

CHAPTER VIII: TRANSPORTATION

1 INTRODUCTION

A good transportation system is essential to provide the citizens of Claremont a quality of life that meets their aspirations. To meet this standard the transportation system must be easy to use by the public, provide for the safety of the community, support its economic engine, and allow various forms of transit (e.g. – buses and taxis).

A transportation system includes forms of infrastructure that enables various modes of travel including (but not limited to) walking, biking, on-road and off-road vehicles, trains, airplanes, and boats. Such infrastructure may include roads, rails, bicycle paths, parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, curb cuts, traffic lights and signs, intersections, airports, boat launches, and hiking trails. Developing the transportation system as a community resource is critical to provide opportunities for improved lifestyle and promote economic development. It will be critically important for Claremont’s transportation system to meet the growing demands of the city’s population, commercial, and industrial development in order to promote the community’s overall quality of life.

Claremont should annually plan to improve on all transportation resources so that steady progress is achieved. This chapter will focus on recommendations for Claremont to improve the overall transportation system and implement short-term and long-term planning to support future improvements.

Such system improvements should be measurable. Improvements since the 1991 Master Plan include increased road maintenance, parking has been developed, directional and parking signs have been added, bus routes expanded, and improvements have been made to trails.

2 TRANSPORTATION GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal, objectives and recommendations that follow are intended to provide a map to meet the challenges for the city’s future and satisfy the preferences expressed in the survey of citizens for the Master Plan.

OVERALL GOAL: PROVIDE AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT MAKES CLAREMONT AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY TO ITS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Maintain adequate parking facilities accessible to the downtown business district.

Objectives:

- Develop a program to provide overnight parking for residential tenants of downtown buildings so that those buildings may be profitably developed and their value increased.
- Build additional safe and cost effective parking to accommodate more workers, students, visitors and residents to the downtown using a coordinated and long-term approach.
- Take the opportunity to develop vacant land and remove derelict buildings for parking.
- Encourage the school administration to eliminate the need for school-related parking on city streets.
- Make parking lots aesthetically pleasing with “green fences” or plantings.

- Consistently enforce the downtown on-street parking limit of two hours.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Improve the appearance and importance of the airport.

Objectives:

- The city should pursue the removal of the partially built Great Lakes building.
- Continue to develop resources to make the airport a more valuable private aviation facility that can meet the needs of businesses and residents.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Develop bicycle, hiking and recreational vehicle routes.

Objectives:

- As roads are repaved or rebuilt provide for pedestrian and bicycle facilities by adding sidewalks or pathways, where feasible, or markings providing space for joggers and bicyclists to travel.
- Install ramped curbs at crossings to allow these forms of traffic to pass without an obstacle.
- Use directional and warning signs which promote these forms of transportation on and off city streets.
- Look for opportunities to develop walking trails along the Sugar River and on city owned property.
- Install bicycle racks for secure parking of these vehicles at frequently visited places, including places where regional public transit is provided.
- Install a seasonal boat dock to improve the utility of the Connecticut River launch site as a family attraction.
- Create a policy for the safe use of recreational vehicles and, where necessary, coordinate with the State of New Hampshire.
- Include provisions for bicycle travel in future land use regulation updates.
- Set policy for use of watershed areas for hiking and recreational vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Provide for a walkable community.

Objectives:

