

Chapter 10 Transportation



Avon's transportation system includes local roads, state roads, sidewalks, and the recent addition of greenways for pedestrian and bicycle use. The Town has 136 miles of Town-owned roads; 16 miles of State roads; and 23 miles of private roads. There have been 51 miles of new roads added since 1989. Roads are classified as local, collector or arterial, according to their function. A local streets major function is to provide access to abutting properties; collector streets, as the name implies "collect" or funnel traffic from residential areas and direct it to arterial streets; arterial streets are generally designed to efficiently distribute local and regional traffic through town and tend to carry the most traffic. **Map 11** depicts the current and proposed Plan of Circulation. This Map identifies the current system of roadways by classification along with recommendations for roadway improvements and new road construction.

Arterial Roads

All State roadways in Avon are designated as arterial roads. They include Routes 44, 10/202, 167, and 177. Route 44 is the principal east-west route through Avon. It is a roadway which has the burden of accomplishing many tasks. It is "Main Street" providing access to the historic village center. In addition, Avon's main commercial/retail corridor stretches for almost 3 miles along it. Over 1 million square feet of commercial space exists here. Route 44 must

provide for convenient and safe access to these locations. At the same time, the roadway must move a significant volume of traffic. This roadway has also become more significant to the region as a whole, as there are limited options when traveling east/west through the Farmington Valley. In recognition of these facts, the State Department of Transportation has considered the possibility of making very significant changes to the roadway over the past several decades. In 1956, the DOT attempted to have the Route 44 corridor west of Hartford added to the interstate system. This was rejected, but, nevertheless, the State proceeded with planning for an expressway. In 1963, the State proposed a four to six lane road leading from I-291 through Avon to North Canaan. In 1967, highway officials were attempting to get federal funding to relocate a portion of Route 44. This segment would lead from I-291 to a point on present day Route 44, near Route 167. In 1970 the state considered building a tunnel through Avon Mountain. By 1975, the State's Master Transportation Plan called for allocating \$133 million for "studies" of the corridor from West Hartford to North Canaan. Each of these plans met with significant political opposition from residents in Avon as well as three other communities which would have been impacted.

All freeway plans have now been abandoned but more recently other proposals to ease traffic in the Farmington Valley have been considered. In

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1997 a State proposed plan called for two new roadways to be constructed, north and south of Route 44. The north road would be two lanes, connecting Bloomfield, Avon, and Route 10 in Simsbury. A tunnel through Avon Mountain would cost about \$500 million. The south road would extend from I-84 at Route 9 in Farmington as a four lane highway, then narrow to two lanes and join Route 44 in Avon. These proposals were also abandoned due to concerns raised by area residents as well as concerns over environmental impacts.

Route 44 and Route 10 Corridor Study

The most recent study for Route 44 was initiated in 1998. At the same time a study with a very similar scope of work was initiated for Route 10. These reports known as the Route 44 and Route 10 Corridor Studies were completed in 2001, after a three-year effort. The Route 44 Study examined the roadway from Hartford to New Hartford. The Route 10 Study looked at this roadway from Granby to Farmington. There was significant participation from all the towns along the corridor, by both elected and appointed officials, Town Staff, and the general public. These Plans were officially endorsed by Resolution of both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Town Council and are incorporated by reference to this Plan. The studies concluded that vacant land was no longer available, nor was there public support to consider a major reconstruction project. These

Plans recommend more modest but, nevertheless, significant changes within the existing right-of-way.

