



DARIEN NORWALK RAIL STATION PARKING STUDY

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Submitted to:
SOUTH WESTERN REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

Submitted by:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Study Background

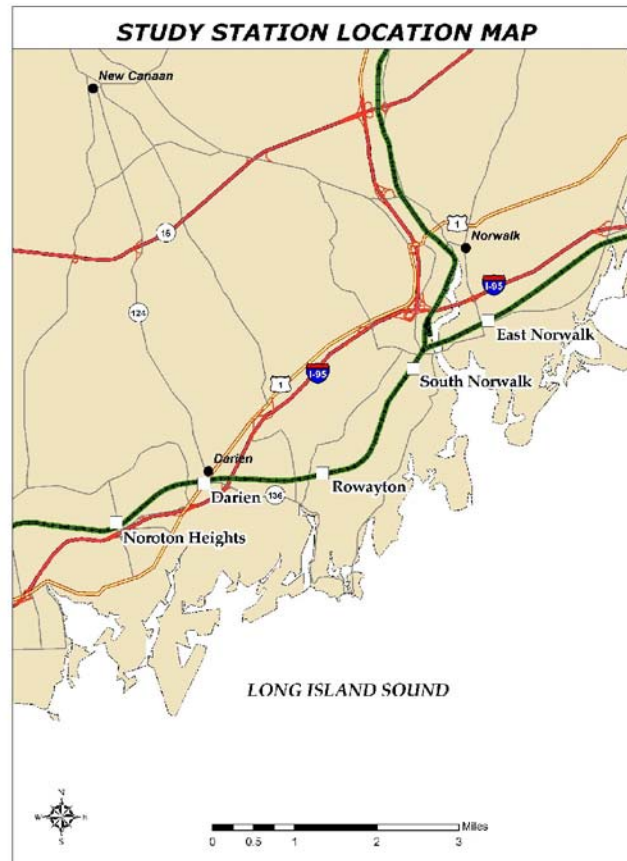
This technical report presents a series of options for improving parking and circulation at the Noroton Heights (Town of Darien) and South Norwalk (City of Norwalk) Metro North rail stations. As a way to help mitigate traffic congestion in the area, the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) is looking at ways to improve access to passenger rail services in the South Western Region. The effort involves the consideration of parking conditions at five stations along the New Haven Rail Line operated by Metro North. The study stations include:

- Noroton Heights,
- Darien,
- Rowayton,
- South Norwalk, and
- East Norwalk.

The locations of these stations are illustrated in the attached figure.

Initially, the study examined existing conditions at each of the stations. The existing conditions were screened to identify the two (2) stations demonstrating the greatest potential for access and parking improvements. This report presents the options identified for the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk stations. The options are intended to:

- improve efficiency of existing parking facilities at both stations;
- identify opportunities for the expansion of parking facilities; and
- recommend neighborhood-level strategies that support additional use of rail stations.



The agency has undertaken the study in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT), the City of Norwalk and the Town of Darien. Funding for the study was provided by CDOT in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation. SWRPA retained the consulting firm of Edwards and Kelcey to complete this study.

Purpose

A key component of the area's overall transportation framework is its commuter rail service along the Metro North Railroad New Haven Line and the Danbury Branch Line. This study provides the incentive to begin viewing transit stations as resources to improve regional mobility as well as to create vibrant multi-functional civic centers that contribute to the local environment.

The study has assessed the demand for additional station parking at each of the five (5) stations in Darien and Norwalk. The study assessed:

- Current use of parking facilities (state, local, private) serving the rail stations.
- Current and projected demand for parking.
- Regularity and frequency of rail service and the likelihood of expanded service.
- Availability of adjacent land that could support expanded parking.
- Potential neighborhood-level impacts of expanded parking or changes to parking access.
- Availability of transit, bicycle and pedestrian connections.

On the basis of this analysis, the South Norwalk and Noroton Heights stations were selected for further study.

The parking improvement options developed for the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk stations encompass six (6) different categories of improvements including:

- “do nothing” or “no build”,
- systems management,
- demand management,
- low-density expansion,
- higher density expansion such as structured parking, and
- a hybrid of the above.

Systems management strategies focus on techniques for improving the operational efficiency of the existing infrastructure and services at each station. Demand management strategies also focus on the existing infrastructure and services, but use pricing, incentives and other techniques to encourage the best use of the station resources and services. In contrast, the low-density and higher density expansion strategies involve the addition of infrastructure and services to enable each station to serve a higher number of commuters.

Working with the study sponsors, an advisory committee and the public, alternatives were selected and refined to form a plan for addressing the parking and access needs at these railroad stations. The recommendations and options for the improvement of rail station parking in Noroton Heights and South Norwalk:

- Have the support of the traveling public, public officials and surrounding communities.
- Blend appropriate elements of each of the concepts evaluated.
- Provide short and long-range opportunities for supportive neighborhood development.
- Offer short and long-range opportunities for enhanced access to passenger rail services.

The plan addresses the potential for additional parking capacity, aesthetic issues, signage, circulation and modal connections, as well as other factors for improvement. The plan has been packaged into a strategy that can be implemented in phases to address the growing demand for parking and commuter requests for additional services and

amenities. The strategy also improves the integration of transit facilities with the surrounding neighborhoods and enhances the quality and attractiveness of Darien and Norwalk railroad stations. In turn, this will increase usage of the stations and reduce demand on area roadways.

Recommended Improvements

Both regional and station specific conceptual improvements are recommended in the plan. The options can also be bundled and implemented through a phased approach. The bundling could occur along the continuum of the following six (6) general categories of improvements described above.

Regional Improvements - Regional improvements include a Parking Information Technology System as well as a wayfinding and signage system. These options are intended to ease the use of the transit services (both bus and rail) for passengers and to improve the consistency of the form of information about access to and parking at the rail stations. The regional strategies may be employed not only at stations within the scope of the study, but also at other stations on the New Haven Main and branch lines.

Noroton Heights - Many of the possible improvements at Noroton Heights emphasize increasing the capacity and efficiency of the existing system. These “systems management” options are also intended to achieve and maintain a safe and continuous travel flow regardless of the mode of transportation. The improvements pertain to pedestrian, bicyclist, lighting, signage, security, organization of existing lots and others aspects.

Demand management strategies include a pricing analysis and the possibility of relocating a portion of the Darien Station's designated parking in downtown Darien to Noroton Heights to improve access to parking for patrons of Darien's downtown business district. The pricing strategy should also consider the viability of using the parking

revenue to fund and implement the systems management recommendations discussed above. Low density and high density parking expansion options are also included.

South Norwalk - The South Norwalk station is located within a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. It is surrounded by a mix of land uses offering opportunities for the station to serve commuters to and from South Norwalk. Thus, potential systems management strategies, such as the recommended pedestrian, bicycle and designated day parking improvements, will be beneficial.

The Plan recommends the City of Norwalk explore the viability of two (2) possible regional bicycle and pedestrian linkages. The first is to connect to the Route 7 linear trail at Route 1. The trail would provide access to communities and park and ride locations to the north. It would also link cyclists and pedestrians with the West Avenue Redevelopment area, the Norwalk Center Wheels pulse point for buses and other portions of the City of Norwalk. The second trail connection is the proposed bike path along the former Conrail bed which runs from South Norwalk station to Wilson Point.

Low density expansion options include renovation of the former police lot on the east side of the station for day parking or an intermodal hub. The hub could be used to accommodate increased use of private and Norwalk Transit District shuttles, taxi and limousine service. The overall goal of the City is to enhance the use of the South Norwalk Station as a destination for commuters and visitors rather than as a point of departure.

The City is undertaking a planning process to encourage reinvestment in the South Norwalk neighborhood immediately adjacent to the station. The South Norwalk redevelopment plan offers the opportunity to integrate parking for the station with future adjacent or nearby uses. In particular, it offers the opportunity to create one or more shared parking facilities between the station and the surrounding uses. Some of the potential shared parking strategies that should be considered as part of the South Norwalk

redevelopment include mixed use development, a structured deck on the former police parking lot and a shared parking facility on Chestnut Street.

An initial planning study for this neighborhood, called Sono South, was recently completed. The recommendations promote South Norwalk as a destination for commuters and travelers and include improving the visual and physical connections between the station and its adjacent neighborhoods to achieve this. In addition, the plan recommends using the station a focal point for development of a “village square” of housing, office, retail and recreational uses as priorities.

Next Steps

The categories of strategies (i.e., systems management, demand management, and expansion) serve as a framework for the recommended timeline for implementation. The philosophy underlying this framework is simple: in order to maximize return on past investment, it is prudent to make lower-cost improvements in the short-term prior to making significant capital investments in additional capacity. This optimizes the use and performance of existing infrastructure, equipment and services.

Thus, systems and demand management strategies should be implemented prior to capacity enhancement strategies. Although appropriate in many transportation planning contexts, this approach is particularly well-suited to this project. The daily carrying capacity, both current and future planned, of the Metro North New Haven Line service offers a practical limit on the number of commuters each station may serve per day. For the purposes of the study, systems and demand management strategies may be implemented in the 0-5 year time frame. Implementation of the capacity expansion projects should be done only after demand for such additional supply is documented.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Study Background

This technical report presents a series of options for improving parking and circulation at the Noroton Heights (Town of Darien) and South Norwalk (City of Norwalk) Metro North rail stations. As a way to help mitigate traffic congestion in the area, the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) is looking at ways to improve access to passenger rail services in the South Western Region. The effort involves the consideration of parking conditions at five stations along the New Haven Rail Line operated by Metro North (Figure 1). The study stations include:

- Noroton Heights,
- Darien,
- Rowayton,
- South Norwalk, and
- East Norwalk.

The locations of these stations are illustrated in Figure 2.

Initially, the study examined existing conditions at each of the stations. The existing conditions were screened to identify the two (2) stations demonstrating the greatest potential for access and parking improvements. This report presents the options identified for the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk stations. The options are intended to:

- improve efficiency of existing parking facilities at both stations;
- identify opportunities for the expansion of parking facilities; and
- recommend neighborhood-level strategies that support additional use of rail stations.

Figure 1 – New Haven Rail Line Location

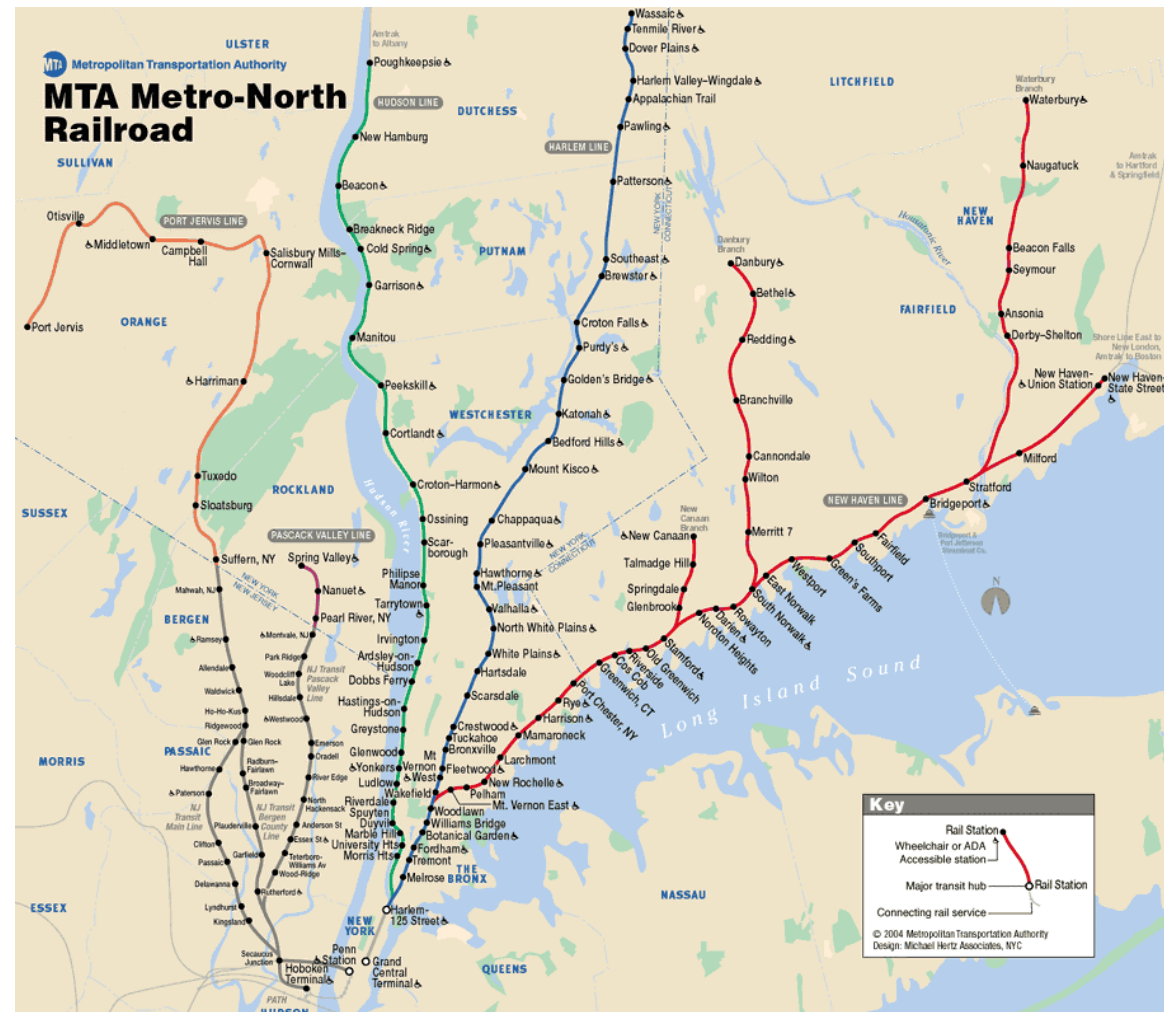
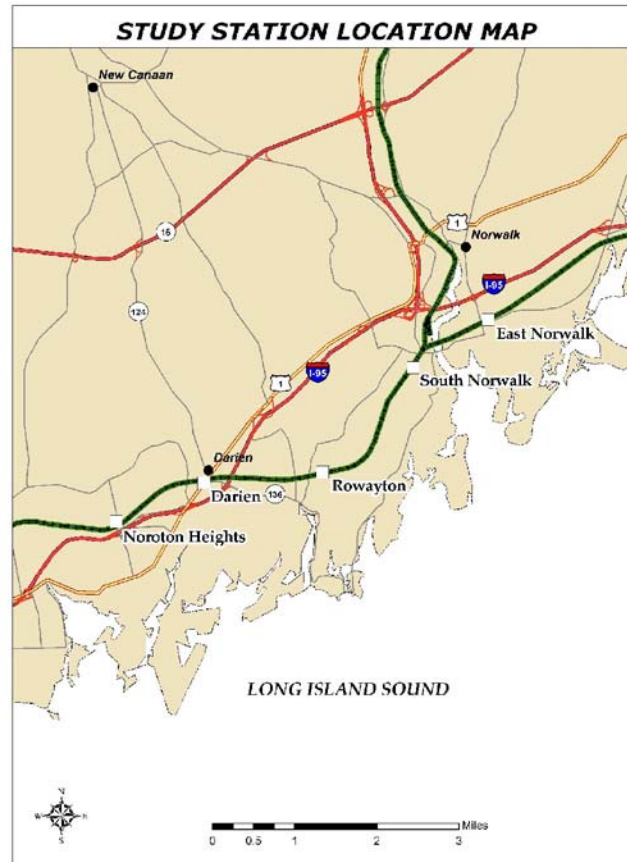


