

# TRANSPORTATION

*"There can be no doubt that the transportation sector is the most critical sector of our economy."*

Robert Brady

# 12

Torrington's State and local streets and public transportation services are the primary elements of its transportation system. The design development and improvement of this system is crucial to effective planning for the orderly development and support of the City and the surrounding region.

Attractive North End Street



East Main Street – improve streetscape (above);  
New residential street (below)



Torrington's transportation system includes:

- a network of local and state roads and highways,
- a multi-purpose trail,
- a network of sidewalks and off-road trails and paths,
- NWCT Transit District bus routes, and
- an unutilized rail line.

## Road Network

Torrington has 163 miles of roadways and 600 streets and roads.

There are approximately 60 electronic traffic signals helping to control the proper and orderly flow of traffic.

## Provide for a Comprehensive Transportation System

Transportation typically focuses on roads and the automobile. Torrington should provide for a transportation system that is comprehensive and addresses all transportation needs.

- provide a safe, convenient highway and local street system;
- support transportation improvements that will improve travel safety, protect existing land-uses and guide future land-use consistent with the overall goals of Plan of Conservation and Development;
- focus on use and improvement of the existing highway and street system;
- support plans for the improvement of Downtown to enhance the safety and convenience of traffic movements (automobile, bicycle and pedestrian) and provide adequate off-street parking facilities;
- balance the need for traffic and road safety improvements with the need to protect and preserve existing land-uses and historic structures;
- continue Torrington's long-range pavement management program;
- encourage cooperation and coordination of the local pavement improvements and in-street utility construction to avoid unnecessary disturbances to newly improved public streets;
- develop model streetscape plans for commercial zones; and
- continue the practice of requiring site development plans for business with coordination of landscape and streetscape improvements along street frontage.

