

Part C:

Travel Patterns, Problems and Opportunities

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
Moving forward together



PART C: Travel Patterns, Problems and Opportunities

C1 Transportation Characteristics

- C1.1 The east-west transportation links serving Southend and the influence of London are reflected in the town's transportation movement pattern. The main transportation characteristics of the town are illustrated in **Table 1**.
- C1.2 Southend suffers from the worst traffic congestion in Essex, with major journey to work movements channelled along the east-west transportation corridor. Congestion has worsened over the last decade as the proportion of people travelling to work by car has increased. Southend's daily mode of travel to work and other transport characteristics are illustrated in **Diagram 6**.
- C1.3 The *1999/2000 Transport Data Report* reveals that on a weekday average traffic flows in and out of the Borough are approaching 185,000 vehicles, with;
- 66,000 using the A127,
 - 30,000 the A1159, and
 - 32,000 the A13.

This level of traffic flow is comparable to the **highest flows** recorded on the Trunk Road network in other parts of Essex, the significant difference being that in the Southend context **all** the traffic recorded has its destination or origin in the town.

Long Term Trends

- C1.4 The 1999 Transport Data Report also reveals a number of characteristics and long term trends, namely;
- *limited capacity on the A13 is one of the reasons why flows on this route have not increased since 1993, flows having actually decreased by 3% over this period. The road has got busier early in the morning but quieter during the day and evening;*
 - *traffic growth on the A127 has increased over the last six years above the national rate of traffic growth and is now 15% higher than 1993 levels. Traffic has increased fairly uniformly from early morning until midnight;*
 - *the A1159 linking the A127 to east Southend and Shoeburyness has also experienced a steady rise in total traffic over recent years increasing by 8% since 1993. Whilst peak flows have not increased, off peak traffic has increased on this route;*
 - *the Southend northern relief road (B1013), linking the A127 with neighbouring Rochford District, has witnessed a 36% rise in traffic flows since it opened in 1996 to a total of 15,000 vehicles. The roads in the Rochford area which it has relieved have also experienced an increase in traffic since the opening of the new road.*
- C1.5 These characteristics are shown in Figures 3.1 to 3.4 of the accompanying 1999/2000 Travel Data Report.
- C1.6 With national and local forecasts of traffic growth indicating a continuing upward trend, this data clearly reveals that **without intervention traffic congestion will increase in Southend to the detriment of the local economy and quality of life.**

Commuting

- 19,000 people commute daily to work in Southend, nearly all from South East Essex;
- 26,000 Southend residents out-commute, 11,000 of them to London;

Railways

- two railway lines serve Southend on Sea; the London Liverpool Street to Southend Victoria line run by Great Eastern Railways (First Group), and the London Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness operated by c2c Rail (Prism Group). c2c Rail have a franchise to run the line until 2011 whilst Great Eastern's franchise runs to 2004;
- both railway lines are heavily used by commuters at peak hours with some 9,500 residents travelling out of the Borough to work by train. However, the capacity of the rolling stock for the reverse journey is greatly underutilised;
- an integrated passenger transport facility is provided at Leigh Railway Station on the western side of the Borough;
- the Borough has nine railway stations and the majority of Southend's population live within one mile of a railway station;

Buses

- the Borough is served by two principal bus companies; First Thamesway and Arriva Southend;

Passenger Transport

- 40% of local residents never use public transport to either travel around or to and from Southend;

Roads

- two principal road links serve the town, the dual carriageway A127 and predominantly single carriageway A13;
- the car accounts for over 80% of traffic movements on these main routes;
- traffic flows on the A127 in Southend equate to the highest recorded of anywhere in Essex;

Lorries

- light commercial vehicles (less than 1.5 tonnes) represent some 12% of traffic on the principal routes, medium goods vehicles (1.5 to 7.5 tonnes) 3% and heavy goods vehicles (over 7.5 tonnes) 3%;
- the principal lorry route in the town is the A127 (A1159) with all types of lorry movement representing some 19% of the traffic;

Airport

- London Southend Regional Airport is run by Regional Airports limited on a long lease from the Borough Council and is currently the subject of approval to increase its throughput from 7,000 passengers per annum to 300,000 per annum;

Tourism

- Southend is the second most popular day visitor destination in the country with over 3 million day visitors, the majority of whom travel by car;

Car Ownership

- a third of households in the Borough do not have access to a car, well above the regional and national average;

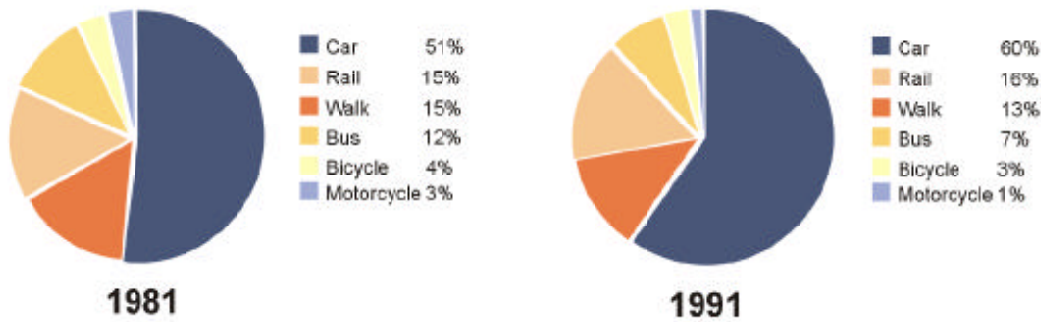
Walking and Cycling

- approximately 18% of residents walk to work and 4% cycle ;
- the town has an extensive pedestrianised central core which is covered by CCTV surveillance;
- the Borough has approximately 5 miles of dedicated cycle routes the use of which has steadily increased since their introduction;