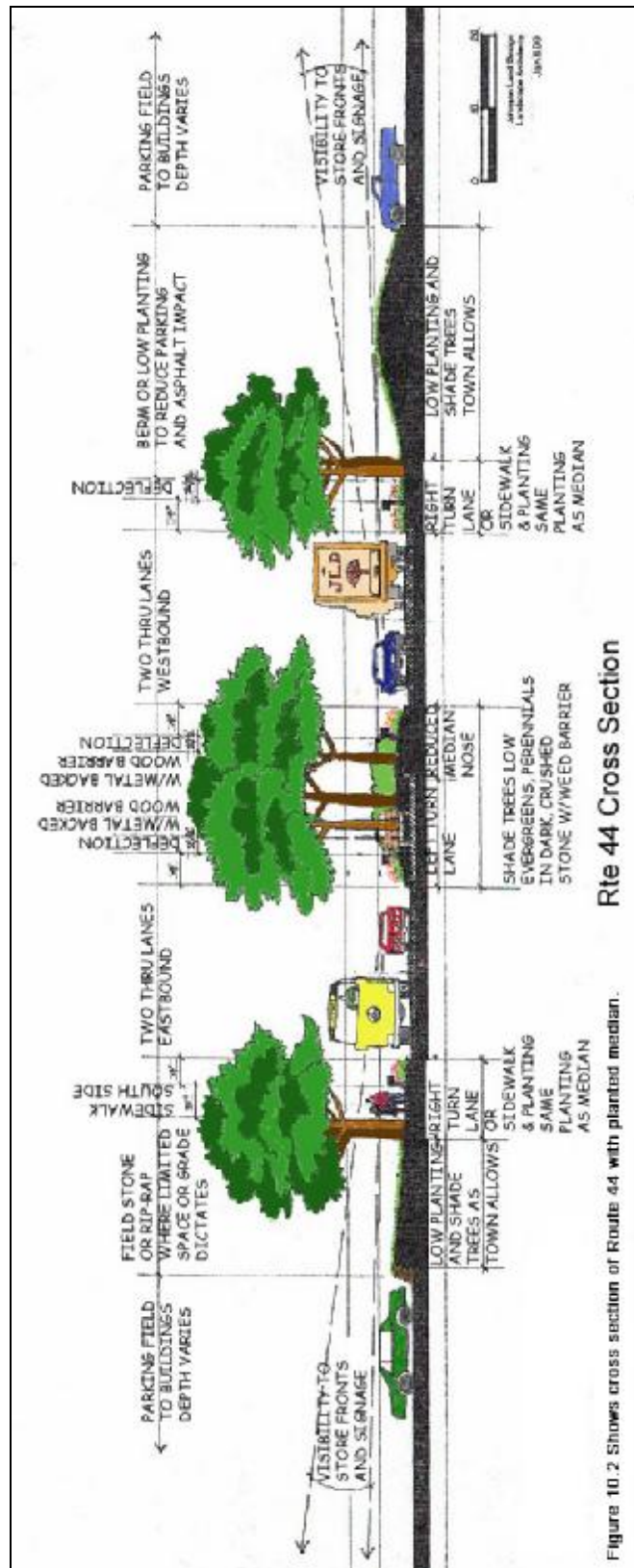
Recommendations to Route 44:

- Installation of a landscaped center median from the Simsbury Town line east to Climax Road (See Figure 10.1)
- Improve roadway geometry over Avon Mountain: add 8-foot shoulders, add 4-foot paved median, realign curves
- Improve driveway safety by consolidating, closing, and relocating commercial driveways as appropriate
- Intersection improvements at
 - Route 44/Route 167
 - Route44/Route10/OldFarms Rd
 - Route 44/Route 10/Nod Road
- Construction of a service road from Dale Rd to the rear of 385 West Main St, continuing east through Bailey Rd intersection, east through Nod Brook Mall, crossing over Nod Brook, continuing east to the rear of the Walmart Plaza to Plaza 44, and ending at the signalized intersection of Lawrence Ave and Route 44. (Figure 10.1 depicts a portion of this proposed service road)
- Construction of a second service road starting at 29 West Main St opposite the intersection of Woodford Ave and Route

- Installation of sidewalks on both the north and south side of the roadway



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Rte 44 Cross Section

Figure 10.2 Shows cross section of Route 44 with planted median.

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Recommendations to Route 10:

- A wholesale widening to 4 lanes is not necessary.
- Many locations have geometrically substandard shoulders that do not provide an adequate opportunity for a motorist to bypass a left-turning vehicle and safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.
- As maintenance activities are undertaken such as repaving, shoulders should be widened to 6 feet in rural areas and to 4 feet in urban areas.
- Replace the bridge across the Farmington River at Old Farms Road and improve the excessively steep eastbound approach.

The Planning and Zoning Commission strongly encourages the State Department of Transportation to follow the recommendations contained in these Plans.