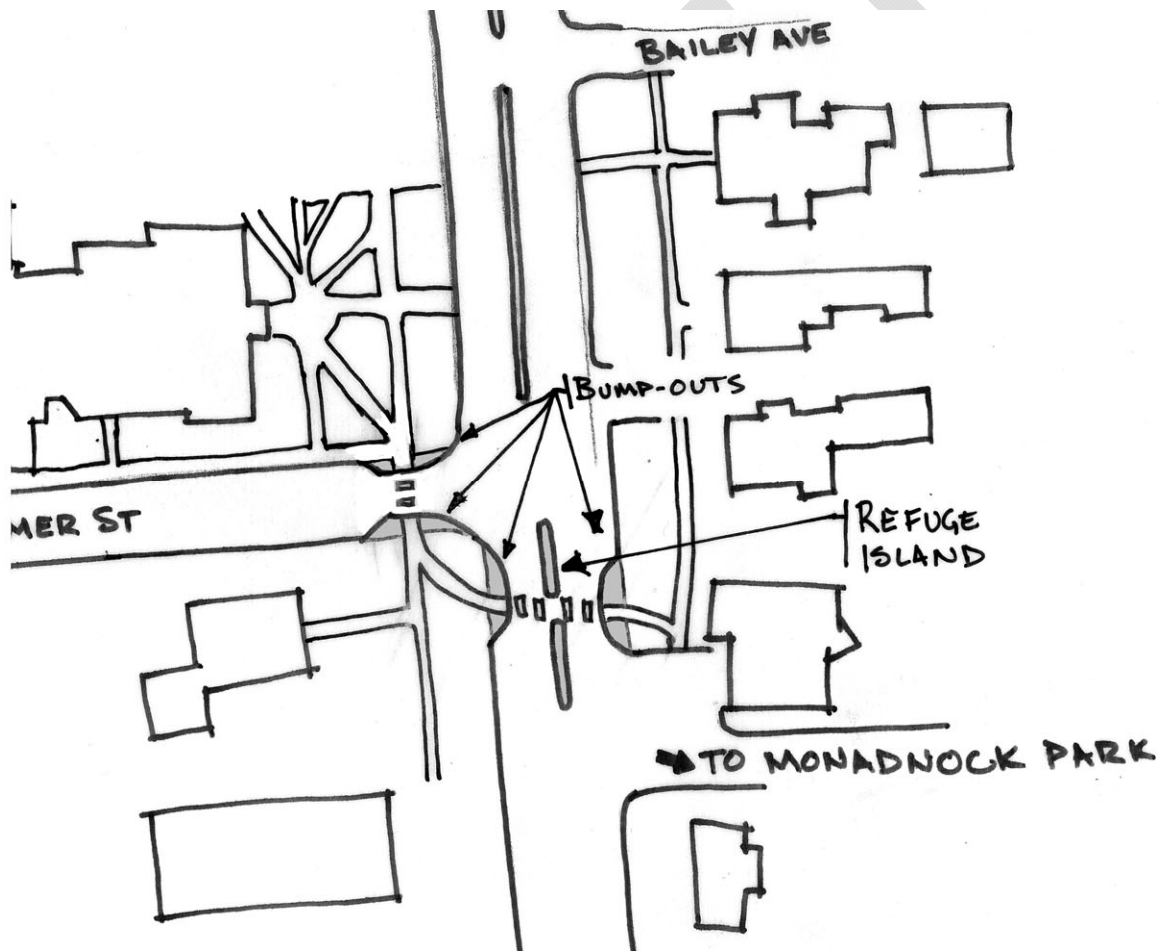
- Build sidewalks on every street within the pupils' required walking radius of schools.
- Promote active student transportation opportunities like walking school bus or bike train programs for student commutes to and from schools.
- Streets that lead to school bus stops should have a sidewalk.
- Provide sidewalks and bicycle routes between city parks.
- Build sidewalks on at least one side of every city street within the developed portion of the community.
- Require new development to provide for sidewalks either through construction or an easement for future construction.
- Consistently fund the repair and construction of sidewalks annually.
- Develop a citywide bicycle and pedestrian plan that can be gradually achieved by acquiring property, easements, and additional space on roads.
- Seek federal funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Improve traffic flow in the central business district.

Objectives:

- Assess need for a traffic light at the intersection of Summer and Broad Streets to improve motor vehicle access to Broad Street and pedestrian safety near Stevens High School.
- Use traffic calming techniques such as narrowing the roadway for crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety. (See Figure 1)
- Eliminate parking spaces and other obstructions near intersections which block the line of sight drivers have for oncoming traffic.
- Remove through truck traffic to reduce congestion especially at Opera House Square and improve pedestrian safety.

Figure 8-1 Safer crosswalks with traffic calming



At busy pedestrian crossings such as the one at Summer and Broad Streets at Stevens High School the roadway can be narrowed to prevent vehicles from passing on the same side of the street which endangers pedestrians.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Improve public transportation resources.

Objectives:

- Build parking areas for park and ride commuters who share automobiles or use transit for commuting.
- Build shelters for citizens waiting to use public transportation.
- Provide shuttle service from commuter parking areas to the central business district to ease the downtown parking demand.
- Support regional bus service.
- Consult regularly with private and governmental groups interested in public transit.
- Investigate ways to contribute financially for the development of mass transit.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Fix traffic problems on Washington Street.

Objectives:

- Develop a route for southbound trucks.
- Develop road network redundancy so that accidents or blockages along Washington Street, particularly in the vicinity of the North Street and Winter Street intersections, do not impede emergency service to or from the hospital.
- Build a road off Washington Street that creates a second way to cross the Sugar River.
- Create zoning and planning provisions that reduce curb cuts along Washington Street such as common entrances for several businesses on parcels which may have separate ownership. (See diagrams.)
- Approve zoning and planning measures that require or create parallel back street connections and avoid cul de sacs and hammerheads. (See Figures 2a and 2b.)
- Apply policies for traffic on Washington Street to other areas of heavy commercial development such as the Charlestown Road and North Street.

