (and walkers) who use roadways, because of visibility problems and motor vehicle speeds, which are difficult to enforce.

Proposals for off-road (or parallel-to-road) multi-use trails/bikepaths, for non-motorized travel have been the subject of various studies within Town. Town residents have indicated in surveys that they are in favor of investigation of increased "off-road" opportunities for bicycles and other non-motorized modes of travel. Such types of trails would offer bicyclists, rollerbladers and walkers a facility separate from the road, and safe from motor vehicle conflicts.

The State supports trails that offer travel within municipalities and are also part of a regional network linking communities and major destination points. Other towns have made use of abandoned railroad rights-of-way for trails -- Fall River is currently constructing a trail along the abandoned railroad that will terminate at the Westport Town line near Route 6. Ideally, a Westport trail would connect to the Fall River trail; however, the rail line in Westport is still used. Also, because of its east/west orientation along only the northern part of Town, it does not provide access to the central portion of Town or the Beach area, where typically bicyclists would desire to travel. One possible opportunity for an "off-road trail" addresses use of the Route 88 public "corridor" (right-of-way) to generally parallel the roadway, off road, through the undeveloped/ unused portion of the right-of way. Given the layout of the Route 88 corridor, the opportunity exists for the trail to extend from Route 6 to Horseneck Beach. The possibility of connecting to the Fall River trail also exists, if a trail could be incorporated into roadway improvements that the State performs to Route 6, or if utility easements could be used in conjunction with roads. Trails that are within a State right-of-way would require close coordination with the State during planning and design, as they would be subject to State and environmental regulations. Other possible routes for trails, which could be investigated are along old rights of way (ancient ways) or on private land via easements.

Typically, the studies of trail opportunities take place at a local level. In years past, a Town-appointed "Bikepath Committee" performed a study and prepared a proposal for a trail along Old County Road. Many residents, however, did not support the proposal, because of concerns with safety and vehicle conflicts. It was generally observed that the Old County Road right-of-way would not provide an adequate offset between the roadway and the trail, and it was felt that because of their close proximity, conflicts between road and trail users would create safety concerns. There is continued interest in the study of multi-use trails in Town, and local efforts are currently taking place for preparation of a study.

8.6. Classification of Roadways

Seventeen roads in Westport have been classified by the State and are thus eligible for State/Federal programs which provide funding for construction of improvements. The roads classified by the State and their classifications are given below:

Table 8-4. State Classification of Westport Roads

| State Classification |
|----------------------|
|----------------------|

| Road | Interstate | Rural Major Collector | Rural Minor Collector |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Route I-195 | X | | |
| Route 6 | | X | |
| Route 177 (Am. Legion Hwy.) | | X | |
| Route 88 | | X | |
| Adamsville Road | | X | |
| East Beach Road | | X | |
| Hix Bridge Road | | X | |
| Horseneck Road | | X | |
| John Reed Road | | X | |
| Old County Road | | X | |
| Pine Hill Road | | X | |
| Blossom Road | | | X |
| Briggs Road | | | X |
| Old Bedford Road | | | X |
| Reed Road | | | X |
| Sanford Road | | | X |
| Tickle Road | | | X |

The remaining roads in Town are classified as "Local roads". Local Roads can be further classified into categories such as : "Local Roads of Regional Significance", "Local Roads of Scenic or Historic Value", "Subdivision Roads", and "Unpaved Roads". The local (and some state classified) roads that are considered "Scenic" are listed below and discussed in the Chapter entitled "Land Use".

Table 8-5. Scenic Roads

- Adamsville Road, from Main Rd. to RI line (agricultural)
- Drift Rd. from Head of Westport to Route 88 (agricultural)
- Gifford Rd. from Rte 6 to Old County Rd. (Residential)
- Hix Bridge Road, Main Road to Dartmouth (agricultural)
- Horseneck Rd. from Hix Bridge to East Beach (agricultural)
- Main Road from Central Village to Westport Point (residential)
- Pine Hill Rd-Sissons Corner to Hix Bridge (transportation)
- Sodom Road from Charlotte White Rd. to Adamsville Rd. (transportation)

Classifications of local roads can also be used to develop design and construction requirements according to traffic volume, speed, and other criteria. These requirements may be used to update standards for road construction in new subdivisions, as well as for upgrading existing Town roads to handle changes in the nature and volume of traffic as the Town grows. Road standards must be coordinated between the Westport Zoning Bylaws, General Bylaws, and Subdivision Control Regulations to improve consistency of the regulatory process and road design. Recommendations regarding the further classification of local roads and coordination with Town Bylaws and Regulations are included in Section 8. 7.