Route 44

Capitol Region Transportation Plan

In 2001, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) adopted the Capitol Region Transportation Plan, which will guide transportation investments in the Region through 2025. This plan recommends improvements to the Route 44 corridor from Canton to Hartford and echoes some of the same recommendations contained in the two 2001 corridor studies. Increasing public safety is the main goal of most of the actions proposed. In the commercial areas, safety problems related to left turns at driveways are identified as being of primary concern. On Avon Mountain safety is a critical problem where steep grades, sharp curves, and high speeds result in frequent and severe accidents. The major road improvements recommended in the CRCOG Plan for the Avon area are:

- 1. Avon Mountain:** Correct safety problems over Avon Mountain by reconstructing roadway to include: 8-foot shoulders; 4-foot painted median (buffer space between opposing lanes of traffic); left-turn lanes at intersections; and reduction of sharp curve near Deercliff Road.
- 2. Avon-Canton Commercial Area:** Correct left-turn accident problem in commercial area of Avon and eastern part of Canton by reconstructing Route 44 with a median. Median to be sufficiently wide (24 feet) to allow

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landscaping to create an attractive “boulevard” type appearance.

Other recommendations include upgrading the Computer Controlled Traffic Signal System, including replacement of older signal systems and installation of new signal systems at locations that meet warrants for this advanced type of control.



Rte 10

Access Management

Access management involves limiting the number of individual driveway cuts onto a heavily traveled roadway in order to preserve the capacity of the existing road and thereby minimize the need for either widening or making operational improvements. Access management is also critical to maintaining the effectiveness of a coordinated traffic signal system. Both roadway capacity and signal system effectiveness can be reduced by construction of too many driveways, poorly located driveways, or poorly designed driveways. Access

management requires active planning by towns and the State to help determine how many driveways will be allowed in the future, where they will be allowed, and how they will be designed.

Avon has been in the forefront of access management through the application of its Zoning Regulations over the past 5 decades, with many businesses now sharing driveways and eliminating unnecessary curb cuts, especially along Route 44. This has been accomplished largely by 2 means. The first is by requiring private developers to grant easements to adjoining private property owners as a condition of site plan approval. These easements are granted at no cost to either party. When the adjoining property owner also applies for site plan approval at some later date, a cross connection is made. This sometimes sets up a condition where an existing driveway (curb cut) can then be closed.

The second technique involves an innovative zoning provision known as consolidated parcel agreements. Adjoining property owners are encouraged to jointly develop or redevelop their commercially-zoned property. Avon’s Zoning Regulations provide certain benefits largely through reduced requirements for parking and yard setbacks as a means to encourage this type of development. This can result in the sharing of a single curb cut and in the instance of

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redeveloped sites the elimination of one or more existing curb cuts.

The Commission should pursue funding sources to prepare a detailed access management plan which can be used as a guide in the review of individual site plan applications. Following the preparation of this plan, regulatory changes can be considered which could require compliance with this Plan when the Commission reviews applications through the Site Plan Approval process.

Collector Streets

Map 11 depicts the existing and proposed collector street network. The following is a list of collector streets:

Arch Road	Lovely Street
Burnham Road	New Road
Carriage Drive	Nod Road
Chevas Road	Northington Drive
Climax Road	OldFarmsRoad
Country Club Road	Scoville Road
Deercliff Road	Stagecoach Road
Harris Road	Talcott Notch Road
Hollister Drive	Thompson Road
Huckleberry Hill Road	Tillotson Road
Juniper Drive	West Avon Road
Lofgren Road	Woodmont Road

Many important recommendations from prior Comprehensive Plans concerning collector streets have now been accomplished. These include the construction of the Woodmont-Juniper connector; extension of Hollister Drive; reconstruction of Country Club Road from West Avon Road to Lovely Street including the

elimination of the “S” curve; and reconstruction of Nod Road including the removal of the “S” curve.

Several sections of a new collector roadway known as Northington Drive have been constructed in the Huckleberry Hill area (Neighborhood #13) over the past 15 years. This construction has taken place incrementally and funded privately with the construction of individual subdivisions. One remaining portion of this roadway, approximately 4,000 feet in length, must still be constructed from where it currently ends (Bridgewater Subdivision). This will provide for an important connection to Lofgren Road. The majority of this road will be constructed privately. However, a small portion of this planned extension (600 feet) crosses the Town-owned “Found Land”. This will require public funding. This should be budgeted for through the Town’s Capital Budget process. It may also be possible to consider a land swap such that this 600 feet portion could also be constructed privately, as part of the development of the parcel of land is now owned by Jakubiak parcel # 3030047.