Figure 2 – Vicinity Map



The agency has undertaken the study in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT), the City of Norwalk and the Town of Darien. Funding for the study was provided by the Connecticut Department of Transportation in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation. SWRPA retained the consulting firm of Edwards and Kelcey to complete this study.

Opportunities for public participation were incorporated throughout the study and structured to help identify ways to improve access to passenger rail services at selected stations in Darien and Norwalk. Specific public outreach activities are summarized in Appendix 1.

1.2 Purpose

A key component of the area's overall transportation framework is its commuter rail service along the Metro North Railroad New Haven Line and the Danbury Branch Service. This study provides the incentive to begin viewing transit stations as resources to improve regional mobility as well as to create vibrant multi-functional civic centers that contribute to the local environment.

The study has assessed the demand for additional station parking at each of the five (5) stations in Darien and Norwalk. The study assessed:

- Current use of parking facilities (state, local, private) serving the rail stations.
- Current and projected demand for parking.
- Regularity and frequency of rail service and likelihood of expanded service.
- Availability of adjacent land that could support expanded parking.
- Potential neighborhood-level impacts of expanded parking or changes to parking access.
- Availability of transit, bicycle and pedestrian connections.

In addition, other factors for improvement at the stations that could enhance ridership were considered. For example, the study considered local support for the development of structured parking and opportunities for transit-oriented development at the five (5) existing passenger rail stations. On the basis of this analysis, the South Norwalk and Noroton Heights stations were selected for further study.

The parking improvement options developed for the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk stations encompass six (6) different categories of improvements including:

- “do nothing” or do nothing,
- systems management,
- demand management,
- low-density expansion,
- higher density expansion/structured parking, and
- hybrid of the above.

Systems management strategies focus on techniques for improving the operational efficiency of the existing infrastructure and services at each station. Demand management strategies also focus on the existing infrastructure and services, but aim to use pricing, incentives and other techniques to encourage the best use of the station resources and services. In contrast, the low-density and higher density expansion strategies involve the addition of infrastructure and services to enable each station to serve a higher number of commuters. Specific recommendations for each category are provided in Section 4.0.

Working with the study sponsors, an advisory committee and the public, alternatives will be selected and refined to form a plan for addressing the parking and access needs at the railroad stations in Darien and Norwalk. The recommendations for the improvement of rail station parking in Noroton Heights and South Norwalk will:

- Have the support of the traveling public, public officials and surrounding communities.
- Blend appropriate elements of each of the concepts evaluated.
- Provide short and long-range opportunities for supportive neighborhood development.
- Offer short and long-range opportunities for enhanced access to passenger rail services.

The plan will address the potential for additional parking capacity, aesthetic issues, signage, circulation and modal connections, as well as other factors for improvement. The plan will be packaged into a strategy that can be implemented in phases to address the growing demand for parking and commuter requests for additional services and amenities. The strategy will also improve the integration of transit facilities with the surrounding neighborhoods and enhance the quality and attractiveness of Darien and Norwalk railroad stations. In turn, this will increase usage of the stations and reduce demand on area roadways.

2.0 STATION SCREENING

2.1 Existing Conditions

The following is a summary of the existing conditions at the five stations that led to the selection of Noroton Heights and South Norwalk for the options study.

2.1.1 Description of Station Areas

The following provides a brief description of each station area by municipality.

Town of Darien - Two Metro North commuter rail stations are located within the Town of Darien along the New Haven Line: the Noroton Heights Station and the Darien Station. Connecting bus services at both the Noroton Heights and Darien Stations are operated by CT Transit.

Noroton Heights - The Noroton Heights Station is a contemporary-style station located off Heights Road. It is located in close proximity to Exit 10 of Interstate 95.

Parking is provided by the Town of Darien in 3 lots at the station as seen in Figure 3. There are a total of 779 parking spaces at the Noroton Heights Station; 329 are voucher (daily) parking designated, 439 permit (annual) designated and 11 spaces are reserved for 15 minute parking. All of the designated permit spaces allow voucher parking while 109 of the 329 designated voucher spaces allow permit parking. The annual permit and voucher system is managed by the Town of Darien.

Figure 3 – Noroton Heights Station Existing Conditions



Reference is made throughout the discussion below to Lots 1, 2 and 3. Lot 1 is the daily voucher lot along Heights Road. Lot 2 is the annual permit parking lot that is between Interstate 95 and the eastbound platform. It is accessed primarily from Hollow Tree Road off of Heights Road. Lot 3 is a daily voucher lot located between Interstate 95 and the eastbound rail line to the east of Lot 2. It is accessed off of Noroton Avenue via the slip ramp onto Interstate 95. This lot is considered to be the most physically remote from the platforms.

The 439 annual permit spaces are located in Lot No. 2 which is accessed from Hollow Tree Road off of Heights Road. The voucher spaces are located in Lots No. 1 and 3. Lot No. 1 is accessed from Heights Road. Lot No.3 is accessed from Noroton Avenue at its on-ramp to Interstate 95 westbound and from the eastern end of Lot No. 2.

The land uses immediately to the north of the rail station are primarily neighborhood based service and retail. There are also offices located along Heights Road, several of which have retail on the first floor. Each of the commercial facilities has its own parking lot and is accessed primarily by auto. There is a sidewalk along Heights Road parallel to the station parking lot.

There are no residential uses immediately adjacent to the station along Heights Road. The residential neighborhoods begin one block to the north along West Avenue. The access to the Avalon apartments is located across Hollow Tree Road from Lot 2. The Connecticut Turnpike (Interstate 95) serves as the southern border of the rail station. A teen center is located on the eastern end of the north parking lot (Lot No. 1) and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) building is located in the eastern end of the southeast lot (Lot No.3).

Darien - Darien Station is a historic-style station located off West Avenue in downtown Darien. Parking is provided both by the Town of Darien and a private vendor (i.e., Koons'/West Avenue Lot). The Town operates 6 lots that provide 555 spaces to serve the station users.

The Darien station is located in Darien's Central Business District. Although easily accessed by Boston Post Road (Route 1), the station is not located immediately adjacent Interstate 95. Though several of the businesses have limited parking adjacent to their buildings, most of the off street parking is located at centralized locations within the central business district.

Tilley Pond Park is located across West Avenue from the Darien Station to the north. It is a nine-acre park of walking/jogging paths with garden areas, trees and ornamental plantings. Just to the west of the station is a private parking lot that is used by rail commuters as well as visitors to the downtown. West of Leroy Avenue the land uses are primarily residential. At the intersection of Squab Lane and Leroy Avenue there is a multi family residential complex that was built several years ago.

City of Norwalk - Four Metro-North commuter rail stations are located within the City of Norwalk. Along the New Haven Line are Rowayton Station, South Norwalk Station, and East Norwalk. Along the Danbury Branch is the Merritt 7 Corporate Park Station which was not considered in the study.

Rowayton - The Rowayton Station is a suburban-style station located off Rowayton Avenue. There exists 330 surface parking spaces provided by the City of Norwalk. Of these, 112 spaces are reserved for annual permit holders and 218 spaces that can be used by annual permit holders or daily parkers. The Norwalk Transit District operates connecting bus services. The land uses surrounding the Rowayton Station and surface parking lots are single family residential. Access to the station from Interstate 95 is indirect and requires travel through single-family neighborhoods.

South Norwalk - The South Norwalk Station is a historic station located off Monroe Street in the South Norwalk Central Business District. There exists 816 parking spaces at the station. Six levels of parking are provided by the City of Norwalk in the 725-space garage, which is open 24 hours. In addition, the City provides 91 daily parking spaces in

an overflow lot on the eastbound side of the station. Norwalk Transit District operates three bus routes that serve the station on the eastbound side.

There are a variety of different land uses surrounding the South Norwalk station, which is located in historic South Norwalk. South Norwalk has been undergoing revitalization during the last decade and includes a variety of shops and restaurants located one block east of the station. The neighborhood adjacent to the eastbound platform is primarily residential with commercial uses interspersed. Commercial uses dominate the area to the west between the station and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The station itself, a modern Victorian-like structure with an attached six level parking garage includes mixed uses including offices and service oriented businesses.

East Norwalk - East Norwalk Station, located off of Winfield Street, is a station consisting of a platform shelter. There are 237 parking spaces provided by the City of Norwalk. The Norwalk Transit District operates connecting bus services.

The areas adjacent to the station platforms are primarily commercial. The surrounding area along the major arterials is neighborhood commercial with the interior streets primarily residential. There is a mixed use complex adjacent to the eastbound platform that houses a gym and offices. Several of the offices are vacant and available to lease. Parking for the complex is adjacent to the station platform while the rail commuter parking lot is located further to the west. Signage is used to designate parking areas for the rail commuters versus customers and employees of the building complex. The other satellite lot is located two blocks from the station. The lot is leased by the city from a church. The interior lot is surrounded on three sides by residential land uses and on the fourth side there is the church building and several retail/service-oriented businesses. The portion of the lot designated for rail commuters is signed.

2.1.2 New Haven Line Rail Service

Rail services on the New Haven Line and Danbury Branch are operated by Metro-North Railroad under a contract between Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). Frequent services are offered at the Darien and Norwalk stations between 5:30 AM and 12:00 AM weekdays, with less frequent service offered on the weekends and holidays. Westbound on the New Haven Line service is provided to employment hubs such as Stamford, CT and Grand Central Terminal, New York City, New York. Eastbound service provides access to Bridgeport, New Haven and Waterbury in Connecticut. Access to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor is provided at the Stamford and Bridgeport stations.

The frequency of trains varies throughout the day, but generally there are trains departing in the morning peak (6:00-9:00am) and in the afternoon peak (4:00-7:00pm) every 20-30 minutes in both directions. Off-peak hour service generally operates every hour in both directions.

The trip from the Darien/Norwalk vicinity to Stamford is approximately 15 minutes; to Grand Central is approximately 60 minutes. The trip from Darien/Norwalk to Bridgeport is approximately 30 minutes; to New Haven is approximately 60 minutes.

2.1.3 Highway Congestion

The study area in Darien and Norwalk experiences significant congestion on its roadways throughout the day, but particularly during the peak periods. The Connecticut Turnpike (I-95, Exits 10-16), Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway provide access to the region. Stakeholders at the local, regional and state level have all identified highway congestion as a major issue requiring both short- and long-term solutions. Additional data regarding congestion and management solutions are provided in SWRPA's Congestion Mitigation System Plan - Vision 2020 (see www.swrpa.org).

Part of a package of solutions to address congestion problems and meet this goal of reducing highway demand is the expansion of rail usage in the corridor. This will involve more frequent rail service as well as capital improvements to rail facilities (such as parking, bicycle and pedestrian access and station amenities) and rolling stock.

