



Existing Conditions

Route 44 Corridor Study, Canton, CT

PREPARED FOR

CRCOG

Capitol Region Council of Governments
241 Main Street, 4th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106-5310
860.522.2217

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PREPARED BY

vhb

100 Great Meadow Road
Suite 200
Wethersfield, CT 06109
860.807.4300

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Section	Description
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C	Crash Data
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E	Intersection Capacity Analysis Worksheets
F	Meeting notes
G	Public Survey

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Introduction

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and the Town of Canton has commissioned this corridor study, which reviews a section of the US Route 44/US Route 202 corridor in southeastern Canton (hereafter referred to as Route 44), as well as part of Dowd Avenue (CT 565). These sections of US Route 44 and Dowd Avenue traverse the main commercial areas of the town, including the Shops at Farmington Valley and the Canton Village Shopping Center.

1.1 Project Purpose and Study Area

The Route 44 Corridor Study supports the Town of Canton's efforts to provide streets that are safe and accessible for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users of all ages and abilities. The Study goals include evaluating the Route 44 and Dowd Avenue corridors to improve mobility and access for all users, including motorists and freight, through the area under its future build-out as a high-density, mixed-use village. It also includes reviewing safety improvements to extend the Farmington River Rail Trail and how best to provide safe reliable access for people walking and biking to employment, education, and healthcare in the area.

The primary purpose of this effort is to investigate and evaluate current transportation infrastructure deficiencies including bicycle and pedestrian options and transit, along a portion of Route 44 as well as adjacent roadways in the Town of Canton and develop a recommendation plan to address those deficiencies. These efforts follow the Route 44 Master Plan study completed in 2000, also commissioned by CRCOG, which included recommended improvements along Route 44, some of which have been completed. The section of Route 44 studied includes the corridor between the Canton Village Shops (milepost 40.35 on Route 44 East) to the Simsbury Town line. The study also includes a portion of Dowd Avenue, from Canton Hollow (milepost 1.19) to its intersection with Route 44 (milepost 1.73). The study will evaluate safety improvements to accommodate a proposed East-West extension of the existing active

transportation route (the Farmington River Rail Trail) and determine the best location of a trail crossing on Route 44.

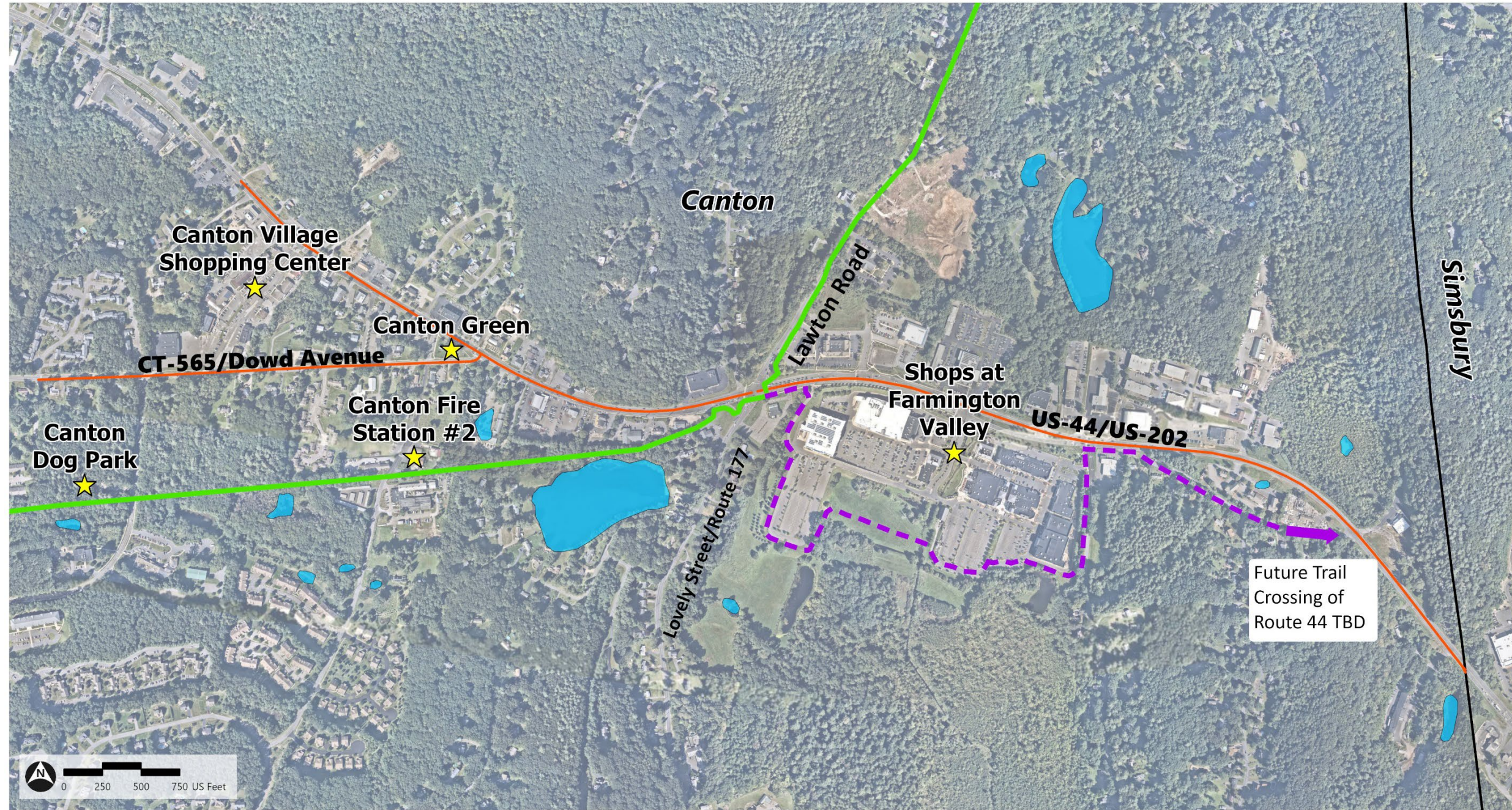
See Figure 1 for a map of the project study area roadways.

1.2 Report Overview

This Existing Conditions report summarizes the transportation-related data and infrastructure, as well as land use and development information that may impact the demand for transportation services and potentially support alternative modes of transportation. Chapter 2 is divided into the following sections:

- › Location Context
- › Transportation Data and Analysis of Traffic Movements
- › Crash/Safety Data
- › Bicycle and Pedestrian Conditions
- › Public Transportation
- › Public Engagement to Date
- › Land Use and Development
- › Previous and Current Plans and Studies

Figure 1 Map of the Route 44 Study Area



★ Key Destinations

— US-44 Canton Study Area Roadways

■ Water Bodies

— Farmington River Trail

- - - Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension

Source: VHB, NearMap

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Existing Conditions

This chapter presents a summary of the existing conditions in the Route 44 and Dowd Avenue area of Canton based upon accumulation of Town data, field observations, collection of traffic and bicycle/pedestrian data, transit data, land use and development data, previous plans and studies, and public engagement efforts.

2.1 Location Context

The Town of Canton was founded in 1806. The town is on the western edge of the Capitol Region, situated approximately 12 miles from Hartford. It is a suburban/rural town with a population of 10,124 and a population density of about 411 people per square mile (as of the 2020 Census). The town has a strong rural character and identity as noted in the most recent Canton Plan of Conservation and Development (2020). The study area location is in Canton Valley, with Route 44/202 traveling east-west through the southern part of Canton between Simsbury and New Hartford. Although the road is situated in the valley, steep slopes and large outcroppings of ledge can be seen from the road, particularly on the east end of the corridor. State Routes 177 (Lovely Street) and 565 (Dowd Avenue) also intersect or run through the study area.

The Town of Canton has been growing steadily since the 1950s due to suburbanization and automobile use. In the year 2000, a previous corridor study was completed which made recommendations for access control, widening, and other changes, some of which were implemented in the last 20 years including the median section near the shops. (For more information on the previous corridor study and what was completed, see Section 2.8.1.)

This Canton Valley area is the location for much of the town's busiest commercial development, including the Shops at Farmington Valley, the Canton Village Shops, and the development in between them along Route 44. There has been significant new development along the corridor in recent years, including new construction for CVS Pharmacy, an Aldi Grocery Store, Mitchell Subaru, and other developments, primarily situated near the Shops at Farmington Valley east of the intersection of Route 44 and Route 177/Lovely Street and Lawton Road. These developments have led to changes along the roadway, as well as new or updated signals, sidewalks, and new driveways.

The Farmington River Rail Trail (referred to as the Farmington River Trail or FRT) runs for 16 miles as a half-moon diversion off the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) and passes through the corridor study area. To the west, it intersects with Collinsville and provides direct access to the businesses, residences, and town properties of the village. To the northeast, it continues into Simsbury, on road and off-road, to meet the FCHT again to the north. The FRT is an important spine of the local bicycle and pedestrian network, as the town works towards becoming more bicycle and pedestrian friendly, encouraging the use of the trail, and adjusting its zoning to develop more walkable and bikeable village districts.

2.2 Traffic Volumes, Speeds, and Vehicle Classification

Route 44/202 through the study area is classified by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) as a Principal Arterial roadway within the Town of Canton. State Route 177/Lovely Street and State Route 565/Dowd Avenue are classified as Minor Arterials. All other streets in the study area are local streets.

2.2.1 Observations

Typical Route 44/202 traffic was observed on field review days with notably higher than posted speeds (passing over 40 mph) and significant traffic weaving was observed. Due to a lack of turn lanes at some intersections and for adjacent businesses in the western section of the corridor study area, drivers would sometimes need to change lanes to get around another driver that was waiting for traffic to clear to turn left. This was particularly apparent at the intersection with Dowd Avenue, where many drivers waited to turn left from Route 44 onto Dowd Avenue. Through-traffic in the left through lane needs to change to the right lane to pass around a queue that can be several cars long; this was often done quickly with little room for error due to drivers who are experienced to this condition in this section of the corridor. The through left lane becomes a de facto left turn lane in this condition, significantly reducing the through capacity of the roadway. This operation can result in higher crashes as well as a preponderance of near misses.

Vehicle queues were also observed on Dowd Avenue with drivers waiting for the signal to turn right onto Route 44 from the exclusive right turn only lane. In the morning peak hour, this was observed to be as long as 15-20 vehicles deep, sometimes queuing past Canton Springs Road. Usually, most of the traffic was able to clear in one or two cycles of the traffic signal.

Dowd Avenue was observed to be busy with both automobile and heavy truck traffic, due to the connection to Collinsville, to western Canton, and points west into Burlington via Route 4.

2.2.2 Traffic Volumes

To identify current traffic flow characteristics along the study corridor, traffic data was collected in June and October 2023 in the form of Turning Movement Counts (TMCs) at the six project study intersections and three Automated Traffic Recorder counts (ATRs) collected along the corridor study area. The TMCs were counted on June 8 and 10, 2023 and the ATRs recorded traffic data from October 2 through October 9, 2023.

The traffic data reviewed in this study includes daily traffic volumes, vehicle speeds and classification. The following section summarizes this traffic data collection process and documents the results.

2.2.2.1 Daily Traffic

Automatic Traffic Recorders (ATRs) were installed at three locations in and around the Route 44 study area and Dowd Ave in Canton initially in June and again in October 2023 to collect data on traffic volumes and traffic speeds by direction over a minimum 48-hour period. Table 1 identifies the approximate ATR count locations and the average daily traffic for weekdays. Traffic data was collected from Tuesday through Sunday.

Table 1 2023 Existing Weekday Average Daily Traffic Volume Summary

Location	Weekday Average Daily Traffic (ADT)
Route 44 West of Route 177/Lawton Road (WB)	15,046
Route 44 West of Route 177/Lawton Road (EB)	<u>11,854</u>
	26,900 (Total)
Route 44 West of Secret Lake Road	22,750
Dowd Avenue West of Route 44	8,600
Route 44 West of Dowd Avenue	18,800
Route 177 South of Route 44	8,400
Lawton Road North of Route 44	6,700
Route 44 East of Route 177/Lawton Road	23,100

Source: ATR counts for first three locations conducted in October 2023.
All other locations conducted by CTDOT in November 2022.

As shown in Table 1, the Route 44 corridor carries a significant amount of daily traffic volume, with over 26,000 vehicles per weekday. The counts do reveal that the traffic volume varies across the week, with Tuesday having the highest volume and descending volume through the week with the lowest daily volume on Sunday, just over 16,000 vehicles per day.

Dowd Avenue carries a much lower amount of daily traffic volume than Route 44, with 8,600 vehicles per weekday. Like Route 44, Tuesday has the highest volume of the week at 9,000 vehicles per day.

Route 177 has similar daily traffic volumes to Dowd Avenue with 8,400 vehicles per day south of Route 44. Lawton Road has 6,700 vehicles per day north of Route 44. Again, Tuesday has the highest volume of the week on Route 177 with 8,896 vehicles per day south of Route 44, and on Lawton Road with 7,139 vehicles per day north of Route 44.

This declining weekday traffic volume is the result of work from home for many workers and reduced commuting through the corridor.

The Saturday and Sunday daily traffic counts were similar except Saturday is slightly higher than Sunday.

Comparing the traffic data collected in 2023 to the CTDOT traffic volumes from 2022 reveals that the corridor has maintained traffic volume over the last year, indicating the pandemic era traffic volumes appear to have stabilized. For example, while there is no CTDOT traffic data in the eastern portion of the corridor, west of Route 177/Lawton Road there is a count station by CTDOT. This station recorded 25,600 annualized average daily traffic volumes, based upon an actual 26,560 vehicles per day count. This compares to the October 2023 traffic count noted above at 26,900 at the same location.

The CTDOT traffic data also revealed that daily volumes on Route 44 have decreased significantly over the last 15 years. For example, CTDOT has conducted counts at their Route 44 west of Route 177/Lawton Road station since 2007 and subsequent years through 2022. The peak daily traffic volumes were 32,600 in 2007 and as noted, last year, 25,600. This represents a nearly 20% reduction in daily traffic volumes in this section of Route 44 since 2007. Of note, most of this reduction is during the pandemic years, when traffic volumes decreased the most in those years than the years prior.

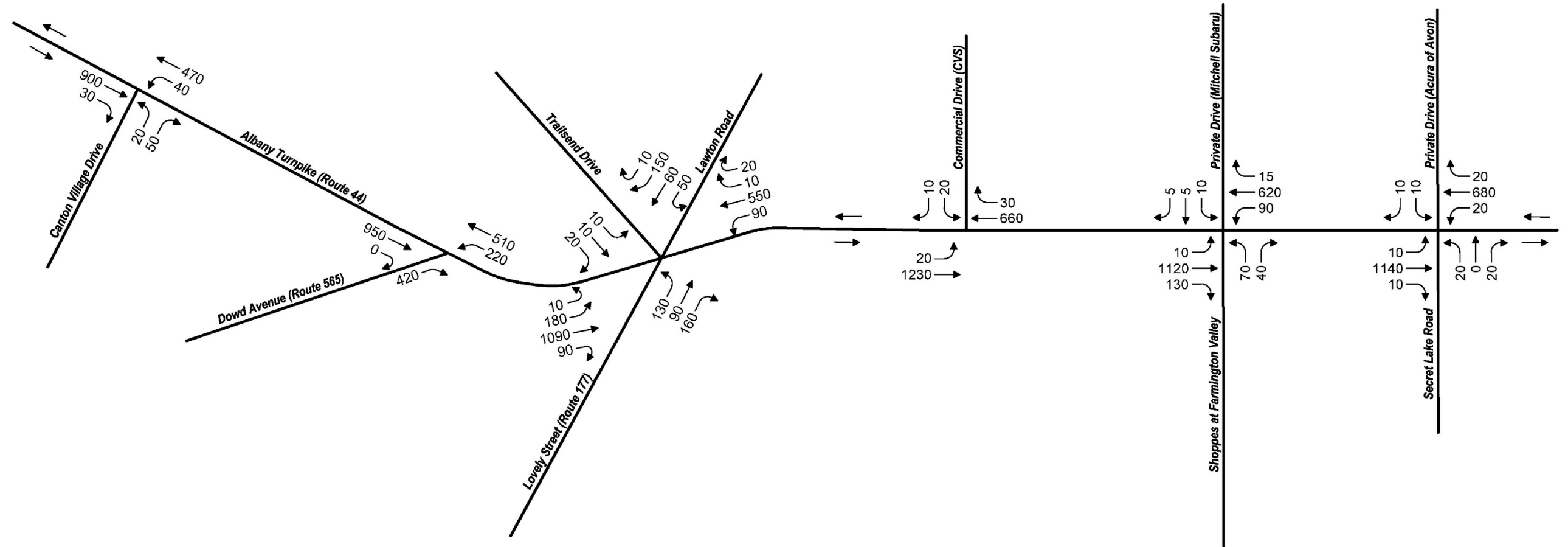
The time of the daily peak hours within the corridor were found to be somewhat similar to pre-pandemic peak hours, 8 AM in the morning and 4 PM in the afternoon during the week, depending on the traffic count location and direction. Some directional traffic counts show a later morning peak traffic volume. The afternoon peak hour traffic volumes also show a 3 PM peak hour on some days, a condition that has been happening in other communities. This is likely the result of parents bringing their kids to school and picking them up in the afternoon, causing an earlier peak hour that extends into the typical commuting peak hour.

In terms of peak hour traffic volumes, as with the daily traffic volume reductions through the pandemic years, the peak hour traffic volumes have also decreased at similar rates at the comparable CTDOT traffic count locations.

The traffic count data collected under this study included Saturday midday peak hour volumes, between 11 AM and 1 PM, typical peak hour traffic volumes in retail development areas. These Saturday midday peak hour traffic volumes were revealing, with some movements in the corridor experiencing higher volumes than the weekday afternoon peak hour traffic volumes. Overall, the Saturday midday peak hour traffic volumes are slightly less than the weekday morning and weekday afternoon peak hours, however the retail generated traffic volume appears to replace the commuting peak hour traffic volumes and exceed them in some locations. This verifies the Route 44 corridor serving as a commuting corridor during the week as well as a significant commercial and retail supporting corridor during weekends.

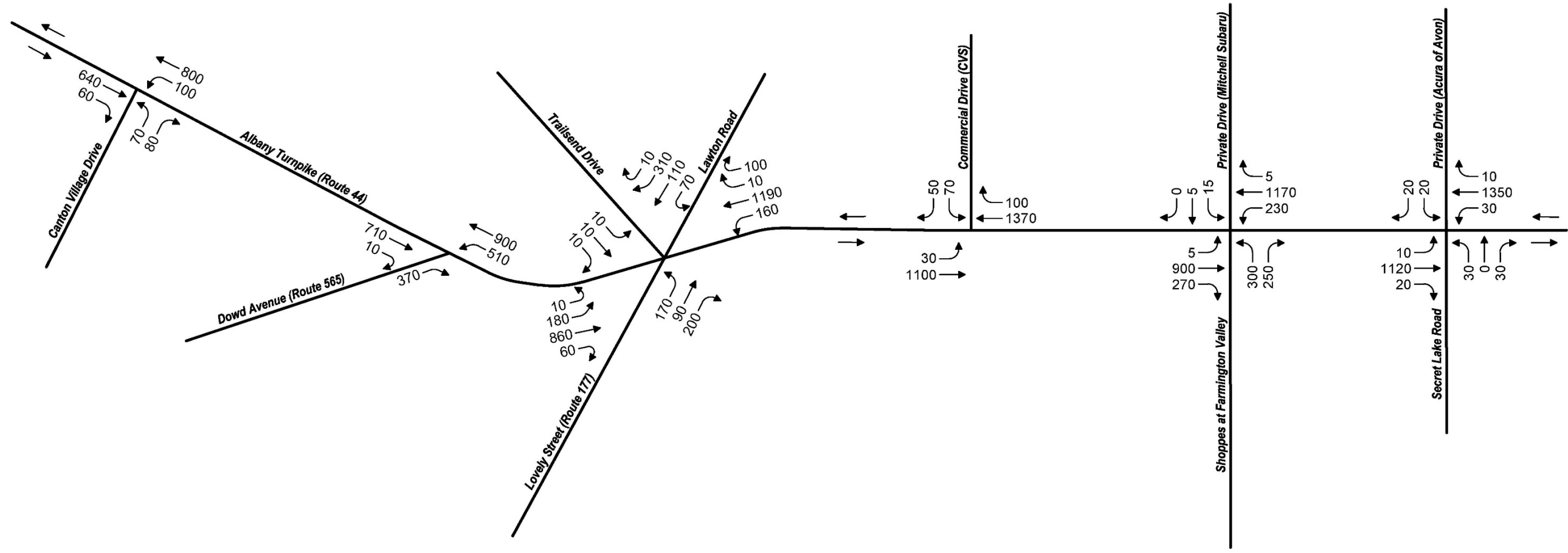
The peak hour traffic volumes are presented in the Figures 2, 3, and 4 for all six study intersections for the weekday morning, weekday evening and Saturday midday peak hours, respectively. These traffic volumes are shown as recorded by movement for each intersection.

Figure 2 Existing Weekday AM Peak Traffic Volumes



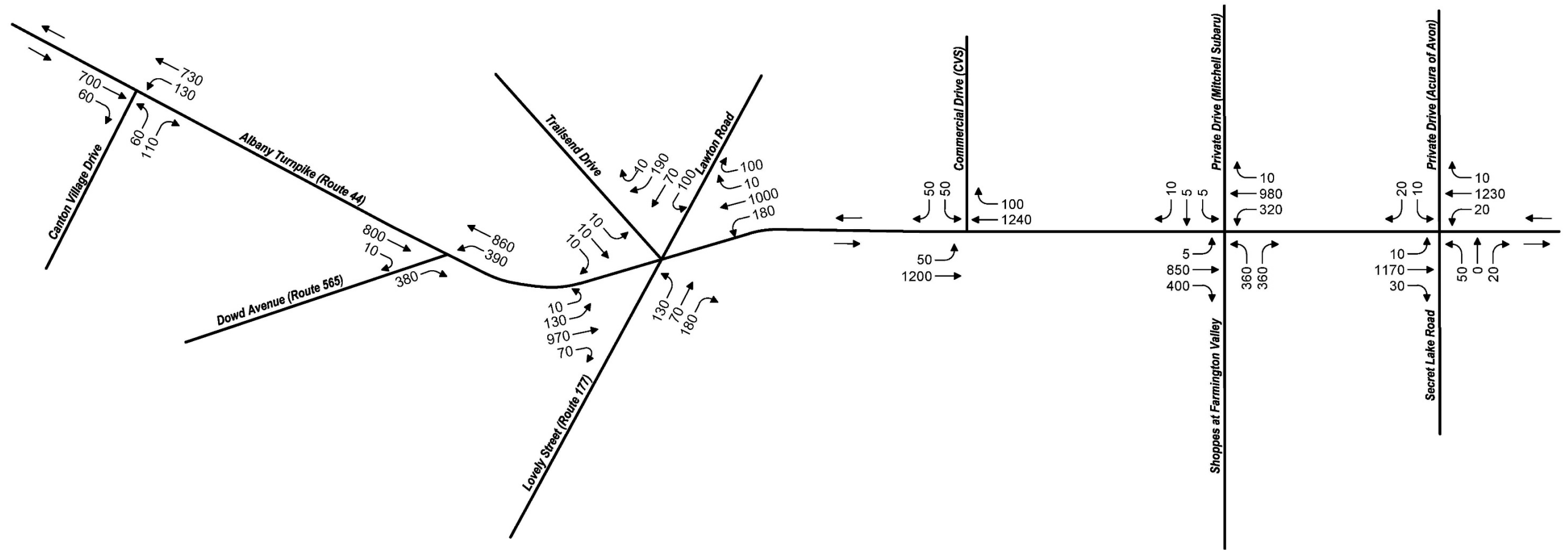
Not to Scale

Figure 3 Existing Weekday PM Peak Traffic Volumes



Not to Scale

Figure 4 Existing Saturday Peak Traffic Volumes



Not to Scale

2.2.3 Vehicle Speeds

In terms of vehicle speeds within the Route 44/Dowd Avenue study area, a review of the CTDOT speed data for the corridor shows the 85th percentile speeds were found to be higher than the posted speed limit for each location, with Route 44 West of Dowd Avenue and Lawton Road (north of Route 44) having the highest 85th percentile speeds at 11 miles per hour over the posted speed limits.

