



# Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS) Roundtable

October 22, 2024,

**Discussion Highlights**

Newtown Senior Center

## Traffic & Other Issues with Newtown Roads

A small group of seniors met at the Senior Center to discuss traffic congestion and other issues with Newtown roadways. Key conclusion is that there is no planning for roads and traffic

### **Problematic Intersections and Roadways**

1. The Flagpole
2. West Street – Main Street (turning left or crossing to Church Hill)
3. Queen St and Glover Ave
4. Sugar Street (302) – Main Street - Glover
5. Currituck – Main Street
6. Currituck – Hawleyville - Obtuse
7. Mt Pleasant - Hawleyville
8. Sandy Hook Center (Church Hill – Glen – Riverside – Washington)
9. Church Hill from the railroad tracks to I84
10. Main Street when Waze or Apple Maps divert traffic off I84
11. Wasserman – Berkshire (Much better but still has problems making right from the exit at the stoplight and heading north on Wasserman to make a left onto Washington)
12. South Main – Northwest after the Botsford Rd traffic light (Knight’s Restaurant hit three times before it torn down)

### **Concern about intersection if new housing developments are built**

The impact on traffic congestion was mentioned often. Specific developments and intersections mentioned were:

1. Johnnie Cake – Main Street
2. Swamp Rd – South Main
3. Fairfield Hills (Trades Land – Wasserman/Mile Hill)

There were mixed opinions and experiences about new housing’s impact

- Traffic studies developers present cannot be trusted. Need “independent” traffic studies. Developers should pay for the studies.
- The new Farrell apartments were discussed as an example.

### **Other issues and concerns**

1. Newtown does not have a Traffic Plan
2. Newtown should hire a Traffic Engineer/Planner to create a town plan and manage it’s implementation. Alternatively engage a consultant to create a Newtown Traffic plan



## Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS) Roundtable

### Solutions

1. Through realtors or a form of “Welcome Wagon” new residents of Newtown should receive tips on driving in Newtown, especially around The Flagpole.
2. Increased police traffic enforcement, especially on Main Street. It was recognized that more police will not reduce the volume of traffic, but it could make it easier to drive in Newtown.
3. When the apartments are created on Fairfield Hills, provide a shuttle bus from Fairfield Hills to reduce increases in POV traffic.
4. Create a public transportation option.
  - a. Fairfield Hills – Sandy Hook Center – Flagpole – Fairfield Hills
  - b. Newtown to Bethal
  - c. Newtown to Southbury
5. Participants had different perceptions of accident frequency. Some believe that is at least one accident a week at the Flagpole or at Currituck and Main Street. Others didn’t think it was that often. What the Police summary each week the The Bee shows was discussed. See Follow-up below
6. Some point solutions were identified
  - a. Make Queen Street – Glover all way stop
  - b. There is a sign about navigating the Flagpole on west bound Church Hill. Put signage on north and south bound Main Street
  - c. On south bound Main Street at Sargar/Glover make the right turn lane thru and right.
  - d. At west bound Mt Pleasant – Hawleyville, add a right turn lane
  - e. Add a right turn and through lane on west bound Washington St in Sandy Hook Center
7. Have the State move Rt 6 onto I84 from Exit 8 so Newtown could control Main Street.

### Roundabouts

About a third of participants have experience of travelling through Roundabouts. There was general agreement that they reduce congestion, but there is a learning curve. Intersections where Roundabouts may improve congestion were:

- Currituck – Hawleyville – Obtuse
- Mt Pleasant - Hawleyville
- Currituck – Main Street
- Queen Street - Glover

### Traffic Studies and Plans

Various planning initiatives were brought up as opportunities to address Newtown’s traffic problems.

1. Newtown Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) update.  
There is a chapter on transportation mobility in the 2024 POCD update draft. (See below)  
The full draft is available for review on the Newtown-CT.gov website POCD page  
<https://www.newtown-ct.gov/home/pages/newtown-plan-conservation-and-development>  
The draft calls for study of Currituck – Hawleyville – Obtuse and Route 34 / Gray Plains Road



## Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS) Roundtable

/ Bennetts Bridge Road. Otherwise, the goals and objectives are broad and do not get to the level of Roundtable's discussion

2. Housatonic Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (HVMOP) 2019 – 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan  
The plan focuses on I84, I95 and Route 7