Plans for a major realignment of Old Farms Road, including reconstruction of the bridge over the Farmington River are currently in design. These improvements are needed to address current safety and capacity issues. This new alignment as shown on **Map 11** will also

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provide an opportunity to buffer the Avon Old Farms School campus from the impacts of Old Farms Road. This road will continue to function as an important collector roadway.

Traffic Volumes

Table 10.1-10.4 presents the ADT at key locations on Route 44, 10/202, 177 and 167. The State Department of Transportation defines ADT as “an estimate of the number of vehicles passing through a defined section of roadway on an average day for both directions of travel combined”. The Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) collected this data during the months of January, February and March of 2003. These counts should be considered approximate as data is collected only over a single day. Results will vary somewhat depending on the month, day of the week, weather conditions, and road construction projects.

Peak volumes of over 34,000 vehicles per day or average daily traffic (ADT) occur on Route 44 between the intersections of Simsbury Road (Rt.10) and Waterville Rd. (Rt. 10). This section of road carries the largest traffic volume in Avon. Other areas along Route 44 carry between 22,000 and 29,000 ADT.

Traffic on Route 10/202 (Waterville Road) varies between 13,000 and 16,000 ADT. The highest volume is at the intersection with Talcott

Notch Road. The ADT on Route 177 (Lovely Street) varies between 5,000 and 8,000. Route 167 (West Avon Road) carries daily volumes between 6,000 and 15,000.

Increased traffic volumes at peak hours have resulted in conditions which require improvements at key intersections between the Town’s collector roads and State Roads. The intersection of Country Club Road and Route 167 as well as the intersection of Talcott Notch Road and Route 10/202 will need to be addressed in order to maintain public safety and a reasonable level of service. Level of service is defined as qualitative measures that characterize operational conditions within a traffic stream and their perceptions by motorists and passengers. Intersection improvements at Old Farms Road and Route 10/202 are being addressed as part of the bridge replacement/Old Farms Road realignment project discussed earlier and are a top priority.



Traffic on Route 44

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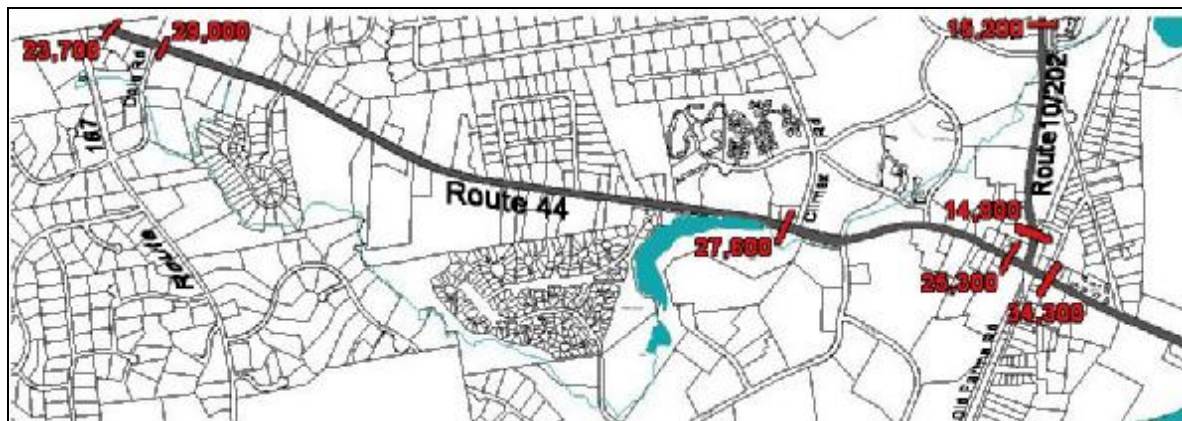