The vehicle speed data was reviewed to determine the average speed and 85th percentile speed at each location where data was collected. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85-percent of vehicles travel at or below and is a measure of the overall speed of traffic. This data was compared to the posted speed limit to understand whether there is speeding in the project area and beyond the posted speed limit.

In addition to the 85th percentile speeds, another measure of traffic speeds is the 50th percentile speed. This indicates the median speed of the vehicles on the roadway, with 50% traveling at or below. It is reviewed in combination with the 85th percentile to provide a more holistic understanding of the corridor speeds. The 50th percentile traffic speeds show a different dynamic than the 85th percentile speeds with some locations under the posted speed limits.

The most recent data collected shows that the 85th percentile speeds were above the speed limit at all the data collection locations except Route 177 south of Route 44. The location of Route 44 West of Route 177/Lawton Road (WB) showed the 85th percentile speeds of drivers at 9-11 miles per hour over the speed limit – considered excessive speed.

It should be noted that the speed data collected is for a 24-hour period and is not aggregated to just peak hours, as it includes peak and off-peak travel speeds.

The ATR data provided traffic speeds for each of the count locations for each vehicle recorded over the course of each day of recording.

Some examples of the speed data collected include the locations shown on Table 2.

Table 2 Speed Data Collected in Route 44 Study Area

Location	Posted Speed	85 th %	50 th %
Route 44 West of Route 177/Lawton Road (EB)*	30	36	30
Route 44 West of Route 177/Lawton Road (WB)*	30	39	33
Route 44 West of Secret Lake Road*	40	47	38
Route 44 West of Dowd Avenue	40	51	36
Dowd Avenue West of Route 44	35	43	38
Route 177 South of Route 44	40	40	35
Lawton Road	30	41	36
Route 44 East of Route 177/Lawton Road	40	42	35

Source: Speed data for first three locations (denoted with an asterisk) conducted in October 2023. All other locations conducted in November 2022 by CTDOT

The highest 85th percentile speeds recorded include a CTDOT November 2022 count station located west of Dowd Avenue (51 mph) and an October 2023 count for this study west of Secret Lake Road (47 mph).

TAC Members and the Town of Canton noted that utility work on Route 44 starting in spring 2023 and continuing through the year may have impacted traffic speeds in the data collected. The utility work included replacement of poles along Route 44 and required shutting down traffic lanes on Route 44 to narrow the road from two lanes in each direction to one lane in each direction at the location of the pole replacement, causing congested conditions. However, traffic speeds from data collected in October 2023 are not unusually low, which would be consistent with heavily congested and delayed conditions, and there is no indication that utility work was done in same areas while data was being collected. In addition, five of the locations in Table 2 display data from CTDOT that was collected in November 2022 and would not have been affected by this utility work. As such, the speed data presented in Table 2 are considered accurate and consistent with standard data collection practices.

2.2.4 Vehicle Classification

In addition to the traffic volume and speed data collected, vehicle classifications were also recorded at the ATR locations in October 2023 for this study. The recorded vehicle classifications include motorcycles, cars, buses, single unit box trucks, and semi-trailer trucks across a total of 14 classification categories.

The lowest percentage of total automobiles was 75.7 percent of the traffic along Route 44 west of Route 177/Lawton Road in the westbound direction. A significant percentage of non-automobile traffic was recorded, with almost one quarter (23%) of traffic being trucks and heavy vehicles. The remaining traffic is made up of buses (0.5%) and almost 1% of traffic was found to be bicycles (numbers do not add up to 100% due to rounding). Route 44 west of Route 177/Lawton Road in the eastbound direction also had a substantial amount of truck traffic, with 78.7% being automobiles and almost 20% (18.7%) being heavy trucks.

The final location at Route 44 West of Secret Lake Road recorded 85 percent for automobiles. Only about 11% of traffic in this section was trucks and heavy vehicles. About 0.3% of traffic was buses. Interestingly, 3.8% of traffic was found to be bicycles, a considerably higher amount compared to the count locations west of Route 177/Lawton Road, which may include people biking to and from the Farmington River Trail crossing.

Overall the vehicle classifications for the recorded count stations indicates approximately 90 percent of corridor daily traffic volume includes passenger vehicles and light trucks with the remaining 10 percent all other vehicle types. This is a typical range of vehicle classifications for a roadway such as Route 44, which has been built primarily to move car and truck traffic swiftly from place to place while also allowing access to adjacent land uses.

2.2.5 Intersection Capacity Analysis

A traffic model was developed in Synchro traffic modeling software for the three peak traffic periods using the data from Turning Movement Counts (TMCs) at main study area intersections. The traffic model has been developed using corridor base mapping, traffic control signal plans

from CTDOT Traffic and corridor signal system timings from CTDOT Highway Operations. The traffic models were modified from observations of existing signal timings and traffic operations.

The traffic models were developed for the Existing Condition weekday morning, afternoon, and Saturday midday peak hours.

The evaluation criteria used to analyze area intersections in this traffic study are based on the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual (HCM). The term “Level of service” (LOS) is used to denote the different operating conditions that occur on a given roadway segment under various traffic volume loads. It is a qualitative measure that considers several factors including roadway geometry, speed, travel delay and freedom to maneuver. Level of service provides an index to the operational qualities of a roadway segment or an intersection. Level-of-service designations range from A to F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions and LOS F representing the worst operating conditions.

In addition to LOS, two other measures of effectiveness (MOEs) are typically used to quantify the traffic operations at intersections; volume-to-capacity ratio (v/c) and delay (expressed in seconds per vehicle). For example, an existing v/c ratio of 0.9 for an intersection indicates that the intersection is operating at 90 percent of its available capacity. A delay of 15 seconds for a particular vehicular movement or approach indicates that vehicles on the movement or approach will experience an average additional travel time of 15 seconds. It should be noted that v/c and delay could have a range of values for a given LOS letter designation. Comparison of intersection capacity results therefore requires that, in addition to the LOS, the other MOEs should also be considered.

The criteria for determining Levels of Service are presented in Table 3 and based upon the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual.

Table 3 Intersection Level of Service Criteria

Level of Service	Signalized Intersection	Unsignalized Intersection
A	0 to 10 seconds	0 to 10 seconds
B	10 to 20 seconds	10 to 15 seconds
C	20 to 35 seconds	15 to 25 seconds
D	35 to 55 seconds	25 to 35 seconds
E	55 to 80 seconds	35 to 50 seconds
F	Greater than 80 seconds	Greater than 50 seconds

The results of the intersection capacity analyses are presented in Table 4 utilizing the above criteria for all project intersections and all three peak hours presenting the Levels of Service, delays, volume-to-capacity ratios for each movement at each intersection as well as overall intersection operations.

In addition, the traffic models provide the resultant vehicle queueing for each movement for the critical 95th percentile queues (design queue) and the 50th percentile queueing which is typically the average queueing at any point in the peak hour.

2.2.5.1 Capacity Analysis Results

As shown in Table 4, most of the project study intersections are operating at LOS C or better during any of the peak periods. One intersection has LOS E during the weekday afternoon and Saturday midday peak hours: the intersection of Route 44 at Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive. It also has an LOS D in the morning peak hour, and some approaches to the intersection have LOS F during the Saturday midday and weekday evening peak hours. The poor level of service is partly due to the intersection having five legs and therefore a longer cycle length.

The Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive intersection has been a busy intersection in the midpoint of the corridor study for years with recent developments adding to the congestion. The intersection carries significant through traffic volume on Route 44 as well as Route 177 to and from Avon. With new development and the Route 177 approach, exclusive turn lanes are carrying significant traffic and operating at capacity. With significant traffic volumes, intersections require longer traffic signal cycles to process the traffic, thereby incurring longer queues on the approaches. This is the condition for this intersection in the weekday afternoon and Saturday midday peak periods.

See Table 4 for the existing capacity analysis and vehicle queuing summaries. Figures 5, 6, and 7 graphically display the overall LOS at each of the six intersections in the weekday morning, weekend midday, and weekday evening periods.

Table 4 Signalized Intersection Capacity Analysis Summary – Existing Conditions

Location	Movement	Morning Peak Hour					Midday Peak Hour					Evening Peak Hour				
		v/c ¹	Del ²	LOS ³	Q50 ⁴	Q95 ⁵	v/c	Del	LOS	Q50	Q95	v/c	Del	LOS	Q50	Q95
Route 44 at Canton Village	EB T/R	0.42	6	A	115	160	0.40	8	A	105	169	0.41	12	B	92	265
	WB L	0.10	2	A	3	6	0.28	3	A	11	m21	0.23	6	A	8	m41
	WB T	0.18	2	A	22	27	0.30	2	A	38	64	0.36	5	A	44	185
	NE L	0.20	40	D	13	33	0.42	35	D	33	66	0.45	39	D	48	81
	NE R	0.04	39	D	0	28	0.08	34	C	0	42	0.06	37	D	0	33
	Overall	0.41	7	A			0.42	8	A			0.39	11	B		
Route 44 at Dowd Ave	EB T/R	0.59	11	B	210	280	0.53	14	B	194	246	0.56	15	B	196	32
	WB L/T	0.37	1	A	0	1	0.64	2	A	1	2	0.69	4	A	1	3
	NE R	0.89	43	D	263	#376	0.77	27	C	198	266	0.67	27	C	179	280
	Overall	0.71	15	B			0.70	10	B			0.69	10	B		
Route 44 at Route 177 (Lovely St)/Lawton Rd/Trailsend Dr	EB L	0.96	106	F	166	#344	0.84	94	F	129	#332	>1.20	>120	F	~241	#405
	EB T	0.85	43	D	456	#632	0.90	59	E	434	#818	0.73	41	D	377	486
	EB R	0.06	0	A	0	0	0.04	0	A	0	0	0.04	0	A	0	0
	WB L	0.65	63	E	84	145	0.87	93	F	162	#402	0.77	72	E	151	226
	WB T	0.56	34	C	229	286	0.88	54	D	432	#815	0.93	52	D	586	#737
	WB R 2	0.02	0	A	0	0	0.07	0	A	0	0	0.07	0	A	0	0
	NB L	0.71	63	E	119	199	0.79	87	F	119	#262	1.04	>120	F	~196	#330
	NB T	0.42	53	D	80	142	0.37	64	E	61	138	0.47	59	E	92	147
	NB R	0.21	41	D	20	62	0.12	47	D	0	56	0.27	43	D	30	65
	SB L/T	0.69	64	E	109	#179	1.07	>120	F	163	#433	0.77	69	E	169	#289
	SB R	0.67	59	E	89	131	0.81	83	F	105	#242	0.89	80	E	173	#273
	SE L	0.63	68	E	48	75	0.65	84	F	47	71	0.70	86	F	46	58
Overall	0.87	48	D			0.82	66	E			1.01	68	E			
Route 44 at CVS Drive	EB L	0.05	3	A	1	15	0.22	6	A	3	32	0.18	7	A	2	22
	EB T	0.49	5	A	79	363	0.51	6	A	75	365	0.47	6	A	70	344
	WB T	0.31	7	A	30	319	0.58	9	A	121	#520	0.65	8	A	172	#652
	WB R	0.02	5	A	0	12	0.08	4	A	0	m16	0.09	3	A	1	m27

Location	Movement	Morning Peak Hour					Midday Peak Hour					Evening Peak Hour				
		v/c ¹	Del ²	LOS ³	Q50 ⁴	Q95 ⁵	v/c	Del	LOS	Q50	Q95	v/c	Del	LOS	Q50	Q95
	SB L	0.24	47	D	9	18	0.27	39	D	19	34	0.34	44	D	26	50
	Overall	0.47	6	A			0.51	9	A			0.58	9	A		
Route 44 at Shops at Farmington Valley/Private Driveway	EB L	0.50	54	D	6	m12	0.29	45	D	3	m9	0.29	60	E	3	m7
	EB T	0.58	19	B	332	490	0.68	25	C	251	263	0.57	15	B	246	105
	EB R	0.09	31	C	6	85	0.29	38	D	28	139	0.19	10	A	14	14
	WB L	0.45	49	D	29	62	0.74	53	D	111	156	0.65	57	E	82	127
	WB T/R	0.34	5	A	32	83	0.58	12	B	74	225	0.61	8	A	56	179
	NB L	0.48	46	D	34	51	0.80	52	D	118	#212	0.74	53	D	106	#191
	NB T	0.49	46	D	35	52	0.80	52	D	118	#212	0.75	53	D	107	#193
	NB R	0.04	37	D	0	3	0.51	27	C	53	103	0.34	31	C	34	80
	SB L	0.21	47	D	10	22	0.12	41	D	5	12	0.32	47	D	15	27
	SB T	0.11	46	D	5	17	0.14	41	D	5	13	0.10	46	D	5	13
Overall	0.54	19	B			0.68	29	C			0.65	20	C			
Route 44 at Secret Lake Road/Acura of Avon	EB L	0.03	2	A	1	m1	0.06	8	A	2	m3	0.07	9	A	2	m5
	EB T	0.58	5	A	49	51	0.63	11	B	190	212	0.58	9	A	144	217
	WB L	0.09	7	A	2	12	0.10	8	A	4	12	0.13	7	A	6	16
	WB T	0.35	8	A	57	179	0.62	13	B	218	368	0.69	13	B	291	485
	NB T	0.03	43	D	0	0	0.05	38	D	0	0	0.05	43	D	0	0
	SB L	0.29	49	D	8	23	0.17	42	D	8	20	0.36	48	D	17	35
	SB R	0.01	47	D	0	0	0.02	41	D	0	0	0.02	46	D	0	0
	Overall	0.50	8	A			0.52	13	B			0.61	13	B		

Source: VHB, Inc. using Synchro 11 software

1 volume-to-capacity ratio

2 delay, in seconds

3 level of service

4 50th percentile queue length, in feet

5 95th percentile queue length, in feet

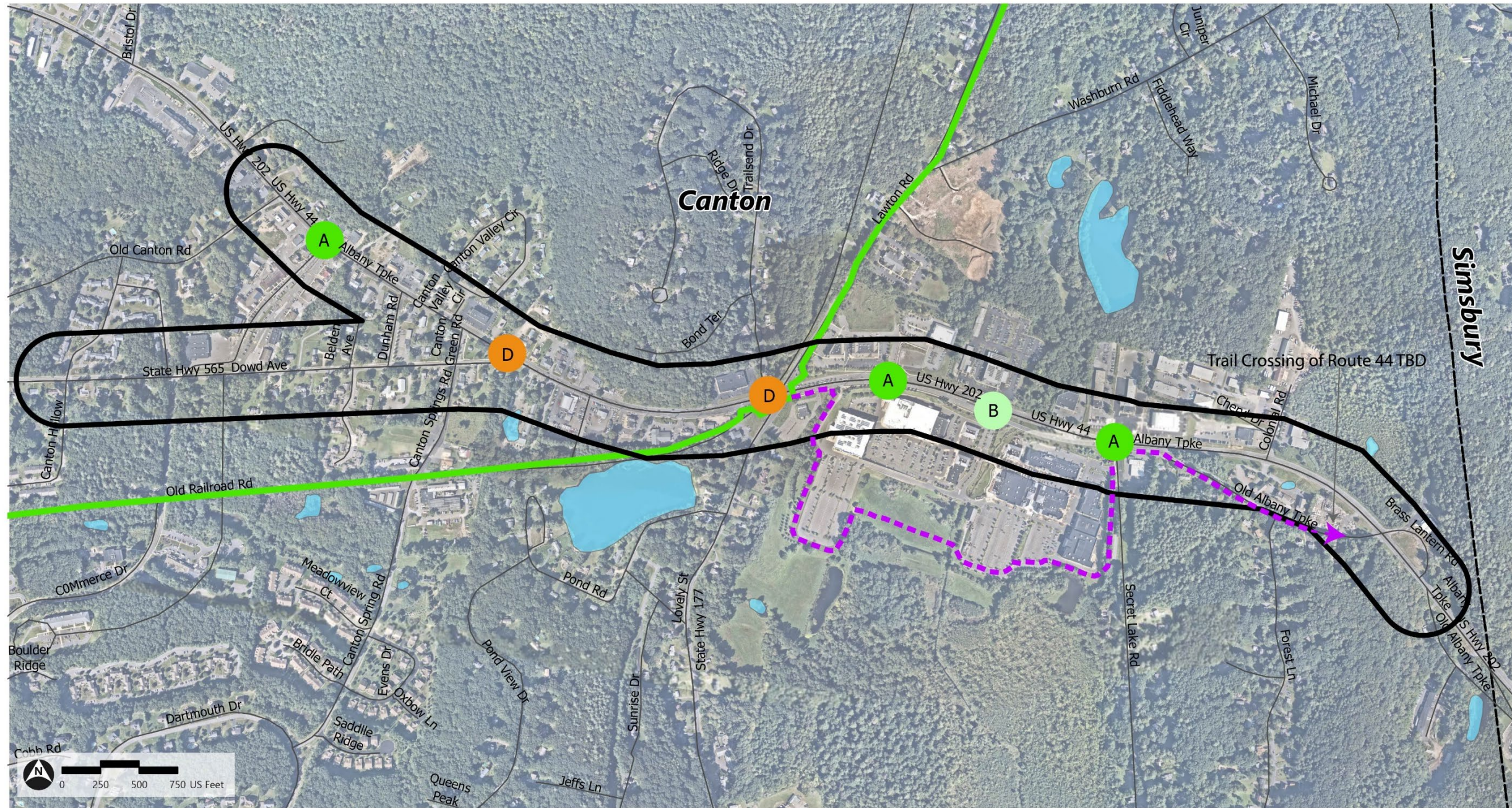
EB = Eastbound; WB = Westbound; NB = Northbound; SB = Southbound; R = right; T = through, L= left

95th% volume exceeds capacity, queue may be longer

~ Volume exceeds capacity, queue is theoretically infinite

m Volume for 95th percentile queue is metered by upstream signal

Figure 5 Route 44 Key Intersections Level of Service – Weekday Morning



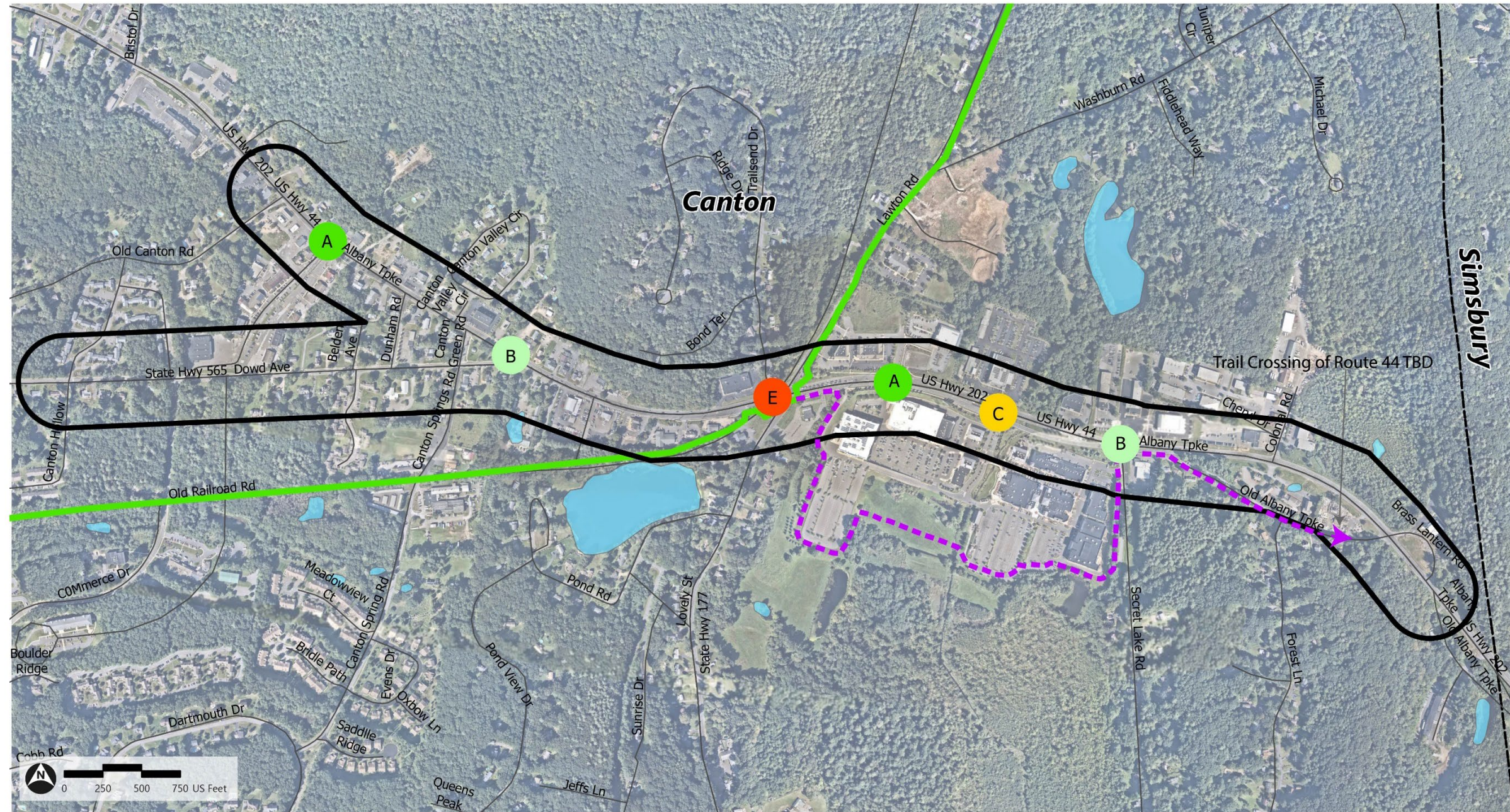
— Farmington River Trail
— Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension
— Study Area

Weekday Morning Peak Level of Service
● A ● B ● C ● D ● E ● F

Source: VHB

Source: VHB, NearMap

Figure 6 Route 44 Key Intersections Level of Service – Weekend Midday



— Farmington River Trail
- - - Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension
 Study Area

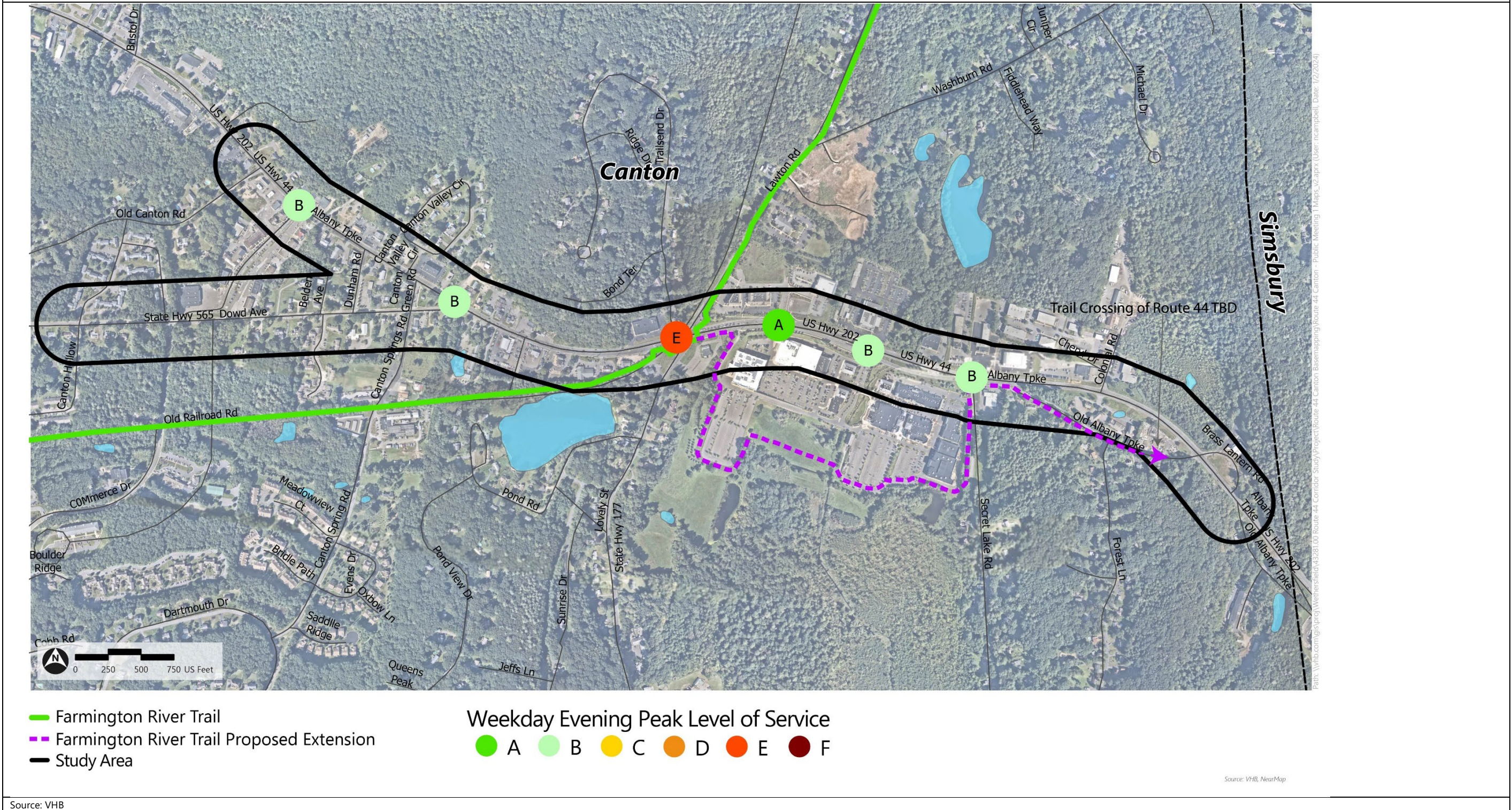
Weekend Midday Peak Level of Service

● A
 ● B
 ● C
 ● D
 ● E
 ● F

Source: VHB, NearMap

Source: VHB

Figure 7 Route 44 Key Intersections Level of Service – Weekday Evening



2.2.5.2 Vehicle Queuing

Like the results of the Level of Service analysis, queuing analysis shows that the intersection of Route 44 at Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive has long vehicle queuing due to volume that exceeds capacity of those lanes. In addition, there are other intersections in the study area that have excessive queuing. The right turn movement from Dowd Avenue onto Route 44 has a queue length of 376 feet in the morning peak hour, reaching back to the intersection with Canton Springs Road (See Figure 8 for picture of morning queuing). At the intersection with CVS, Route 44 westbound has a queue length of 520 feet in the midday peak hour, and 652 feet in the evening peak hour. The northbound left and through movements at the Shops at Farmington Valley also have excessive queuing. These excessive queuing lanes often spill back to the upstream intersection causing further congestion and delays and present potential safety concerns with stop-and-go traffic.