2.1.4 Intermodal Connections and Facilities

Intermodal connections refers to the ability to move from one mode of transportation to another (e.g., bus to train). Transit use can be increased transit by fostering seamless connections between various modes of travel. In order to achieve this benefit, it is important that the transfer between modes be easy, safe and efficient as possible, ideally within 250 feet and using a minimum of vertical changes (e.g., stairs). Transit services should be scheduled to minimize transfer wait time as well.

There are options available connecting Metro-North commuters with bus transit and shuttle services at all five stations. The Norwalk Transit District provides public transportation services in Norwalk and Connecticut Transit operates public bus service in Darien. In addition, Gallivant, a private non-profit entity provides door-to-door passenger van services to older citizens and physically disabled residents regardless of age to Darien residents. Both Norwalk Transit and Connecticut Transit offers commuters the opportunity to purchase a UniTicket that combines monthly bus and rail fare into one ticket. The Norwalk Transit District operates a fixed route service that provides free transfers among its 14 routes at its' Norwalk Mall Hub.

2.1.5 Travel Method – Access to Stations

Access to the Darien and Norwalk stations is available from a broad range of modes including driving alone and parking, drop-off, walking, bus or shuttle service, bicycling

and carpooling. The method most passengers used to travel from their home to the station is to drive alone and park. This was the most common method for each of the five (5) stations. Darien had the highest proportion of passengers driving alone and parking (75%) while East Norwalk had the lowest proportion (52%). Walking is the next highly used method for each station with the exception of South Norwalk. Twenty-five percent (25%) of those passengers responding walk at Rowayton Station and East Norwalk Station. At the South Norwalk Station, getting dropped off was the second most commonly method of accessing the station. Getting dropped off is the third most widely used method for all other stations. Carpooling was used minimally at all locations and public bus service was only used at the South Norwalk Station.

2.2 Initial Issues and Site Constraints

The following represents parking related issues identified at each of the five stations based on observations and feedback received from stakeholders during public outreach sessions conducted in 2002. These issues, together with the existing conditions inventory, helped frame the identification of Noroton Heights and South Norwalk as having the best opportunities for achieving the study purpose. It is important to note that some of the issues or conditions or issues have evolved since the initial definition was completed.

2.2.1 General

The following issues and constraints were raised for the Darien and Norwalk study area in general.

- There is a high volume of traffic in Darien going to and leaving the Noroton Heights and Darien train stations.
- Safety of pedestrians near the lots is a concern due to driver inattention.
- Commuters generally know the parking lot locations and how to get to them.

- There is a substantial waiting list at both the Noroton Heights and Darien stations with the demand for spaces far outstripping available supply.
- The Town of Darien zoning code prohibits above or below ground parking structures.
- The voucher parking program in Darien is much preferred to metered parking which was eliminated a couple of years ago.
- A Parking Authority was established in Norwalk to allow for bonding of parking capital improvements in the City.
- Local funding sources to support construction of new commuter parking facilities extremely limited, in particular, in Norwalk.
- State funding sources are also extremely tight. The capital outlays have been allocated for the next twenty years. Thus, new funding sources need to be identified including joint venture options with the private sector.
- New interchanges on Interstate 95 generally are not supported by the CDOT Bureau of Highway Operations. Thus, the benefits need to be clearly defined. Also, new interchanges are very costly.
- The relocation of an existing rail station requires the preparation of a cost/benefit analysis that clearly shows the benefits of a possible relocation.
- None of the lots give priority to carpoolers.

2.2.2 Noroton Heights Station

- Existing topography along the southern border between the station property and the Turnpike may lend itself to a low lying parking garage structure.
- If a parking garage is built at the existing southwest lot, there are access issues that need to be addressed. It may require a substantial and costly redesign of the existing entrance ramp to Interstate 95. The garage must also be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Rather than park in the station lot, some individuals are using the private lots serving individual businesses across Heights Road. Since most of the businesses

are neighborhood based, to maintain a positive relationship with customers, there is reluctance by the business owners to have the cars removed.

- The Avalon property behind the rest stop is no longer available. The Town's initial intent to purchase the property was rejected by the voters. The site has been developed for housing.
- There was a several year waiting list for annual permit parking. In 2002, there was almost 900 persons on the waiting list.
- Existing public bus transportation to and from the station is extremely limited. Only one route, operated by Connecticut Transit, travels along Heights Road providing service to the train station.
- The parking spaces are poorly delineated in the north lot (Lot No. 1), in particular in the vicinity of the teen center.

2.2.3 Darien

- The Darien Station is being upgraded (subsequently completed). The station is ADA-compliant.
- Metro-North commuters as well as patrons to downtown business establishments and cultural events use the privately owned (Koons) lot adjacent to the station.
- The Leroy Ave. Bridge has a substandard width and lacks a sidewalk on both sides. Line of sight is also limited for car drivers exiting from the parking lots and Squab Lane onto Leroy Avenue.
- There is limited public bus service to and from the station. The station is the end point for one of the routes.
- The parking configuration along Squab Lane is unmarked in many locations and can be confusing. The parallel parking spaces along Squab Lane are not delineated.
- In 2002, there was over a 1000 person waiting list for annual permit parking.
- Private property adjacent to the station is signed prohibiting station commuter parking.

2.2.4 Rowayton

- Surface parking lot expansion on hold due to neighborhood opposition.
- The area is surrounded by residential homes making future expansion difficult. Any expansion requires mitigating measures to address neighborhood concerns.
- Similar to East Norwalk station serves primarily a neighborhood clientele.
- Cars exiting the westbound parking lot onto Rowayton Ave. have limited sight distance.

2.2.5 South Norwalk

- Parking garage can be expanded by up to two additional floors. However, future expansion is unlikely due to aesthetic and traffic concerns.
- Neighborhood revitalization efforts are underway in South Norwalk.
- Additional parking may be incorporated into the mixed-use redevelopment proposed for this area.
- South Norwalk station is well served by public bus service between 7:00am and 7:00pm. However, public bus service is not convenient for many commuters from New York City who arrive at the station after 7:00pm.
- The private shuttle service primarily serves employees arriving at the station to work in Norwalk and does not serve residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- In 2002, there existed an approximately two-month waiting list for annual and monthly parking permits.

2.2.6 East Norwalk

- The station uses three lots including: leased space from the church two blocks away for \$20,000 annually; leased space adjacent to gym/office complex next to the eastbound platform; and space adjacent to train station. The station lot usually at 100% capacity while the church lot is underutilized.
- The perception exists that more police patrols are needed due to vandalism of cars.
- The station primarily serves residents of the surrounding neighborhood.
- The parking spaces at the office/gymnasium complex lot are poorly delineated.
- If a new platform is built, it must be ADA compliant.

3.0 COMMUTER QUESTIONNAIRE

Subsequent to the selection of the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk stations as the best candidates for improved parking and access, a questionnaire was distributed to travelers at the those stations. The purpose of the questionnaire was to provide passengers the opportunity to suggest ways they would like to enhance parking and access to the stations. The distribution and summary of supported parking and access elements is presented below.

3.1 Distribution

The questionnaire was distributed in the winter of 2004 at both stations. In addition, a limited number of questionnaires were distributed at the East Norwalk Station to allow for a comparison of responses. The questionnaire is included in Appendix 2.

The questionnaires were distributed by hand to users at the Noroton Heights, South Norwalk and East Norwalk stations. The respondents were asked to indicate which of the following improvements were needed at their station.

1. Improved traffic circulation patterns at existing parking facilities.
2. Improved roadway access at existing parking facilities.
3. Reconfiguration of existing surface lots.
4. Off-site parking facilities with frequent and reliable transit connections to rail station.
5. Use of pricing incentives, e.g. time of day, location, to encourage better use of existing surface lots.
6. Expanded daily parking.
7. Expanded permit parking.
8. Additional surface parking lots.
9. New sheltered parking facilities, e.g., decks or garages.
10. Improved signage and traveler information services at stations and parking facilities.

11. Improved or additional sidewalks, bicycle paths and bicycle lockers.
12. Improved bus connections at station.
13. Improved or additional landscaping.
14. Improved or additional security.
15. Improved or additional lighting.
16. Neighborhood-appropriate development, e.g., housing, small retail, etc.

Respondents were also provided the opportunity to suggest additional improvements or make additional comments.

3.2 Supported Elements

Responses to the questionnaire varied significantly between the two stations. The summary of responses is provided in Appendix 2. The majority of the respondents at the Noroton Heights Station stated the most of the improvements listed above were not needed or should not be studied. The elements that received support did include improved or additional security, lighting and roadway access. There were several written comments discouraging additional parking capacity or structured parking at the station.

The number of responses supporting or against each potential improvement was relatively even for most elements at South Norwalk. The elements that were supported by a slight majority of respondents included additional surface parking and deck/garage parking. A clear majority supported improved sidewalks, bicycle trails and bicycle lockers. Many of the comments expressed support for reinstating annual parking passes and debit card payments for parking.

4.0 POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

The following is a brief description of the potential improvements for the Noroton Height and Darien stations. These conceptual improvements serve as a starting point for targeted outreach to the general public, commuters, business and civic organizations. Outreach to these groups was achieved via the advisory committee, station-based “meet and greets,” news releases and media coverage. Final study recommendations will seek to balance the comments with current and projected demand, travel trends and travel behavior to develop the final recommended concepts.

Both regional and station specific conceptual improvements are presented. Regional improvements include a Parking Information Technology System (ITS) as well as a wayfinding and signage system described below. The remaining conceptual improvements are described for each station separately. In addition, the options can also be bundled and implemented through a phased approach.

The bundling could occur along the continuum of the following six (6) general categories of improvements:

- “do nothing” or no build option,
- systems management,
- demand management,
- low-density expansion,
- higher density expansion/structured parking, and
- hybrid of the above.

The specific options for each category are presented below.

4.1 Regional Strategies

Two regional “systems management” options are proposed, including a Parking ITS and a wayfinding system. The options are intended to ease the use of the transit services (both bus and rail) for passengers and to improve the consistency of the form of information about access to and parking at the rail stations. The regional strategies may be employed not only at stations within the scope of the study, but also at other stations on the New Haven Main and branch lines.

4.1.1 Parking ITS

Working in partnership with the Connecticut DOT, Metro North, SWRPA, the municipalities and the private parking lot owners, a corridor-wide Parking ITS system along Interstate 95 could be developed. The real time parking information could be displayed with dynamic message signs (DMS).

The Parking ITS would make rail users aware available parking supply for monthly and daily lots from Interstate 95 as well as the primary roadways leading to the station and at station lots. The information could be supplemented with train schedule information regarding the next departing train from each station. The Parking ITS could also be used to manage parking within each station area by directing drivers to available parking. A similar program is under testing and development for the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system in San Francisco/Oakland, California.

As an example, if the parking lots were full at Darien, a traveler arriving at the exit for Darien would be forewarned prior to leaving the interstate. The driver would also be provided information regarding parking and the schedule for Noroton Heights and Stamford. Similarly, if a traveler arrived at a parking lot in Darien that was full, the status of parking availability at other lots in Darien would be displayed. In this manner, the system can help to maximize the use of under-utilized station lots along I-95 as well.

The Parking ITS would complement the Regional Transit Card system recommended in the SWRPA's Regional Transit Card Implementation Study and Congestion Mitigation System Plan - Vision 2020 (see www.swrpa.org). The concept incorporates a regional smart card system that could be used to pay parking costs as well as transit fares as well as convenience items at participating local retailers.

4.1.2 Wayfinding and Safety Signage

The term *wayfinding* is used to describe the process of reaching a destination, whether in a familiar or unfamiliar environment. Currently, the information provided to access the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk stations is limited in its ability to help passengers find the station. Thus, the station areas in the study area could be enhanced with more visible wayfinding signs. In Norwalk, signage should be improved on local streets between Exits 14-16 and the station for those who travel to and from the station. Similar signage should be installed between the station and downtown. In Darien, wayfinding signs should be improved from Exit 10 to the station and along West Avenue.

Signs can also provide important information that can improve road safety in the two station areas. By letting people know what to expect, there is a greater chance that they will react and behave appropriately. Signage may be particularly beneficial in the vicinity of the eastbound station at South Norwalk where motorists, buses and taxis operate. In addition, giving motorists advance warning of an upcoming pedestrian crossings, such as at Heights Road, or that they are entering a traffic-calmed area will alert them to modify their speed (e.g., within the Noroton Heights parking lots). In unusual cases, signs may be used to prohibit pedestrian crossings at an undesirable location (such as mid-block on Heights Road) and re-route them to a safer crossing location, or warn pedestrians of unexpected driver maneuvers. In addition, wayfinding and safety signage should be provided to orient pedestrians and motorists traveling to and from the station areas.

Additional traveler information could be provided by expanding the regional ITS system recommended above. The ITS could provide information real time information on transit connections at each station and for other stations. Kiosks could also be provided at each station showing neighborhood information such as maps, major destinations, key pedestrian routes and nearby services.