Water

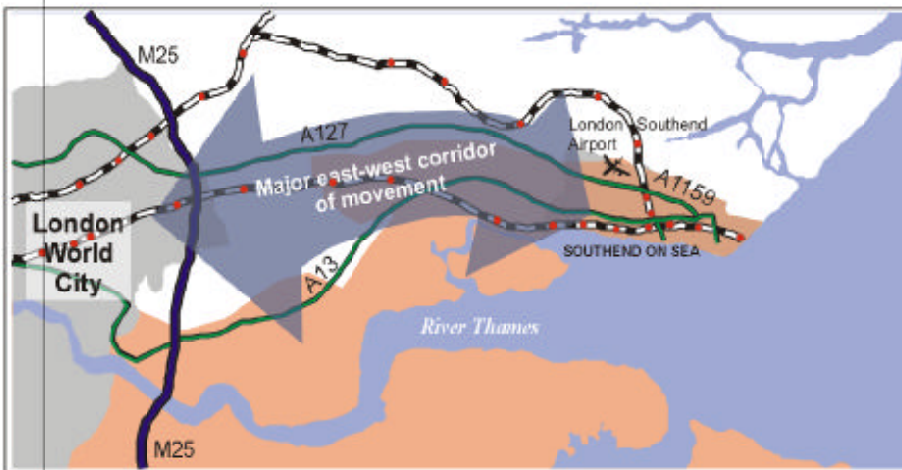
- the Borough has seven miles of foreshore to the River Thames but currently no permanent water based transportation links.

Southend Travel to Work 1981 and 1991 - Total Flow



Source: Office of National Statistics

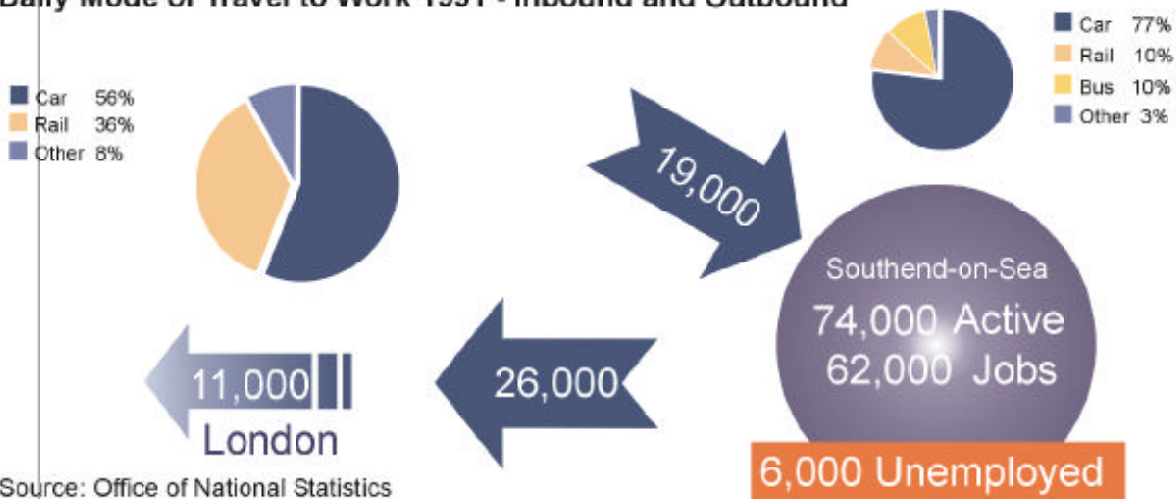
Southend's Main Transport Links



- Road**
 - 185,000 daily traffic movements in and out of Southend
 - Main routes (A127/A13) heavily congested at peak times
- Rail**
 - Two railway lines to London
 - Nine railway stations
 - Heavily used by commuters at peak times
 - Opportunities for increased usage, particularly off-peak
- Air**
 - London Southend Regional Airport - 7,000 passenger movements per annum.
 - Potential to expand, particularly for business travel
- Water**
 - River Thames underutilised
 - Opportunities for river based travel
- Visitors**
 - 3 million day visitors a year - majority travel by car
 - 2nd most popular day visitor destination in UK
 - Potential to increase tourism economy

- Thames Gateway**
 - Opportunities for economic regeneration and transportation improvements - national and regional priority
 - Multi-modal study of movement between London and Southend

Daily Mode of Travel to Work 1991 - Inbound and Outbound



Source: Office of National Statistics

- C1.7 The town also experiences **a significant number of traffic movements related to short, local journeys**. In 1988 the South East Essex Transport Study showed that in Southend 22.5% of all trips were less than one mile and 51.2% of all trips were less than two miles. Based on an estimate of five vehicle movements per household per day this would mean that there are over 337,000 locally generated vehicle movements per day in the Southend Borough. With increasing growth in the number of vehicles on the road and available leisure time, the number of short trips has almost certainly increased over the last decade.

C2 Problems

- C2.1 The Partnership has identified a whole series of transportation *problems* that it faces in trying to meet the objectives. These transportation problems are set out below. Further details of the Partnership findings are provided in the accompanying *Partnership and Public Involvement* document.