The Town of Canton staff also noted there is a persistent issue of vehicles queuing back from Dunkin' Donuts drive-through at 140 Albany Turnpike/Route 44 in the morning hours. This location is only about 500' west of the Route 44 at Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive intersection and queuing traffic sometimes back up as far as or into the travel lanes on Route 44, creating a hazardous situation. This problem was also highlighted during public comment at the December 7, 2023 public meeting and in the public survey.

Figure 8 Morning Vehicle Queuing on Dowd Avenue



Source: VHB

2.3 Safety Data and Crash Analysis

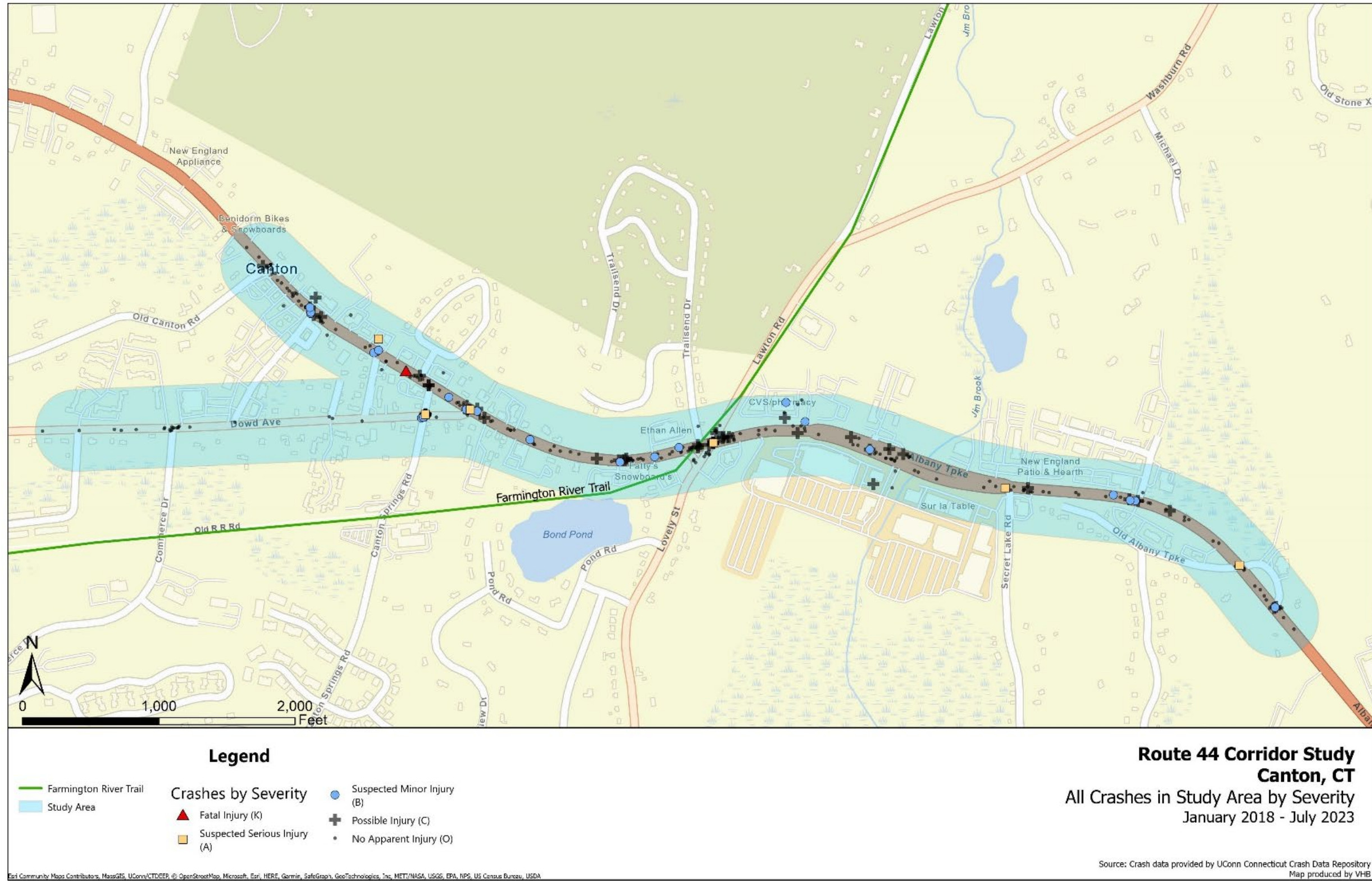
To assess traffic safety conditions within the study area, crash data was collected from the University of Connecticut, Connecticut Crash Data Repository (CTCDR) from 2018 through mid-2023 (January 1,

2018, through July 1, 2023), the most recent period of five full years of data plus halfway into 2023. It should be noted that only collisions that result in death, injury, or property damage more than \$1,000 are required to be reported. The collision data were reviewed for Route 44/Dowd Avenue study area in Canton, with particular focus given to the six study area intersections.

For this period, there were 456 crashes total in the study area. Seventeen percent of these crashes resulted in injuries. One fatality occurred during this period. The most common crash types were front to rear (rear-end) crashes at 46%, angle crashes at 21%, and sideswipe same direction at 14%. January accounted for the highest proportion of crashes by month (11%), while June accounted for the highest proportion of severe injury crashes (15%). There were also two pedestrian crashes and no bicycle crashes. One of the pedestrian crashes accounts for the single fatality in the study area during this period.

The study area with total crashes by severity is highlighted in Figure 9. The extent of the analysis is shown with a blue buffer around the project study area. Crashes that occurred within 300 feet of the extent of the study area are included in this analysis.

Figure 9 Study Area Crashes By Injury Status



Source: VHB

2.3.1 Overall, Route 44 Crash Summary

Table 5 below shows an overall breakdown of all the crashes analyzed in the study area. It includes 5 years' worth of crash data, from 2018 to mid-2023, separated by year, and describes the manner of the collision, the time of day it occurred, the lighting conditions of the crash, the weather and surface conditions, and the crash severity.

Table 5 Overall Route 44 Canton Crash Summary

Year	Manner of Collision										Time of Day			Lighting			Weather				Surface					Severity				Total		
	Front to Rear	Sideswipe, Same Direction	Angle	Sideswipe, Opposite Direction	Other	Front to Front	Rear to Side	Rear to Rear	Unknown	Not Applicable	AM Peak (7am – 10am)	PM Peak (4pm – 7pm)	Off-Peak	Daylight	Dawn/ Dusk	Darkness	Cloudy/Clear	Fog/Mist	Rain	Snow	Other	Dry	Wet	Snowy	Icy	Other	K: Fatal	A: Suspected Serious Injury	B: Suspected Minor Injury		C: Possible Injury	O: No Apparent Injury
2018	49	13	21	3	1	2	2	1		6	12	26	60	75	5	18	90		6	2		84	12	1		1	1	2	7	8	80	98
2019	40	13	26	2	6	1	2			5	14	27	54	78	1	16	84		9	2		76	15	1	3			5	7	83	95	
2020	30	7	10	3		1		1		8	7	12	41	45	1	14	57		2		1	56	4					1	12	47	60	
2021	39	11	12	1	1	4	1		1	8	5	19	54	69	1	8	71		6	1		66	11	1			1	4	8	65	78	
2022	38	13	16	1	4	7				7	9	34	43	66	2	18	79		5	1	1	76	8		1	1	2	6	10	68	86	
2023	16	6	10	1	1			1	1	3	5	6	28	32	1	6	36		3			36	3				1	3	2	33	39	
Total	212	63	95	11	13	15		3	2	37	52	124	280	365	11	80	417		31	6	2	394	53	3	4	2	1	6	26	47	376	456

As shown in this table, the year with the greatest number of crashes was 2018 (98 crashes). The lowest number of crashes occurred in 2020, the year when the COVID-19 pandemic began (2023 only accounts for crashes until July 1). The only fatality that occurred during this period was in 2018. Around 18% of crashes occurred in darkness or low-light conditions. Around 9% of crashes occurred during precipitation or other weather. Finally, about 11% of crashes occurred during the AM peak period while 27% occurred during the PM peak period.

2.3.2 Collision Summary

Table 6 shows a summary of the manner of collision for the crashes from 2018-2023 that were studied for this project. As noted earlier, the most common crash types were front to rear (rear-end) at 46%, angle at 21%, and sideswipe same direction at 14%, for a total of 81 %of crashes being these types. All other collisions (which include sideswipe opposite direction, other, front to front, rear to side, rear to rear, unknown, and not applicable) accounted for about 19 %of crashes. Seventeen percent of all crashes resulted in injuries, and 7% of all crashes were the most severe injuries of types of K, A, or B (fatality [K], serious injury [A], and minor injury [B]).

Table 6 Collision Summary

Crash Severity		Number of Crashes	Percent of Total							
Fatal Injury(K)		1	0.22%							
Suspected Serious Injury (A)		6	1.32%							
Suspected Minor Injury (B)		26	5.70%							
Possible Injury (C)		47	10.31%							
No Apparent Injury (O)		376	82.46%							
Total		456	100%							
KAB Crashes		33	7.24%		K	A	B	C	O	Total
Manner of Collision	Front to Rear	212	46.49%		1	7	19	185	212	
	Sideswipe, Same Direction	63	13.82%			2	2	59	63	
	Angle	95	20.83%		4	12	19	60	95	
	Sideswipe, Opposite Direction	11	2.41%			2	1	8	11	
	Other	13	2.85%			1		12	13	
	Front to Front	15	3.29%			1	2	12	15	
	Rear to Side	5	1.10%					5	5	
	Rear to Rear	3	0.66%					3	3	
	Unknown	2	0.44%				1	1	2	
	Not Applicable	37	8.11%		1	1	1	3	31	37

Source: UConn Connecticut Crash Data Repository

2.3.3 Crashes by Time of Day

During the 2018-2023 period, the hours of 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM, and 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM account for the highest proportion of crashes at 11.62%, 10.31%, and 10.09% respectively. Table 7 shows all crashes by hour of day for the five-year period.

Table 7 Crashes by Time of Day

Crash Hour	Number of Crashes	Percent of Total
12:00 AM to 1:00 AM	2	0.44%
1:00 AM to 2:00 AM	1	0.22%
2:00 AM to 3:00 AM	1	0.22%
3:00 AM to 4:00 AM	0	0.00%
4:00 AM to 5:00 AM	0	0.00%
5:00 AM to 6:00 AM	2	0.44%
6:00 AM to 7:00 AM	10	2.19%
7:00AM to 8:00 AM	14	3.07%
8:00 AM to 9:00 AM	22	4.82%
9:00 AM to 10:00 AM	16	3.51%
10:00 AM to 11:00 AM	21	4.61%
11:00 AM to 12:00 PM	42	9.21%
12:00 PM to 1:00 PM	30	6.58%
1:00 PM to 2:00 PM	36	7.89%
2:00 PM to 3:00 PM	47	10.31%
3:00 PM to 4:00 PM	46	10.09%
4:00 PM to 5:00 PM	53	11.62%
5:00 PM to 6:00 PM	44	9.65%
6:00 PM to 7:00 PM	27	5.92%
7:00 PM to 8:00 PM	14	3.07%
8:00 PM to 9:00 PM	9	1.97%
9:00 PM to 10:00 PM	11	2.41%
10:00 PM to 11:00 PM	4	0.88%
11:00 PM to 12:00 AM	4	0.88%
Total	456	100%

2.3.4 Crashes by Month

Table 8 show crashes by month of the year. January accounts for the highest proportion of crashes by month (10.53%). The greatest number of KAB crashes occurred in June with 15% of KAB crashes, with January, April, and August also accounting for about 12% each.

Table 8 Crashes by Month

Crash Month	Number of KAB Crashes	Percent of Total KAB Crashes	Number of Crashes	Percent of Total
January	4	12.12%	48	10.53%
February	0	0.00%	30	6.58%
March	3	9.09%	29	6.36%
April	4	12.12%	29	6.36%
May	1	3.03%	46	10.09%
June	5	15.15%	38	8.33%
July	2	6.06%	38	8.33%
August	4	12.12%	45	9.87%
September	2	6.06%	39	8.55%
October	3	9.09%	33	7.24%
November	3	9.09%	40	8.77%
December	2	6.06%	41	8.99%
Total	33	100%	456	100%

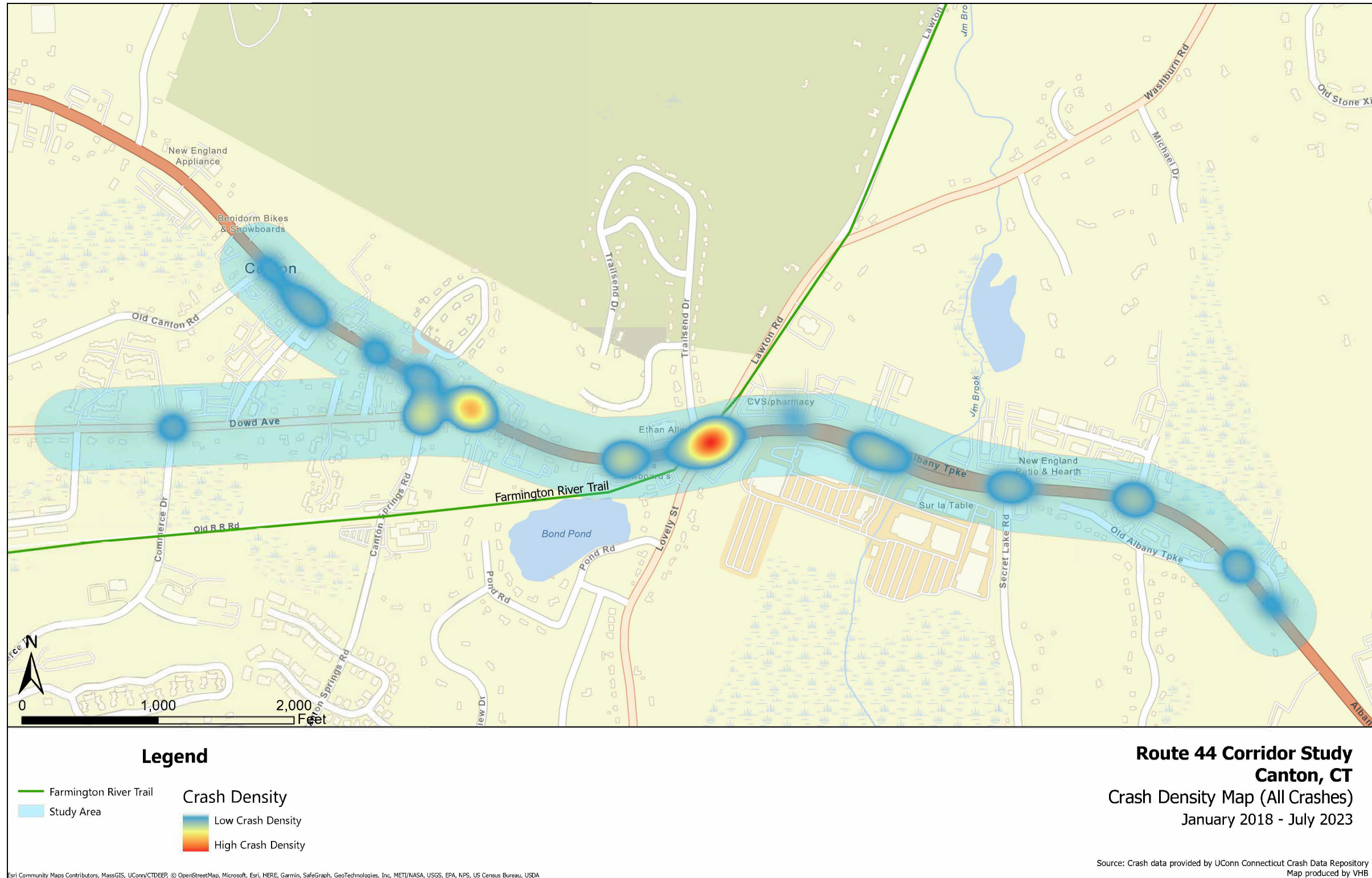
2.3.5 Intersection Crashes

176 crashes occurred at the six key intersections on Route 44 listed in Table 9. Due to its high number of crashes and injury crashes, Dowd Avenue at Canton Springs Road is included in this list, bringing the total number of intersection crashes to 202. In terms of total number of crashes, the location with the highest number of crashes was Route 44 at Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Trailsend Drive/Lawton Street with 70 crashes total. For crashes of high severity (fatality [K], serious injury [A], and minor injury [B]), the two intersections with the highest densities of these crashes were Route 44 at Dowd Avenue and Dowd Avenue at Canton Springs Road, both with 5 AB crashes each. See Figure 10 which shows the density of all crashes in the study area from 2018-2023, and Figure 11 which shows the density of crashes with KAB severities in the study area.

Table 9 Intersection Crashes

Intersection	Fatal Injury (K)	Suspected Serious Injury (A)	Suspected Minor Injury (B)	Possible Injury (C)	No Apparent Injury (O)	Total
Route 44 at Canton Village Shopping Mall	0	0	3	4	12	19
Route 44 at Dowd Avenue	0	1	4	3	42	50
Route 44 at Lovely/Trailsend/Lawton	0	1	1	14	54	70
Route 44 at CVS Drive	0	0	1	1	5	7
Route 44 at The Shops at Farmington Valley	0	0	0	2	13	15
Route 44 at Secret Lake Road	0	1	0	0	14	15
Dowd Avenue at Canton Springs Road	0	1	4	4	17	26
Total	0	4	13	28	157	202

Figure 10 Density of All Crashes in the Study Area



Source: VHB

Figure 11 Density of Most Severe Injury Crashes in Study Area

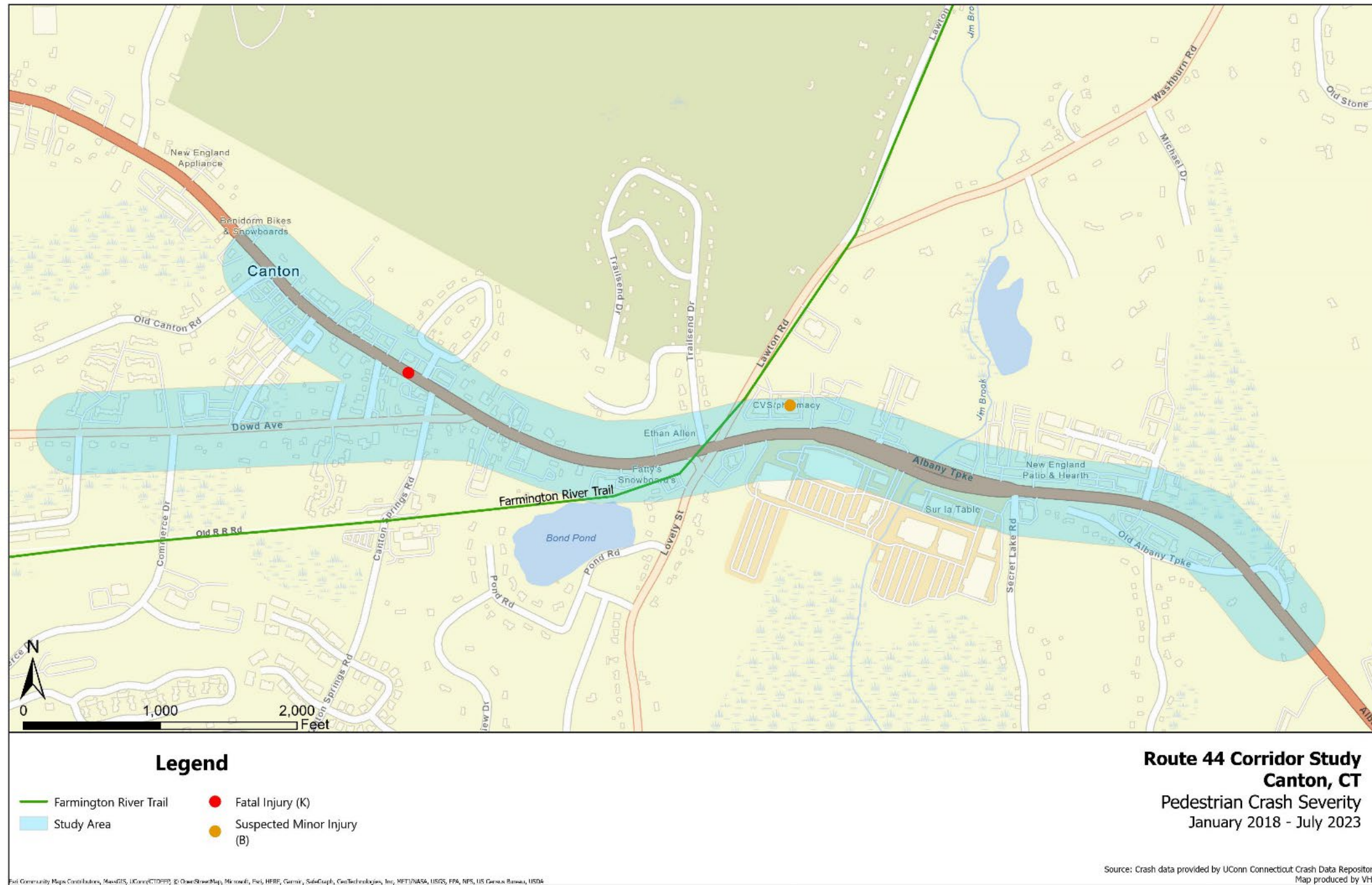


Source: VHB

2.3.6 Pedestrian and Bicycle Involved Crashes

There were two pedestrian crashes and no bicycle crashes reported during the 2018-2023 period. However, one of the pedestrian crashes was the sole fatality crash in the study area. Figure 12 shows the locations of the two pedestrian crashes in the study area. The pedestrian fatality was reported near Dunham Road, west of the Dowd Avenue intersection, where there is no dedicated pedestrian crossing. The crash occurred in late December 2018 under low-light conditions.