Figure 10.3 Rte 44 and Rte 10/202 Average Daily Traffic for 2003



Figure 10.4 Rte 10 ADT 2003

Table 10.1 Rte 44 and Rte 10/202 Average Daily Traffic for 2003	
Location	Average Daily Traffic 2003
Rte 44	
Avon-Simsbury Town Line	23,700
Dale Rd	29,000
Climax Rd	27,600
West of Old Farms Rd/ Simsbury Rd	25,300
East of Old Farms Rd/ Simsbury Rd	34,300
West of Waterville Rd/ Nod Rd	32,100
East of Waterville Rd/ Nod Rd	22,700
Avon-West Hartford Town Line	23,000
Rte 10/202	
North of Rte 44	14,800
Avon-Simsbury Town Line	15,200

Source: Connecticut DOT ADT counts for 2003

Table 10.2 Rte 10 Average Daily Traffic for 2003	
Location	Average Daily Traffic 2003
South of Rte 44	15,500
Ayrshire Ln	13,800
Old Farms Rd	13,300
Talcott Notch Rd	15,700
Avon-Farmington Town Line	9,400

Source: Connecticut DOT ADT counts for 2003

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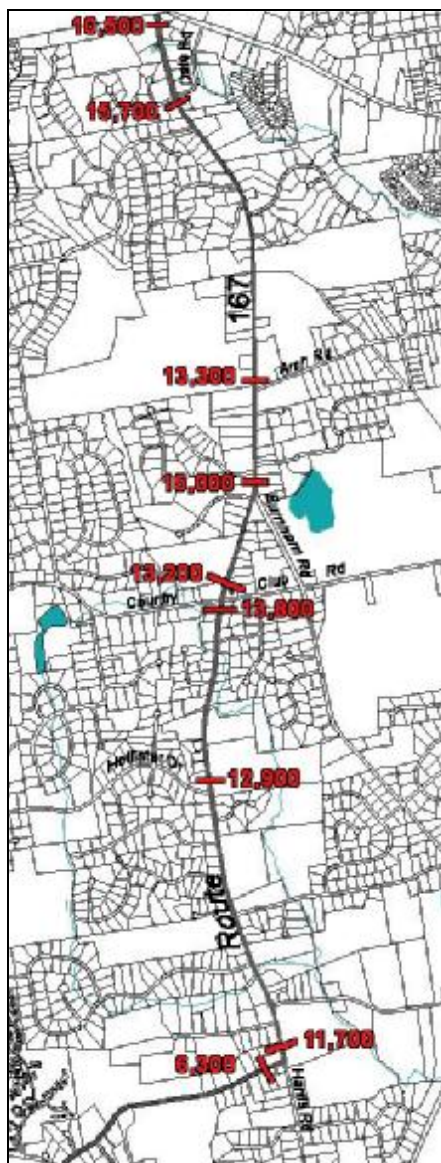


Figure 10.5 Rte 167 ADT 2003

Table 10.3 Rte 167 Average Daily Traffic for 2003	
Location	Average Daily Traffic 2003
Avon-Simsbury Town Line	10,500
Dale Rd	15,700
Arch Rd	13,300
Burnham Rd	15,000
North of Country Club Rd	13,200
South of Country Club Rd	13,800
Hollister Dr	12,900
North of Harris Rd	11,700
West of Harris Rd	6,300