Economy

- C2.2 In relation to the local economy, of particular concern to the Partnership is the imbalance between supply and demand. The sheer volume of traffic and the inability of the two principal road links to Southend (A127 and A13) to cope with it causes severe congestion. The time taken to actually get in and out of the Borough detrimentally affects the efficient movement of freight and business traffic, and is regarded as a major problem. This coupled with Southend's geographical location is leading to isolation and affecting the viability of local businesses and tourism industry. Partners noted that these factors were affecting business decisions to the extent that it is understood some businesses had already moved out of the Borough to the detriment of an already depressed local economy.
- C2.3 These findings of the Partnership are borne out by recent local economic studies which have ***all identified accessibility and transportation problems as a major barrier to new investment in the Borough. Improved accessibility will therefore be vital to the regeneration of Southend.***
- C2.4 Of further concern is the plight of businesses located in the eastern part of the Borough. Isolation and poor internal accessibility have had a significant impact on their viability with businesses closing or moving out of the area to more accessible locations. This has had a dramatic effect on the local economy, with pockets of unemployment in Shoeburyness area in excess of 20%.
- C2.5 These problems were recognised by the Government in 1996 in granting SRB funding to assist in the regeneration of Shoeburyness as part of Round 3 of the scheme. Further funding was secured in 1998 under Round 4. However, whilst this funding has been of considerable benefit in pursuing community based initiatives and self-help schemes, it has not been able to address the fundamental problem of poor accessibility. With two of Southend's major development opportunities located at Shoeburyness (see paragraph C3.27) poor accessibility will be a major obstacle to their successful redevelopment and contribution to the regeneration of the area.
- C2.6 The Partnership noted that the key routes of the town were continuously congested during the peak hour and unable to perform their role. The many traffic obstacles on the A13 – traffic signals, build outs, and poor traffic enforcement - were cited as major factors in creating congestion on this route. The bottleneck at Priory Crescent (A1159) and Cuckoo Corner, linking the A127 with the town centre and east Southend and Shoeburyness, was identified as a major problem in terms of improving accessibility to the eastern areas of the Borough. This 800 metre length of highway is the only section of single carriageway linking east Southend to the national network via the A127 and causes major traffic congestion at peak times. It affects the viability of local businesses located in the eastern sector of the town in terms of poor accessibility to their premises and acts as a significant deterrent to potential inward investors to such areas. The need for road improvements in this locality is identified in the *adopted Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan* (Adopted March 1994 - Policy T6) subject to environmental safeguards to protect adjoining parkland (Priory Park).
- C2.7 In addition, commercial traffic serving industrial and business areas in Shoeburyness has to utilise single carriageway highway not designed for such purposes for the final part of its journey. This passes through sensitive residential areas to the detriment of the environment, residential amenities

and road safety. This route is the only one currently available that could be utilised to access very significant development opportunity sites in Shoeburyness formerly occupied for military purposes.

- C2.8 **Good accessibility is also a vital component of the local tourism and retail economy.** With Southend the second most popular destination for day visitors in the country and a sub-regional shopping centre, increasing traffic congestion and related problems of delays, noise and pollution will only serve to deter visitors and shoppers from returning. With a number of development opportunities within the central areas of the town, it will be important to resolve these problems if the full potential of such opportunities are to be realised and the viability and vitality of the town centre, the Borough's many local centres and local tourism economy is to be safeguarded and enhanced.
- C2.9 In seeking to improve accessibility and encourage visitors, the Partnership also recognised that it will be important to have quality signage around the town. This signage needs to relate to vehicular, cycle and pedestrian traffic and be of a standard that ensures facilities such as business parks, retail areas, tourist facilities, car parks, cycle stands, toilets, information centres etc are easily located. On the main access routes such signage should ideally be of an electronic standard that informs traffic in advance of current circumstances, such as full car parks, in order that traffic can be redirected thereby preventing unnecessary congestion and frustration on behalf of the driver.

Environment

- C2.10 The Partnership has identified the inadequacies of the main roads to cope with the increasing volume of traffic as the main reason for motorists seeking alternative routes through predominantly residential areas. They noted in particular that the number of traffic obstacles on the A13 was a contributory factor in persuading motorists to seek alternative routes. This has had **a detrimental impact on the local environment and affected the quality of life of residents, creating noise, pollution and road safety problems** as the volume of traffic and its speed increases. This has been particularly prominent in the western part of the Borough with traffic seeking alternative routes to the town centre.
- C2.11 Increasing traffic congestion will only serve to exacerbate the problems and affect the health and well being of the community. Commuter parking is accentuating these problems.
- C2.12 The Partnership noted that the general poor quality of the journey associated with public transport – comfort, cleanliness etc. - is a deterrent to its use. Of particular concern is the **poor quality of the Central Bus Station** together with facilities and information at bus stops. The Central Bus Station has changed little in 25 years principally due to site constraints. The facilities for passengers and the building fabric are extremely poor and unrelated to other passenger transport facilities. **The bus station facilities create a poor image to the user and totally undermine the objectives of the Borough Council and bus operators to encourage increased bus use.** The limited site area and congested nature of the site also gives rise to excessive concentrations of vehicle emissions and **poor air quality** within the vicinity. They also undermine the objectives of the Borough Council's *Town Centre Environmental Enhancement Scheme* which seeks to upgrade the environment of the town centre and its attractiveness in partnership with town centre operators.
- C2.13 Similarly the **Seaway Car Park** which lies between the town centre and central seafront areas and functions as the main coach park for visitors to the town, **is of poor quality and presents a poor image to visitors to the detriment of the local tourism industry.** Facilities for passengers are very poor and unrelated to other passenger transport services and it suffers from a concentration of criminal activity militating against its full use. Visitors are faced with a stark uninviting expanse of tarmac, with no information or directional signs of the facilities available in the area.
- C2.14 Poor integration of public transport services has in some cases resulted in an unnecessary proliferation of signage and uncoordinated street furniture to the detriment of the local environment and visual amenities.

Safety

- C2.15 Partners identified speeding traffic and unnecessary traffic movements through residential areas as a **major concern for road safety**, especially for the elderly and children.
- C2.16 They highlighted the safety and security concerns people have of using public transport and in walking between different termini, particularly outside the core hours. Reductions in the number of visible public transport staff were highlighted as a security concern, such as the demise of the bus conductor. This has only served to **deter people from using public transport**.
- C2.17 Safety and security issues were also identified as a major reason why **children are taken to school by private car**. It is estimated that in the region of 15% of peak hour traffic is a direct result of such journeys.
- C2.18 Road safety issues and increasing pollution were cited as one of the main factors why people were **deterred from cycling and walking** as an alternative means of travel. The Partnership recognises that cycling will not become a viable alternative means of travel around the town until the cycleway network is extensively progressed to form a series of safe, integrated and linked routes. In addition, the problems associated with using shared carriageway space and pedestrian areas for cycleways were identified in terms of both safety for cyclists and pedestrians, particularly the mobility impaired. Segregated cycleways were therefore considered to be the most appropriate form of provision which should be aspired to in considering the development of further sections of the cycleway network.
- C2.19 The Partnership also recognised that the quality of footways was an important issue in terms of safety for pedestrians, particularly the disabled and other vulnerable users, that was often overlooked. Quality well lit pedestrian footways are an important ingredient in encouraging walking, increasing footfall in retail areas to the benefit of the local economy, integrating public transport facilities, and improving the local environment.