Figure 12 Pedestrian Crash Location Map



Source: VHB

2.4 Bicyclists, Pedestrians, and Vulnerable Users

The following sections describe the existing conditions for people bicycling, walking, and traveling on multi-use trails in the study area. Users who walk and bicycle along roadways may be referred to as “Vulnerable Users”, indicating that they are more likely to be injured or killed if struck by a motor vehicle in a traffic crash, and thus their exposure to high-speed and high-volume traffic within the transportation system must be minimized. This is especially important at intersections and road crossings where people biking and walking must cross into the street to access the opposite side of the road.

As noted in the introduction (Section 2.1) Canton is primarily a rural community, which typically have lower rates of bicycling and walking than more urbanized areas. However, the Town is working to actively promote and zone for compact development within the study area to grow the community while minimizing vehicle trips. Improving conditions for people biking and walking within the transportation system will be important to complement the Town’s efforts in this regard and promote their vision of walkable village centers in the study area.

2.4.1 Pedestrians

The pedestrian environment is especially important to the Town of Canton, to have a safe and walkable Route 44 and Dowd Avenue where people will make fewer trips by car and “park once” to visit the businesses in the area. The Town has rezoned much of the area in a form-based code to have future development contribute to a compact and walkable built environment that resembles a village center. The VHB Team visited the Route 44/Dowd Ave corridor on several occasions to review pedestrian infrastructure and make observations on safety, connectivity, ADA accessibility, and comfort.

Due to concerns about pedestrian and traffic safety, the Town has formed a new committee called the Temporary Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee. It had its first meeting on August 3, 2023, and has met monthly since that time. The role of the committee, as based on their first meeting minutes, is to:

- › Review the Town’s Complete Streets Policy and incorporate it into the committee’s decisions
- › Review the current POCD to help plan and discuss recommendations
- › Advocate for town residents
- › Work with Town employees and the State
- › Raise awareness campaigns
- › Work on safe route to school connectivity

The first public meeting of the Route 44 Corridor Study was held just prior to the December meeting of the Temporary Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee, to present existing conditions of the study area, and draw people to the public meeting.

Additionally, Canton has an advocacy group called Bike Walk Canton CT, which is a citizen advocacy group founded to promote cycling and pedestrian activities in the community. They put on events, have regular meetings, help with Safe Routes to Schools, and advocate for engineering, education, and enforcement strategies to reduce traffic crashes and deaths for all

road users. Bike Walk Canton is part of the Route 44 Corridor Study Technical Advisory Committee as well.

2.4.1.1 Curb Ramps and Crosswalks

Visual inspections of curb ramps were conducted. Widths, slopes, and other measurements were not included as part of the project scope. Curb ramps were noted as being “observed compliant” or “observed non-compliant” based on the visual inspection, with curb ramps that did not have detectable warning strips or landing pads considered “non-compliant.” Other observable issues such as crumbling concrete or severe drainage issues were also factors in determining whether the curb ramps could be considered compliant. Figure 13 shows a map of the study area with observed compliant and observed non-compliant curb ramps.

The majority of curb ramps (84% of those observed) were found to be compliant and recently constructed. Several curb ramps on Route 44, west of Dowd Avenue, were noted as lacking compliance due to missing or damaged tactile warning strips. All crosswalks in the study area appeared to include some kind of curb ramp to provide a degree of accessibility, except for the crosswalk across Dowd Avenue at Canton Hollow. This crosswalk appeared to be striped at two driveways and did not have a dedicated curb ramp on either side. Figure 14 shows the locations of crosswalks in the study area.

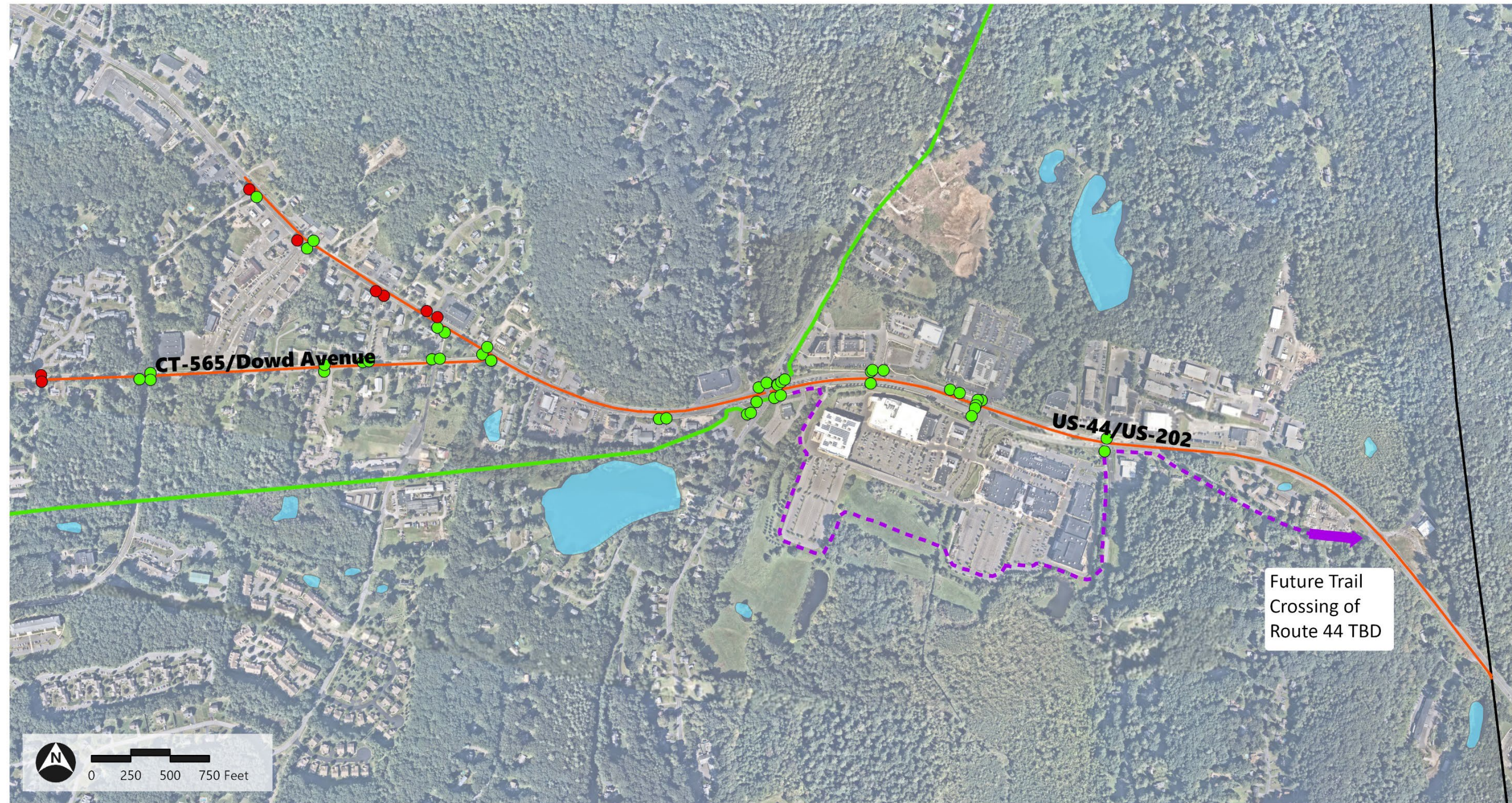
Crosswalk locations were identified as part of the project data collection. Designated crosswalks on Route 44 were all located at signalized intersections. Given the high speeds and high volumes on Route 44, crossings must be placed at locations where traffic can be stopped to allow pedestrians to cross. Unfortunately, this also limits the locations of crossing opportunities for pedestrians when signalized intersections are far apart. For example, there are no safe ways to cross Route 44 between Dowd Avenue and Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive, a distance of over 1,800 feet. This also requires the strategic location of bus stops to give bus riders a way to get from one side of the road to the other to catch the bus or return from a trip. More information on the connection between public transportation and pedestrian conditions can be found in section 2.5.

Several crosswalks on Dowd Avenue are at uncontrolled locations (with no signal or stop sign/traffic control present). Some of these crosswalks have flashing beacons to enhance their visibility and encourage drivers to yield when the beacon buttons are pressed to activate the lights (crossings with these beacons are noted in the list below). These uncontrolled locations include:

- › Across Dowd Avenue at Canton Hollow
- › Across Dowd Avenue at Commerce Drive (includes Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons or RRFBs)
- › Across Dowd Avenue at Belden Ave/Maple Glen Apartments (includes RRFBs)

Dowd Avenue has more frequent crossing opportunities in the study area compared to Route 44 due to its lower-speed traffic, and less traffic overall, though Dowd Avenue does have heavy trucks and significant amounts of traffic traveling down it. Yielding to pedestrians is greatly improved by the presence of the RRFBs. Pedestrian activity along Route 44 was not very frequent to observe crossings; pedestrian activity appeared higher on Dowd Avenue.

Figure 13 Curb Ramps in Study Area



- US-44 Canton Study Area Roadways
- Water Bodies
- Town Line
- Farmington River Trail
- Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension
- Existing Curb Ramps - ADA Compliance**
- Observed Compliant
- Observed Non-Compliant

Future Trail Crossing of Route 44 TBD

Source: Town of Canton, VHB

Path: \\vhb.com\gis\proj\Wetherfield\43281.00 Route 44 Corridor Study\Project\Route 44 Canton Basemapping\Route 44 Canton Basemapping_v3_120623.aprx (damstutz, 12/

2.4.1.2 Sidewalks

The sidewalk network in the Route 44/Dowd Avenue area is partially complete, with many long stretches of road without sidewalks that are a result of mid-20th century suburban road construction that rarely included sidewalks for pedestrians. On Route 44, particularly on the east side of the study area near Simsbury, there are few sidewalks except those that have been constructed by recent development projects. Development on the north side of Route 44 is slowly filling in sidewalk gaps on that side of the road. However, there is no sidewalk on Route 44 between Canton and Simsbury/Avon, although there is a pedestrian desire line east of Shops at Farmington Valley into Simsbury/Avon. The Town of Canton noted that employees from the Shops at Farmington Valley, multiple dealerships, and other businesses in the vicinity, will walk on route 44 to get to restaurants and services across the town line in Avon and Simsbury.

Further west, there are sidewalks primarily located on the south side of Route 44, with some spotty, incomplete sidewalk sections on the north side of the road. West of Dowd Avenue, the sidewalk on the south side is older and sometimes of poor quality, with frequent curb cuts crossing the sidewalk and utility poles placed inside the sidewalk space. Although a buffer of road shoulder or grass is usually present to provide some shy distance for walkers along Route 44, it is still an uncomfortable walk due to the high speed and frequency of traffic, including heavy truck traffic that can produce wind gusts that buffet pedestrians when passing.

Dowd Avenue has sidewalks on the north side of the road from Route 44 west to the project limits. As noted above, there are three crosswalk locations to cross Dowd Avenue, two of which have flashing beacons to help pedestrians cross to the side of the road with sidewalks. The sidewalks are generally in good condition and more recent construction has replaced and added sidewalks around the Canton Green near the intersection with Route 44.

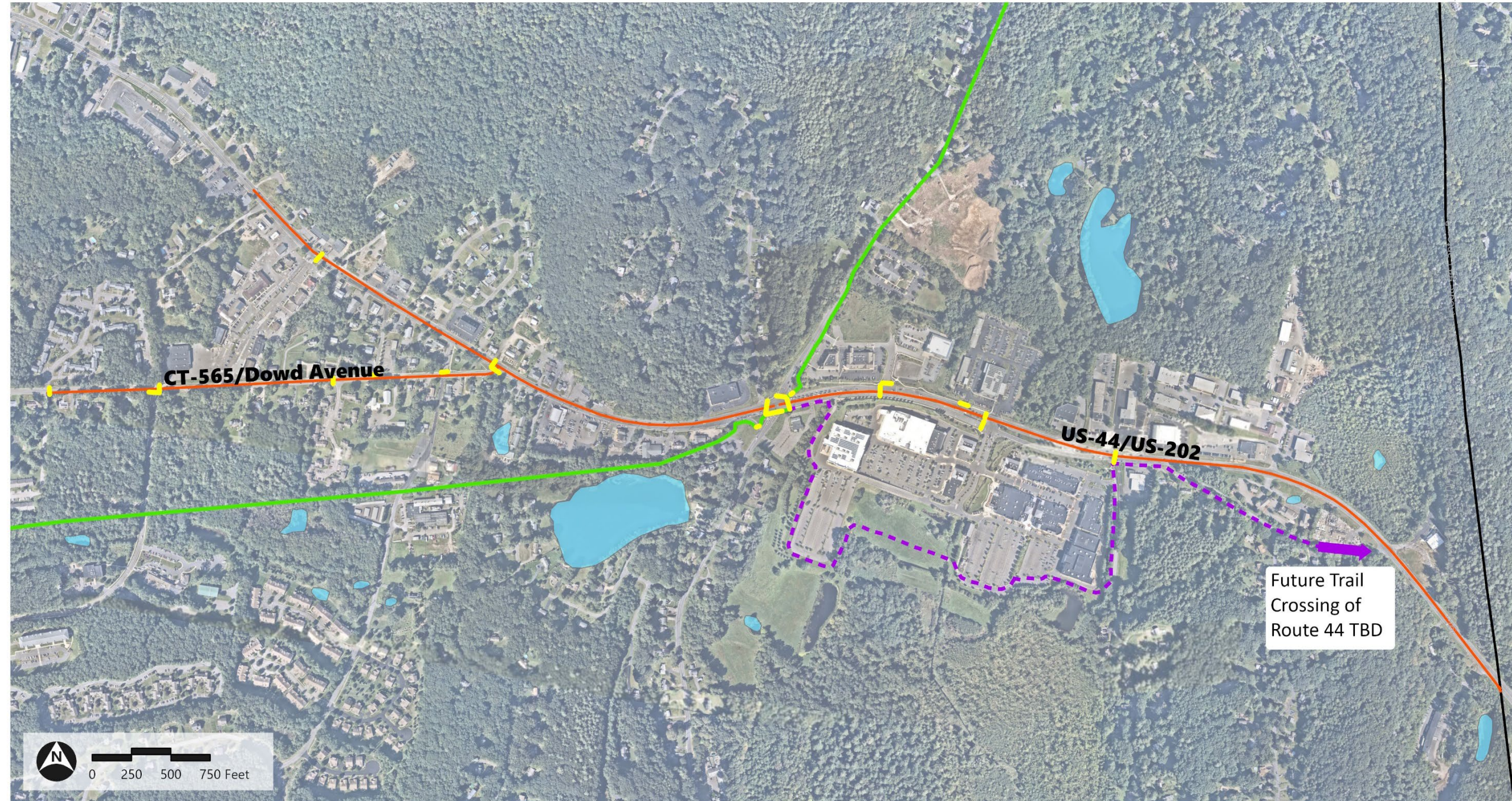
Sidewalks generally have limited shade and street furniture except in certain areas. One location of note is a small plaza with benches and a pergola along the Farmington River Trail adjacent to where the trail intersects with Route 44 near Route 177/Lovely Street. There is also a small area with brick pavers next to the emergency entrance on the west side of the Shops at Farmington Valley, but there are no benches or amenities here. Inside the Shops at Farmington Valley there are places to sit associated with different businesses and it is possible to walk around most of the complex safely.

Street sections in the study area without sidewalks include:

- › Both sides of Route 44 between the Shops at Farmington Valley and the Simsbury Town line
- › The north side of Route 44 between Trailsend Drive and 163 Albany Turnpike/Route 44
- › The north side of Route 44 between 225 Albany Turnpike/Route 44 and the project limits (approximately Old Canton Road)
- › The south side of Dowd Avenue between Route 44 and the project limits (Canton Hollow)

See Figure 15 for a map of existing sidewalks in the study area.

Figure 14 Crosswalks in Study Area

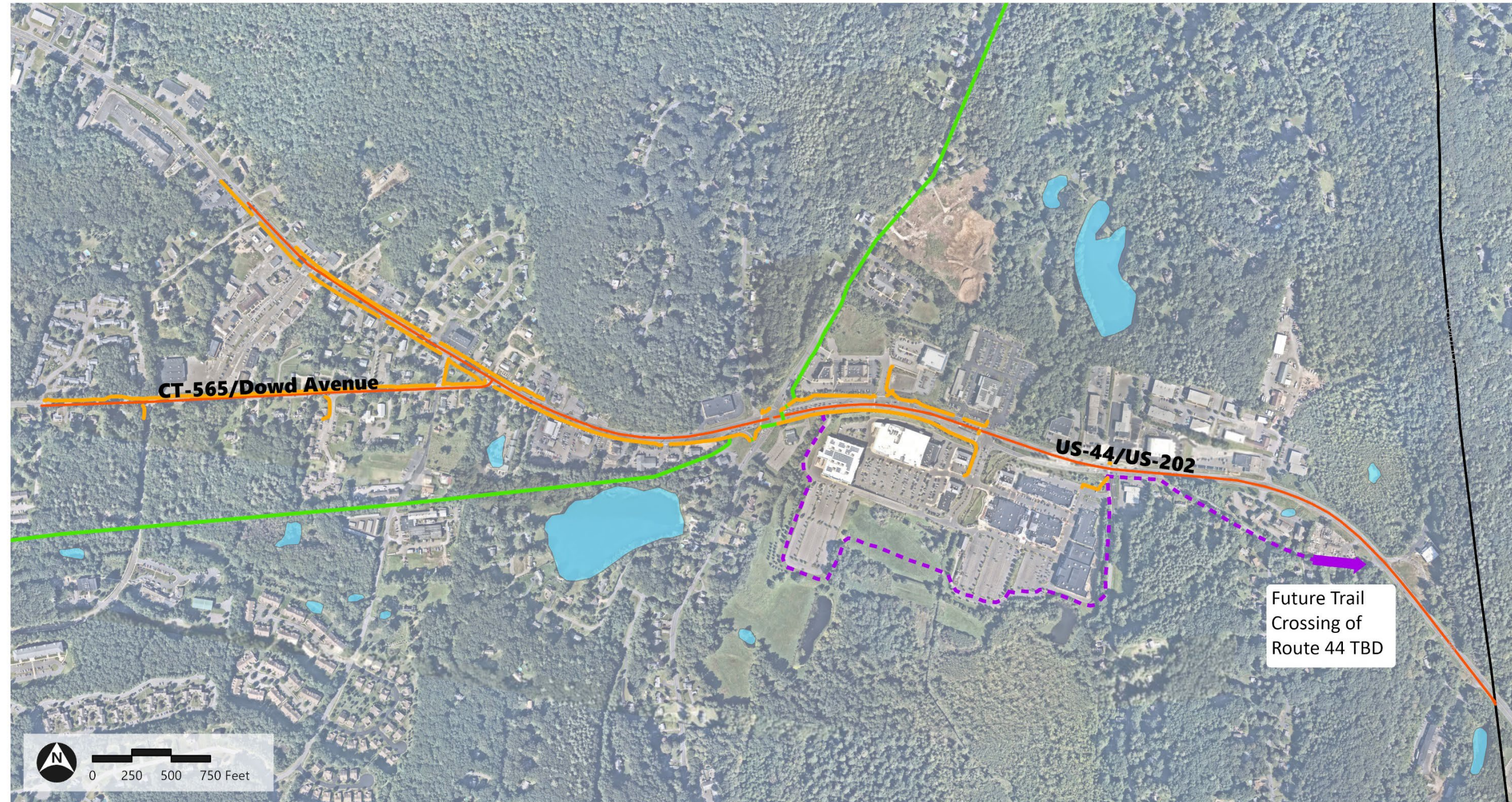


- US-44 Canton Study Area Roadways
- Water Bodies
- Town Line

- Farmington River Trail
- - Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension
- Existing Crosswalks

Source: Town of Canton, VHB

Figure 15 Existing Sidewalks on Study Area Roadways



- US-44 Canton Study Area Roadways
- Farmington River Trail
- Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension
- Existing Sidewalks
- Water Bodies
- Town Line

Source: Town of Canton, VHB

2.4.2 Bicycling

Bicycling is an important part of the transportation system, and it is the goal of the Town of Canton to increase cycling as a healthy, low-carbon, economical and space-efficient way to travel around the town. At the present time, the primary bicycle accommodation in the study area is the Farmington River Trail (FRT), which is an off-road path that splits off from the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) in Farmington, travels northwest into Unionville and Collinsville, and comes east from Collinsville into the study area before continuing north-northeast to meet up with the FCHT again in Simsbury. Along Lawton Road to the north, where the route continues out of the study area, it is mainly an on-road route for bicyclists. Along study area roadways, there are no bicycle lanes or designated shared-use roads for bicyclists, and paved shoulders along Route 44 and Dowd Avenue are generally narrow with little space for bicyclists to move out of the travel lane.