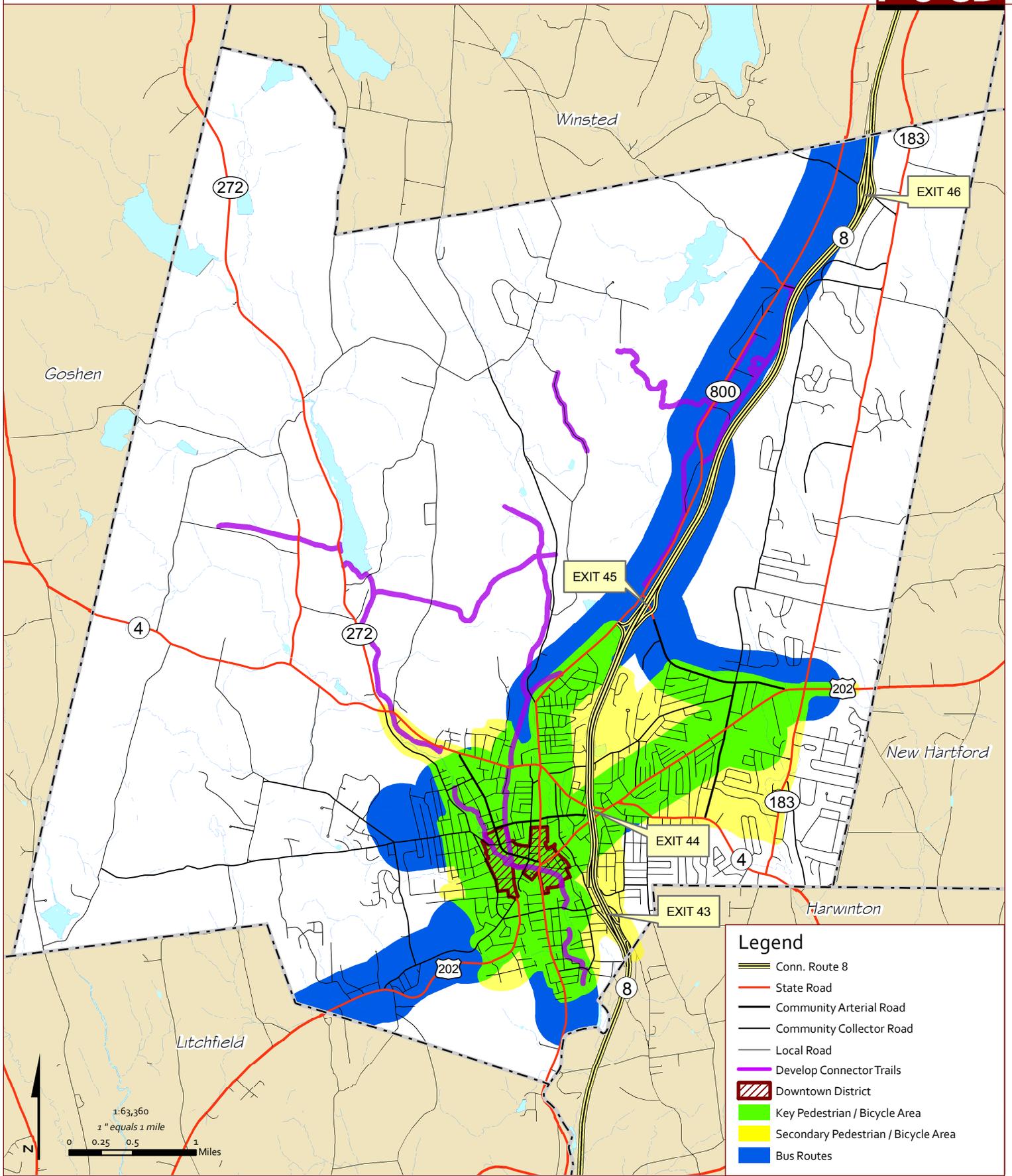


Sidewalks that are not part of the road network (above); Improve pedestrian safety (below)



Sidewalks in Downtown are very important

# BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN



**Legend**

- Conn. Route 8
- State Road
- Community Arterial Road
- Community Collector Road
- Local Road
- Develop Connector Trails
- Downtown District
- Key Pedestrian / Bicycle Area
- Secondary Pedestrian / Bicycle Area
- Bus Routes

## Provide Safe Routes for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

A comprehensive transportation plan must also provide safe pedestrian access in Downtown, densely developed residential neighborhoods, near schools or recreation areas and along major city collector roads.

Major streets in Torrington in need of sidewalk construction or sidewalk maintenance are Winsted Road, East Main Street, etc. Development and subdivision applications that include frontage on a major collector street should be evaluated for sidewalk needs. In major new subdivisions sidewalk should be planned along the main interior subdivision roads at a minimum.



Provide bike racks (above); Provide bike lanes (below)



Bicycling Downtown

Bikeways are also valuable for both transportation and recreation purposes. Federal and State funds are available to design and construct bike and walking paths. It is recommended that Torrington support regional efforts to urge use of State and federal funds for high priority sidewalk construction.

The five-mile Sue Grossman Still River Greenway project, along the abandoned rail line parallel to Winsted Road, can be replicated in other sections of Torrington. The Regional Transportation Plan recommends consideration of a rails and trails bikeway along the active rail line in Downtown, which could be extended southerly along the Naugatuck River through Thomaston.

As with sidewalks, major collector-streets should be designed to be bicycle-friendly. The Regional Plan recommends that when a State highway in Torrington is improved, the roadway should include a minimum shoulder width of at least four feet for safe bicycle use.

## Support Transit and Commuting Opportunities

Public transportation is an important part of any city transportation plan, especially in metropolitan city centers. Large, densely developed city centers have public bus service with multiple routes and continuous service. Small cities, such as Torrington, do not, have a sufficient population base to support extensive transit services; nevertheless, these services are essential to segments of the population and can play an important role in Downtown development.

Bus and other mass transit services require governmental subsidies to continue operations. Without a critical mass of potential public transit patrons Torrington's expenses per capita will be higher than larger cities.

Easy Street Carpooling Vans



Preserve the old train station (above);  
Provide bus shelters in key locations (below)



Torrington public bus services are provided through the regional Northwestern Connecticut Transit District. This model enables the costs of providing this service to be spread out among all of the communities served. Goals for public transit are:

- maintain, improve and where feasible expand bus transportation service to major existing and proposed employment sites, the city center area and major developed residential neighborhoods with services designed especially for elderly, handicapped and others with no automobile;
- encourage creation of a centralized transit facility for Northwestern Connecticut Transit District for vehicle storage and maintenance, centralized dispatching and administrative functions and
- cooperate with major local employers to support and encourage ride-sharing, car-pooling and use of commuter parking facilities.

Boarding the Rural Transit Bus



The City Hall Candystriper Stop (above)



## Rail Network

The original Naugatuck Railroad was chartered in 1845, to be built between Bridgeport and Winsted, adjacent to the Naugatuck River. Construction began in April, 1848, and was completed by May, 1849. The first regular train service began June 11, 1849.

The Railroad Museum of New England, Inc. (RMNE), a not-for-profit educational and historical organization, now leases the line from the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

RMNE operates excursion trips along the line. These trips are primarily run from Thomaston to Waterbury.