Integration

- C2.20 The Partnership has noted that **the poor quality of public transport provision, whether real or perceived, is a major barrier to achieving a significant increase in the use of sustainable modes of transport in Southend and helping to alleviate the congestion on the main highway routes**. Past bad experiences of passenger travel have been difficult to remove from peoples minds as witnessed by the longstanding 'misery line' tag associated with the London Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness railway line. Identified problems include poor integration of services and ticketing, poor information and marketing of the product, and unreliable and expensive services.
- C2.21 The integration of transport services in terms of **promoting seamless travel** has also been identified. It is noted that bus stops, taxi ranks and related services are often of poor quality, unco-ordinated, and unrelated to each other.
- C2.22 In relation to buses and taxis, their unreliability is considered to be a major deterrent to their use. The main bus route into and out of Southend is along the A13 which extends across the Borough from Leigh in the west to Shoeburyness in the east. It serves extensive local shopping and residential areas. This route, particularly on the section from Leigh to the town centre, is heavily congested with significant flows of traffic throughout the day in both directions. From the western boundary of the urban area to the town centre bus station it is predominantly of single carriageway standard and is flanked for much of its length by commercial and retail premises and has numerous junctions and traffic signal controls. There are extensive vehicle/pedestrian movement conflicts which result in significant **delays in the journey times of buses, coaches and taxis along this route making these modes unattractive as an alternative means of travel**.
- C2.23 This identified problem has been made worse by the fact that since deregulation and a period of frantic competition, there are fewer local operators and a contracting network range and frequency

of service. Deregulation has also hampered effective integration between the bus companies services.

- C2.24 The need to ensure that key development sites are planned and integrated with public transportation provision was also emphasised by the Partnership as essential if additional car journeys were not to be created by allowing large scale service developments that were principally only accessible by the car.

Accessibility to Everyday Facilities

- C2.25 The Partnership recognised the importance of ***ensuring that any transportation plan embraces social inclusion and all modes*** so that all members of the community have the opportunity to access job, cultural, entertainment, health and leisure facilities in a safe and secure environment.
- C2.26 It was noted that people with disabilities are totally dependent on specific forms of transport, be it the car, taxi, voluntary and community transport, or rail and bus. It is essential that the valuable role that all these forms of transport play in serving the disabled are recognised and catered for in addition to the provision already being made to assist movement through use of physical improvements at junctions and other key highway locations.
- C2.27 The needs of those members of the community who do not have access to a car were emphasised by the Partnership, particularly the low paid, the young and single parents. Issues such as the cost of public transport, especially the relative high cost of travel for trips within the Borough compared to longer trips, and the availability, quality and frequency of passenger transport services were cited. The particular role of voluntary and community transport operators, and the effective integration and co-ordination of their services, was recognised as a vital one in addressing some of these issues.
- C2.28 The increased isolation felt by members of the community without access to a car living in the eastern periphery of the Borough at Shoeburyness, particularly the unemployed, were highlighted by the Partnership. These problems are to some extent being addressed through initiatives pursued as part of the Single Regeneration Budget programme, including the provision of a 'one stop' job/training centre which has brought such opportunities, currently available in the town centre, to the people of Shoeburyness thereby negating the need for local residents to travel.
- C2.29 In addition, the Partnership noted that accessibility to existing transport facilities was often denied to some members of the community because of safety issues and the fear of crime. It was therefore acknowledged that improvements in passenger transport facilities must be combined with improvements in safety and security if real progress is to be made in achieving better mobility for all members of society.

Awareness

- C2.30 The Partnership was of the unanimous view that ***many of the transportation problems in the town are due to the lack of awareness of people*** of the choice of means of travel available and services offered, and of the consequences of continuing car use and growth. The Partnership felt so strongly about this issue that it determined that it should adopt it as a specific objective in addition to those objectives identified by the Government to ensure that it was taken into full account in the development of the Integrated Transportation Plan for Southend.
- C2.31 The lack of knowledge and awareness of where to obtain public transport information, particularly in relation to journey times, route availability and connectivity between bus routes and rail journeys, were noted. It was also noted that the information that was available was often poorly marketed and/or poorly presented with complicated maps, small print etc.
- C2.32 It was also acknowledged by the Partnership that other transport options were often not considered by residents because they are unaware of the facilities available. Cycling was a case in point. Although a number of residents are deterred from cycling because of safety issues, no effort has been made to publicise the facilities that are currently available and proposed. Because of this the

current cycle network, its connectivity with other transport nodes, location of cycling facilities such as cycle stands and their level of security and weatherproofing, were unknown by a large number of residents.

- C2.33 With traffic growth set to increase by some 22% in the Borough in the next 15 years if no action is taken (see paragraph B1.6), the Partnership felt it to be crucial that people's awareness is raised to highlight the consequences of this growth and to try to encourage them to think about alternative forms of travel to the car for certain trips. The use of the car for the school run and car based commuter journeys with a single occupant were cited as the most prominent examples of this. Such journeys are not only creating excessive congestion, to the detriment of business and commercial traffic, the 'school run' was providing children with the wrong messages and helping to perpetuate the problem into the future. It was also promoting unhealthy lifestyles for the children.
- C2.34 It was noted that the majority of businesses were reliant on the car with no incentives for staff to use alternative forms of transport or to car share, adding to the road congestion problems.