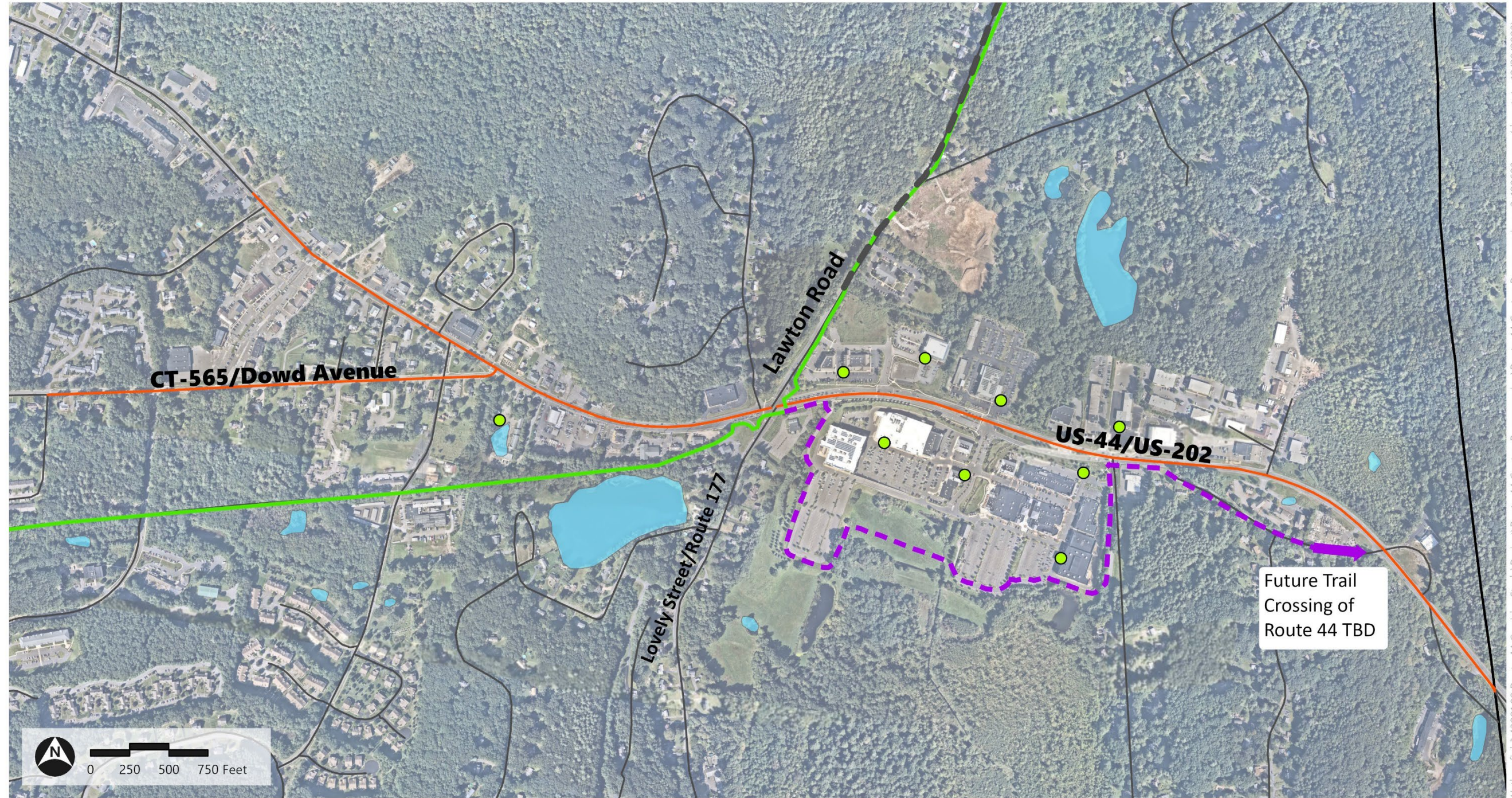
Bike racks were observed at several locations in the study area, including at least four areas in the Shops at Farmington Valley, the new CVS and Aldi properties across Route 44 from the Shops, the Mitchell Subaru, and at an older shopping area at 166 Albany Turnpike/Route 44 near the intersection of Route 44 and Dowd Avenue, called Canton Green. The location of the short-term bike racks at the Shops at Farmington Valley and other locations are sometimes placed at a distance from the businesses front doors, making them inconvenient for bicyclists, and are of a design not considered preferable for convenient and secure bicycle parking.

During field visits, one person bicycling was observed, on the Farmington River Trail. No bicyclists were observed biking on roadways.

The Town noted that Lovely Street/Route 177 is important as a bike route down to Unionville and Farmington via Avon. Lovely Street also allows for a direct connection to the Farmington River Trail at its intersection with Route 44. As noted in the draft recommendations for the Avon Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (reviewed in section 2.9), Avon also sees this as a primary bicycle route and future improvements may be on the horizon to improve bicycling conditions on this road in Avon up to the Canton town line.

As shown on Figure 16, Lawton Road to the north of Route 44 is part of the CTDOT On Road Bicycle Planning Network as a Municipal Maintained Road. It follows the route of the Farmington River Trail as it travels on-road north and east into Simsbury to an off-road path connecting to W. Mountain Road. The 2018 CTDOT Active Transportation Plan was reviewed for its applicability to the study area and included an analysis of suitability of state roads for bicycling, as well as priority implementation tiers for the bicycle planning network on state routes. Route 44 in the study area is considered "less" and "least" suitable for bicycling, likely due to the high vehicle speeds, high traffic volumes, heavy truck traffic, and lack of separate space for bicycling. Dowd Avenue is considered "More suitable" for bicycling. However, these roads have planned Bicycle Facility Implementation Tiers in the lowest range (Tier III-3) indicating that they are not high priority for the state to develop bicycle facilities at this time. See Figure 17 and Figure 18 which are taken from the CTDOT Active Transportation Plan map and show the bicycle suitability ratings and the implementation tiers, respectively.

Figure 16 Bicycling Planning Along Study Area Roadways



- US-44 Canton Study Area Roadways
- Water Bodies
- Town Line

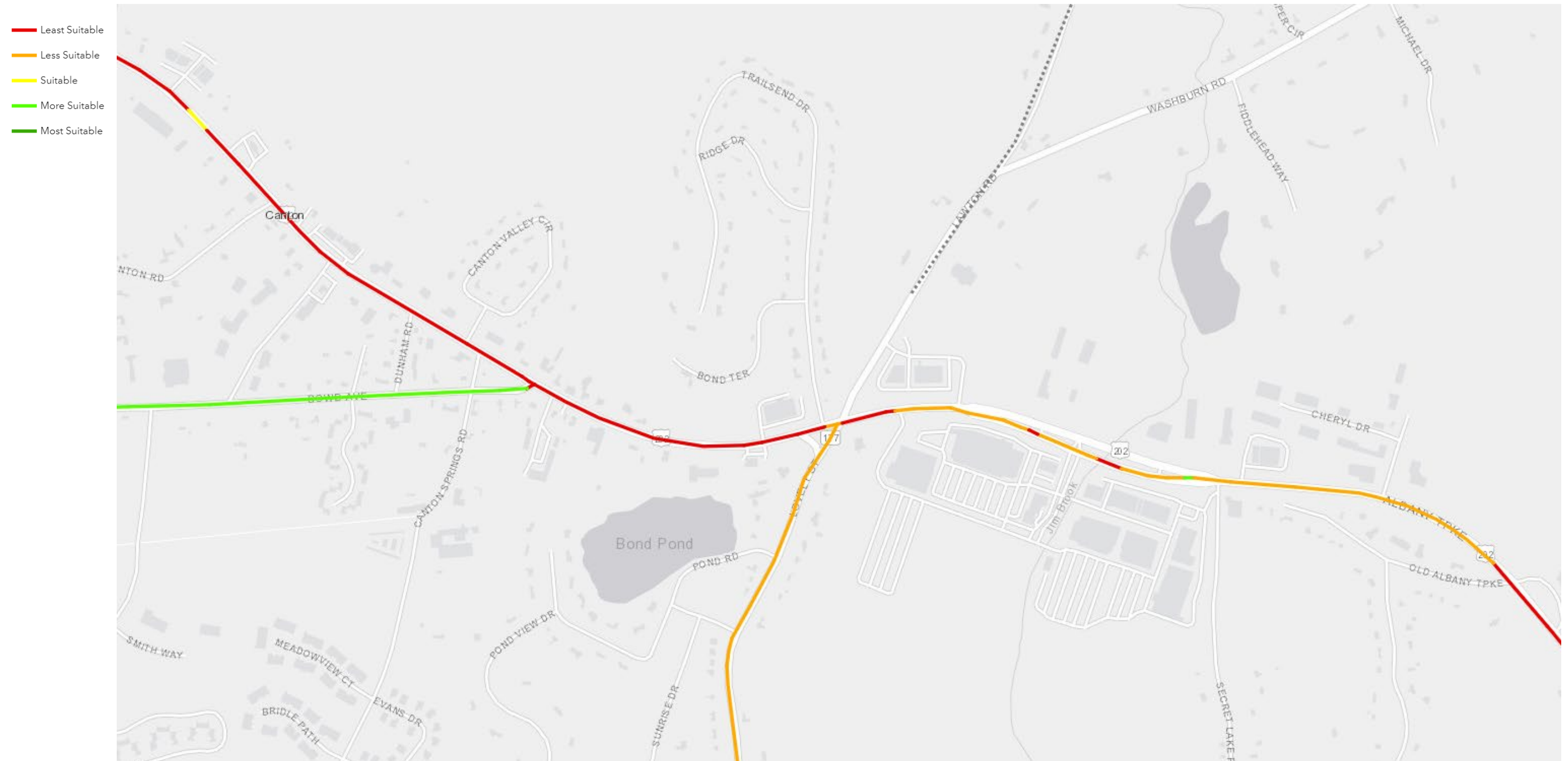
- Farmington River Trail
- - - Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension
- Bike Racks

- - - On-Road Bicycle Planning Network (CTDOT)

Source: Town of Canton, VHB

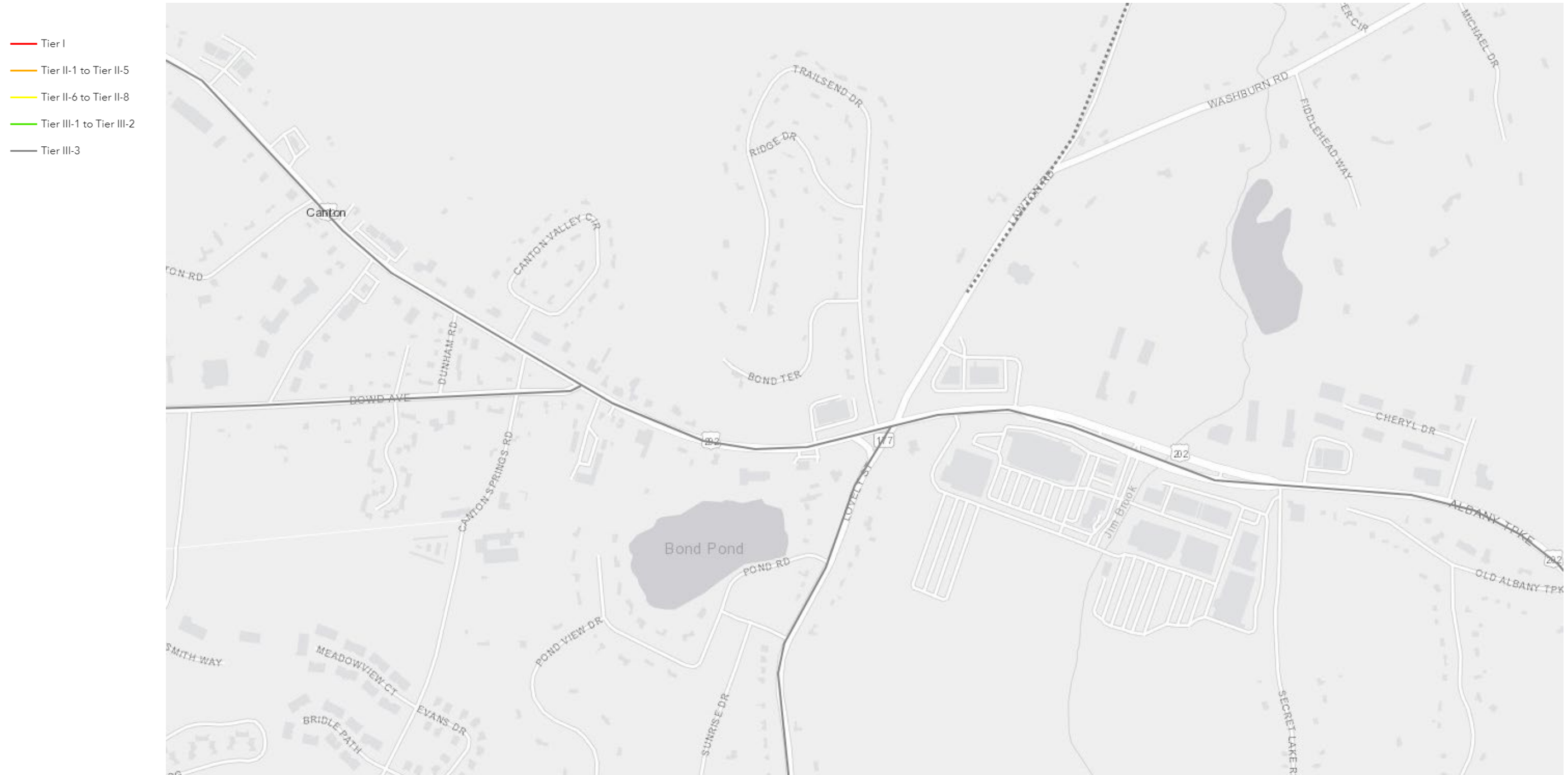
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Figure 17 CTDOT Active Transportation Plan Bicycle Suitability Map



Source: CTDOT Active Transportation Plan

Figure 18 CTDOT Active Transportation Plan Bicycle Facility Implementation Tiers



Source: CTDOT Active Transportation Plan

2.4.3 Multi-Use Trails

The Farmington River Trail (FRT) goes directly through the study area and crosses Route 44 at Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road. To the west of the study area, the trail connects to historic Collinsville and its dense commercial area before crossing the Farmington River to continue its path south towards Unionville and Farmington. To the north and east of the study area, the route follows a sidepath on Lawton Road for a short distance before turning into an on-road route and crossing into Simsbury. The Town of Canton intends to extend the FRT into the Shops at Farmington Valley by crossing into the west end of the development and going around the south side of the shopping center's parking lots before continuing east towards Simsbury in later phases of the trail development. See Figure 19 for a map of the proposed extension through the shopping center. Part of this corridor study project is to review locations where this extension could cross Route 44 and continue eastward. Currently, the Town has selected a designer for the phase of the trail extension that leads into the shopping center and stops on the east side. That project is just starting but will work with the corridor study so the study can address issues such as the location of the trail crossing that can be incorporated into the design. In addition to the proposed extension through the Shops at Farmington Valley, the Applegate Village development on Lawton Road will construct a sidepath along its frontage with Lawton Road to provide an off-road section of the Farmington River Trail route that goes northeast from the study area. The property at 115 Albany Turnpike is also expected to have another off-road portion of the trail constructed along Lawton Road when this property is eventually developed.

Figure 19 Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension Map



- US-44 Canton Study Area Roadways
- Farmington River Trail
- Water Bodies
- Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension
- Town Line

Source: VHB, Town of Canton

Source: Town of Canton, VHB

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2.4.3.1 Trail Counts

The FRT is part of the Connecticut Trail Census and there is an automated counter on the FRT in the vicinity of Commerce Drive that collects data continuously on bicycle and pedestrian usage of the trail. The Connecticut Trail Census Dashboard is hosted by the University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research (UConn CLEAR) and provides data on 30 different trail counters around Connecticut. Data from the trail counters includes 2017-2023 data and is analyzed to show daily, weekly, and monthly trips; average hourly trips; and average trips by day of week.

Based on data from the Trail Census from the last seven years, the FRT in Canton records about 40,700 trips annually, with a high of 65,200 trips in 2020. The Trail Census shows a low of 10,600 trips in 2019, but almost half the year's data is missing, presumably due to a malfunctioning trail counter. Similarly, the trail counter only shows 10,800 trips over the course of 2023 so far, but there appear to be significant gaps of data in March, May, and after June. Currently, the FRT in Canton is showing about 144 trips per day. See Table 10 for an annual data comparison for the FRT trail counter, and Figure 20 for an example of the Connecticut Trail Census Dashboard for the FRT from 2022.

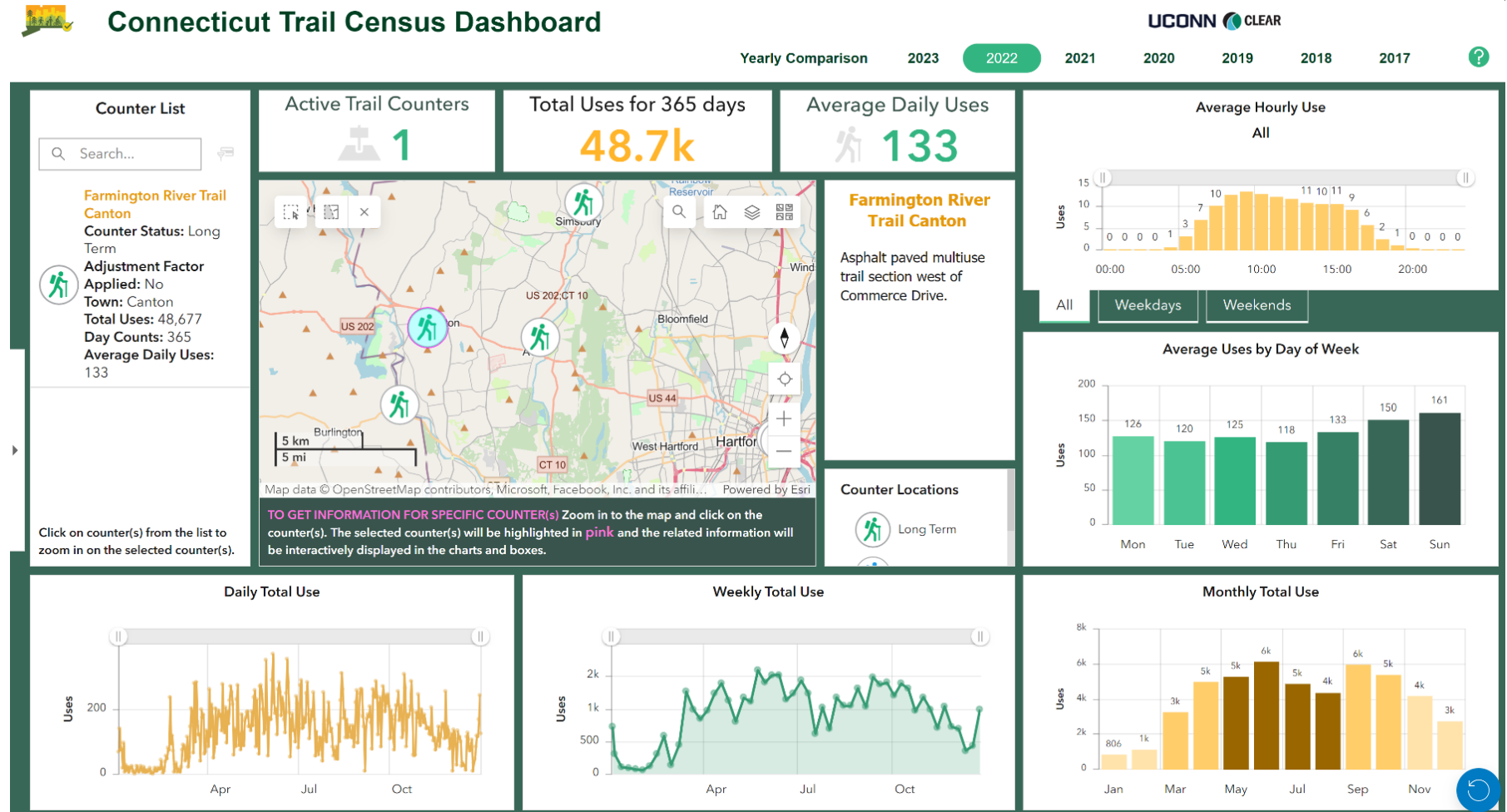
Table 10 Farmington River Trail Counts - Canton

Year	Total Trips ¹	Average Daily Trips ¹
2017	55,800	153
2018	47,000	129
2019	10,600 ²	52
2020	65,200	208
2021	47,300	146
2022	48,700	133
2023	10,800 ²	144

1 The Connecticut Trail Census applies the term "uses" to explain the number of times a trail is used by someone on the trail. For the purposes of this report, "trips" is used in place of "uses" as it is considered more common nomenclature.

2 The Connecticut Trail Census shows significant count gaps in 2019 and 2023, suggesting that the trail counter was not functioning during much of the year and displaying count numbers much lower than actual.

Figure 20 Connecticut Trail Census Dashboard – Farmington River Trail 2022



Source: CT Trail Census, UConn CLEAR

2.5 Public Transportation

Public transportation is currently limited in Canton and in the study area, consisting of three express bus routes that are part of the CT Transit system. Private transportation services under specific programs exist, such as the Arc of Farmington Valley (Favarh), which provides transportation services to participants in its program to day and employment programs. The Town also provides bussing to school for pupils in the local school district. However, there is no inter- or intra-community public transportation service to provide general day-to-day transportation trips. As a more rural community, this is not uncommon, as the low population density makes public transportation generally inefficient or only able to focus on specific types of trips, such as travel to work. This section will discuss the current public transportation options (including school bussing) and access to existing public transportation in the area.

2.5.1 Bus Routes and Stops

Public transportation service to the study area includes three CT Transit express bus routes that are part of the Hartford Express Bus system. The Hartford Express Bus system is comprised of 24 express routes and two shuttle bus services that generally operate on weekdays during peak hours to take workers to downtown Hartford from suburban Park & Ride lots in the region. One run is a combined route in the middle of the day. The CT Transit routes are:

- › Route 901 – Avon-Canton Express
 - This route operates between the Canton Park & Ride at Albany Turnpike at Route 179/Cherry Brook Road and downtown Hartford, passing through Simsbury, Avon, and West Hartford.
- › Route 926 – Winstead Express
 - This route operates between a stop on Park Place at CT State Community College Northwestern (formerly Northwestern Connecticut Community College) in Winstead and downtown Hartford, passing through Barkhamsted, New Hartford, Canton, Simsbury, Avon, and West Hartford.
- › Route 927 – Torrington Express
 - This route operates between a stop on S. Main Street at Torrington Plaza in Torrington and downtown Hartford, passing through New Hartford, Canton, Simsbury, Avon, and West Hartford.
- › Combined Routes 926/927 – mid-day trip
 - This combined route makes one mid-day trip, starting in at the Park and Ride at Central Ave and Church Street North in New Hartford and traveling to Barkhamsted and Winstead before passing through Torrington. The route then continues east through Canton, Avon, Simsbury, and West Hartford on its way to downtown Hartford.

See Figure 21 for the section of the CT Transit Express Bus Map that focuses on the Canton area.

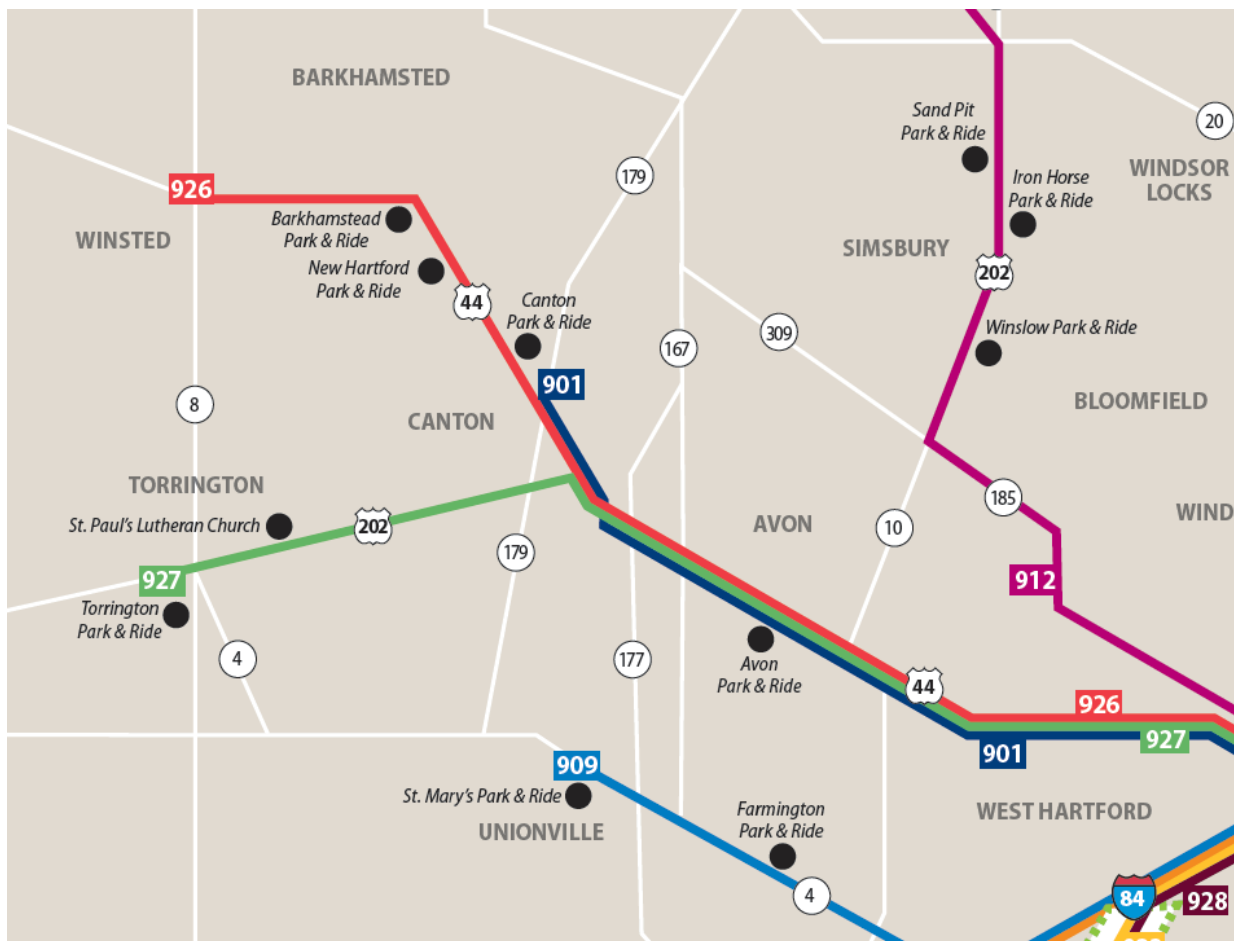
Each express route travels along Route 44 through Canton. The routes also stop at the three stops along Route 44 in Canton in the study area. These stops are:

- › Albany Turnpike at Secret Lake Road
- › Albany Turnpike at Lawton Road
- › Albany Turnpike at Dowd Avenue

In addition, each route stops at the Canton Park & Ride – Albany Turnpike at Route 179/Cherry Brook Road, which is to the west of the study area.