Source: Connecticut DOT ADT counts for 2003

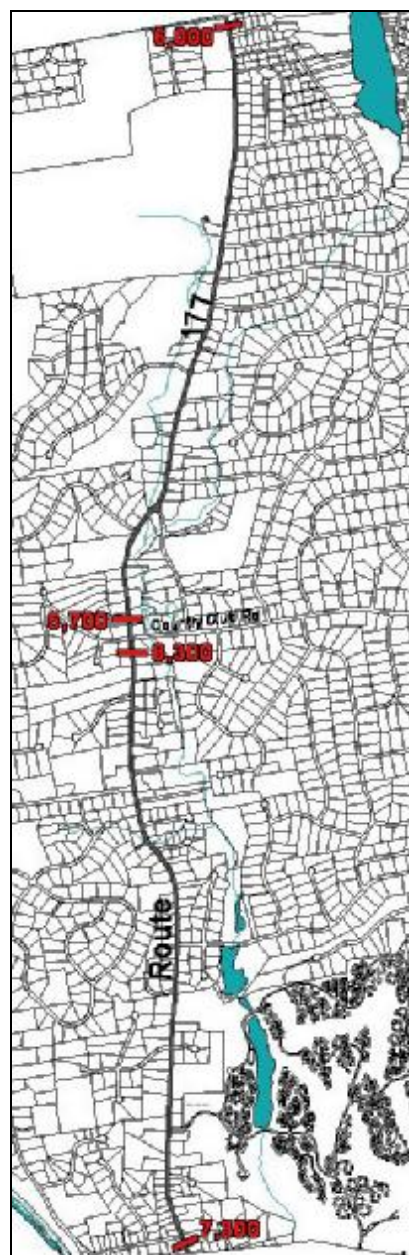


Figure 10.6 Rte 177 ADT 2003

Table 10.4 Rte 177 Average Daily Traffic for 2003	
Location	Average Daily Traffic 2003
Avon-Canton Town Line	6,000
North of Country Club Rd	5,700
South of Country Club Rd	8,300
Avon-Farmington Town Line	7,300

Source: Connecticut DOT ADT counts for 2003

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Scenic Roads

Public Act 87-280 authorizes the Commissioner of Transportation to designate State highways or portions thereof as scenic roads in consultation with the Commissioners of Environmental Protection and Economic & Community Development. A scenic road is defined as any State highway that: 1) passes through agricultural land or abuts land on which is located an historic building or structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places; or 2) affords vistas of marshes, shorelines, or forests with mature trees or notable geologic or other natural features. Consideration should be given to utilizing this designation for Route 167 (West Avon Road). If so designated, any future improvements made to this roadway by the State would require special design considerations including landscaping, signage, and pedestrian needs.



Scenic Road

Temporary and Permanent Cul-de-Sacs

The Planning Commission's practice has been to designate some cul-de-sacs as "temporary" during the subdivision approval process. These temporary cul-de-sacs are meant to be extended at some future time when adjacent property is developed. Many roads have been extended in this manner, greatly contributing to the Town's overall circulation system. In 1989, 33 roadways existed that ended in a "temporary cul-de-sac". Since then, 7 of these 33 have been extended. Several of the remaining temporary cul-de-sacs have been deemed unnecessary or not feasible due to environmental considerations. In addition, several new temporary cul-de-sacs have been added to the town's inventory since the last Plan. There are presently 17 temporary cul-de-sacs which are depicted on **Map 11**.

Permanent cul-de-sacs are designed to be "dead ends", with no future extension or connection possible. The Subdivision Regulations establish strict standards for the maximum length and maximum number of homes permitted on permanent cul-de-sacs for reasons related to public safety. The vast majority of cul-de-sacs in Avon are designated as permanent.

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Sidewalks

Avon has a limited sidewalk system and there are no requirements for the construction of sidewalks in new subdivisions. However, there are sidewalks along West Avon Road in the vicinity of Country Club Road south to Scoville Road, along Scoville Road east to the Farmington Valley Greenway. Consideration should be given to expanding the system, particularly in the vicinity of schools and neighborhood businesses. Consideration should also be given to the construction of lower cost gravel seasonal use walkways in areas where use is likely to be limited. If this concept is used, the Town could eliminate the requirement for winter maintenance by abutting property owners.



Avon Center Sidewalk on Rte 44

Additional sidewalk construction in Avon Center is a key component to accomplishing the goals of the 2005 Avon Center Study. Sidewalks should be constructed as shown in this Plan.

Sidewalks along both sides of Route 44 should be constructed as part of the overall Plan for modifications as described in the 2001 Route 44 Corridor Study.



Avon Center Sidewalk on Rte 44

Bicycles

Avon has one designated bicycle path from the Farmington line north to the Simsbury line. It is part of The Farmington Valley Greenway, a multi-purpose trail that has been completed for the entire length in Avon. The Greenway is nearing completion in other Valley towns and will stretch for 22 miles from the Massachusetts/Connecticut State line to Farmington. The Greenway is also part of the Farmington Canal Trail, which is proposed to extend from New Haven, Connecticut, to Northampton, Massachusetts.