Data and Relationship with Development Plans

- C2.35 In identifying the transportation problems of the town, the Partnership has also noted the importance of up to date transport data in informing effective decision making and in the monitoring of projects to assess their success.
- C2.36 The last comprehensive traffic study undertaken in the area prior to the Borough Council obtaining Unitary Status, was the South East Essex Traffic Study co-ordinated by Essex County Council in the late 1980's. Essex County Council as the former highway authority for the area also maintained a large annual traffic monitoring programme, however, only one of its regularly monitored sites fell within the Borough.
- C2.37 Clearly this data was both outdated and inadequate to meet the needs of the new Highway Authority and provide for the effective development and monitoring of a transportation plan for the town. The Borough Council therefore commissioned its transport consultants W S Atkins to prepare a Transport Data Report to support the Road Traffic Reduction Report. This has been supplemented by data supplied by transport operators and users within the Partnership. Significant progress has therefore been made over the last two years in establishing an effective travel database. This has greatly assisted partners in making informed decisions. Further details of this monitoring are set out in Part F.
- C2.38 However, the transportation provisions contained in the current statutory development plans for the area, namely the Essex Structure Plan and Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan, both reflect the outdated provisions of the South East Essex Traffic Study and do not take into account recent Government guidance on transportation matters. The Regional Planning Guidance for South East England (RPG 9) and the Replacement Essex and Southend on Sea Joint Structure Plan will resolve this problem at the strategic level by providing for an up to date regional policy context (see B1.10 and B1.23). However, a number of transport related elements of the Borough Local Plan remain in urgent need of review.
- C2.39 The Borough Council is acutely aware of these problems and is making positive steps to address them. Work on preparing a *Replacement Borough Local Plan* commenced in 2000, following completion of the public examination of the two strategic plans in May and July the previous year. A programme for the development of the Replacement Borough Local Plan has been agreed by the Borough Council with an Issues Report scheduled to be published in Summer 2000, a First Deposit programmed for January 2001 and adoption of the Plan for July 2002. This will be essential to reflect the work of the Partnership and ensure that transportation and land use planning policies are complementary and truly integrated. To ensure this, the Partnership have been, and will continue to be, consulted on the provisions of the Replacement Borough Local Plan. (see paragraph B2.16).

Bridge Strengthening

- C2.40 The Borough Council as highway authority has 76 road bridges falling into the assessment category, plus 39 footbridges and 14 other highway structures. The Borough Council is continuing to process bridge assessments within the Borough, to accord with national and international Codes of Practice and Standards. All preparatory work requiring Railtrack possession has been carried out and assessment work on all bridges is targeted to be completed in 2000/01. The locations of bridges and their assessment and strengthening status are shown in the accompanying Technical Paper.
- C2.41 Of prime importance is the need to complete the assessment programme of Railtrack bridges on the strategic routes in the Borough. As a result of the Borough's strengthening work to date and of higher level assessments, 40 ton capability is now available on the A127/A1159 route as far as "Danger Bridge" in Shoebury, which is a Railtrack structure. First stage assessments of this and two other Railtrack bridges have been submitted for acceptance by Railtrack. The possibility of failure of these and other Railtrack bridges would create a potential problem in progressing strengthening schemes by the company at a time when many other such works will be required throughout the country. This creates a potential problem to the integrity of the Local Transport Plan.
- C2.42 The implications of the significant level of bridges failing the assessments present problems which the Borough Council will need to effectively resolve as part of the Full Local Transport Plan strategy whilst demonstrating effective use of funding.