There were no shelters or benches for riders observed in the area. The Albany Turnpike at Lawton Road and Albany Turnpike at Dowd Avenue stops have sidewalks to provide for a safe location for riders to get on and off the bus. The Albany Turnpike at Secret Lake Road stop does not have any sidewalks along the road, which make these stops inaccessible for people with mobility impairments. All stops are proximate to signalized intersections with crosswalks for riders to cross Route 44 if needed.

Figure 21 CT Transit Express Map of Canton Area



The frequency of the bus routes is nine round trips per day, with three buses going towards Canton in the morning, and six in the afternoon; and five buses going towards Hartford in the morning and four in the afternoon. These include three round trips for both Route 926 and 927, two round trips for Route 901, and one round trip for the combined 926/927 route. Only weekday service is offered – there is no weekend service. As such, this route is focused almost

exclusively on commuters working during the week on typical workday employment or similar working hours during the day.

Transit usage data was collected from CTDOT for the bus routes in the area. Data includes Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2023, covering eight months of trips before the COVID-19 pandemic to post-pandemic conditions. See Table 11 which shows the average daily boardings over these four fiscal years. As noted in the 2021 CTDOT Service and Fare Equity (SAFE) Analysis, the express bus service network experienced a 95% drop in ridership at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic due to requirements for workers to work from home if they were able to. The SAFE Analysis states that, “most express bus routes transitioned to hourly service schedules and some routes were combined to reduce the number of vehicles in service while continuing to serve the essential workers who rely on the bus system.” As of mid-2021 when the report Analysis was developed, ridership was still 80% below normal levels.

Route 901 was particularly hit hard by the drop in transit usage at the beginning of the pandemic. Although Route 901 had 142 average daily boardings for all of FY2020, when comparing the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic months, the route had 182 average daily boardings from July 2019-March 2020 and only 21 from April 2020-June 2020. Route 901 usage has continued to decline and hovers around 30 boardings per day, only 16% of the average it had prior to the pandemic. The route was also adjusted as part of the route changes detailed in the 2021 SAFE Analysis to eliminate service to Collinsville, and some trips on Route 901 were replaced by trips on Routes 926 and 927.

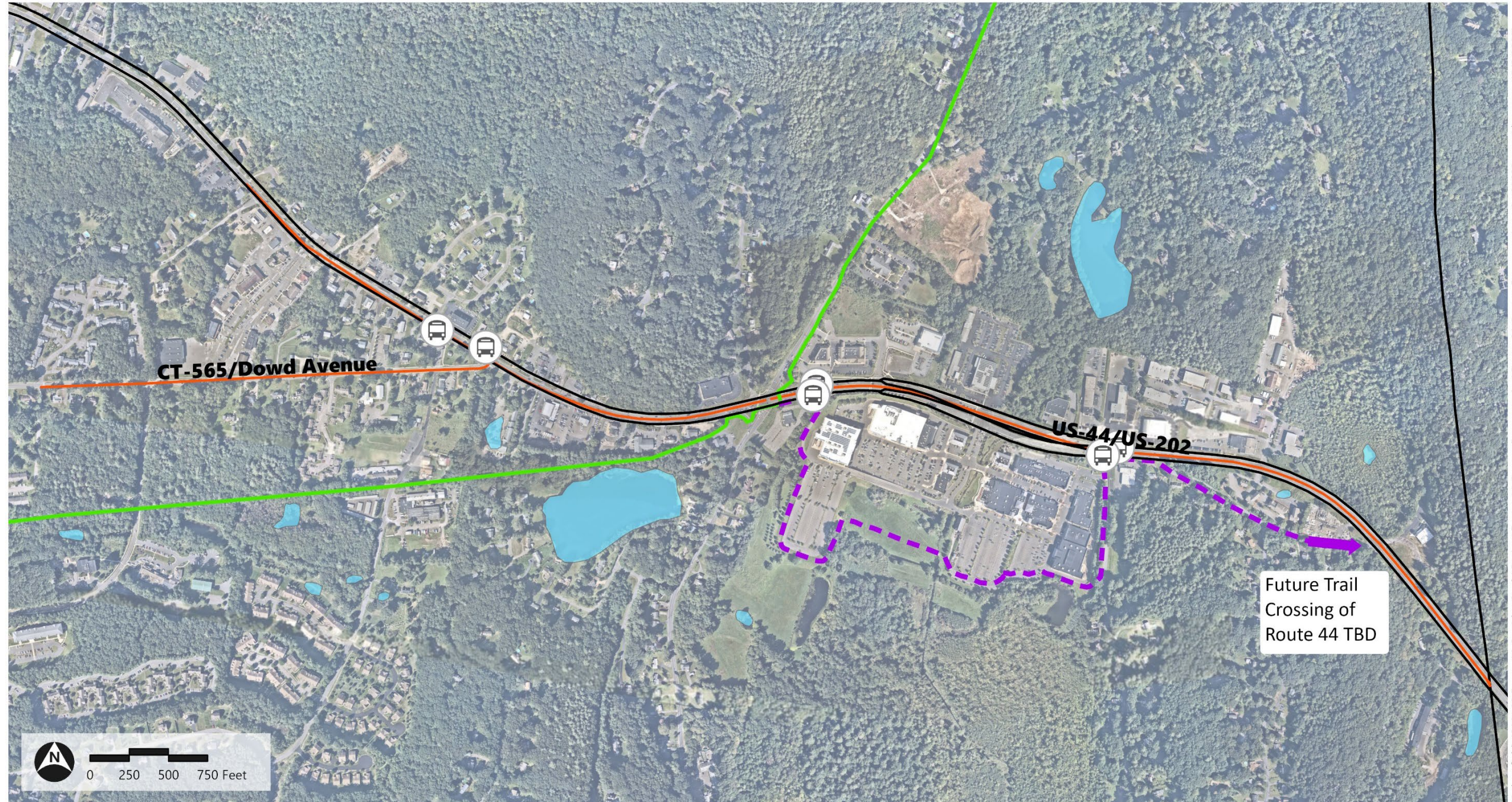
Table 11 Routes 901, 926, 927, and 926/927 Average Daily Boardings

Average Daily Boardings	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Route 901	142	45	26	29
Route 926	18	7	25	37
Route 927	26	10	26	36
Route 926/927	N/A	N/A	9	19

Routes 926 and 927 were also impacted by the pandemic, although the drop is not as steep in terms of absolute numbers because they already started off much lower than Route 901. In general, both routes are getting closer to their pre-pandemic numbers than Route 901. The combined Route 926/927 was created in 2021 as a result of the 2021 SAFE Analysis to replace previously eliminated route 901 trips. Its ridership is lower than the others but also runs only one round trip per day, and also runs on modified route that begins in New Hartford and backtracks to Winstead and Torrington before going back east to Canton. Routes 926, 927, and the combined 926/927 stop at all local stops in Canton and Avon, which was a change approved through the 2021 SAFE Analysis to replace eliminated Route 901 trips.

Through September 2023, which covers parts of FY2023 and FY2024, CTDOT data shows that all the above express routes are carrying an average of 2,378 passengers per month, with around six passengers per trip. The public transit routes in Canton provide an important service to people who need to travel to or from the Hartford area for work, but it is very limited to a commuting population and continues to have low ridership numbers post-pandemic.

Figure 22 Public Transit in Canton



- US-44 Canton Study Area Roadways
- Water Bodies
- Town Line

- Farmington River Trail
- - - Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension
- == Bus Routes

Bus Stops

Future Trail Crossing of Route 44 TBD

Source: Town of Canton, VHB

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2.5.1.1 Access to Public Transportation

Access to existing bus stops in the study area is generally limited to neighborhoods that are directly adjacent to or within walking distance of the stops along the corridor at Route 44 and Dowd Avenue, Route 44 and Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive, and Route 44 and Secret Lake Road. The Dowd Avenue stop location is reachable by residents on Dowd Avenue and cross streets such as Canton Springs Road, Commerce Drive, Canton Hollow, and Old Canton Road. Access to the Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive stops are primarily from the same side streets in the intersection as well as some of the neighborhood side streets that interconnect (Ridge Drive, Washburn Road, and Pond Road, for example). The Secret Lake Road stop can be reached by residents on Secret Lake Road, as well as potentially from Old Albany Turnpike and Forest Lane. However, in most cases getting to the stop on foot (bus riders most often get to a bus stop by walking) requires traveling along narrow streets without sidewalks over long distances, half a mile or more in some cases. There is also no dedicated parking at the stops, which is not uncommon, so someone who is driving to access the transit service would be best served by driving to the Park & Ride in Canton to the west or to the Avon Park & Ride at the Walmart off Route 44 to the east. Neither of the Park & Rides, both of which are outside the study area, are easily accessible on foot or bicycle.

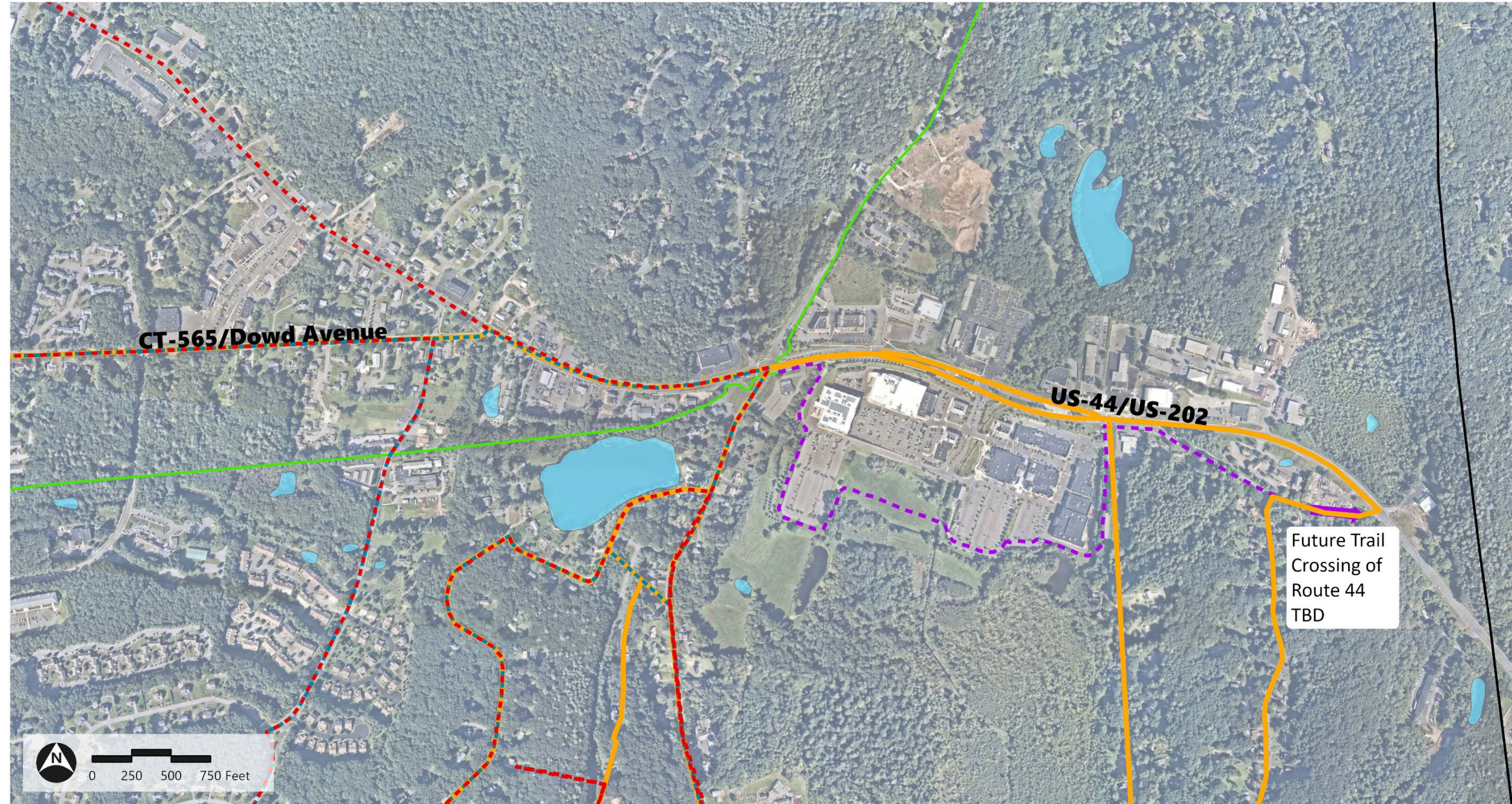
Facilitating better access to the bus stops in the study area through pedestrian facility improvements may encourage people who live near the stops to consider using the service. However, it should be noted that the limited nature of the public transportation – as an express bus to Hartford mainly serving travel to and return trips in the morning and evening – significantly hampers the overall utility of the service to provide everyday trips for users that have access to a private vehicle. This does not diminish the importance of the service to provide workforce trips to Hartford and back. Within the existing context of the study area, and the trend towards working from home for workers that are able, public transportation options in the area are likely to remain limited.

2.5.2 School Bus Routes

There are local school bus routes near the project area for Cherry Brook Primary School (Route 14), Canton Intermediate School (Route 13), and Canton High School (Route 4). Information provided by the Town shows these school bus routes pick up children south of the Route 44 corridor, around Canton Springs Road, Pond View Drive, Pond Road, Lovely Street, Secret Lake Road, and Forest Lane. The bus routes start at 6:50 AM for the High School, 7:22 AM for the Intermediate School, and 7:55 AM for the Primary School, and so are running at the same time as the morning peak hour. See Figure 23 for a map of the school bus routes.

Note that many of the bus routes overlap with each other and also backtrack, going down one street and back to pick up children, including those at the end of dead end/cul-de-sac streets.

Figure 23 Canton School Bus Routes in Project Area



- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Water Bodies | School Bus Routes |
| Town Line | Route 4 - Canton High School |
| Farmington River Trail | Route 13 - Canton Intermediate School |
| Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension | Route 14 - Cherrybrook Primary School |

Source: Town of Canton, VHB

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2.6 Public Involvement

Public outreach for the Route 44 Corridor Study is critical to understanding how people use Route 44 and Dowd Avenue, and what their concerns are for traveling through the corridor. To collect public input on the corridor on its existing conditions, the Study Team conducted a robust public outreach program that included a public survey, pop-up event at the local farmer's market, traditional public information meeting, and targeted stakeholder interviews with key organizations, businesses, and individuals. There is also a dedicated page on the CROCOG website for the Route 44 Corridor Study (<https://crocog.org/rt44/>) to share information and documents from the study. The following sections go over the public engagement conducted for this stage of the Route 44 Corridor Study.

2.6.1 Collinsville Farmer's Market Pop-Up

The Study Team attended the Collinsville Farmer's Market in southwest Canton on October 1, 2023. The Team promoted the study, took comments on a map of the study area, promoted the public survey and improved visibility of the study to the general public. The Team interacted with around 20-30 people and received several comments from the public about the corridor. The comments included:

- › The problem of speeding starts further west along the corridor at the signal on Route 44 with East Hill Road. People start moving quickly east from here through the traffic signals at Canton Village and Dowd Ave. (This location is outside the study area.)
- › The flashing light for the East Hill Road intersection, to indicate when the signal is about to turn red, when going eastbound, seems too far away from signal itself; long delay from flashing sign to intersection. (This location is outside the study area.)
- › Suggestion of pedestrian bridge to cross Route 44. Note that for the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail there is a tunnel under Route 44 in Avon.
- › Notes about missing sidewalk on Route 44.
- › Proposed development at Canton/Simsbury line on Route 44; gas station/charging stations. Just east of Brass Lantern Road – where a new restaurant has been built. May not still be active at this point.
- › Lots of crashes at the intersection of Route 44 and Colonial Road.
- › It is very congested on Route 44 between Dowd Avenue and Lawton Road/Lovely Street. Lots of turns here to get to local businesses.
- › Lawton Road/Lovely Street intersection is not a good intersection. Long wait times, people try to beat the light and end up running the red light because they want to avoid the delay of waiting for the next cycle.

2.6.2 Public Survey

A public survey was developed to collect information about existing conditions and transportation issues people experience in the corridor. The survey asked questions about how people travel on the corridor, how safe they think the corridor is, and what issues they see on the corridor. It was opened on October 1, 2023, to gather input from residents, business owners, employees, visitors, and travelers to Canton. The survey was primarily distributed online and via email or social media, though some flyers with the survey website address were also put up at Town Hall. Additionally, the survey was also promoted through stakeholder meetings by the consultant team and CRCOG.

2.6.2.1 Public Survey Results

The public survey stayed open for responses from October 1, 2023, through December 15, 2023. A total of 869 responses were received from the survey. Seventy-seven percent of the responses were submitted by residents of Canton. Another 6.5% of the responses came from Avon residents, 3.7% came from Simsbury residents, and the remaining 12.6% came from residents of other towns in Connecticut. People visit the study area for a variety of reasons, the most common being for shopping and errands (86%), through travel to other places (71%), going to entertainment venues, events or restaurants (59%), and using the Farmington River Trail (54%).. Just over half of respondents live along or near Route 44 or Dowd Avenue. A quarter work or study in the area, and just 10% own a business or residence in the study area. People noted other reasons they visit the area including going to medical appointments and visiting family.

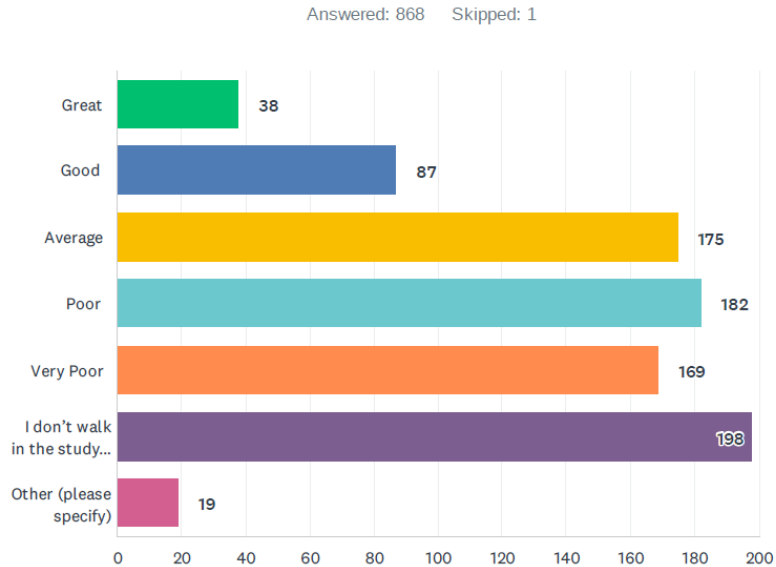
Almost all respondents are very familiar with Route 44 and the study area. Most respondents (66%) travel on the Route 44 corridor daily, and another 25% travel in the area two or three times a week. Most respondents drive in some way (87%), either through the corridor or to stop and walk around the shops, while 5% say they bike and 2% who said they walk. Other respondents noted that they travel by several different modes, and do not do just one. All respondents except for three own or have access to a car.

In terms of how people view walking and biking on the Route 44 and Dowd Avenue corridors:

- › Just 14% percent say walking is good or great; respondents commented that they perceive Route 44 as an unsafe place to walk due to the heavy volume and speed of traffic
- › Only 6% of people consider bicycling in the area good or great; many commented that similar to walking, the heavy volume and speed of traffic on Route 44 is not conducive to bicycling and feels unsafe
- › 40% of people find walking the study area poor or very poor; 44% said bicycling is poor to very poor (with 25% saying it is very poor)
- › 23% do not walk in study area and 36% do not bike in study area

Figure 24 Perception of Walking Safety in Route 44 Study Area

Q6 In terms of traffic safety, what is your level of safety and comfort walking along US-44/Dowd Avenue in Canton? (choose one)



75% of respondents (651 total) responded to the question about whether there are unsafe or unappealing places to walk or bike in the US-44/Dowd Avenue area. In general, people considered Route 44 to be very unsafe and unappealing for biking and walking, with 59 responses for “everything” about Route 44 and the study area being unappealing. Route 44 at Dowd Avenue and Route 44 at Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive were mentioned the most frequently, 78 times and 53 times, respectively. Dowd Avenue at Canton Springs Road was also mentioned 18 times. Common themes included problems with crossing at these intersections, the heavy traffic and high speeds, and confusion around the functioning of Route 44 at Dowd Avenue. The trail crossing of Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive was also called out around 22 times, and crossings in general of Route 44 were raised as a concern 37 times. Bicycle and pedestrian safety was also a frequent concern brought up in answers. Areas outside of the study area were also noted, including Route 44 at East Hill Road, River Road, Route 44 at Cherry Brook Road, Route 44 Dyer Avenue, Route 44 at Bristol Drive, Dowd at East Hill Road and Old Canton Road/Simonds Avenue, further west on Dowd Avenue outside the study area, and Route 44/202 and Route 179.

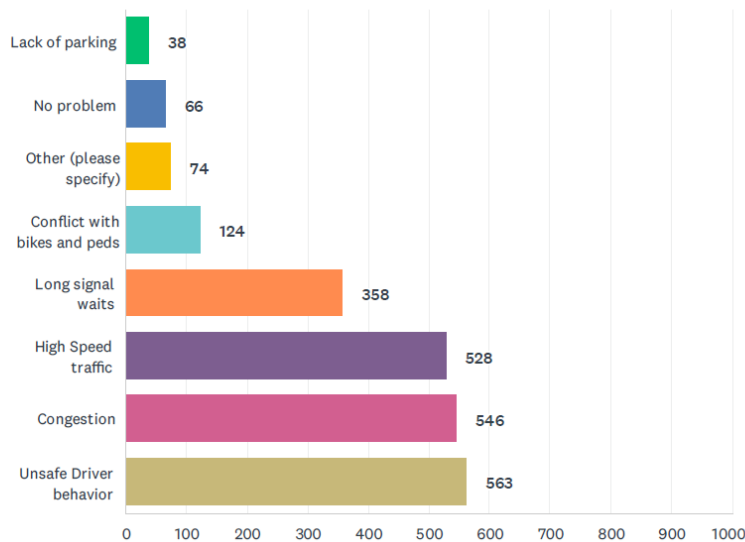
For issues about driving in the study area, 65% said unsafe driver behavior was an issue, 63% cited congestion as an issue, 61% noted high speed traffic and 41% said there were long waits at signals. Respondents could also note other concerns. Many of these touched on issues of difficulty making left turns into and out of businesses, lack of enforcement of speeding, red-light running, and construction impacts on the road from utilities or development.

The most frequently noted transportation or public space improvements needed along Route 44 and Dowd Avenue included safer drivers (57%), traffic calming (57%), better bicycle and pedestrian facilities (53%), less signal wait times and signal improvements (29%) and beautification and more green spaces (29%). Other comments made for this question noted better transit amenities and frequency, more sidewalks, and lighting improvements.