It is recommended that a comprehensive inventory of existing wayfinding and safety signs could be conducted for each of the stations. Following completion of the inventory, a wayfinding signage master plan should be completed for the region or system wide. The master plan should incorporate signage that complies with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

4.2 Noroton Heights

Subsequent to the scoping of issues, the Town of Darien initiated several steps that may help to refine the menu of possible improvements to the Noroton Heights station. These steps include the following:

- An update of the rail station parking permit wait list.
- Development of a Draft 2005 Town Plan for Conservation and Development.
- Renegotiation of the station contract with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.
- Survey and study of employee, customer and commuter parking.
- Initiation of a traffic study of the Noroton Heights business district.

Many of the possible improvements at Noroton Heights emphasize on increasing the capacity of the existing system. These “systems management” options are also intended to achieve and maintain a safe and continuous travel flow regardless of the mode of transportation. The improvements pertain to pedestrian, bicyclist, lighting, signage, security and others aspects and are described below.



Noroton Heights Station – Platform and Pedestrian Walkway

4.2.1 Transportation Systems Management

Systems management emphasizes increasing the utility of the existing system by improving its efficiency. The systems management options are intended to achieve and maintain a safe and continuous travel flow regardless of the mode of transportation. In this context, improving safety means both reducing conflicts and accidents as well as enhancing a traveler's perception of their well-being. The options include improvements to existing lots, completion of a pedestrian master plan, enhancements to the bicycle connections and facilities, and improved signage, security and lighting.

A. Improve Organization of Existing Lots

Layout of Existing Lots – Lot 1, located along Heights Road, is currently used for two lanes of parking. Lot 1 is currently used for daily parking. Additional capacity might be gained for day parking by striping the center aisle for additional spaces perpendicular to the existing spaces. These spaces could possibly be enhanced with the installation of a landscaped island or median. The effect would be to create two travel lanes within Lot 1

which might require the use of a pair of opposite one way restrictions and signage. A more detailed analysis of the ability to make these improvements is recommended.

The existing layout can be viewed on Figure 3. The recommended location of the new parking lane is shown on Figure 4.

Access to Existing Lots – Lot 1, which provides daily parking, can be accessed off Heights Road. Access to Lot 2, which is used for permit parking, is provided primarily via Hollow Tree Ridge Road. Lot 3, which provides daily voucher parking, can be accessed from Noroton Avenue via the southbound entrance ramp to Interstate 95.

Access to Lot 2 is considered to be most problematic due to traffic volumes on Hollow Tree Ridge Road. Travelers coming from West Avenue or Heights Road must turn left against oncoming traffic to enter Lot 2. There is no signal at this parking lot access point on Hollow Tree Ridge Road. The ability to provide a left turn lane at the intersection is constrained by the overpass over the rail lines to the north and the overpass over Interstate 95 to the south. Consideration should be given to shifting the access point to the south a short distance in order to provide left turn stacking capacity.

Shared Parking – There are a number of privately owned parking lots for retail businesses and offices within a 5 minute walking distance of the station. These privately owned lots are generally located along Heights Road. Agreements with the owners of these properties could be pursued to lease spaces. Retail property owners (e.g., grocers, pharmacies and services) would benefit from an increased traffic flow at their place of business as well as more efficient use of their parking spaces.

The leased spaces could be reserved for permit or daily parking. Daily parking could be coordinated on a web-based reservation system. Under such a system, the property owner could list available spaces and interested rail passengers could reserve and pay for the spaces on the web. The structure of the agreements could vary and may include dedicated spaces or a first-come, first served options.

As new developments occur within the Heights Road corridor, the Town could negotiate additional dedicated parking in lieu of an equal portion of the minimum required number of spaces required under the zoning ordinance. This may require the Town to review the number of required parking spaces within its zoning ordinance in order to allow less than what is currently required.

B. Complete a Pedestrian Master Plan

Train riders need safe and convenient pedestrian routes to get to and from stations. Once the train riders leave their cars, they become pedestrians as they walk through the parking lot to the station itself. Cyclists and bus riders arriving or departing from the station are also pedestrians for a short distance. They are at risk of being struck by motorists pre-occupied with looking for, driving into, and backing out of parking spaces. They must also dodge cars and buses on access roads and passenger drop off areas. Persons who live on nearby streets and walk to the station often face the same hazards.

Safety not only includes protection from conflicts with motorists but from crime as well. There exists a perception that pedestrian may not be safe from crime in the parking lots due to poor lighting, lack of security cameras and other factors. Thus, improving pedestrian access also means that pedestrians should be made to feel more secure walking to and from the station.

Thus, the completion of a pedestrian master plan is recommended. The master plan should address new sidewalks within the parking lots and between parking lots and nearby roadways, marked walkways and a new pedestrian overpass.

Sidewalks - New sidewalks will provide people with space to travel within the public right-of-way or lots that are separated from roadway vehicles. Sidewalks are associated with significant reductions in pedestrian collisions with motor vehicles.

The pedestrian master plan should examine the feasibility of redesigning the 3 existing lots to incorporate sidewalks. Sidewalks can be built between rows of facing cars in Lots 2 and 3 so that pedestrians do not have to walk in the travel lanes. As several people may get off a train at once, there must be enough sidewalk space adjacent to the station entrance so that no one is forced to walk along the roadway. The sidewalks should meet the minimum requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Currently, there are no sidewalks or designated walkways connecting Lot 3 in the southeast corner of the facility to the station or the commercial uses along Heights Road. An ADA-compliant sidewalk should be evaluated as part of the pedestrian master plan for construction along Noroton Avenue between Lot 3 and Heights Road to provide access to the station. The sidewalk would allow persons parked in Lot 3 the option of walking through Lots 3 and 2 to reach the station platform or to use a sidewalk. The sidewalk would also provide enhanced visibility and would segregate the pedestrian from automobile traffic.

Access to a new sidewalk along Noroton Avenue from Lot 3 would require a significant change in elevation. Potential design options include placing the ramp along the existing access road from Noroton Avenue or building the ramp into the hillside behind the Darien Emergency Medical Squad (EMS) - Post 53 facility. A site analysis for compliance with the ADA is recommended.

In addition, the width of the existing Noroton Avenue overpass may limit the size or the ability to install a sidewalk along Noroton Avenue. Restriping of the lanes to create narrower lane widths may help to provide the needed width. A design investigation should be completed as part of the sidewalk master plan to determine the feasibility of the new sidewalk.

While sidewalks are typically made of concrete, less expensive walkways may be constructed of asphalt, crushed stone, or other materials if they are properly maintained

and accessible (firm, stable, and slip-resistant). The benefits and constraints of alternative materials should be examined as part of the sidewalk master plan.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) guidelines recommend a minimum width of 1.5 m (5 ft) for a sidewalk or walkway, which allows two people to pass comfortably or to walk side-by-side. If possible, wider sidewalks should be installed due to the high concentrations of pedestrians that exist during peak hours. The sidewalk should be continuous and fully accessible to all pedestrians, including those in wheelchairs. A buffer zone of 1.2 to 1.8 m (4 to 6 ft) is desirable and should be provided to separate pedestrians from the roadway. The buffer zone will vary according to the street type.

Marked Walkways - Marked walkways are desirable at some high pedestrian volume locations (often in conjunction with other measures such as lighting, and security) to guide pedestrians along a preferred walking path. Marked walkways within the parking lots indicate optimal or preferred locations for pedestrians to travel and help designate right-of-way for motorists to yield to pedestrians. This may be particularly effective in the higher volume traffic areas immediately around the station platforms.

It is important to ensure that the walkway markings are visible to motorists, particularly at night. Thus, the pedestrian master plan should consider alternative ways to provide marked walkways. Various crosswalk marking patterns are given in the MUTCD. Alternatively, the walkways can be raised and installed in conjunction with other enhancements that physically reinforce desired pedestrian routes and reduce vehicle speeds. Other options include depressed lighting or raised reflectors to delineate pedestrian zones.

One of the best materials for marking crosswalks is inlay tape, which is installed on new or repaved streets. It is highly reflective, long-lasting, and slip-resistant, and does not require a high level of maintenance. Although initially more costly than paint, both inlay and thermoplastic tape are more cost-effective in the long run. Inlay tape is recommended for new and resurfaced pavement, while thermoplastic may be a better option on rougher

pavement surfaces. Both inlay tape and thermoplastic are more visible and less slippery than paint when wet.

The walkways should not be slippery or create tripping hazards. Even though granite or cobblestones are aesthetically appealing materials, they are generally not appropriate for walkways.

It may also be useful to supplement walkway markings with warning signs for motorists. At some locations, signs can get "lost" in visual clutter, so care must be taken in placement.

Pedestrian Overpass - The pedestrian access between Lot 3 and the station platforms could also be enhanced by the construction of a pedestrian overpass between Lots 1 and 3. The overpass would provide a more direct route than the sidewalk along Noroton Avenue and would allow for the uninterrupted flow of pedestrian movement separate from the vehicle traffic. The overpass would likely be significantly more expensive than the sidewalk along Noroton Avenue. This alternative should be considered as part of the pedestrian master plan.

Although an overpass can be high-cost, it can serve as a visually attractive feature or focal point if its design incorporates architectural features, lighting, public art or other design features. In addition, drainage, graffiti removal and security are important design considerations associated with maintaining overpasses as visual features.

Such a facility must accommodate all persons, as required by the ADA. These measures include ramps or elevators. Extensive ramping will accommodate wheelchairs and bicyclists, but results in long crossing distances and steep slopes that discourage use.

Studies have shown that many pedestrians will not use an overpass or underpass if they can cross at ground level in about the same amount of time. Thus, it may be desirable to

conduct time of travel study to determine the benefits of such a facility as part of the pedestrian master plan.

C. Improve Bicycle Facilities and Connections

The station should have secure bicycle parking to ensure that a bicycle is still there or is intact when the user returns to it. The lack of a secure parking area keeps many people from using their bicycles. Improper rack design and location can be lead to a frustrating experience. Currently, cyclists lock bicycles to a rack or components of the platform structure on the northside of the tracks.

Rack Design and Supply - Racks should be installed that support the bicycle upright by its frame in two places and that prevent the wheel of the bicycle from tipping over. The rack should also allow both front-in or back-in parking. Comb, toast, wave or schoolyard racks are not recommended. The racks should have at least 30 inches of spacing between bicycles. Additionally, an effort should be made to assess the appropriate number of spaces for the Noroton Heights Station.

Rack Location - The rack area should be as close as possible to the primary entrances to the station platform. The rack area should be covered or protected from the elements. For example, if the rack is located along the station wall, an awning could be installed to protect the bicycles.

Off-site Improvements – Improving bicycle safety and convenience at the Noroton Heights Station requires more than improvements to the station itself. Encouraging the use of bicycle travel to and from the station will require a wide range of measures to make bicycling safe, convenient, and comfortable. These may include resurfacing of roadways, additions of shoulders or dedicated bike lanes and signage.

The state's recommended regional cycling routes are identified in the Connecticut Bicycle Map which is available free of charge from the Connecticut DOT. The map identifies

both local and cross-state routes and include additional information on cycling in and around the state.



Existing bicycle storage at Noroton Heights Station.

The rail station should be integrated into the regional bicycle route network linked to a network of major streets with striped bicycle lanes and signed bicycle routes. These

streets should be improved to provide a safe and comfortable ride. They may also have reduced vehicle speeds and flows to make residential roads more conducive to riding.

The Town of Darien may also consider redesigning intersections to give cyclists priority, experimenting with colored bicycle lanes, or installing traffic lights with a special bicycle logo. Cities such as Portland, OR, Davis, CA, Seattle, WA, Gainesville, FL, Tucson, AZ and Madison, WI can provide examples of these techniques. The Town can also promote bicycling through events, teach bicycle safety in schools and enforce traffic laws that affect bicyclist safety.

Bicycle Route Map - The station should also include a large sized version of a regional bicycle map to promote bicycle use. The map should also include recommended routes to and from the station from nearby neighborhoods.

D. Improve Signage, Lighting and Security

Signage - Parking is typically available in Lot 3 for daily voucher parking. However, due to the lack of signage in Lot 1 (across the tracks), the daily lot fills and late-arriving commuters do not realize there is parking available across the tracks. In the near term, suggestion was made to install a sign directing commuters to the additional daily voucher parking in Lot 3. The regional Parking ITS recommended in Section 4.1.1 should also be implemented to improve the utilization of the lot.

Lighting - Good quality and placement of lighting can enhance an environment as well as increase comfort and safety. Pedestrians often assume that motorists can see them at night; they are deceived by their own ability to see the oncoming headlights. Without sufficient overhead lighting, motorists may not be able to see pedestrians in time to stop.

In the parking lots during evening hours, streetlights and building lights can enhance the ambiance of the area and the visibility of pedestrians by motorists. It is best to place streetlights along both sides of parking lots and to provide a consistent level of lighting

throughout the lots. Nighttime pedestrian crossing areas may be supplemented with brighter or additional lighting. This includes lighting pedestrian crosswalks (both overhead and in-pavement) and approaches to the crosswalks along Noroton Avenue if constructed. Decorative lighting fixtures can be used in the parking lots, along the access roads and in the Heights Avenue retail/office district to enhance and unify the appearance of the area.