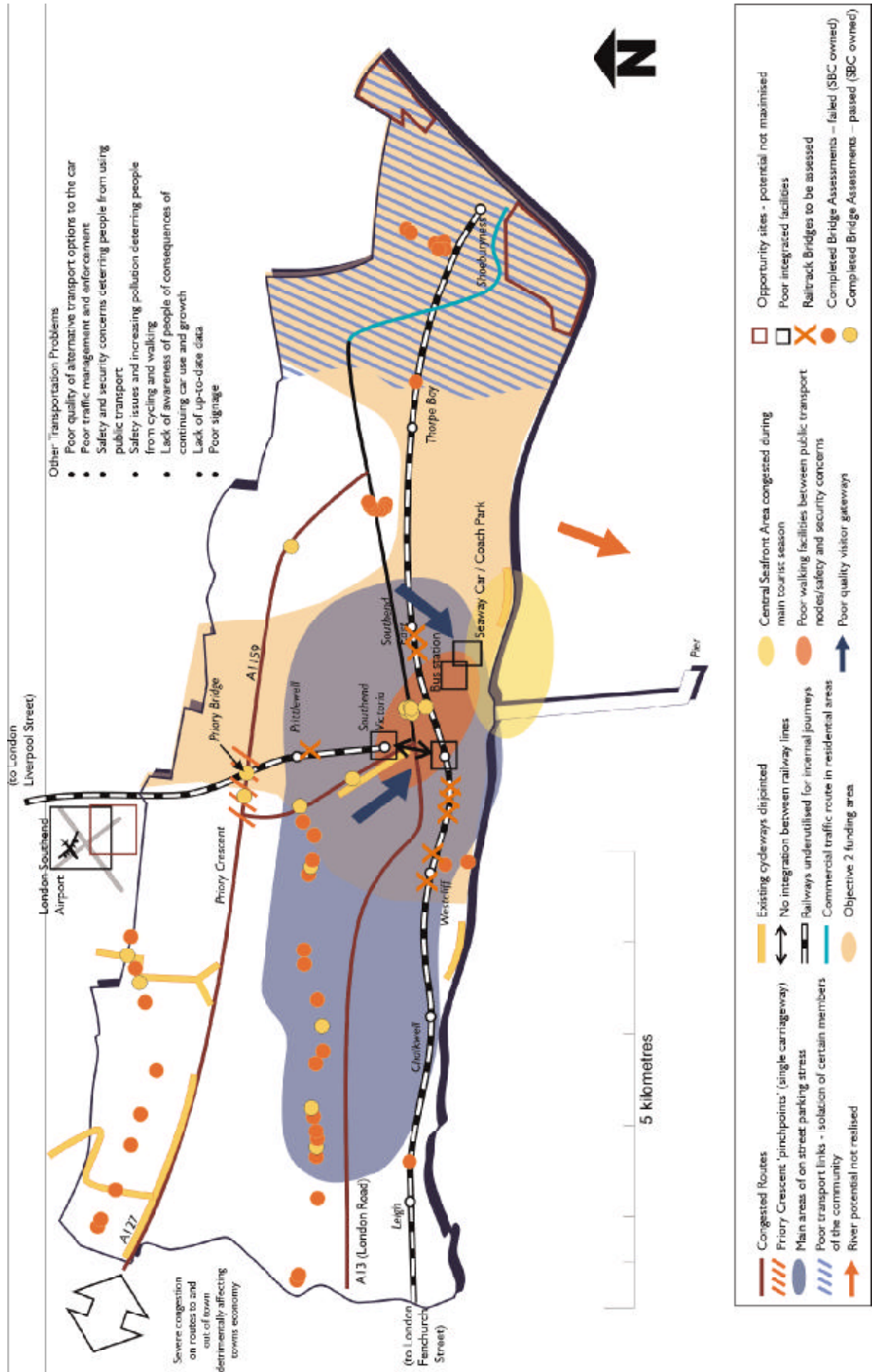
Summary of Transportation Problems

- C2.43 The main transportation problem in Southend identified by the Partnership is one of **congestion** which in turn creates a whole series of additional related problems as detailed above. This affects all members of the resident and business community and the viability of transport operators businesses.
- C2.44 This traffic congestion is considered to be the result of the following key factors:
- *imbalance between supply and demand;*
 - *a principal network with inadequate parts;*
 - *poor quality of transport options;*
 - *poor traffic management and enforcement; and*
 - *lack of awareness.*
- C2.45 If the Partnership is to meet the agreed objectives and the successful regeneration of Southend, it will be essential that action is taken to resolve these problems and that it also remedies problems associated with the high number of **bridge assessment failures**.
- C2.46 These transportation problems are illustrated in **Map 4**.

C3 Opportunities

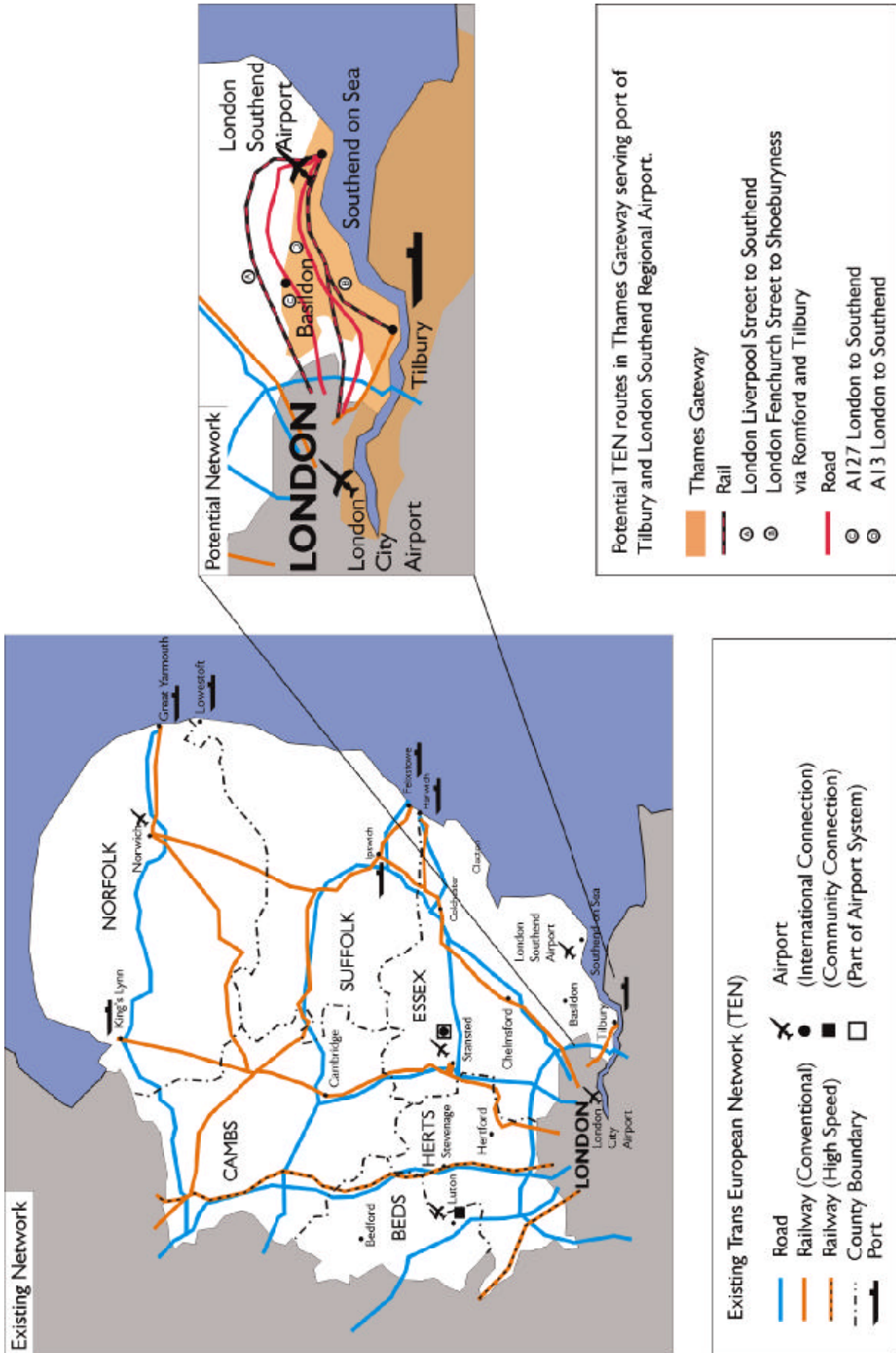
- C3.1 Having regard to the;
- *predominant east-west transportation movements between London and Southend,*
 - *number of two way commuter journeys made by car,*
 - *number of short journeys made within the town,*
 - *high population density,*
 - *relatively compact nature of the Borough,*
 - *number of significant development opportunities in the town, and*
 - *focus of the transportation Partnership to raise awareness amongst the local community;*