Figure 25 Driving Issues Experienced in Route 44 Study Area

Q9 If you often drive along US-44/Dowd Avenue, do you experience any problems when driving through the study area? (check all that apply)

Answered: 867 Skipped: 2



In terms of improving the corridor for non-motorized users, respondents most frequently chose the following:

- › 52%: extend the Farmington River Rail Trail
- › 51%: improve street crossings in the area
- › 51%: improve facilities to make it easier to bike around the area
- › 51%: slow down car traffic
- › 46%: improve facilities to make it easier to walk in the area
- › 28%: Improve navigation around the area
- › 26%: more green spaces and shade trees
- › 23%: visual improvements to the area

Other comments made for this question were similar to the comments made for the question about transportation and public space improvements. Many people noted they did not believe people should be walking or biking on Route 44 given its current condition.

Finally, many similar themes showed up in the last question which asked for any additional comments on the study, including slowing down traffic, speeding and need for more enforcement, concerns about additional traffic being generated by new housing developments, safety of people biking and walking, and better ways to access businesses along the roadways.

2.6.3 Stakeholder Interviews

The Project Team determined that Stakeholder Interviews should be conducted for the Route 44 Corridor Study to supplement the public survey and public information meetings and get more detailed comments from key individuals and organizations. The VHB Team interviewed ten people/groups as key stakeholders in the Route 44 Corridor Study. The interviewees were determined in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee for the project and Town of Canton staff. They included the following:

- › Melanie Carr and Elizabeth Ackerman of the Shops at Farmington Valley
- › Chuck and Debbie Joseph, owners of the ShopRite of Canton
- › Tim Bowman of Bike Walk Canton
- › Jan Tanner, Canton resident and owner of Benidorm Bikes on Route 44 in Canton
- › Tonoa Jackson, Canton Senior & Social Services Director
- › Steven Mitchell, owner of Mitchell Subaru and member of Bike Walk CT
- › Matthew Couch, representing the Arc of Farmington Valley
- › Barbara Collins, the Director of the Farmington Valley Trails Council
- › Dr. Jordan Grossman, Superintendent of Canton Public Schools
- › Lisa Bohman from the Avon Chamber of Commerce (written comments forthcoming)

Concerns brought up by the stakeholders about the Route 44 corridor include the following:

- › Access
- › High Speeds
- › Signals not coordinated
- › Poor illumination
- › Sidewalks connectivity
- › Pedestrian and Bike crossings are dangerous
- › No Wayfinding
- › Delays
- › Connection to Farmington River Rail Trail
- › Congestion increasing
- › Safety for bicyclists and walkers
- › Lack of left turn bays or adequate capacity
- › Lack of access management

The stakeholders provided various recommendations for the issues above. They include:

- › Coordinate signal timing on Route 44
- › Connect Sidewalks
- › Lighting improvements
- › Make bike and pedestrian improvements
- › Extend trail
- › Make 44 safer for vehicle travel through area
- › Decrease car traffic
- › More plants and trees
- › Entrance and Exit improvements into plaza
- › Wayfinding signs
- › Extension of the sidewalk along Route 44 from 91 Albany Turnpike to 71 Albany Turnpike
- › Continue with Canton Bike Friendly Community
- › Multimodal signage to increase public awareness-bikes may be present-Share the Road
- › Ensure access to shops
- › Maintain traffic flow
- › Fix left turn issues
- › Slow traffic down

In addition to the stakeholders interviewed above, CRCOG staff visited 41 businesses along Route 44 to speak with business managers and determine how staff members traveled to work. In general, business managers reported in almost all cases that staff traveled to work by personal vehicle, and only one manager reported an employee taking transit or using their bicycle to get to work. CRCOG staff noted that the current conditions for traveling to work other than by car are poor, and likely contribute to the preponderance of employees driving to work. In addition, they found that some employees had to carpool to work because they did not have a car.

2.6.4 Public Information Meeting #1

On December 7, 2023, the project team hosted the project's first public involvement meeting as a hybrid meeting with an in-person component and a virtual component. The in-person meeting took place at the Community Center in Canton, CT, while the on-line meeting was conducted simultaneously on the Town of Canton's Zoom Meeting account. Approximately 55 people attended the in-person meeting, including staff from the Town of Canton, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), CTDOT, VHB and VN Engineers. Twenty people attended the online meeting. Audio and video of the meeting was recorded using Zoom.

The purpose of the meeting was to go over the Existing Conditions Report for the Route 44/Dowd Avenue corridor area and take comments and feedback from the community on transportation issues they see in the study area. After giving a presentation going over the existing conditions, the Study Team took questions from the audience (both in-person and online) then ended the meeting to allow time for attendees to ask questions individually of the Study Team members and provide feedback on large maps of the corridor hung on the walls in the meeting room.

The questions/comments from the public included the following:

- › Left-turning crashes were raised as an issue along Route 44, from people turning into businesses along the corridor. A center two-way left turn lane could be added to address left-turning crashes.
- › Concerns were shared about speeding and heavy truck traffic on Dowd Avenue.
- › There was a request to provide more information about the Route 44 Corridor Study from the year 2000, and what was and was not implemented in Canton from that plan.
- › Protecting bus riders and pedestrians is important.
- › Concerns were raised about additional traffic resulting from new housing developments.
- › Planted medians were supported if they help calm traffic.
- › Grade-separated crossings of the trail (such as a tunnel or bridge) should be considered.

Attendees placed dots and wrote on large maps in the meeting room after the presentation. The dots represented different concern areas of the attendees, such as bicycle, pedestrian, or traffic safety issues. Figure 26 shows a map of the locations of these concerns. The map reflects many of the themes highlighted in public comment: significant concerns about the Route 44 at Dowd Avenue and Route 44 at Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive intersections; pedestrian and bicycle concerns on Dowd Avenue regarding speeding and car volumes; and less concentrated concerns in other parts of the study area. Of note are several concerns about Route 44 at the Canton Village Shopping Center and access in that area.

Finally, a letter from the Town of Canton Economic Development Agency was submitted before the public meeting to provide additional comment for the Project Team. The letter notes that the high speeds, difficult intersections and business access, and challenges for pedestrians are qualities that restrict the area's economic activity. The letter suggests several recommendations, including traffic calming, safer vehicular access to businesses, improvements to the Farmington River Trail and crossings, pedestrian improvements, and beautification improvements.

2.7 Land Use and Development

The Route 44 corridor is characterized primarily by commercial development catering to through car traffic and regional draws for customers, especially for the Shops at Farmington Valley. Commercial development includes new construction and buildings constructed for specific business needs which are mixed in with former residential properties that have been converted for commercial use. Residential development has mostly moved off the corridor onto side streets and behind the commercial developments. Dowd Avenue/Route 565, while also carrying significant volumes of traffic, has mainly residential and institutional uses in the study area and as it travels west towards Collinsville. Several condominium complexes and multi-family dwellings are present along the corridor, and more are proposed for development in the future. See Figure 27 for a map of land uses within the study area.

Route 44 is the main commercial core of the Town of Canton and is undergoing rapid development and redevelopment including a recently constructed grocery store, pharmacy, car dealerships, and restaurant within the study area. Many of the properties in the study area adjacent to Route 44 or Dowd Avenue are considered “Opportunity Locations” or “Mixed Use Opportunity Areas” within the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). These Opportunity Locations are considered sites of significant economic potential, sites where is an expectation of a meaningful/tax positive contribution to the tax base, or sites where there are known development interests. Encouraging development in these areas is part of the Town’s overall strategy to diversify its tax base to be less reliant on residential property taxes to keep the Town’s tax rates competitive and keep Canton a desirable place to live and run a business.

Additional commercial development has been proposed in the study area corridor and further west, which is potentially bringing more traffic to the area and more needs to upgrade the corridor to address through traffic and trips destined for businesses. Nearby residential developments have been proposed or are underway, including 102 units of housing at 115 Albany Turnpike (behind the CVS property), the Applegate Village north on Lawton Road which will include 34 single-family homes, and several proposed developments on Dowd Avenue. See Figure 29 for locations of proposed developments within the study area.

The following is a list of development locations where proposals have been submitted or are expected, shown on Figure 29:

- › 9-15 Albany Turnpike
 - Most recently, a fuel station was proposed on this property, but is no longer active.
- › 111/115 Albany Turnpike
 - 115 Albany Turnpike, along Lawton Road behind the CVS and UCONN Health, is proposed to be developed into 102 housing units.
- › 31, 35, and 39 Lawton Road
 - These properties, along with adjacent Washburn Road properties, are actively being redeveloped into approximately 34 single-family homes.

- › 55 Lawton Road
 - This property is owned by the Town of Canton and has been approved to be developed as recreational fields.
- › 75 Old Canton Road
 - This property has been approved for the development of 60 housing units but must connect to existing utilities on Route 44.
- › 85 & 97 Dowd Avenue
 - These properties have the potential to be developed into additional housing.

Note that not all sites on the map are currently under development at this time, and many still have to go through further permitting and approvals with the Town. The Future Conditions Report will go into further detail on anticipated development and growth.

As noted in Section 2.1, it is the desire of the Town of Canton to develop the Route 44 corridor in a way that creates walkable, compact village districts and leverages the Farmington River Trail and the existing “town center”-like urban design of the Shops at Farmington Valley. See Figure 28 for a zoning map of the study area. The Town also recently approved a requirement for affordable housing in new residential development at 15% of total units, which became effective on October 10, 2023. The units need to be income-restricted affordable housing units as defined by the state, and a minimum of 50% of the affordable units must meet 60% income threshold requirements. The Town has also considered recent Connecticut zoning reforms as part of Public Act 21-29 (2021) that allow parking to be capped on new developments so that parking is not overbuilt on new developments. The reforms state that zoning codes “may not require a minimum number of parking spaces for new housing units in excess of one space for studio and one-bedroom homes or two spaces for two-plus-bedroom homes.”¹ The Town is interested in Dowd Avenue in particular being changed through developments to be more of a dense residential area and create more of a neighborhood feel that would slow down traffic and bring more vibrancy to the street.

2.7.1 Environmental Issues

Of particular importance in the corridor is the presence of a Superfund site at approximately 51 Albany Turnpike in Canton. This was the site of the J. Swift Chemical Company, which buried and disposed of waste solvent sludges starting in the 1950s and 1960s through the latter half of the 20th century. Due to this soil and water contamination – Jim Brook south of Route 44 became highly polluted – a public water main was extended in the 1980s south along Secret Lake Road to serve the residents who could no longer get their water from private wells. The current owner of the property is the Cadle Company, a large out-of-state landholding company, which has not been an “active” property owner, according to the Town of Canton. Although the property is being used as a car dealership, it still requires remediation, as noted by the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) in its list of state Superfund sites. As such, redevelopment of this property could be an issue as the corridor develops further, and the Town has an interest in seeing the site cleaned up. For more information visit:

¹ <https://www.desegregatect.org/hb6107>

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Remediation--Site-Clean-Up/Superfund-Programs/State-of-Connecticut-Superfund-Program#Swift>.

Figure 27 Route 44/Dowd Avenue Study Area Land Uses

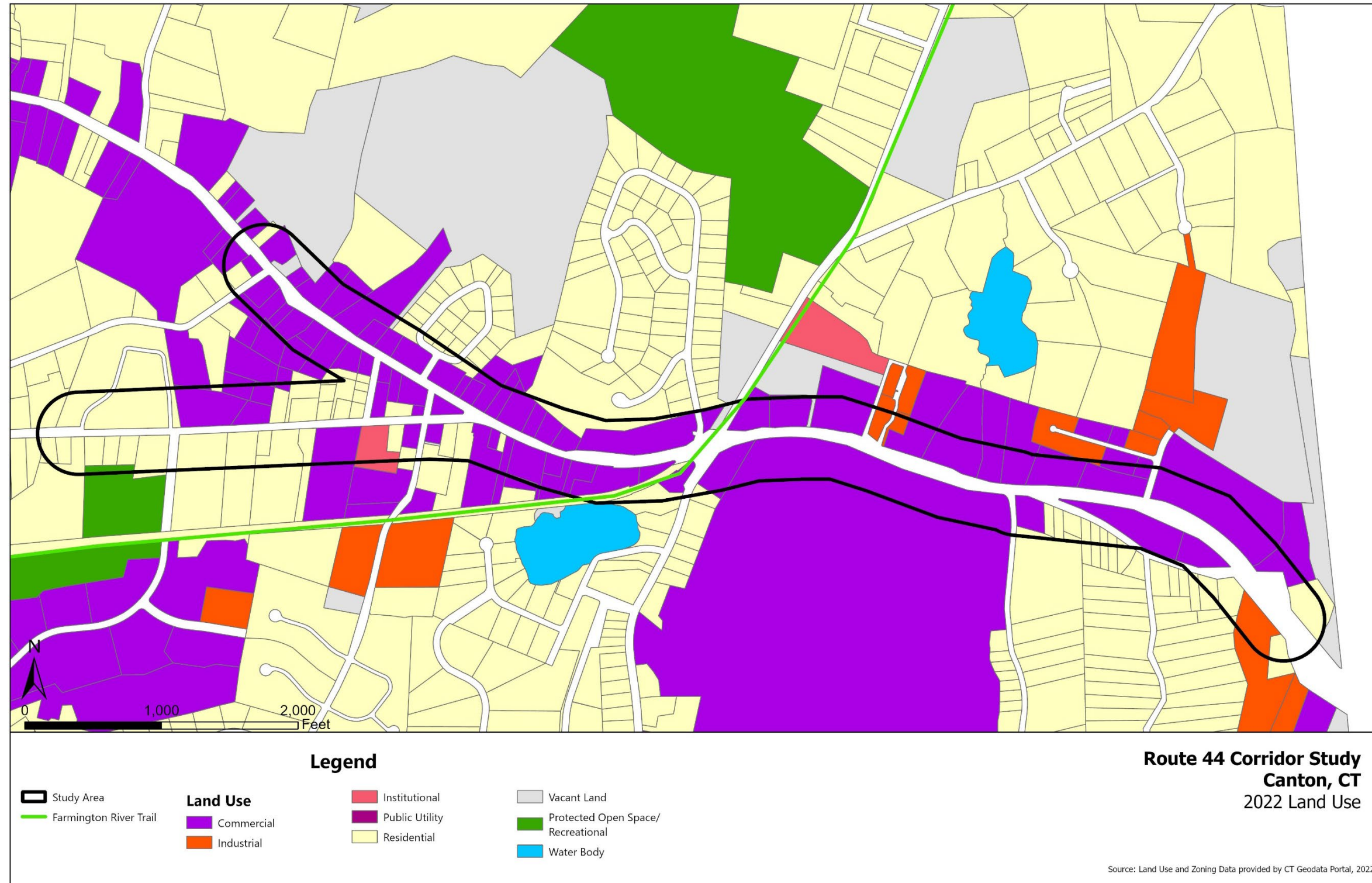


Figure 28 Route 44/Dowd Avenue Study Area Zoning

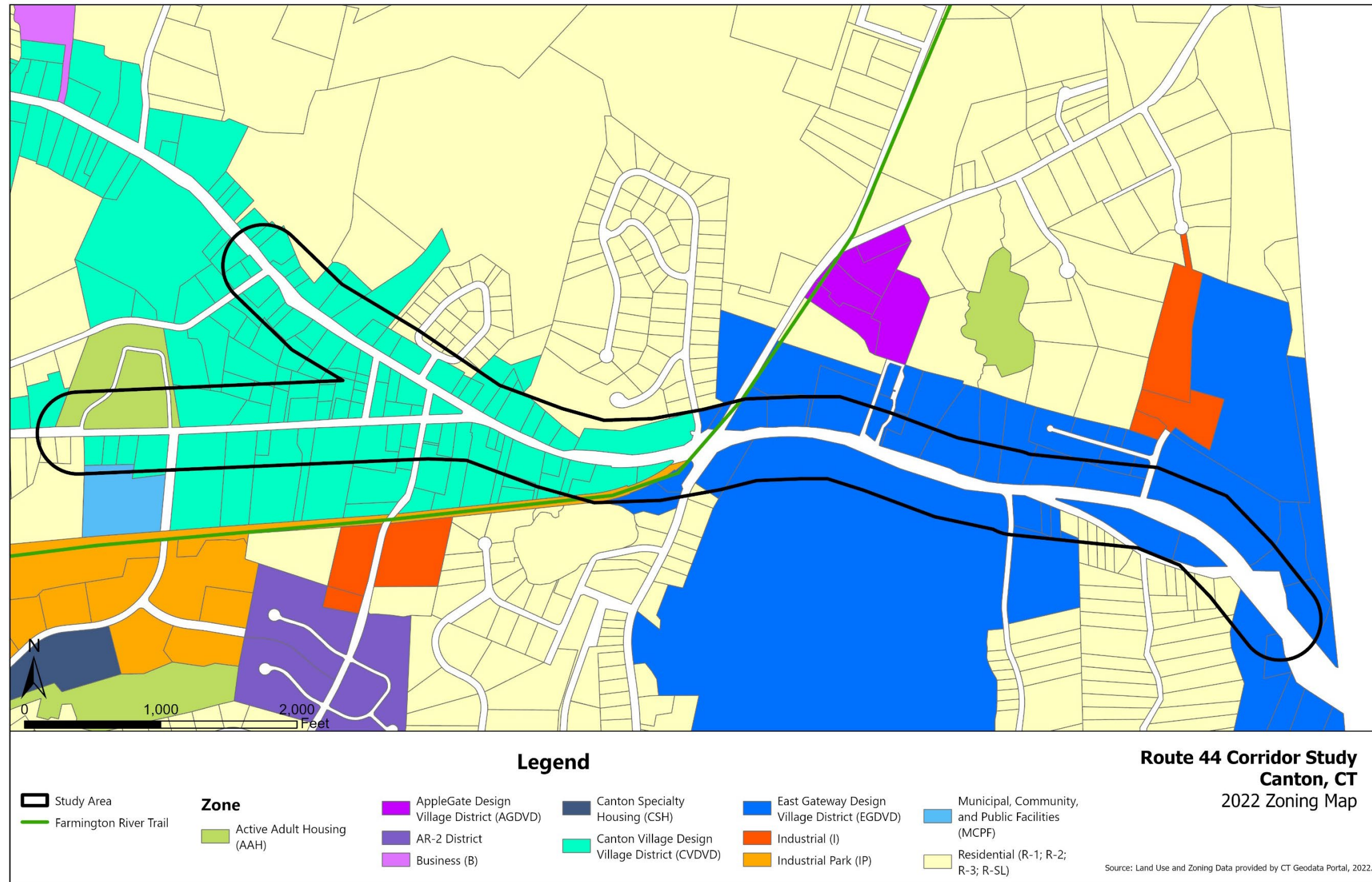
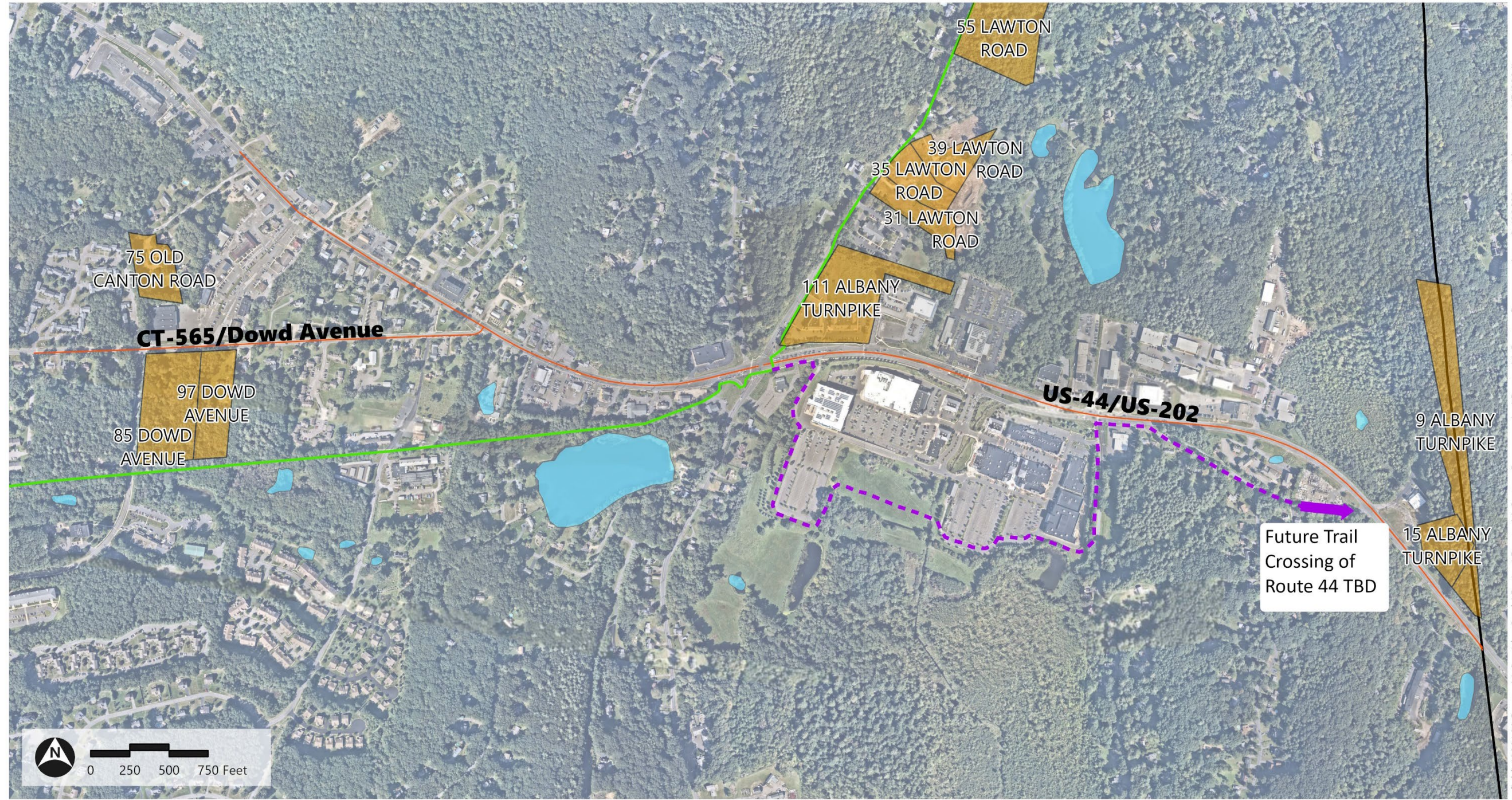


Figure 29 Route 44/Dowd Avenue Study Area Proposed Developments



- US-44 Canton Study Area Roadways
- Farmington River Trail
- Water Bodies
- - - Farmington River Trail Proposed Extension
- Town Line
- Proposed Development Sites

Source: Town of Canton, VHB

\\vhb.com\gis\proj\Wethersfield\4328100 Route 44 Corridor Study\Project\Route 44 Canton Basemapping\Route 44 Canton Basemapping_v3_120623.aprx (damstutz, 1/5/2024)

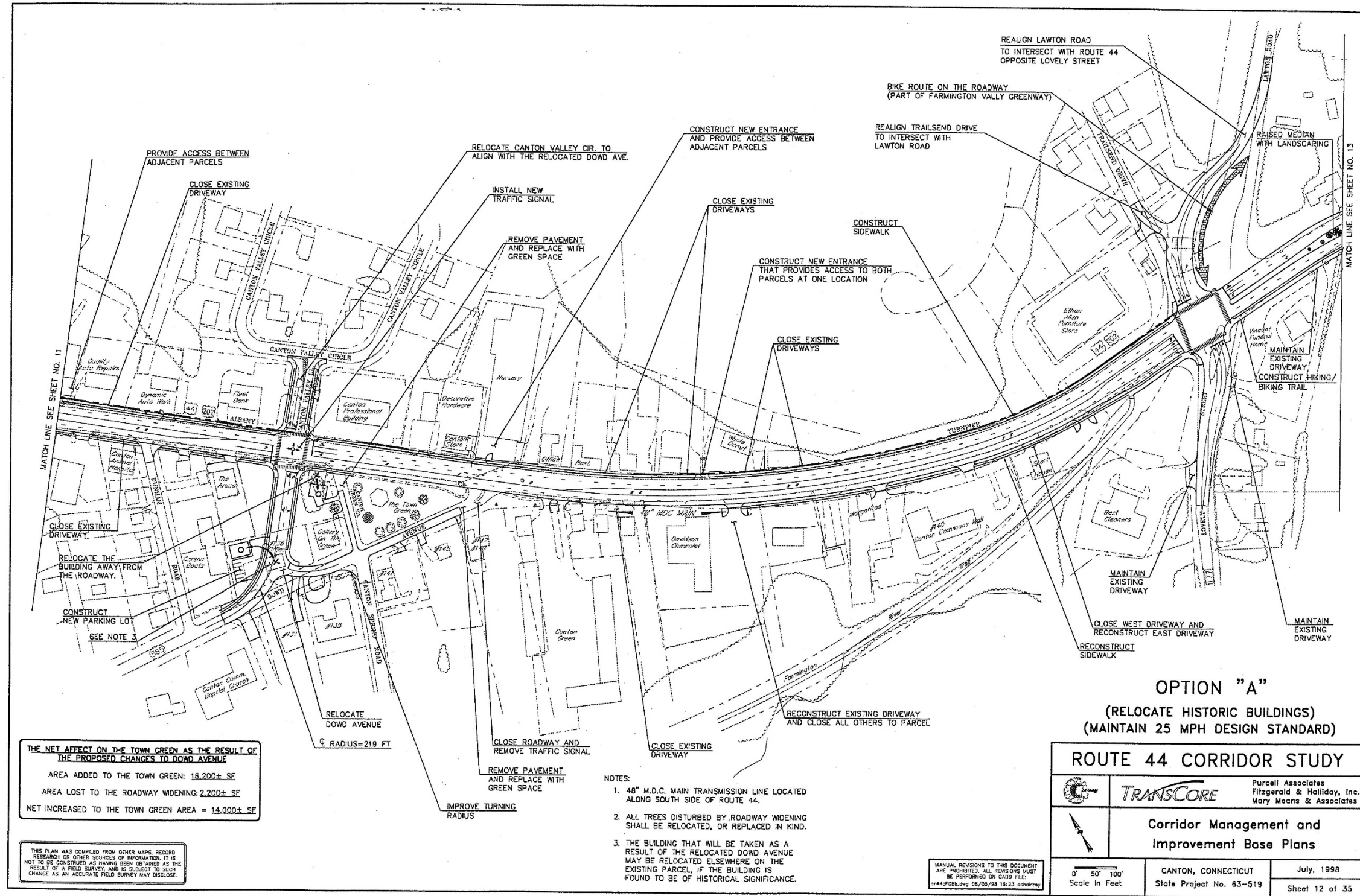
2.8 Previous and Current Plans and Studies

Previous and current plans and studies were reviewed as part of the existing conditions scan for this project.