Specialty pedestrian-level lighting may be used to improve pedestrian comfort, security, and safety. Mercury vapor, incandescent, or less expensive high-pressure sodium lighting is often preferred as pedestrian-level lighting. Low-pressure sodium lights are low energy, but have a high level of color distortion. Examples of minimum parking lot and pedestrian walkway illumination standards are available in The Subdivision and Site Plan Handbook (David Listoken and Carole Walker, 1989).

Security - Security cameras and increased patrols will make Lot 3 more attractive to parking patrons. Currently, the lot is visually isolated from the station platforms. It is separated from Lot 2 and the platform by topography and a small business located between the tracks and the access road between parking lots. The security cameras would be linked to the Town of Darien police department.

Over the long term, the property between Lots 2 and 3 used for the steel business should be purchased and the business should be relocated off of the station. This would allow the construction of a pedestrian walkway directly from Lot 3 to the platform, thus improving visibility and security. Currently, the building located on the property creates a physical and visual separation between the platforms and Lot 3. In turn, this reduces the utilization of Lot 3 for parking.

4.2.2 Demand Management

Demand management emphasizes matching demand and supply at the station. It includes measures, such as parking pricing increases or coordination with commuter and retail parking in downtown Darien, which encourages demand that supports the efficient use of parking. The recommended demand management measures are discussed below.

A. Examine Pricing

The Town of Darien administers parking and sets the rate at the Noroton and Darien stations. There are 777 annual permits sold for 439 spaces in Lot 2.

During the study outreach process, some participants noted that prices were perceived to be low (\$235 for an annual permit and \$2.50 per day for vouchers) compared to other stations on the Main Line. Thus, once a commuter obtains a permit they renew it annually even if they don't use it regularly. This is perceived to penalize other regular commuters who must pay for daily parking. A suggestion was made to raise the cost of permits so that only those who find utility in their cost will use them. If this step is taken, the lot should not be oversold as is currently done. (Note: The prices will increase to \$288 for annual permits and \$3.00 per day for vouchers on 1/1/05).

In order to increase the use of parking in Lot 3, it was suggested that price for daily parking in Lot 3 could be discounted. This might entice users who might otherwise feel the lot is too distant from the station.

It is recommended that a pricing analysis for parking be conducted by the Town. The analysis should compare pricing to other stations along the Main Line and consider the factors identified above. The pricing strategy should also consider the viability of using the parking revenue to fund and implement the systems management recommendations discussed above.

B. Examine Downtown Darien Parking

Currently, there is a perception that there is a shortage of short-term parking in downtown Darien. In addition, retailers have complained that commuters are using the short-term municipal parking intended for shoppers and other downtown patrons.

A suggestion was made during the study, that all or portion of a lot at the Darien station could be reassigned to short term public parking in order to meet demands for public parking in the downtown. The station-related parking could shift and use the capacity of Lot 3 at Noroton Station. This would have the benefit of helping the economic vitality of the downtown while taking advantage of existing capacity at Noroton Heights. Similarly, such a shift could occur if a low or high density expansion of parking occurs at the Noroton Heights Station.

4.2.3 Low Density Expansion

The Connecticut DOT and Metro-North generally match the frequency of train service to stations where the highest amount of parking is located. As a result, additional parking at Noroton Heights could actually mean more frequent train service. Low-density expansions include the creation of additional surface parking and/or a new one-story parking deck.

However, in order to maximize return on past investment, it is prudent to make lower-cost improvements discussed above in the short-term prior to making significant capital investments in additional capacity. This optimizes the use and performance of existing infrastructure, equipment and services.



Existing sheet metal shop and access road connecting Lots 2 and 3.

A. Remove Sheet Metal Shop

Acquisition and relocation of the existing sheet metal shop between Lots 2 and 3 on the south side of the rail line would offer a number of benefits. The removal of the small building would eliminate the visual and physical barrier between the platform and Lot 3.

This barrier precludes motorists from seeing the available parking. It also reduces the sense of security in the lot. Removal of the building would increase the awareness of the availability of parking in Lot 3 enhance the sense of security in Lot 3. It would also allow for a small expansion of the parking supply and construction of a lighted sidewalk between the platforms and Lot 3.

In addition, the removal of the structure would allow the construction of a more direct pedestrian walkway from the platform to Lot 3. The site would also provide additional space for enhancing the design of a parking structure if recommended for Lot 2.

B. Construct One Story Deck on Lot 2

Approximately 400 additional parking spaces could be created by the construction of a one-story deck over Lot 2. The deck would be accessed from Hollow Tree Ridge Road and Lot 3 off of Noroton Avenue. The existing lot is located between the railroad tracks and I-95 on the side of hill that slopes towards I-95. The deck would be at or slightly below the elevation of Hollow Tree Road. By building into the side of the hill, the additional parking can be added without adding to the perceived height of the lot when viewed from the rail station, Hollow Tree Road or Heights Road neighborhood.

Context sensitive design could be used to present an attractive façade when viewed from the interstate. This could be supplemented with additional landscaping to mitigate any visual impacts. Also, there are no residential houses facing the lot, thus reducing its visual impact on the neighborhood. The concept is illustrated in Appendix 4. Concerns were raised regarding this option due to the additional traffic on West Avenue, Heights Road, Hollow Tree Ridge Road and Noroton Avenue.

C. One Story Deck on Lot 1 (Heights Road)

A smaller (approximately 200 spaces) deck could be developed over the day use lot along Heights Road. The perceived deck height could be reduced by excavating the existing lot

and constructing the first floor below the existing grade. Currently a portion of the lot is build atop a berm above Heights Road. The concept is illustrated in Appendix 4. The deck would reduce the number of intersections affected by additional traffic and would generate less traffic than the Lot 2 deck. It too could incorporate Context Sensitive Design to minimize the visual impact. Opportunities also exist to incorporate retail uses into the structure near the station to reduce automobile trips in the area.

4.2.4 High Density Expansion

A multi-story parking deck is feasible on Lots 2 and 3. Approximately 550 spaces could be added on each floor constructed over the combined area of Lots 2 and 3. The current grade of Lot 3 is about even with the height of the second floor of Lot 2, so Lot 3 would require excavation to match grades. Given the substantial increase in traffic that would be generated under this option direct access to and from I-95 to the garage should be considered. The traffic impacts associated with the garage may require coordination with the upcoming Interstate 95 Operation Improvements Study being undertaken by CDOT. Similar to the low-density expansion options described above, this strategy should not be undertaken until low-cost capacity improvements have been implemented in the short term.

4.3 South Norwalk

The station includes both a parking garage on the westbound side and a surface lot on the eastbound side. The station and its vicinity are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – South Norwalk Station area



The 725-space garage is open 24 hours and is monitored by security patrols and an electronic security system. Five of the six floors are covered and protected from rain and snow. The parking office is open 24 hours for parking permit and debit card purchases and daily parking fee payment. Monthly and semi-annual permit parkers use the Bates Court entrance.

Daily parkers use the State Street entrance to the parking garage or can use the overflow surface lot on the eastbound station side of the tracks. Daily parkers in the garage must pre-pay at a vending machine and obtain a pass to open the exit gate. Payments at the surface lot are collected by a staff person. Revenue control technology at day surface lot is planned for implementation.

The neighborhood surrounding the South Norwalk Station is enjoying the early stages of a revitalization effort by the City of Norwalk. The new construction near the Webster Block to the immediate north and the proposed redevelopment of the Reed-Putnam area north of downtown are examples. The city is also undertaking a planning process to encourage reinvestment in the South Norwalk neighborhood immediately adjacent to the station. Other major investment programs include the Mid-Harbor and Wall Street areas to the north of the station area and downtown. As these plans are implemented and new development occurs, the station will be an increasingly important piece of the city's transportation system.

An initial planning study for this neighborhood, called Sono South, was recently completed. The recommendations promote South Norwalk as a destination for commuters and travelers and include improving the visual and physical connections between the station and its adjacent neighborhoods to achieve this. In addition, the plan recommends using the station a focal point for development of a "village square" of housing, office, retail and recreational uses are top priorities.

4.3.1 Systems Management

The South Norwalk station is located within a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. It is surrounded by a mix of land uses offering opportunities for the station to serve as commuters to and from South Norwalk. Thus, potential system management strategies, such as pedestrian and designated day parking improvements, will be beneficial.

A. Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Sidewalks - Sidewalk improvements are recommended along Railroad Plaza on the east side of the station between Henry and Monroe Streets. Monroe Street is the primary pedestrian and automobile link between Downtown Norwalk (i.e., South Main Street) and the station. The station is a slight uphill walk from Monroe Street, thus the sidewalks should be well-maintained to enhance safety and ease of use.

Pavement Markings, Signals and Signage – It is recommended the City enhance safety for pedestrian crossings of Monroe Street and other locations around the station. Potential improvements include the new 'piano key' high visibility crosswalk marking, 'countdown' pedestrian signals and retroreflective signage materials. These and other innovative pedestrian safety improvements can be reviewed at the following web site: www.walkinginfo.org.

In addition, the City should locate crosswalks to access buses parked at the station. The crosswalks should be located to provide adequate sight distances for motorists and pedestrians. The bus loading areas should be positioned so that pedestrians don't have to cross between parked buses.

Bicycle Parking – It is recommended that the City develop a bicycle parking plan for secure, visible and sheltered locations at the station, including both on-street parking and potential long term lockers or indoor parking. The plan should identify potential locations for a 'bicycle station' facility offering parking, repair and rental services.

Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Linkages – The City should explore the viability of two (2) possible regional bicycle and pedestrian linkages. The first is to connect to the Route 7 linear trail at Route 1. The trail would provide access to communities and park and ride locations to the north. It would also link cyclists and pedestrians with the West Avenue Redevelopment area, the Norwalk Center Wheels pulse point for buses and other portions of the City of Norwalk. The second trail connection is the proposed bike path along the former Conrail bed which runs from South Norwalk station to Wilson Point. The trail would extend between the South Norwalk station and the intersection of Meadow Street and South Main Street. This is discussed in additional detail in Section 4.3.2 below.

B. Expand Designated Day Parking

The lower portion of the parking structure should be designated for day parking and upper floors for permit parking. Day parkers enter the garage at the northern entrance off of State Street. The ramp to the upper floors is at the southern end of the garage past the permit parking entrance. Once the garage is full, day parkers are directed to the overflow lot. The current design of the garage makes the flow of traffic up and down between floors somewhat difficult. Limiting day parking to the first two or three floors of the station would reduce the number of floors that day parkers must cycle through to find a space. The number of floors reserved for permit parking should be determined based on sales of parking permits.

The supply of day parking would remain approximately the same as currently exists. However, the supply would be concentrated in one portion of the garage, thereby increasing the efficiency of finding a space.

4.3.2 Demand Management

A. Construct the Wilson Point Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail

A former rail line right of way extends approximately 1.0 mile south from the South Norwalk Station to Route 136 at Meadow Street in Norwalk. The line is a segment of the former Danbury Wilson Point Division line. The rail terminus at Wilson Point provided marine access (early multi-modal connection) to New York City for the Housatonic Railroad. The trail would extend between the South Norwalk station and the intersection of Meadow Street and South Main Street.



Historic Photo of Wilson Point Marine Rail Access

The right of way is owned by CSX Corporation. The railbed is elevated above surrounding land uses for much of its extent. With careful planning and design, as well as public involvement, the northerly portion of the right of way could be used to link a pedestrian and bicycle path.

The path would link the station to the neighborhoods to the south. There are limited, but feasible, locations for mid-path connections to the trail from adjoining streets. Consideration would be required for lighting and clearing of vegetation to ensure visibility of the trail for security and safety of its users.

The design and construction of the bicycle trail could be administered by the City of Norwalk in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

4.3.3 Low Density Expansion

A. Renovate the Former Police Lot

The eastbound station is host to a City of Norwalk Community Police Station. The station is scheduled to relocate to the Walker Block development on Monroe Street. The police department currently maintains a fenced lot across Railroad Plaza from the station.

Day Parking - This lot could be repaved, striped and signed for day parking. It would provide approximately 40 additional parking spaces depending on the final configuration.

Intermodal Hub - Alternatively, the lot could be redeveloped as a mini-intermodal facility for transfers between buses or between buses and trains. The Norwalk Transit District operates three bus routes that serve the station on the eastbound side. Service to the downtown transfer point is provided approximately every half hour from 6:15 a.m. to 6:55 p.m. M-F. Saturday hours are 7:15 a.m. to 6:05 p.m. Commuter shuttles operate to Merritt 7/U.S. Surgical and Norwalk Hospital/ Virgin Atlantic M-F from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Currently, the Wheels systems operated by the Norwalk Transit District uses the Norwalk Mall as an intermodal hub. It may be desirable and feasible to link additional routes to the

South Norwalk station using the newly constructed intermodal facility in addition to the Norwalk Mall. The potential location of the facility is shown in Appendix 3.

The facility could also be used to accommodate increased use of private and Norwalk Transit District shuttles, taxi and limousine service. The overall goal of the City is to enhance the use of the South Norwalk Station as a destination for commuters and visitors rather than as a point of departure.

4.3.4 Higher Density Expansion

A. Integrate Parking Expansion with South Norwalk Redevelopment

The City of Norwalk is undertaking a planning study for the neighborhood to the east of the station. The South Norwalk redevelopment plan offers the opportunity to integrate parking for the station with future adjacent or nearby uses. In particular, it offers the opportunity to create one or more shared parking facilities between the station and the surrounding uses.