8.7. Implementation/Action Plan

8.7.1 Mitigation Measures Corresponding to Roads/Intersections of Concern

Route 6/ Sanford Road Intersection

The State Massachusetts Highway Department is currently performing a study for improvements at the intersection. The Town should request that the State prioritize the design and construction of the improvements.

Route 6 Corridor

The Town should request that the State perform a study of the Route 6 corridor before they design any improvements. In light of the safety concerns with the existing median layout, the Town should request that the State perform a safety analysis relative to the median openings. Such a study could support the need for left turn lanes or determine if additional openings are needed, which would reduce the number of vehicles turning at each opening. The State could also investigate other alternatives for the road to benefit the Town and reflect Westport's vision for the future of this roadway. The Town may request additional landscaping of the median or addition of street trees, and increased sidewalks. The study may also address the option of changing the 4-lane roadway to a 2-lane roadway with separate left turn stacking lanes at median openings, or shifting the roadway within the right of way. By narrowing the road, or shifting it off-center in the right of way, opportunities for inclusion of a "multi-use trail" for non-motorized modes of travel, including pedestrians, within the Route 6 corridor could also be investigated.

Main Road/Adamsville Road Intersection

Based on the volume of traffic utilizing Adamsville Road, and the safety concerns related to turning movements (particularly left turns onto Adamsville Road), and restricted sight lines for left turns onto Main Road, the Town should consider improving the intersection with new island geometry.

East Beach Road

Based on the continued problems with the road being destroyed during storm events, the Town should address permanent improvements to the road. The road is classified as a state road which is eligible for Federal and State funding. Because of the environmental impact of existing conditions and proposed solutions, additional grant funding may be available to address both maintenance and environmental issues. The Town should coordinate with the State to study options for alleviating the flooding, such as raising the roadway and providing equalization culverts to allow flow between the ocean and the River, or excavating the "Let" and constructing the roadway on a filled causeway with a bridge over the opening.

Route 88 intersections with Briggs Road, Old County road, Charlotte White Road, Hixbridge Road and Drift Road

Based on safety concerns at the intersections, the Town should request that the State revise the striping at the intersections, for the right lane to be a "right turn only" lane, thereby alleviating the "double through" lanes.

Route 6/Route 177 intersection

The Town should coordinate with Dartmouth regarding petitioning the State for a safety study of this intersection, and determine whether improvements are needed, such as a left turn stacking lane from Route 6 westbound onto Route 177.

Main Road

As previously discussed, the number of curb cuts on Main Road between Village Commons Plaza and Town Hall currently causes confusion and safety concerns for traffic on the roadway. Included in the Land Use section of this plan, are discussions of Village Zoning, which might include streetscape regulations, (see Section 8.7.4 below). However, due to the existing significance of Main Road to the Town, as the primary shopping and civic center of Westport, improvements to the streetscape of Main Road, with or without additional regulations, should be considered a priority. These improvements may include sidewalks, landscaping, such as street trees, and amenities, such as benches and pedestrian scale streetlights. Additionally, as discussed in Section 8.7.4 below, the Town should consider requiring “shared driveways” and/ or frontage roads along this section of Main Road. Incentives should be provided to existing businesses to encourage them to consolidate existing driveways, which would decrease the number of vehicles turning at multiple driveways. Additionally, it would be prudent for the Town to implement regulations concerning future development along Main Road, specifically regarding requirements of “shared driveways”, to help prevent exacerbation of the existing problems.

Rte 177 intersection with Sodom Road

Needs a further study of safety issues regarding sight lines, left turns, etc.

