

Chapter 7

TRANSPORTATION

Town and State Highways

The present road system of Canterbury is linked very closely to the original layout and development of the Town over two hundred years ago. A map, dated 1858, shows most of the roads still in use today, plus miles of road not now maintained or which remain only as trails.

The regional road system affecting Canterbury provides excellent north-south movement from Canterbury. On the west, the Town is traversed by seven and one-quarter miles of Interstate 93 with full interchanges located on the Concord boundary and in the middle of the Town at West Road. To the east, one and three-quarter miles of Route 106, another State maintained road, provides access to Routes 202 and 4, the principal east-west corridor in the region.

While access to Canterbury is excellent, Canterbury's internal road system has many inherent problems. These problems will continue into the future since more intense use of these roads is inevitable. The connection between Routes I-93 and 106 is Carter Hill, Center, Baptist and Shaker Roads. These roads provide the only usable link between the east and west part of Town and are in need of improvements to safely handle increased volumes of traffic. Since most of these are State roads, the Town should consult with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation regarding possible future right-of-way needs for road improvements. These needs should be addressed by the Planning Board when considering subdivisions on these roads.

Most of the Town's 29.5 miles of Class II and Class V roads, which are paved or treated gravel roads, are located to the west of the Town Center. These roads are best suited to handle increased traffic and provide circulation between the Town Center and the two Route I-93 interchanges.

Many miles of Class V Town roads are gravel or gravel and dirt and need widening, surface upgrading or safety improvements to assure safe travel for passenger and emergency vehicles and better accessibility during mud season.

Class VI roads, i.e., those Town roads that are not maintained for year-round use, serve a variety of useful functions in the Town and should not be overlooked as a community asset. In addition to providing access for hiking, riding, and recreational uses, they function as "cross-country" corridors for fire equipment in times of drought, and as access to woodlots for forest management purposes. Subdivision and new building on Class VI roads pose problems for Town emergency vehicles.

"Discontinued" highways are former Town roads that have been discontinued by Town vote. The rights-of-way have been transferred to adjoining landowners. Neither the public nor the Town has any residual rights in discontinued highways.

Road Maintenance and Safety

The cost of maintaining and improving the Town highways is the largest item in the Town budget and represents approximately one-third of Town expenditures. The highway budget provides for both "winter maintenance" and "summer maintenance." Winter maintenance is a reactive process of trying to keep up with the winter storms. In general, Town residents seem satisfied with the quality of winter maintenance.

Summer maintenance is a matter of trying to repair and/or prevent the deterioration of the roads, both gravel and paved. A regular paving program has been scheduled for the past several years.

Construction of New Roads

All new roads in Town must be reviewed and approved by the Planning Board before construction. The Planning Board relies upon, and incorporates in its subdivision and site plan review and approval process, the road construction standards adopted by the Selectmen. Those standards for new road construction (or the upgrade of existing roads to Class V standards in order to allow subdivision) are presently under review by the Selectmen in consultation with the Town Road Agent, the Planning Board, and the Fire Department. It is intended that the revised standards will strike an appropriate balance among many factors: aesthetics and safety, maintenance, and short-and long-term costs.

Long-Range Goal

Maintain Canterbury's roads in a manner that promotes public safety, is consistent with land use goals, does not degrade the environment, and efficiently safely moves people and goods.

Objectives and Policies

1. Continue resurfacing of existing paved highways on a yearly basis, in a cost effective manner that will prevent road deterioration.
2. Continue to grade gravel roads and apply new material as needed. Continue to improve side ditches to keep the roads from significantly degrading without widening or straightening unless this becomes unavoidable in order to handle existing traffic.

3. Schedule regular inspections of roads, bridges, and culverts to determine repair needs on a priority basis.
4. Reexamine existing speed limits to establish limits that promote efficient movement of traffic, while taking into consideration pedestrian use, built-up areas, and schools.
5. In the interest of keeping roads usable while maintaining rural character, roads should not be widened or straightened without due consideration to mature trees or stone walls.
6. Maintain roads so that soil erosion and the use of salt do not adversely affect the environment.

Recommended Actions

1. Develop a long-range plan and budget to reconstruct and resurface a percentage of the existing paved Town roads every year to reduce deferred maintenance. **Selectmen**
2. Re-examine the existing standards for road construction. **Selectmen and Planning Board**