

TRANSPORTATION

(Adopted 2000)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports improved traffic flow and safety, and reduced congestion on local and state roads, but opposes widening the Post Road and adding lanes to major state highways. We support traffic planning and engineering solutions for local roads and enhancement of mass transit both locally and regionally.

The League recommends measures to alleviate parking pressure downtown such as the use of satellite parking lots and shuttles from the perimeter of town as well as from neighboring towns.

Explanation:

1. Traffic Congestion on Local Roads

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports improved traffic flow and reduced congestion within Westport, making vehicular travel safer and more efficient without increasing speed of travel.

- a. LWV Westport opposes the overall widening of the Post Road, except at certain intersections to improve channelization. Any improvement to the Post Road should have minimal impact on greenery and should be in keeping with the character of the town, e.g. retaining stone walls.
- b. To improve traffic flow in town, LWV Westport supports:
 - i. Lights for left-hand turns and lanes, where possible;
 - ii. Review of timing of lights to improve traffic flow from side streets at major intersections, e.g. Maple Avenue, Bulkley Avenue, Hillspoint Road;
 - iii. Directional signs which are consistent, clear, standardized and easy to read;
 - iv. Enforcement of zoning laws requiring buildings to have visible street numbers;
 - v. Review and enforcement of speed limits to make them reasonable and consistent;
 - vi. Enforcement of zoning regulations pertaining to clear sight lines within 15 feet of intersections.
- c. LWV Westport supports an overall traffic plan for Westport and independent professional assistance for traffic planning on an ongoing basis. Such ongoing assistance would ensure continuity in the planning process and should utilize past studies. This planning should provide impartial assessment of the probable traffic results when new projects are being considered.
- d. To improve traffic flow and safety, engineering solutions should include:
 - i. Delineating roads with lines on the right side for safety as well as for bicycles and pedestrians.
 - ii. Micro-surfacing of roads at dangerous intersection.
 - iii. Standardizing speed humps to national standards. Additional speed humps should be used as a last resort.
 - iv. Creating and maintaining sidewalks. All commercial proprietors should be required to provide sidewalks within a reasonable time period and maintain them.
- e. Enhanced use of public transportation in Westport is an important part of the overall solution to reduce traffic on our local roads.

- i. The Westport Transit System should be marketed strongly and information disseminated widely. Signs should be posted at bus stops with route and schedule information.
 - ii. Student transportation services should be expanded.
 - iii. The Westport Transit District should provide frequent service for commuters, coordinated with train service, including services from satellite parking lots.
 - f. Car pooling, van pooling, ride sharing and use of satellite parking should be encouraged.
- 2. Traffic Congestion Due to State Roads**
- a. LWV Westport opposes adding more traffic lanes to major state highways.
 - b. LWV Westport supports improving traffic flow on I-95 and on the Merritt Parkway by upgrading entrance and exit lanes and completing the interchange at Route 7 and 15.
 - c. To reduce highway traffic congestion and its overflow into our town, the LWV of Westport supports the following:
 - i. Increasing train ridership to reduce traffic on highways by
 - 1) Expanding the train schedule, both interstate and intrastate;
 - 2) Providing more cars per train;
 - 3) Lengthening platforms to accommodate longer trains;
 - 4) Developing more railroad stations in the region;
 - 5) Expanding regional railroad parking lots in other towns;
 - 6) Providing intermodal service;
 - 7) Coordinating train schedules with bus schedules and with other trains, e.g. interstate trains;
 - 8) Increasing the use of trains and ferries for transport and freight;
 - 9) Studying alternative transportation such as monorail and light rail.
 - ii. The League would like to see a percentage of the State Department of Transportation budget earmarked for mass transit.
- 3. Parking**
- Westport residents and visitors experience shortages in railroad parking. Its two railroad stations are shared with 30 neighboring towns, and the waiting list for railroad parking is in excess of two years. Convenience and ease of downtown parking has long been a matter of concern to Westport residents and downtown merchants.
- i. For downtown parking, the League supports:
 - 1) Parking for employees on the perimeter of the downtown area;
 - 2) Increasing the number of downtown short-term parking spaces, and enforcing parking regulations;
 - 3) Improving pedestrian and vehicular access among lots;
 - 4) Double decking, when necessary, behind the Police Station.
 - ii. To address shortages in commuter railroad parking, the LWV supports:
 - 1) Satellite parking in Westport, with connecting public transportation available on a timely basis;
 - 2) Encouraging other towns to provide satellite parking lots for resident commuters to be serviced by shuttle buses to the railroad stations;
 - 3) Using existing parking at the railroad station more efficiently, e.g. the Railroad Permit Office should reexamine the use of permit spaces by non permit holders after 10:00 a.m.