Figure 8-2a – Subdivision with Dead-end Streets

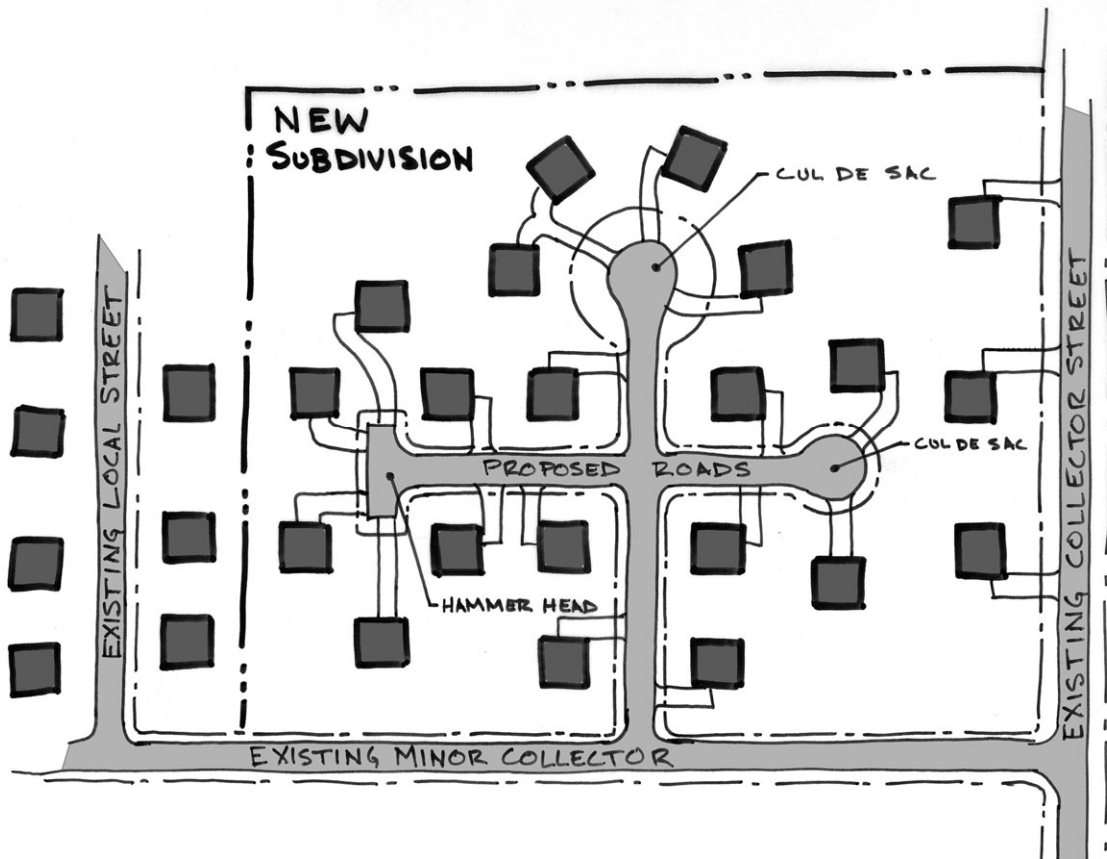
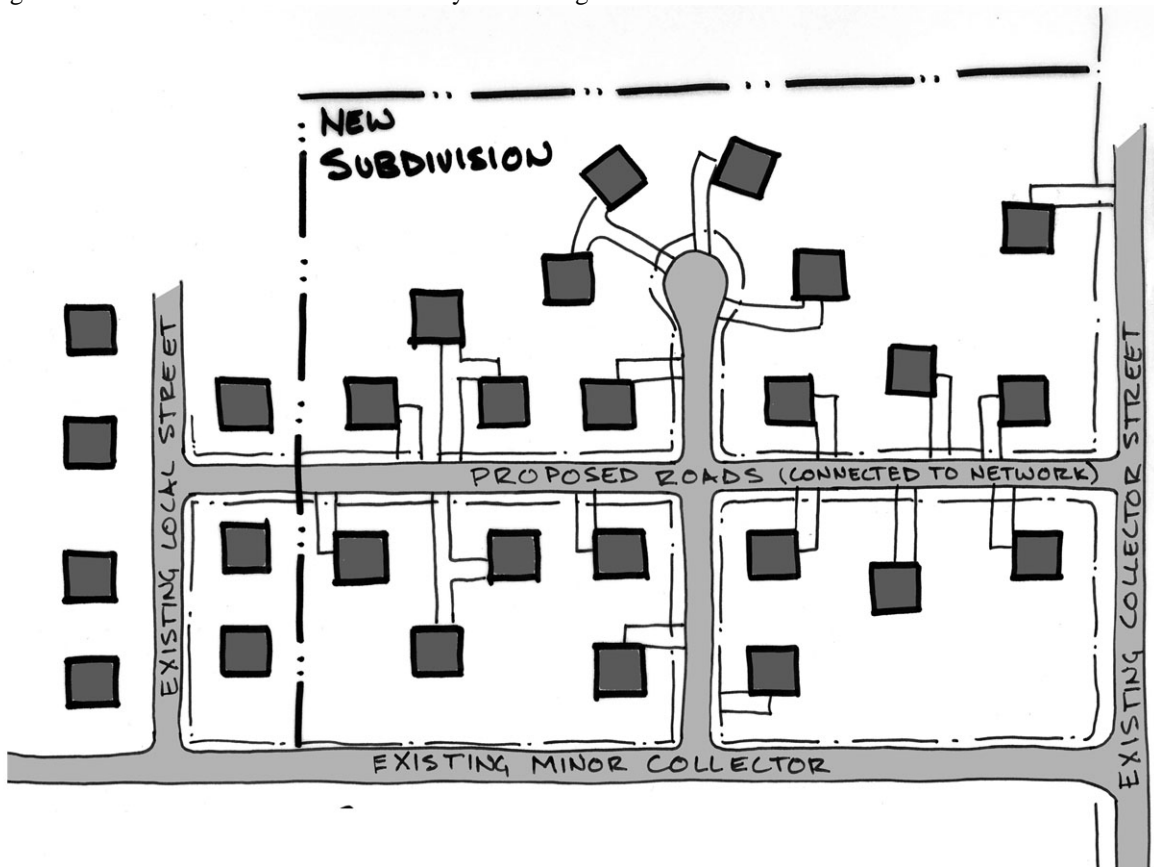