2.8.1 Route 44 Corridor Study – Canton (September 2000)

As noted in the introduction of this document, a Route 44 Corridor Study was completed in September 2000 which reviewed conditions on Route 44 between New Hartford and Hartford and made recommendations for improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, transit improvements, and improvements for biking and walking. The recommendations were planning-level, meaning they required further investigation and design development to be implemented. For the Canton section of this corridor study, recommendations in some parts of the corridor were implemented, while others were not, due to lack of funding, priority, relative need, or other reasons. Many of the most significant recommendations, in particular the widening of Route 44 to five lanes with a center turn lane between Dyer Avenue and Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive, were never completed, likely due to lack of right-of-way and/or funding to complete a substantial widening of the road. Another recommendation that went unrealized is the relocation of the Dowd Avenue intersection with Route 44, to move the road to a four-way intersection with Canton Valley Circle. This would have significantly changed the interaction of these two roads but would have required impacting existing buildings including relocating or demolishing structures. Many more of the plan's recommendations have been implemented east of Route 44 and Route 177 (Lovely Street)/Lawton Road/Trailsend Drive, with the installation of a landscaped median, new traffic signals, and greater access controls. Redevelopment adjacent to the road has allowed much of this to be developed and necessitated these changes. See Figure 30 for an example of one of the pages of recommendations from the plan.

Figure 30 Route 44 Corridor Study – Canton (2000), Dowd Ave Relocation Option A



2.8.2 CROG Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Connect 2050)

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG) is called Connect 2050 and covers the period of 2023-2050. It is one of three major policy documents for the region, the other two being Capitol Region's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and Metro Hartford Future, the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). The Introduction to the Plan notes that "the MTP promotes sustainable development by encouraging the creation of a sustainable transportation system that integrates land use, economic development, and the preservation of the natural environment in the decision-making process to help shape a region with first-class mobility." Key goals of the MTP are Mobility and Access, Performance-Based Planning, Innovative Funding, Fiscally-Constrained Priorities, Safety, and Equity. These goals shape the Sustainable Transportation System that CROG plans to develop within the region.

Route 44 is referenced in Chapter 2: Highway System, under the "Arterial Improvements" section. It notes that there "safety problems related to left turns at driveways are the primary concern" for Route 44 in Canton and Avon. The recommendations for the Avon-Canton Commercial Area along Route 44 are to relocate Dowd Avenue as it intersects Route 44 and address left-turning crashes by reconstructing Route 44 with a landscaped median to create a boulevard-type appearance for the road.

Under Chapter 6: Freight Transportation System, Route 44 (including the portion in Canton) is listed as part of CTDOT's Critical Urban and Freight Network.

2.8.3 CROG Regional Complete Streets Plan (2021)

In 2021, CROG completed the Capitol Region Complete Streets Plan to create an action plan for creating streets in the region that accommodate all users regardless of mode, age, or ability. In addition, CROG developed a regional complete streets policy that makes complete streets a requirement of funding programs administered by CROG. The plan discusses the need to shift away from automobile dependence and develop streets as places that are safe for all people and encourage sustainable transportation modes. Canton is noted as being a Bronze-Level Bicycle Friendly Community as designated by the League of American Bicyclists. Route 44 and Route 177 in Canton are also shown as being part of CROG's Complete Streets Network.

The Action Plan includes the following:

1. Enact policies, plans, and guidelines that promote the implementation of complete streets
2. Develop a robust complete streets network linking important nodes of activity throughout the region

3. Provide materials, events, and projects that educate officials and the public about the benefits of Complete Streets, as well as encourage them to implement them
4. Monitor progress

2.8.4 CRCOG Regional Plan of Conservation and Development

The current Plan of Conservation and Development for the Capitol Region goes from 2014-2024 and is being updated as this study is underway. The Capitol Region Plan of Conservation and Development: Vibrant. Green. Connected. Competitive. encourages the creation of a more sustainable region, providing a general guide for conservation and development in the Greater Hartford area. The CRCOG POCD covers a diverse range of topics including natural resources conservation, watersheds and water quality, open space and farmland preservation, climate change, food systems, land use, housing, and economic development, as well as transportation.

Chapter 10, which covers Transportation, includes several goals and policy recommendations under the following umbrella themes:

- › Provide a Range of Viable Transportation Options within the Region
- › Improve Interregional and Interstate Transportation
- › Coordinate Land Use, Environmental and Transportation Efforts
- › Anticipate and Plan for Future Transportation Needs

2.8.5 Canton Plan of Conservation and Development (February 28, 2020)

The Canton Plan of Conservation and Development goes through the period of 2014-2024 and was revised in early 2020. The POCD include a strategic plan portion and an implementation plan. The Strategic Plan notes that the aspiration of the POCD is to enhance service to the community through the development of multi-modal facilities and connections that improve circulation, access, and safety, reduce the reliance and dependence on the auto-mobile, and promote healthy activities while effectively managing the costs to the taxpayers” (pg. 68). The strategic directions of the POCD in relation to transportation are:

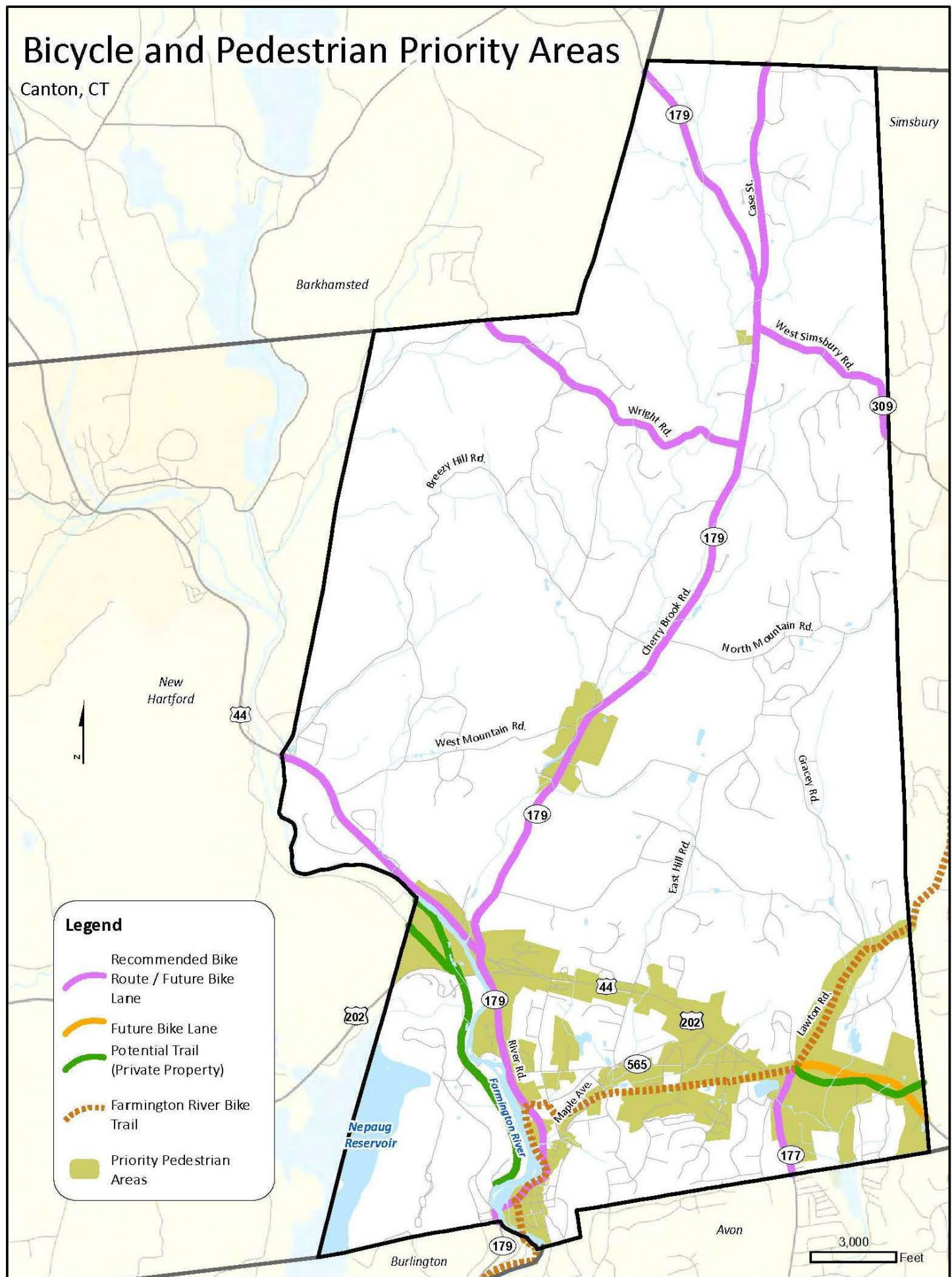
- › Maintain our transportation facilities
- › Provide for improved systems and facilities for pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit
- › Manage vehicular traffic
- › Manage transportation costs

Within the transportation section are maps of areas of Canton with transportation priorities. Route 44 and Dowd Avenue are shown as “Priority Traffic Calming Areas”. Route 44 at Dowd Avenue and Route 44 near Secret Lake Road are Intersection Improvement Areas. In addition, Lovely Street and Route 44 have notes for recommended future bike lanes or bike routes, and much of the area around Route 44 and Dowd Ave are considered Priority Pedestrian Areas.

In the Implementation Plan of the POCD, several actions related to the strategic directions area are listed. The ones that are relevant to the Route 44 corridor study include:

- › Working with CTDOT for improvements to improve access at Route 44 and Colonial Road/entrance to Canton Gateway Office Park
- › Develop an access management plan for Route 44
- › Identify and close sidewalk gaps and provide extensions in targeted locations
- › Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, improve safety for pedestrians
- › Support public transportation options, encourage/promote/incentivize shared access drives, and connected parking areas along Route 44 and other State Routes
- › Look for opportunities for traffic calming measures along Route 44 (such as medians, streetscape improvements, and moving buildings closer to the roadway)

Figure 31 Canton POCD – Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas Map

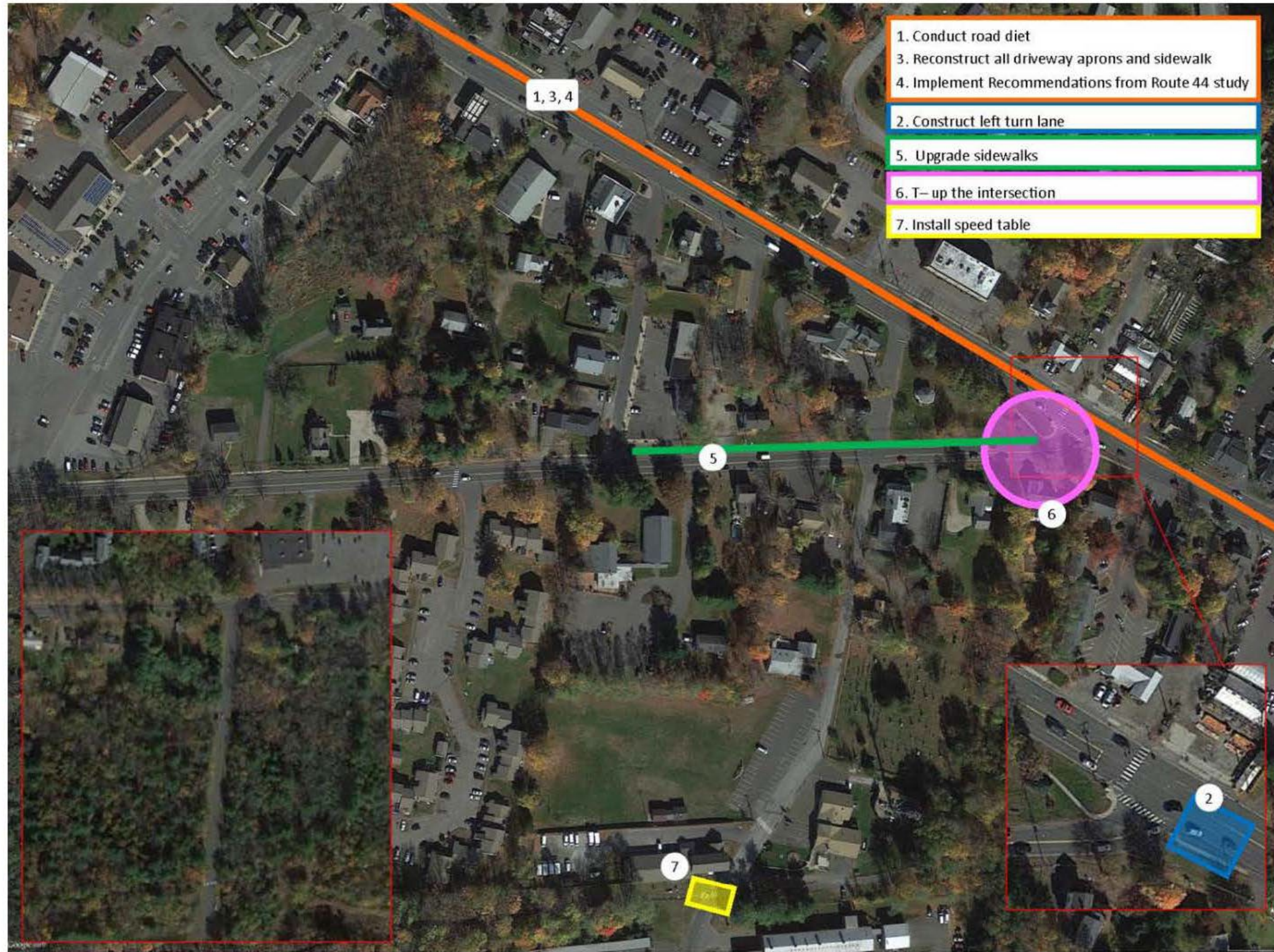


2.8.6 Canton Town Green (Route 44 and Route 565) Road Safety Audit (2016)

Canton completed its first Road Safety Audit (RSA) within the study area. The area reviewed focused on the Town Green and included Route 44 west of Dunham Road and east of Dowd Avenue, Dowd Avenue from Route 44 to just past Belden Avenue, and approximately 300' south on Canton Springs Road. This area had been identified in several previous plans as an area of concern, with a confusing signal operation at the intersection of Route 44 and Dowd Ave, discontinuous and broken sidewalk, and heavy traffic. Also of note was the lack of bicycle/pedestrian connectivity to the Farmington River Trail via Canton Springs Road.

Several recommendations were made in the RSA that would affect Route 44 and Dowd Avenue, including reducing travel lanes, lowering speed limits, examining the potential of creating a left turn lane from Route 44 onto Dowd Ave, and various pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Many of the recommendations in the RSA may be reviewed by the Route 44 Corridor Study, such as conducting a road diet on Route 44, constructing a left turn lane at Dowd Ave, and reconfiguring the intersection of Route 44 and Dowd Ave.

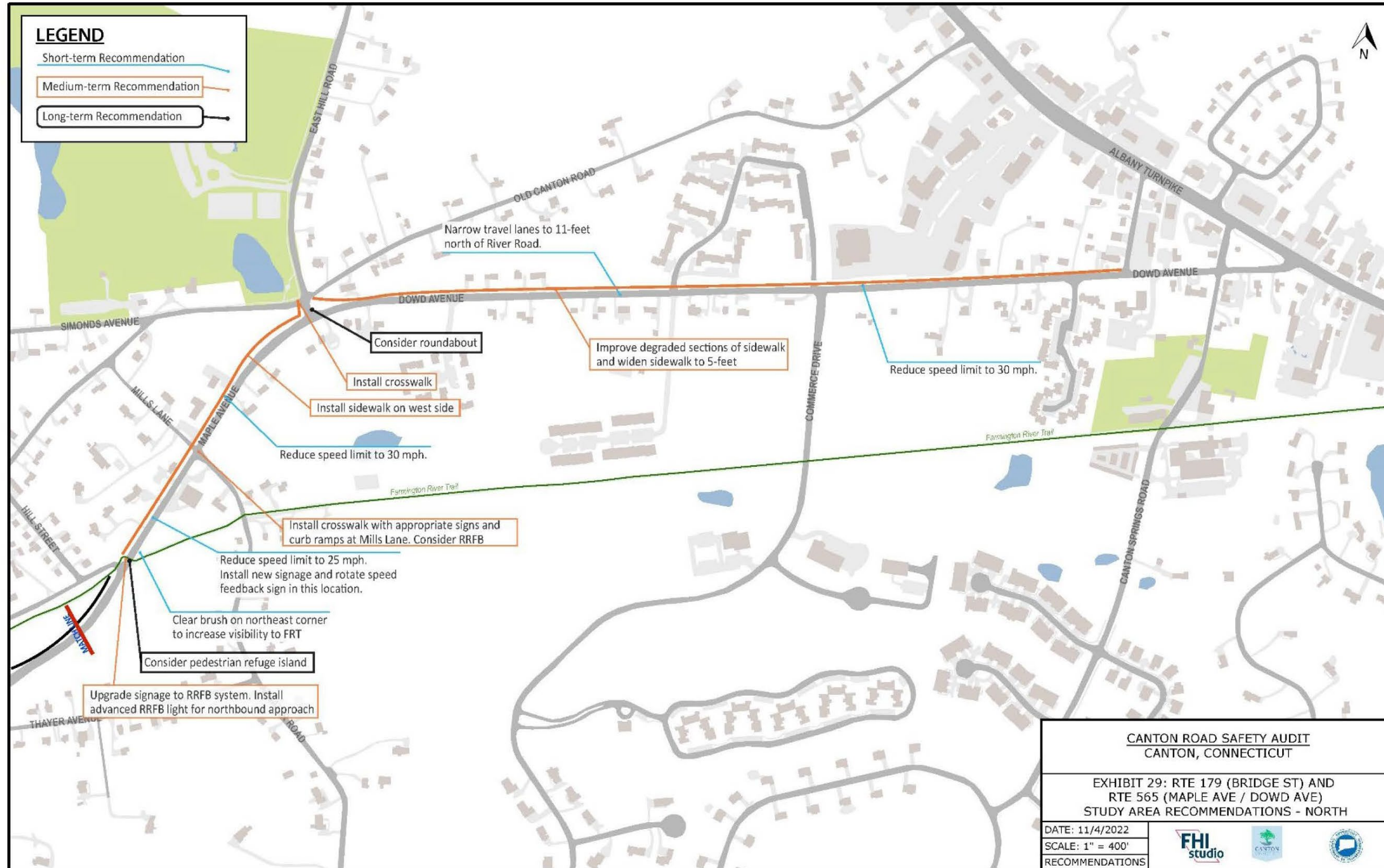
Figure 32 Canton 2016 Road Safety Audit Long-Term Recommendations



2.8.7 Canton Road Safety Audit: Dowd and Maple Avenue (Route 565 and Bridge Street (Route 179) (2023)

A second RSA in Canton was completed in early 2023 that includes part of the Route 44 Corridor Study area, Dowd Avenue from Canton Hollow to Route 44. The RSA noted that Dowd Ave/Maple Ave function as a main connector route between Route 44 and Collinsville, with access to local residential neighborhoods, civic uses such as Town Hall and local schools, and there is pedestrian and bicycle movement especially around the core of Collinsville and the Farmington River Trail, which passes through the area. Only a few recommendations impact the Route 44 Corridor Study area. They include reducing the Dowd Avenue speed limit, narrowing travel lanes on Dowd Avenue, and improving sections of sidewalks along the road.

Figure 33 Canton 2023 Road Safety Audit Recommendations - North



2.8.8 Avon Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

The Town of Avon is currently developing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. According to the Plan website, the Plan will review connecting the town's residential and commercial areas, existing paths and trails, public transit, schools, and other destinations, and look at how best to provide for improved bicycle and pedestrian connections to and between these areas. The purpose of reviewing information about this draft Plan for the Route 44 Corridor Study in Canton is to see where recommendations for improvements in Avon may provide active transportation connectivity to the Route 44 study area.

The draft Plan recommendations include a map of the bicycle connectivity network which shows Route 177/Lovely Street and Route 44/W. Main Street as part of the "Proposed Primary Connectivity Network". Route 177/Lovely Street goes north from Avon into Canton and passes through the study area. Short term recommendations for Route 177/Lovely Street suggest maximizing the paved shoulder area and providing bike lanes as feasible, as well as traffic calming; long term recommendations suggest buffered bike lanes or a side path on the street. Route 44 is also considered part of the "Proposed Primary Connectivity Network" and recommendations in Avon include creating a side path to connect to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. The draft recommendations also propose new sidewalks on Route 44 and other pedestrian improvements towards the Simsbury Town line. Although these recommendations for Route 44 do not directly connect to Canton, as Route 44 passes through a small portion of far southwest Simsbury, they are critical to long-term goals of making continuous bicycle and pedestrian connections along Route 44 through Canton, Simsbury, and Avon.

Figure 34 Avon Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan – Bicycle Connectivity Network

Bicycle Connectivity Network