there is considerable potential for **pursuing schemes to address the transportation problems** facing the Borough.



Improving Accessibility

- C3.2 Government Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 9) recognises that the Thames Gateway offers a unique opportunity to make a vital and major contribution to the growth of the regional economy and that a significant component in seeking to achieve this will be the provision of quality transport infrastructure. However, the Guidance acknowledges that the current transport infrastructure within the Gateway is weak. This is clearly evident in the Southend context, the town suffering from accessibility and transportation problems to the extent that it is detrimentally affecting its economy.
- C3.3 With the railways, roads and river running in parallel, and the regional London Southend Airport complementing the business opportunities of London City Airport, the significant transportation movements in the London to Southend corridor of the extended Thames Gateway provides one of the greatest opportunities in the region for developing an integrated rail, road and river policy to deliver significant transport improvements and improved accessibility. The corridor also provides the opportunity for achieving links with the proposed East Thames Crossing and Channel Tunnel Rail interchanges.
- C3.4 ***Realising such opportunities to improve accessibility to Southend***, although outside the scope of this Local Transport Plan, ***will be crucial to the regeneration of the town*** and the extended Thames Gateway in order to provide for greater economic prosperity and job creation, factors crucial to both national and regional objectives. In addition, improvements to accessibility including the consideration of an alternative access route to the east of the town, access to key development sites and the development of additional multi-modal links, will be a ***major complimentary factor*** to the successful development of the transportation strategy contained in this Local Transport Plan.
- C3.5 These factors are recognised within the Regional Transport Strategy contained in Regional Planning Guidance, the Strategy identifying the need to undertake a study of movement issues within the London to Southend corridor. However, the study has yet to be included in any specific programme of study with a committed timescale.
- C3.6 Given that the Thames Gateway is a national and regional priority and the importance of improved transport infrastructure to the regeneration of the area, ***it is essential that this study is undertaken as soon as possible***. The importance of commencing the study at the earliest opportunity is also recognised in the Essex Local Transport Plan.
- C3.7 As part of this approach it will also be essential to realise European funding opportunities to improve the areas main communication links, thereby achieving enhanced accessibility to development and business opportunities and the areas commercial markets, particularly in relation to London and mainland Europe.
- C3.8 Such funding opportunities are dependant on a route being identified on the Trans European Transport Network Maps (TEN's), the concept of which was developed in the early 1990's and now forms part of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP - agreed by all Member States in May 1999). The principle objective of TEN's is to improve transport links that contribute to the strengthening of economic and social cohesion in the Community, particularly to airports and ports.
- C3.9 Apart from the rail link from London Fenchurch Street to Tilbury, no TEN routes are currently identified in the extended Thames Gateway (see **Map 5**). With the TEN Maps currently being reviewed there is the opportunity to include some or all of the main transportation links between Southend and London as part of the initiatives to regenerate the area and to promote a better integrated European transport system. In particular the identification of the railway line between London Liverpool Street and Southend would be of particular value in helping to enhance the role of London Southend Airport (see paragraph C3.20) which is the only regional port or airport in the Eastern Region of England not to be served by a TEN route.



Managing the Existing Highway Network

- C3.10 By making best use of the existing highway infrastructure the Partnership recognises that it has a real opportunity of improving accessibility to the town, and providing for environmental and road safety improvements. ***Lifting the access constraints is seen as one of the single most beneficial actions that could be taken to promote economic regeneration.*** To achieve this the Partnership has developed the concept of '***Environmental Rooms and Distributors***' as part of the Local Transport Plan Strategy (see paragraph D4.2).
- C3.11 The Partnership has identified that this potential could be achieved through capacity reallocations based on a hierarchy of traffic routes. This would allow for the best use of resources to be made by providing for appropriate priorities in relation to expenditure on road and footway maintenance. It would also ***offer the critically important opportunity to improve the movement of freight and business traffic in the Borough.***
- C3.12 However, the Partnership has also recognised that certain parts of the principal road network are simply inadequate and are unable to perform their correct function, notably the single carriageway at Priory Crescent. Adjoining parkland within the ownership of the Borough Council offers the opportunity to introduce appropriate highway improvements at this location and improved cycling and pedestrian facilities together with appropriate landscaping provisions.