8.7.2 Proposed Recommendations for Sidewalk Improvements

For the safety and welfare of the pedestrians who use this road, primarily schoolchildren, the Town should prioritize installation of a sidewalk on one side of Old County Road, from Route 88 to the Middle School. A sidewalk on the north side would connect the Middle School and library to the existing sidewalk, which extends to the Head of Westport. A crosswalk across Old County Road will be required to connect to the existing sidewalk on the south side of Old County Road near Route 88, which then connects to the crosswalk across Route 88. Due to the conflict of vehicle turning movements at the intersection of Old County Road and Route 88, a “mid-block” crosswalk on Old County Road should be considered, located 200-300 feet east of the intersection. The exact location of the crosswalk should be based on adequate sight distance for vehicles and pedestrians to maximize safety.

8.7.3 Proposed Recommendations for Multi-Use Trails

Because Town residents have indicated their support of “multi-use trails”, Town officials should support study of trail opportunities within Town, whether by a Town-appointed committee or volunteer “grass-roots” groups. If any trail proposals are considered viable, the Town should conduct public awareness forums and obtain consensus at the town, regional, and State levels. Town support is critical in the funding process, which would usually require a combination of Federal, State and Town funds.

8.7.4 Proposed Town Regulations for Future Growth

Subdivision Connections. Based on the significant concern voiced by Town residents regarding connection of new roadways to existing subdivision roadways, it is recommended that the

Planning Board regulate the connection of any new roadway to an existing subdivision (residential) roadway.

Frontage Roads/Shared Access in Business Zones. Based on safety concerns related to numerous curb cuts for commercial uses along Town roadways, it is recommended that the Town promote the use of “frontage” roads and “shared access” for adjacent business-zoned uses along business-zoned roadways in Town. A bylaw and regulations should apply to new developments and also address incentives for retrofitting existing driveways of adjacent uses into shared accesses. The Planning Board would develop the by-law and regulations.

Village Streetscapes. Village Zoning recommendations (See Land Use section), address the planning for and regulation of new development in the villages and the identification of village boundaries. The Town should investigate funding sources for village streetscaping of existing public roads, addressing landscaping, textured crosswalks, sidewalks and amenities such as pedestrian-scale streetlights, benches, etc. and should sequentially implement the proposed streetscape provisions in the existing villages, including Central Village, Head of Westport, and Westport Point. The Planning Board should develop bylaws and regulations for new village development. Implementation of improvements to existing streets using State funding will require the Board of Selectmen to apply for funding and coordinated planning between that Board, the Highway Department and the Planning Board.

8.7.5 Recommendations for Public Transportation

Westport needs to coordinate public transportation with the location of higher-density housing, elderly housing and commercial development. If zoning is changed to accommodate higher density residential development in some areas, and if the commercial strip zones are re-configured to encourage commercial nodes, a more detailed public transportation plan may then be developed. The expected large increase in the elderly population will require more extensive van service for this segment of the population.

The coming of commuter rail to Fall River and New Bedford will require coordination at the regional level. Increased traffic on certain Westport roads generated by commuters to the rail stations will require study. Commuter parking lots may be needed. Commuter vans may alleviate some of the expected increase in traffic on local roads.

NOTES

- 1. For the complete action plan for Traffic and Circulation, please refer to Section 12.6 of Chapter 12.**
- 2. Map 8-1 illustrates Westport's circulation system as well as many of the existing problems and recommendations discussed in this chapter.**
- 3. At the public meeting held on February 26, 2003 the on-going problem of East Beach Road washing out was a concern of attendees. During discussion of the Circulation element by the Planning Board, then Chairman John Montano expressed concern with the safety of East Beach Road in the summer, when it is shared by motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles. In a related comment from the public at the meeting of February 26, 2003, a desire was expressed for provisions to get to the beach by means other than driving.**
- 4. The inevitable increase in traffic in the Central Village was an issue raised at the public meeting of February 26, 2003 by a Central Village resident. This Master Plan suggests a detailed study be made of traffic and parking provisions in the villages, especially**

Central Village. During the Planning Board discussion of this plan element, support was voiced for sidewalks in the Central Village.

- 5. During the Planning Board discussion of this element, it was suggested that East Beach Road improvements might be handled as a hazard mitigation project under federal requirements for same, and that the project might be eligible for funding under a federal or state program.**

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