[www.rmne.org](http://www.rmne.org)

## Promote Rail Use for the Future

The Litchfield Hills region has two operational rail lines. One of these lines extends into Torrington and connects to the City of Waterbury. This former Penn Central line is now owned by the Connecticut Department of Transportation and operated privately. No freight service is currently provided on the line, but the State Department of Transportation is evaluating improvements to the line.

Limited seasonal excursion service was re-established in 1997 providing a scenic ride through the beautiful Naugatuck River Valley in restored historical rail passenger cars. However the rail line has been out of service since a rockslide north of the Thomaston dam blocked the tracks.

Removal of the rock blockage and other costly improvements to the Torrington-Waterbury rail line are needed to upgrade it for either freight or commuter passenger service. This is not a top priority in the State Transportation Plan but it is important to the future of Torrington's transportation system and economic development.

Torrington should continue to encourage appropriations of the. State and Federal aid to reinstate a higher level of service on this rail line. Potential actions include:

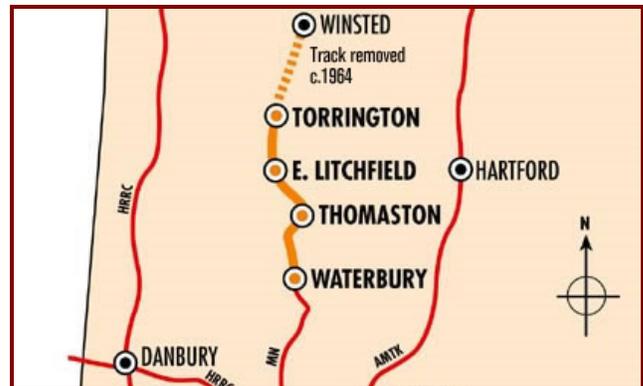
- support continuation of Torrington-Waterbury rail branch line for tourist-passenger use and promote increased use of rail service by local industry;
- Encourage development of new bus service from Torrington area to Metro-North's Upper Harlem Line for commuting to New York City and White Plains; and
- encourage development of abandoned rail right-of-way lines for public use as a transportation or recreational facility or develop them as a shared rails and trails transportation opportunity to be ready when rail use becomes more important to the area. .



Housatonic Railroad (above);RMNE (below)



Photos from [www.rmne.org](http://www.rmne.org)



Naugatuck Railroad (RMNE)

Torrington should work with the New England Railroad Museum to keep the track maintained and useable with a long-term goal of using the rail for tourism, freight and public transportation.

## Continue to Encourage Access Management

Access management focuses on ways to improve traffic flow by reducing reasons why people may get held up in traffic, such as the number of driveways and left turns. Strategies include using shared driveways and interconnected parking lots.

Interconnected drives reduce need to use Route 202



Examples of properties with interconnected driveways (above and below)



Torrington should evaluate land-use activities along major routes to find opportunities to employ access management, either at the time new development is proposed or as part of a City initiative. Potential actions include

- continue to promote access management for land-use activities and consolidate curb cuts when possible; and
- continue implementation of advanced traffic planning and management techniques, including completion of GPS sign inventory system and traffic signalization program.

## Continue to Encourage Traffic Calming

Traffic calming involves changing the way roads are used to reduce speed and provide safety on the roads. Traffic calming techniques can be classified as either education, enforcement or engineering-based solutions:

- *education* programs involve training motorists to cautiously approach certain areas within the transportation system,
- *enforcement* programs can be accomplished through an increased police presence, speed awareness signage or other measures, and
- *engineering* solutions typically involve managing the transportation system by reducing pavement widths on roads and installing devices that cause motorists to slow down, such as speed bumps.

Speed bump



Narrow road (above); Curving road (below)



### Address Other Transportation Issues

Torrington should also monitor other transportation-related issues. Potential issues include:

- communication and coordination of traffic planning with land-use site development reviews and engineering department’s road capital improvement program and
- NW transit authority has been awarded a Federal grant to develop a new transportation facility for their bus fleet and is in the process of locating a facility. Progress on this project will not occur until State funding has been provided. Torrington should continue to support this facility and consider whether it might serve as a transit-oriented development site. A transportation hub or facility, combining commuter, parking, inner-city bus, as well as future rail traffic both freight and passenger is important for Torrington.

	TASK
12-1	Provide for a comprehensive transportation system
12-2	Provide safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists
12-3	Support transit and commuting opportunities
12-4	Promote rail use for the future
12-5	Continue to encourage access management
12-6	Continue to encourage traffic calming
12-7	Address other transportation issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve coordination between traffic planning and capital improvements</li> <li>• Evaluate transit-oriented development at new regional transit hub when State funding becomes available for this facility</li> </ul>