Figure 8-2b – Subdivision with Connectivity to Existing Road Network



Instead of cul de sacs and hammerheads

A well connected street system provides motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists better and more direct routes to schools, shopping, work, and other neighborhoods. A well connected street system not only provides shorter and more efficient connections, but also serves to reduce traffic congestion along the major arterial roadways. A well connected street system improves emergency response times for firefighters, police and ambulance services.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Steadily improve the roadways in Claremont.

Objectives:

- Consistently fund the rebuilding and repaving of roads.
- Create a pavement management program including a system to prioritize most important byways are maintained first and the ones in the worst condition, but less often used, are maintained secondarily.
- Ensure that new road and sidewalk construction meets the code requirements of the city.
- Acquire property or easements so that when funding becomes available for improvements to the transportation network the city can act.
- Do design work so that projects are “shovel ready” in case funding becomes available.
- Continue to improve the Route 103 roadway to facilitate east-west traffic.
- Participate in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission’s Transportation Advisory Committee which plans for improvements on a regional basis.

- Communicate with elected local state representatives about city and regional transportation needs in order to get necessary planning and funding.
- Communicate to the state DOT the city's fiscal constraints and transportation needs for long-term improvement.
- The Traffic Committee should review accident statistics so that dangerous intersections can be identified and improved. The improvements at Drapers Corners will be the product of such planning. Problem intersections include the ones at Sullivan, Mulberry and Union; the one at Mulberry, Tyler and Myrtle; at Plains Road and River Road; and at Summer and Mulberry.
- Make improvements to the transportation system aesthetically pleasing and responsive to the surrounding land uses through context sensitive design practices.
- If a proposed development will adversely impact an intersection or road the Planning Board should consider requiring that appropriate capital improvements be implemented as a part of the review and approval process.
- Work with NHDOT to improve River Road (Route 12A) to include shoulders to better accommodate emergency situations, bicycles, pedestrians, line of sight, and increased truck traffic.
- Review standards for roads in ordinances to ensure they are appropriate.
- Implement a maintenance program to bring city road signs in conformance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- Work with the NHDOT preventative maintenance program for bridges.

3 CONCLUSION

Claremont's consistent and creative attention to the transportation system will make the community a better place to live and work while being attractive to visitors. That outcome will more likely ensure achieving our goals of a desirable quality of life and economic success.