The shared facility could serve nearby residents during the evening and weekends and commuters during the day. In this way, the facility is used efficiently. The most appropriate location of the facility should be determined as part of the neighborhood planning study. Such a facility might lend itself to cost sharing with between the public and private sector. Alternatively, the public sector could construct the facility as an incentive to investment by private developers and homeowners along Chestnut Street.

The following identifies some of the potential shared parking strategies that should be considered as part of the South Norwalk redevelopment.

Mixed Use Development - The former police parking lot should be considered in any redevelopment plans for the Chestnut Street corridor. The lot is located to the west of

two warehouses along Henry Street and may be suitable for either mixed use or shared parking.

Railroad Street Plaza/Day Use Lot Parking Deck – The day use parking lot as well as the Railroad Plaza and former police lot could be incorporated into a new one story parking deck to effectively double the amount of parking on the east side of the station. This parking could be used to support investment along Chestnut Street.

Chestnut Street Shared Parking Facility –As part of this study, consideration should be given to the development of a shared parking facility between Chestnut Street and Railroad Plaza on the east side of the station.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

The categories of strategies (i.e., systems management, demand management, and expansion) serve as a framework for the recommended timeline for implementation. The philosophy underlying this framework is simple: in order to maximize return on past investment, it is prudent to make lower-cost improvements in the short-term prior to making significant capital investments in additional capacity. This optimizes the use and performance of existing infrastructure, equipment and services.

Thus, systems and demand management strategies should be implemented prior to capacity enhancement strategies. Although appropriate in many transportation planning contexts, this approach is particularly well-suited to this project. The daily carrying capacity, both current and future planned, of the Metro North New Haven Line service offers a practical limit on the number of commuters each station may serve per day. For the purposes of the study, systems and demand management strategies may be implemented in the 0-5 year time frame. Implementation of the capacity expansion projects should be done only after demand for such additional supply is documented.

The recommended program of improvements at both the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk Rail Stations include elements of systems management, demand management and capacity expansion strategies. These elements may be implemented individually or as part of a larger, coordinated improvement program. The most dramatic impacts on station access will occur with the simultaneous or phased implementation of a variety of the recommended elements. Implementation of individual elements also will incrementally improved the commuting experience for persons traveling in or out of the stations. The recommended elements are summarized below for each rail station.

5.1 Noroton Heights Rail Station

The Town of Darien is actively working to develop and implement a plan of improvements for the Noroton Heights Rail Station. To date, the focus of Darien's efforts has been to complete deferred maintenance projects and develop a prospective maintenance plan. Recently completed projects include painting of the station's interior and replacement of windows and seating. Consistent with the Town's mission to improve the quality of existing facilities and services at the rail station, the following strategies are recommended for Noroton Heights.

1. **Improve visual and physical connections between station platforms and parking facilities.**

Commuters report that available parking may be found at the rail station, but such parking is often hidden from view by natural or man-made structures or located a great distance from the platform in surface lots without sufficient lighting and sidewalks. Such lots are not only viewed as inconvenient places to park, but perceived as less safe than the lots adjacent to the platform or mixed in with local business parking. Improved visual and physical connections between these areas of existing surface lots and the platform may improve utilization of these lots. Specific recommendations include:

- Improved bicycle and pedestrian connections.
- Enhanced lighting around the station and adjacent areas to improve safety and visibility.
- Expanded use of wayfinding techniques – including ITS, information kiosks and “how to” pamphlets – to help persons arriving or departing from the station better locate and use its facilities and services.
- Use of both landscaping and hardscaping techniques to clearly delineate pedestrian zones and buffer pedestrians from vehicular traffic.
- Construction of an additional pedestrian bridge to connect parking facilities to station platforms.

2. Achieve greater operational efficiencies at existing parking facilities.

Management techniques may be used to encourage commuters to make better use of available parking spaces at the rail station's less convenient lots. Specific recommendations include:

- Improve vehicle access to and circulation within parking facilities.
- Explore use of pricing incentives, e.g., discounted parking fees for lots without direct platform access, as a means of encouraging commuters to park in less desirable locations to improve overall utilization of station parking facilities.
- Designate specific lots, or areas within lots, for non-permitted users as a means of more clearly communicating availability of parking.

3. Strengthen the economic vitality of the Town's neighborhood centers through the implementation of parking strategies that balance the needs of rail commuters and local businesses.

The Town is in the process of implementing strategies to promote additional economic development near the Darien Rail Station. Such economic development is, in part, dependent on the availability of sufficient public parking to meet the needs of local merchants and service providers. Better use of surface lots at the Noroton Heights Rail Station can, in effect, result in increased availability of parking, thereby creating an opportunity to shift commuter parking from municipal lots in Darien Center to the Noroton Heights Rail Station, thereby freeing up additional parking for patrons of local businesses. Specific recommendations include:

- Review parking demand for municipal parking in Darien Center and explore the possibility of redesignating municipal rail parking lots, or sections within such lots, as general public parking.
- Market Noroton Height as the Town of Darien's primary rail station.

5.2 South Norwalk Rail Station

The City of Norwalk – in partnership with its Redevelopment Agency, local business leaders and residents – is currently developing plans for the revitalization of the neighborhood adjacent to the South Norwalk Rail Station. Recommendations for this station compliment these revitalization plans and are organized around three objectives:

1. **Improve visual and physical connections between the station and its adjacent neighborhoods.**

The South Norwalk Rail Station is conveniently located near South Norwalk’s historic downtown and waterfront. A mix of housing, restaurants and retail, parks and tourist attractions such as the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk are a short walk from the station. High density, luxury office space and rental housing are planned for an underutilized tract of land just outside the downtown.

Despite its proximity to jobs, housing and recreational opportunities, South Norwalk Rail Station is more frequently a point of departure for its users, rather than a destination. A number of factors contribute to this pattern: 1) visually, the railroad tracks and other infrastructure appear to separate the station from the adjacent neighborhood; 2) the scattered presence of underutilized and blighted properties is not inviting to visitors of the neighborhood; 3) the quality of street lighting and sidewalks varies; and 4) signage directing travelers to local destinations, transit connections and other services is limited.

Enhancing the visual and physical connections between the station and the adjacent neighborhood can help erase the perceived separation of the station and downtown South Norwalk. Specific recommendations include:

- Improved bicycle and pedestrian connections.
- Enhanced lighting around the station and adjacent areas to improve safety and visibility.
- Expanded use of wayfinding techniques – including ITS, information kiosks and “how to” pamphlets – to help persons arriving or departing from the station better locate and use its facilities and services.

2. Promote South Norwalk as a destination for commuters and travelers.

As stated above, despite its proximity to jobs, housing and recreational opportunities, the South Norwalk Rail Station is more frequently a point of departure for its users, rather than a destination. Promoting South Norwalk as a destination may increase the number of train trips into the station without the need for additional parking infrastructure, reduce traffic congestion on highway and local surface streets and assist in the economic revitalization of the neighborhood.

Specific recommendations include:

- Further development of the rail station as an intermodal hub to increase the number of transportation options and services available to persons arriving at the station.
- Increased commuter connections during peak and off peak times.
- Implementation of neighborhood circulator shuttles.
- Expanded use of wayfinding techniques – including ITS, information kiosks and “how to” pamphlets – to help persons arriving at the station get to local attractions and other destinations.

3. Use the rail station as a focal point in the development of a “village square” of housing, office, retail and recreational uses.

The City of Norwalk’s vision for the neighborhood includes the creation of a mixed use “village” that blends new and old buildings and a blend of residential, neighborhood-

level retail and services and recreational uses. The South Norwalk Rail Station can be a centerpiece of this revitalization by providing opportunities for shared services and facilities. Specific recommendations include:

- Development of shared parking structure on the eastbound side of the station to accommodate both station parking and planned neighborhood business, retail and recreational development.
- Expanded use of the station as an intermodal hub to increase the number of transportation options and services available to persons who live and work in the immediate area.

APPENDIX 1 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

APPENDIX 1 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Opportunities for public participation were incorporated throughout the study and structured to help identify ways to improve access to passenger rail services at selected stations in Darien and Norwalk. Specifically, written and verbal contact with the public was designed to elicit comments relevant to the study's primary objectives. Study objectives are as follows:

- To improve efficiency of existing parking facilities at Noroton Heights and South Norwalk;
- To identify opportunities for the expansion of parking facilities; and
- To recommend neighborhood-level strategies that support additional use of rail stations.

These targeted outreach efforts helped yield recommendations for the expansion of rail station parking in Darien and Norwalk that:

- Have the support of the traveling public, public officials and surrounding communities;
- Blend appropriate elements of each of the concepts evaluated;
- Provide short and long-range opportunities for supportive neighborhood development; and
- Offer short and long-range opportunities for enhanced access to passenger rail services.

A summary of public outreach and participation activities conducted during the study follows.

1. Advisory Committee

An advisory committee including representatives of local and state agencies, transportation providers, the business community, commuters and local residents was the primary link between the study team and those constituencies that will likely emerge as users or beneficiaries of the transportation services and facilities studied. The advisory committee provided input on the direction of the study at regular intervals during the process.

Advisory committee meetings were held as follows:

December 13, 1999
March 25, 2002
June 13, 2002
November 18, 2003
December 18, 2003
March 4, 2004
September 22, 2004

Summaries of these meetings are available for review on SWRPA's website at www.swrpa.org.

Advisory committee members also were encouraged to review and comment on the draft technical memoranda on which the final report and recommendations are based.

2. Commuter "Meet and Greet"

Representatives of the study team were available at the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk Rail Stations from 5:00-7:30 a.m. and 5:00-7:30 p.m. on February 11 and 12, 2004, to share draft concepts for improvements at each of these stations, to distribute a

commuter questionnaire and to field questions about the study. Some commuters provided verbal input to the project team, while others followed up with written comments.

Notice of these “meet and greets” were provided to the following: advisory committee members; Agency representatives; the South Western Region’s chief elected officials; town clerks in the South Western Region; town planners in the South Western Region; municipal traffic engineers in the South Western Region; all public libraries in the South Western Region; local chapters of the League of Women Voters; the Connecticut Department of Transportation; the Federal Transit Authority; the Federal Highway Administration; the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council; and area Chambers of Commerce and other business associations.

Legal notices were published in the Stamford Advocate, the Hour (Norwalk), the Darien News-Review, the New Canaan Advertiser, the Weston Forum, the Westport News, and the Wilton Bulletin. Press releases were sent to approximately 40 area print, radio and television outlets to help further publicize these events.

Commuter Questionnaires

Commuter questionnaires were distributed at the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk Rail Stations by hand from 5:00-7:30 a.m. and 5:00-7:30 p.m. on February 11 and 12, 2004. Blank questionnaires, displays and questionnaire return boxes were available at each station from February 11 through 18, 2004. Over 200 completed questionnaires were returned.

3. Media

SWRPA distributed periodic press releases to area print, radio and television media as a means of communicating information about the study to persons who live and work in the study area. Media coverage was provided by the following: Stamford Advocate, The Hour (Norwalk), Connecticut Post (Bridgeport), Darien News-Review, Darien Times, Norwalk Citizen-News, New Canaan Advertiser, News 12 Connecticut, and WSTC/WNLK radio (Stamford/Norwalk).

APPENDIX 2 – QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSE SUMMARY

Darien/Norwalk Railroad Parking Study Study Overview – February 2004

As a way to help mitigate traffic congestion in our area, the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) is looking to improve access to passenger rail services in the South Western Region. The effort seeks to:

- improve efficiency of existing parking facilities at Noroton Heights and South Norwalk ;
- identify opportunities for the expansion of parking facilities; and
- recommend neighborhood-level strategies that support additional use of rail stations.

Parking demand, local support for the development of structured parking, opportunities for transit-oriented development and other critical issues at the five (5) existing passenger rail stations in both towns will be examined.

In addition, parking expansion and intermodal concepts will be developed for the Noroton Heights and South Norwalk stations. Five (5) different levels of improvements will be examined including: “do nothing,” systems management, demand management, low-density expansion and higher density expansion. Supporting elements such as transit/bicycle/ pedestrian connections, signage, security, landscaping and opportunities for other uses will be incorporated.

The recommendations for the expansion of rail station parking in Darien and Norwalk will:

1. Have the support of the traveling public, public officials and surrounding communities.
2. Blend appropriate elements of each of the concepts evaluated.
3. Provide short and long-range opportunities for supportive neighborhood development.
4. Offer short and long-range opportunities for enhanced access to passenger rail services.

This study needs your ideas. What ways would you like to enhance parking? You can contribute to the study by submitting your suggestions on the attached comment form.

Please return the form to the collection box at the South Norwalk or Noroton Heights stations.
Comments will be collected until February 13nd, 2004.

You may also submit comments by mail, e-mail or fax:

Darien/Norwalk Railroad Parking Study
c/o SWRPA
888 Washington Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Stamford, CT 06901
(203) 316-4995 FAX
leigh@swrpa.org

This study is funded by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

Additional information regarding this study is available on the web at www.swrpa.org.