In April 2000, the Capitol Region Council of Governments adopted the Capitol Region Bicycle Plan that defines a strategy for making the Region a bike friendly environment that supports bicycling as a viable form of travel. It is worthwhile to review the vision statement:

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'That by the year 2010, residents and visitors of the Region will be able to safely and conveniently walk, bicycle, or take another type of non-motorized vehicle via roads and multi-use trails, to employment centers, shopping areas, bus and train centers, recreational and cultural attractions, and schools. Residential and commercial land use planning and development will incorporate walking and bicycling as legitimate transportation modes, providing people of all ages with efficient and enjoyable transportation options within development clusters and to nearby destinations. It is our intent that such steps will promote a sense of community and friendliness in our communities, while enhancing our appreciation of the natural environment.'



Farmington Valley Greenway Map

The recommendations the Plan calls for are:

- 1. Regional Greenway System** - Avon has completed its portion of this trail. A future link with the Charter Oak Greenway is proposed. Once linked, the two greenways will become part of the even larger network of trails that is known as the East Coast Greenway that will eventually stretch from Maine to Florida.
- 2. Bike Friendly Roadways** - Most of the cycling in the region will be on roads. Two important strategies that have the biggest impact on bicycling safety and cyclists' perception of safety are wide curb lanes and wide shoulders (4 feet or more).
- 3. Bike Friendly Land Use** - The main areas of concern with this regard are access to a development and places to park and secure a bike. Developers, towns and the state are encouraged to provide more bike racks in appropriate areas.
- 4. Bike Friendly Transit** - Cycling can be feasible for a greater number of individuals if a cycling trip can be combined with a transit trip. The bike plan recommends secure storage for bicycles at transit stops, and special racks on the exterior of busses so cyclists can take their bike with them while they ride the bus.

Reconstruction/improvements to existing roadways, particularly collector roadways, should employ these principles.

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Farmington Valley Greenway

Goals and Policies

Goal:

Provide for the safe and efficient movement of vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic within the Town of Avon.

Policies:

1. Many of the proposed roadways shown in the previous Plan of Development have been completed. Continue to complete the remainder of the connector roads as shown on the Circulation Plan as part of the subdivision process or town initiative as a capital project where it is deemed necessary. These roadways include the realignment of Old Farms Road, extension of Northington Drive, and connections to designated temporary cul-de-sacs.
2. Encourage the State to implement Route 44 and Route 10 improvements as outlined in the Route 44 Corridor study and Route 10 Corridor Study and as summarized in this

Plan. Left hand turning movements have become an ever increasing safety concern on Route 44. A raised landscaped center median on Route 44 is an important change to address the impacts of increased volumes of traffic and to contribute to the aesthetics of the roadway.

3. Route 10 (Simsbury Road and Waterville Road) should remain a two-lane roadway.
4. Encourage the State DOT to implement improvements to state roads in Avon. Ensure that these improvements are done in a manner which respects neighborhood and community character. Consider the advantages of Public Act 87-280, Scenic Roads.
5. Implement the reconstruction and realignment of Old Farms Road and the construction of a new bridge over the Farmington River as shown on **Map 11**, as well as the Future Land use Plan.
6. Implement a sidewalk construction and maintenance plan for sidewalks as outlined in the Avon Center Study and in other strategic locations, particularly along Route 44, in school zones and in neighborhood shopping districts.
7. Consider pedestrian and bicycle traffic when designing or redesigning new roads.
8. Utilize appropriate traffic calming techniques which do not compromise safety,

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but will slow traffic in Avon Center and on local roads. (See Avon Center Study)

9. Continue to encourage the use of common driveways, interconnection of parking lots, acceleration and deceleration lanes, and to limit the number of curb cuts along the Town's major arterial roadways.
10. Eliminate the use of restricted right in/right out driveways as an access management technique.
11. Consider a realignment of Enford Street such that it results in a four-way intersection with Woodford Avenue. This could be accomplished by shifting Enford Street to the north utilizing the eastern end of the Towpath School site.

12. Work with the State Department of Transportation to improve the level of service at key intersections between State roads and Town collector roads. Two priorities are the intersection of Country Club Road and Route 167 (West Avon Road) and the intersection of Talcott Notch Road and Route 10/202 (Waterville Road).



Aerial View of Route 44 and Rte 10 Intersection