### **Questions and Follow-up**

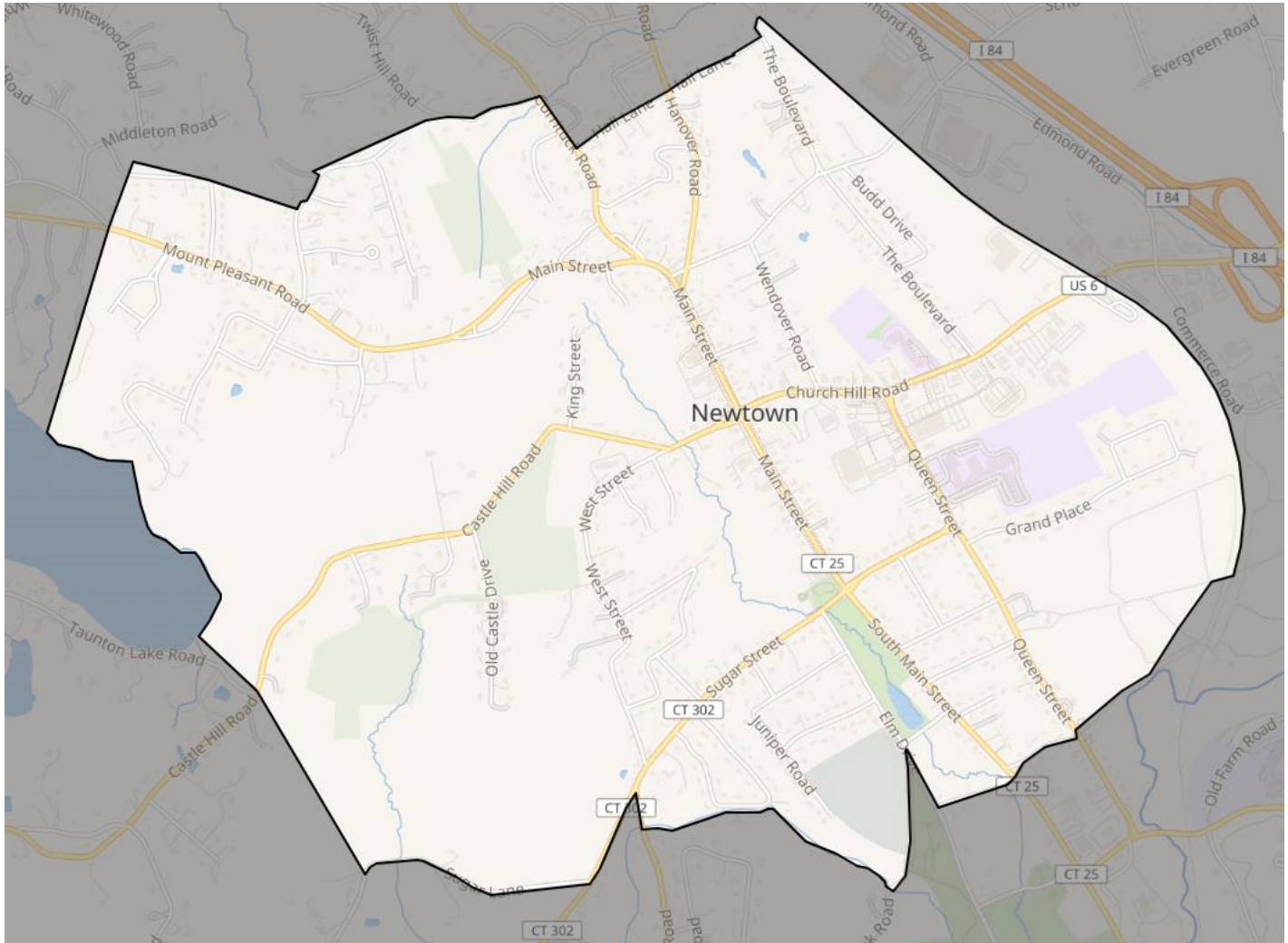
- Bourgouh of Newtown Map – See Below
- Do the Police Reports in The Newtown Bee report all incidents or just some?  
If not all, how are incidents to report chosen?

Ned S contacted Shannon Hicks, Managing Editor of The Newtown Bee. She stated that The Bee publishes whatever they receive from the Newtown Police Department, except domestic violence calls if any. Shannon recognizes that this is not all of the Police Department's calls.

The September Incident Call Statistics report attached to the October 1, 2024 Police Commission Minutes shows a total of 1,407 incidents in September. In this report 147 incidents appear to be traffic activity that might have been reported to The Bee.



# Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS) Roundtable





## Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS) Roundtable

### **2024 Draft POCD Transportation and Mobility Chapter Goals & Objectives**

5.1. Review measures to alleviate congestion and enhance road safety for all users.

5.1.1. Work with WestCOG and the State to coordinate with mapping applications (e.g., Waze, Google) to stop GPS applications from directing traffic to local roads.

5.1.2. Conduct further studies better to understand road network capacity, patterns, and issues.

5.1.2.1. Collaborate with ConnDOT to study the potential realignment of the Currituck Road and Hawleyville Road intersection to improve traffic safety conditions.

5.1.2.2. Work with ConnDOT to evaluate the potential for left turn lights at the Route 34 / Gray Plains Road / Bennetts Bridge Road intersection.

5.1.2.3. Work with ConnDOT to evaluate the potential for a right turn lane at the Route 302 / Route 25 intersection. Evaluate traffic queuing times along main roadways during peak hours.

5.1.3. Study the feasibility of installing turn lanes or roundabouts on congested collector and arterial roads.

5.1.4. Consider implementing U.S. Department of Transportation bicycle parking standards for new developments where appropriate.

5.1.5. Investigate financial feasibility of restoring some type of passenger rail service on the Housatonic rail line.

5.2 Continue investment in road maintenance and sidewalk installation in Newtown.

5.2.1 Review potential regulations requiring new development to provide a fair share of transportation improvements in support of facilitating safety and connectivity.

5.2.2 Support the Capital Budget to continue appropriate funding levels to maintain the transportation network.

5.2.3 Pursue grant opportunities to support transportation network upgrades.

5.2.4 Explore potential expansion of sidewalk network along Queen Street to support a pedestrian network connecting the schools in the surrounding area.

5.3. Examine options to provide additional public transportation services for Newtown's senior population.

5.3.1. Encourage developers to provide shuttle services for tenants to commercial centers.

5.3.2 Explore funding options to help operate and staff the Community Center / Senior Center shuttle.



## Friends of Newtown Seniors (FONS) Roundtable

5.4. Investigate technology upgrades to facilitate roadway efficiency and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

5.4.1. Collaborate with ConnDOT on traffic light timing and sensor upgrades.

5.4.2 Review Town policies and zoning code to encourage the construction of Level 1-3 charging systems to meet the growing demand for electric vehicles for public and private locations.