SWRPA

South Western Regional Planning Agency



South Western Regional Planning Agency

Darien/Norwalk Railroad Parking Study February 2004

Please indicate which of the following improvements to rail station parking and access should be further studied.

Additional comments may be added below:

Station Name (optional):

1. Improved traffic circulation patterns at existing parking facilities.

Yes_____ No_____

2. Improved roadway access at existing parking facilities.

Yes_____ No_____

3. Reconfiguration of existing surface lots.

Yes_____ No_____

4. Off-site parking facilities with frequent and reliable transit connections to rail station.

Yes_____ No_____

5. Use of pricing incentives, e.g. time of day, location, to encourage better use of existing surface lots.

Yes_____ No_____

6. Expanded daily parking.

Yes_____ No_____

7. Expanded permit parking.

Yes_____ No_____

8. Additional surface parking lots.

Yes_____ No_____

9. New sheltered parking facilities, e.g., decks or garages.

Yes_____ No_____

10. Improved signage and traveler information services at stations and parking facilities.

Yes_____ No_____

11. Improved or additional sidewalks, bike paths and bike lockers.

Yes_____ No_____

12. Improved bus connections at station.

Yes_____ No_____

13. Improved or additional landscaping.

Yes_____ No_____

14. Improved or additional security.

Yes_____ No_____

15. Improved or additional lighting.

Yes_____ No_____

16. Neighborhood-appropriate development, e.g., housing, small retail, etc.

Yes_____ No_____

Thank you for completing this survey.

DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

Station Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	COMMENTS
East Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	"Services" in this station are a disgrace! Dirty.
East Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#1 ON EXITING
East Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#1 Traffic jam at exit during p.m. rush
East Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#1 Traffic light slows traffic!
East Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#11 Emphasis on Additional Sidewalks
East Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#13 Safety first! Presently unsafe for pedestrians.
East Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#14 Except Darien #15 Except Darien
East Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#15 Major, very dangerous. Lack of sidewalk and lighting make voucher parking very dangerous as cars back out with pedestrians walking past.
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#15 Shielded w/dark sky light. Bike access on trains during peak hours. Move original station as a restored historical station.
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#2 Improve ingress/egress to lot. #10 Maps necessary. #14 Visibility helps.
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#3 OVERFLOW
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#3 Plenty of room just reconfigure
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#7 ASSUMING FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS ONLY
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#7 Equalize parking rates Permit and Voucher annuals should be equal. #10 Either remove faded stop sign or enforce the it!
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis no garage!
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!!
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!! More cars means more traffic problems
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!! Need more TRAIN cars.
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Plenty of parking available. Issuing of monthly permits is agonizing.

DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

Station Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	COMMENTS
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Underground garage ONLY!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Access & egress impeded busy traffic light coordination to Rt 95/7
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Better maintenance needed; filthy. Reinstate annual parking permits. Better exiting.
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Discontinuing annual passes is discouraging. Hate having to write 12 checks. Inefficient means for paying.
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Do not need additional traffic in NH Period!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Exits continuously backed up; need left Hand turn lane. #9 Worse possible idea to put up a garage. #10 o.k. as they are!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Expand parking AFTER new station is built and improvement to abysmal station conditions. Additional parking, lighting is definitely a top priority for the WESTBOUND side
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Get rid of half security staff; cannot speak english
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	If fees continue to raise, can't increase riders
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Improving NH station and platforms improvements to be considered should go behind mere aesthetics.
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Jr High Traffic in Darien is a mess, needs attention!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Link to 10 trip tickets at metronorth. Smart card Regional Transit Card Link. #2 Too many lights
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Lot too far from platform, additional cars would make the bad traffic problem we have now, worse.
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Mitigate traffic by creating LESS traffic. No parking expansion!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Need annual parking permits and better security. Prepay for daily parking to avoid pm delays exiting. Need more exit lanes
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Need annual parking permits! No security. Poorly maintained.

DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

Station Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	COMMENTS
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Need more train cars
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Need more train cars
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	New management not interested in customer's issues. Elimination of Debit Card pass causes major delays
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	New owners have made parking more difficult. Paying for monthly parking is restricted. Exiting takes way too long.
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	One exit in pm w/one lane backs up to 4th floor. Gate w/attendant causes delays
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	One exit in pm w/one lane backs up to 4th floor; congestion is terrible! Elimination of annual passes maddening!
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	Outer lots too far from station. Station is from dark ages. Dangerous for pedestrians!
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	Parking and station are fine as is. Do not improve or change.
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	Parking lot dark, safety is an issue. Station looks like a trailer. Garage would be ugly.
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	Permit parking should be expanded. Doesn't make sense to increase parking when trains are already overcrowded!
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	Reinstate annual permits to Norwalk residents. Too many loiterers and homeless.
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	Reinstate debit card usage for paying daily. Need covered, safe parking
Noroton Heights	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	Station is an eyesore and should be renovated. Need SIGNAGE indicating which side to NY and which to New Haven. Need more TRAIN cars.
Noroton Heights	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	Station needs some updating, but don't need a big expensive facility. Please do not build a multi-level parking facility.
Noroton Heights	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	Station overcrowded; anything done to expand use will put strain on this residential neighborhood;
Noroton Heights	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	Trains should run all night

***DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004***

[illegible]

***DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004***

Station Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	COMMENTS
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		2	2	2	2	

DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

Station Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	COMMENTS
South Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2		2	2	2	2	2	2	2		2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2	2		2	2	2	2	2	2			2	2	2	2	
South Norwalk	2	2				2	2		2	2			2	2	2		
South Norwalk	2					2	2						2		2		
South Norwalk	2						2										
South Norwalk	2						2										
South Norwalk	2						2										

0 = No comment was made

1 = Yes

2 = No

DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

Station Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	COMMENTS
Noroton Heights	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	"Services" in this station are a disgrace! Dirty.
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#1 Traffic light slows traffic!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#14 Except Darien #15 Except Darien
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#15 Major, very dangerous. Lack of sidewalk and lighting make voucher parking very dangerous as cars back out with pedestrians walking past.
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#15 Shielded w/dark sky light. Bike access on trains during peak hours. Move original station as a restored historical station.
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#3 Plenty of room just reconfigure
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#7 ASSUMING FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS ONLY
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#7 Equalize parking rates Permit and Voucher annuals should be equal. #10 Either remove faded stop sign or enforce the it!
Noroton Heights	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis no garage!
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!!
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!!
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!!
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!! Need more TRAIN cars.
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Underground garage ONLY!
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Do not need additional traffic in NH Period!
Noroton Heights	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Exits continuously backed up; need left Hand turn lane. #9 Worse possible idea to put up a garage. #10 o.k. as they are!

DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

[illegible]

***DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004***

[illegible]

0 = No comment was made

1 = Yes

2 = No

DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

Station Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	COMMENTS
South Norwalk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	#1 ON EXITING
South Norwalk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	#1 Traffic jam at exit during p.m. rush
South Norwalk	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	#2 Improve ingress/egress to lot. #10 Maps necessary. #14 Visibility helps.
South Norwalk	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	#3 OVERFLOW
South Norwalk	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	#9 Plenty of parking available. Issuing of monthly permits is agonizing.
South Norwalk	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	Access & egress impeded busy traffic light coordination to Rt 95/7
South Norwalk	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Better maintenance needed; filthy. Reinstate annual parking permits. Better exiting.
South Norwalk	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Discontinuing annual passes is discouraging. Hate having to write 12 checks. Inefficient means for paying.
South Norwalk	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Get rid of half security staff; cannot speak english
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	If fees continue to raise, can't increase riders
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Link to 10 trip tickets at metronorth. Smart card Regional Transit Card Link. #2 Too many lights
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Need annual parking permits and better security. Prepay for daily parking to avoid pm delays exiting. Need more exit lanes
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	New management not interested in customer's issues. Elimination of Debit Card pass causes major delays
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	New owners have made parking more difficult. Paying for monthly parking is restricted. Exiting takes way too long.
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	One exit in pm w/one lane backs up to 4th floor. Gate w/attendant causes delays
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	One exit in pm w/one lane backs up to 4th floor; congestion is terrible! Elimination of annual passes maddening!
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Reinstate annual permits to Norwalk residents. Too many loiterers and homeless.
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Reinstate debit card usage for paying daily. Need covered, safe parking
South Norwalk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Trains should run all night

***DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004***

[illegible]

DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

Station Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	COMMENTS
YES's	27	27	24	20	23	25	22	29	29	27	24	22	25	36	25	22	407
NO's	22	22	23	24	25	23	25	21	21	22	24	27	23	21	21	27	370

0 = No comment was made

1 = Yes

2 = No

DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

Station Name	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	COMMENTS
East Norwalk	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
East Norwalk	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	#11 Emphasis on Additional Sidewalks
East Norwalk	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	#13 Safety first! Presently unsafe for pedestrians.
East Norwalk	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	Outer lots too far from station. Station is from dark ages. Dangerous for pedestrians!
East Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	
East Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
East Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
East Norwalk	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Overall																	
YES's	4	0	3	2	1	4	7	7	4	2	3	0	3	4	3	3	50
NO's	4	6	4	6	5	3	1	1	4	4	3	6	4	3	4	4	62

0 = No comment was made

1 = Yes

2 = No

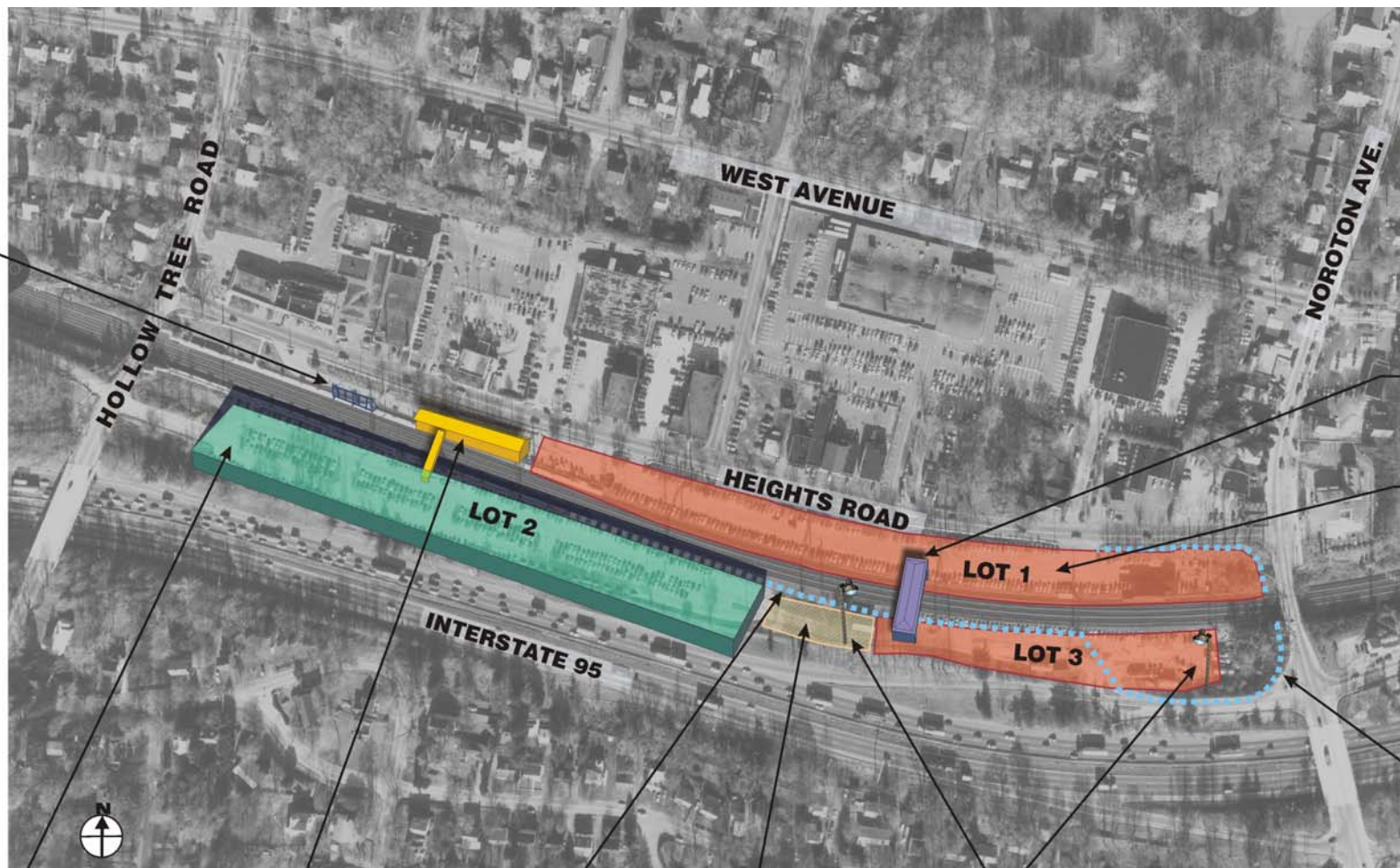
DARIEN/NORWALK TRAIN STATION SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2004

Station Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	COMMENTS
No Comment	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!!
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	#9 Emphasis on NO!!!! More cars means more traffic problems
No Comment	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Need annual parking permits! No security. Poorly maintained.
No Comment	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	Station is an eyesore and should be renovated. Need SIGNAGE indicating which side to NY and which to New Haven. Need more TRAIN cars.
No Comment	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	
No Comment	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
No Comment	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
No Comment	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
No Comment	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	OVERALL
YES's	3	3	3	3	3	7	6	6	3	5	4	2	4	5	4	3	64
NO's	6	5	5	6	5	2	3	3	6	4	4	6	5	4	4	5	73

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APPENDIX 3 – SUMMARY ILLUSTRATION OF NOROTON HEIGHTS RECOMMENDATIONS

Dual Post
Bike Rack
and Lockers



1 Story Deck
(approximately 400
spaces additional)

Existng Station

New Pedestrian
Walkway

Acquire and
Remove Building

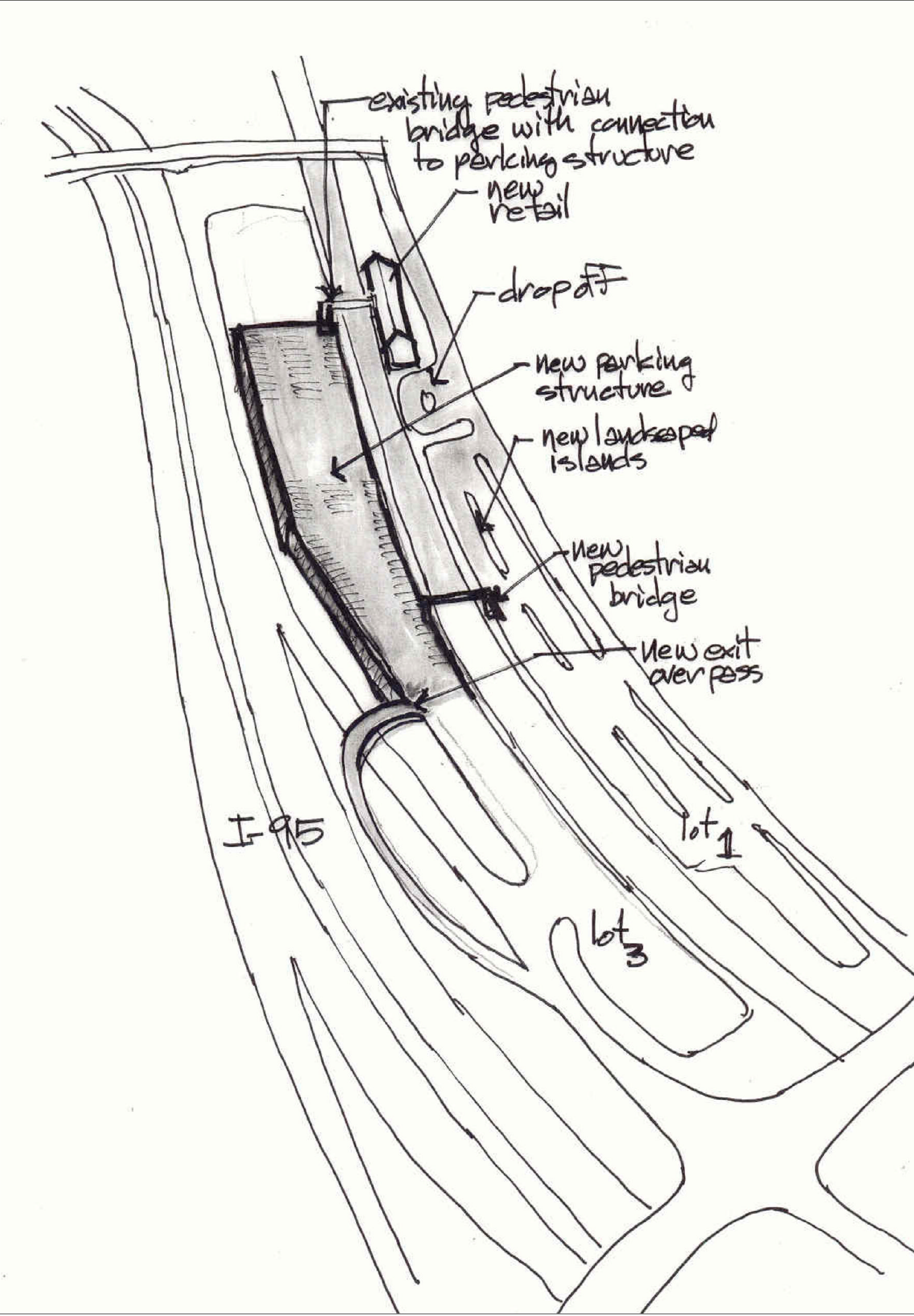
Security Cameras
and Lighting

New Pedestrian
Overpass (ADA
Compliant)

Center Aisle
Parking
Parallel to
Tracks and
Pedestrian
Median

New Pedestrian
Walkway along
Noroton and
Heights Rd.

APPENDIX 4 – LOW DENSITY EXPANSION CONCEPTUAL DRAWINGS



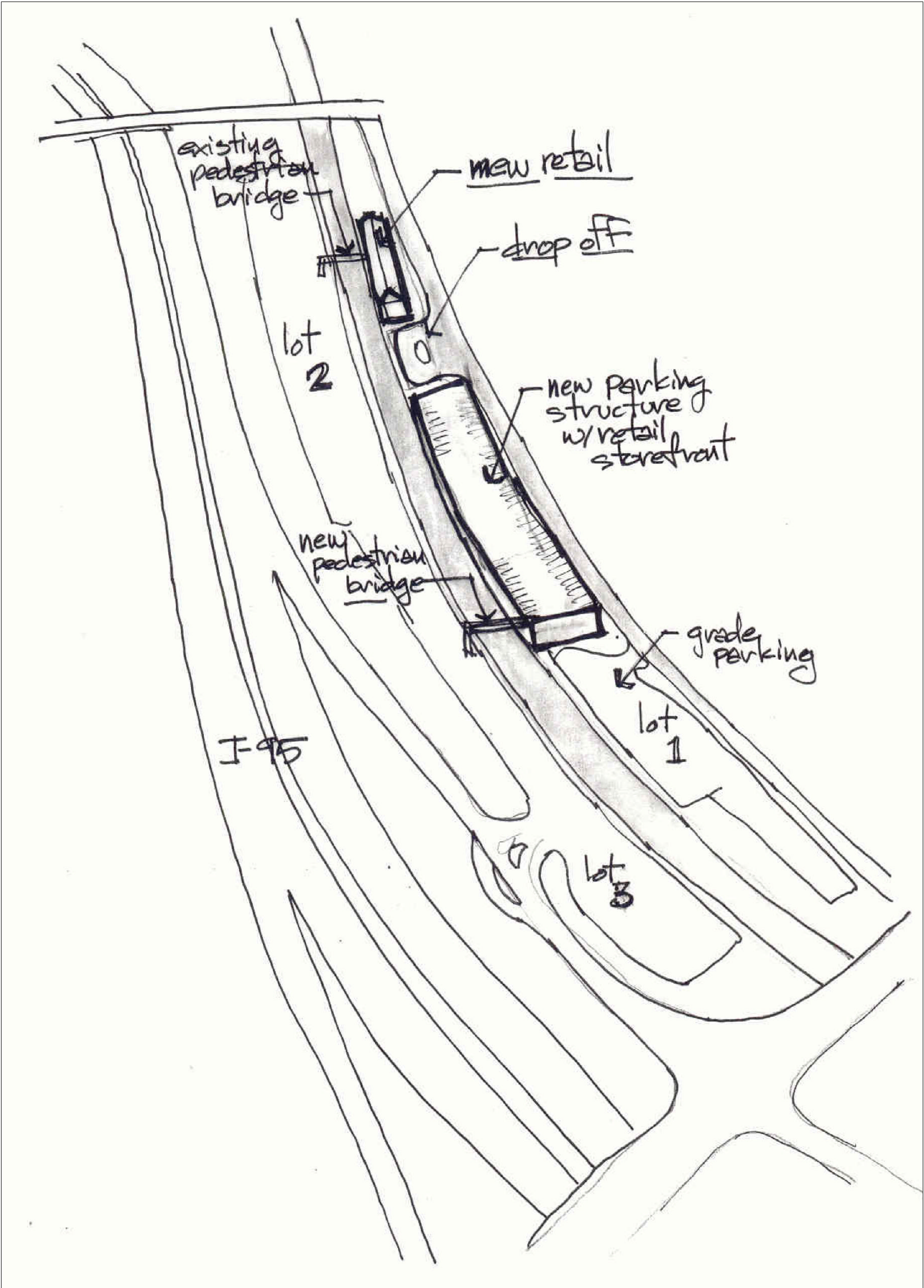
OPTION 1

NOROTON HEIGHTS

RAILROAD PARKING STUDY
DARIEN / NORWALK, CT.

**Edwards
AND
Kelcey**

Edwards and Kelcey Architectural and Design Services Inc. MAR 4, 2004



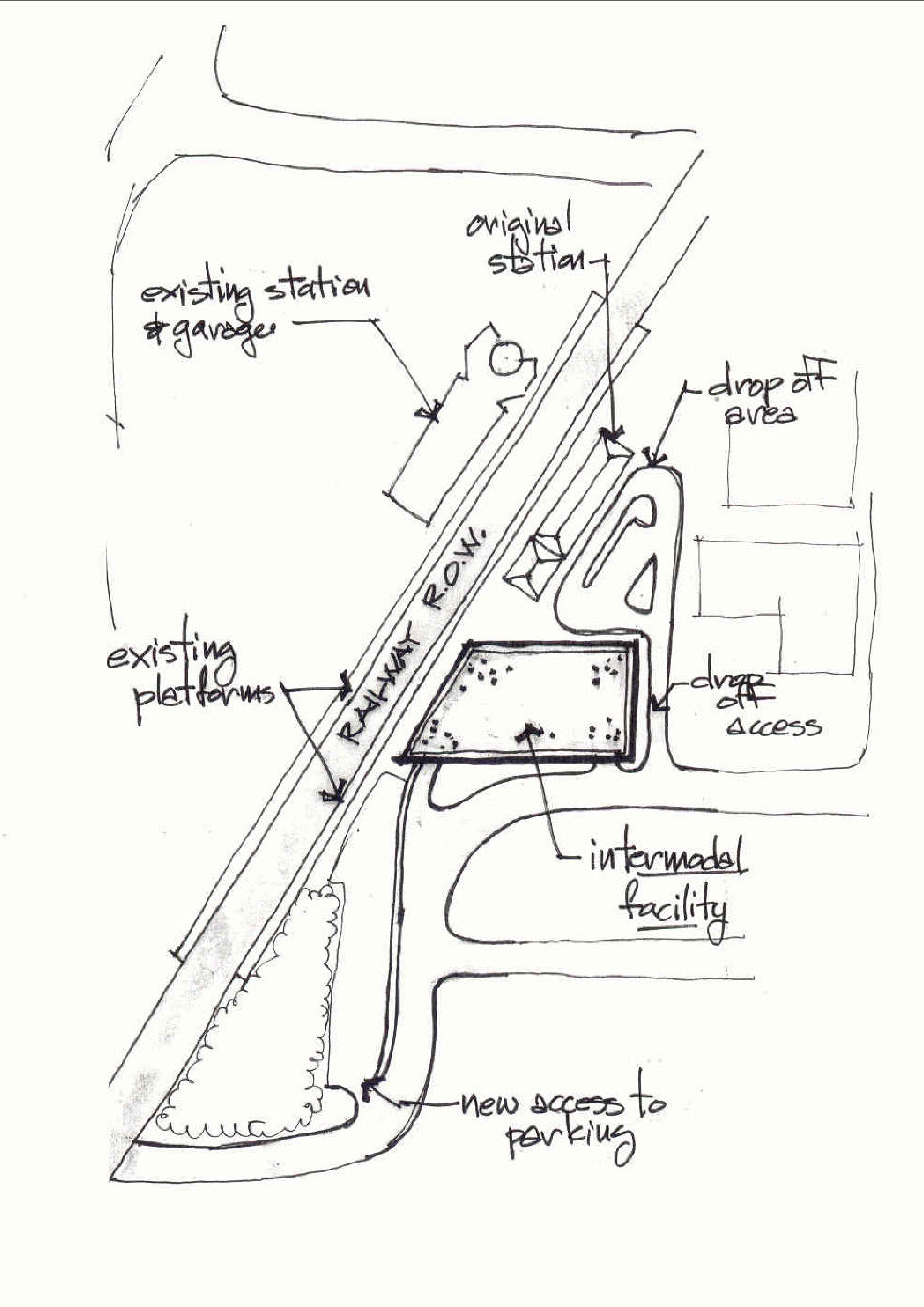
OPTION 2

NOROTON HEIGHTS

RAILROAD PARKING STUDY
DARIEN / NORWALK, CT.



Edwards and Kelcey Architectural and Design Services Inc. MAR 4, 2004



OPTION 1

SOUTH NORWALK



Edwards and Kelcey Architectural and Design Services Inc. MAR 4, 2004

RAILROAD PARKING STUDY
DARIEN / NORWALK, CT.