Sustainable Transport

- C3.13 One of the greatest opportunities within the Borough is the potential to improve sustainable modes of transport by providing people with a greater and real choice of travel option. Achieving this will be essential if traffic congestion is to be effectively tackled and the objectives of the Road Traffic Reduction Act are to be met. These opportunities can be summarised as follows;

Car

- *The Transport Data Report reveals that the percentage of vehicles containing only the driver ranges from 65% off peak to 91% in the peak period on the Borough's network (see Figure 2). This indicates that there appears to be **considerable potential for increasing car sharing** and reducing the reliance by individuals on their own motor car as part of Green Travel Plan initiatives, particularly for the journey to work.*

*There is also the opportunity to introduce '**car sharing clubs**' into the town to provide people with the alternative option of hiring a vehicle for certain trips rather than outright purchase. Such a scheme has the advantage of contributing to a reduction in traffic congestion and providing for cheaper car travel, thereby extending the cars availability to a wider section of the community.*

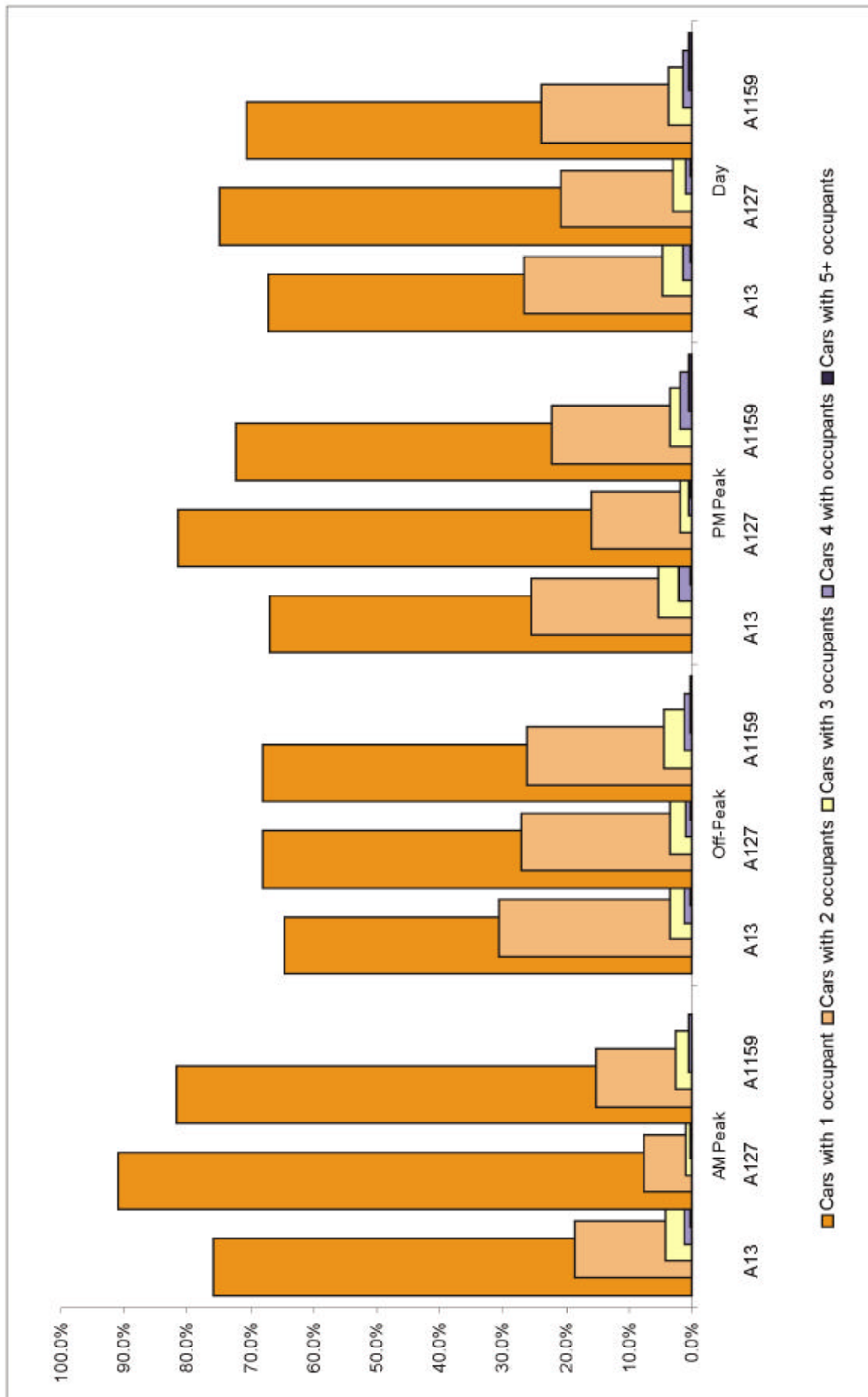
*In addition, the significant number of journeys associated with the 'school run' offers considerable potential for encouraging alternative forms of travel as part of '**Journeys to School**' initiatives.*

Buses

- *the Partnership has **identified the A13, as providing the greatest opportunity in the Borough for significantly improving bus services and for widening travel choice.** Parts of this route have the highest commuter bus travel flow patterns within Essex with scheduled average peak period frequencies of one bus every 1.22 minutes. However, this frequency is significantly affected by traffic congestion on the A13 resulting in a disrupted and unreliable service. The Partnership has also recognised the importance and opportunity for integrating the London Southend Airport into the bus transport network.*

Rail

- *the majority of Southend's population lives within one mile of Southend's nine railway stations. A further railway station is proposed at London Southend Airport. All major facilities are also in close proximity to the rail network. This very unusual situation **offers the greatest opportunity in the Borough for improving transport options,** particularly for a number of journeys to work, both internally and externally generated. It also offers considerable potential for catering for leisure and tourist visitors, particularly at off-peak times.*



Source: 1999 Transport Data Report

Taxis, Private Hire Vehicles and Community Transport

- as active partners, **the opportunity exists to integrate taxi, private hire vehicle and community transport services with rail and bus services and major employee locations and public services**, particularly at key interchange sites and within the town centre and tourist areas. The realisation of this opportunity is essential if issues of social inclusion are to be effectively addressed.

Cycling

- **Southend's high population density and compact area, together with the number of short trips generated in the town, also offers significant potential for encouraging cycling.** In order to achieve this the Borough Council has pursued initiatives with the objective of improving cycle facilities and cycling safety, changing peoples attitudes to cycling and providing safe and secure cycle storage areas.

Walking

- as with cycling, the densely populated nature of the Borough, number of short journeys and the concentration of retail, leisure and employment generating facilities within defined centres, mean **there is potential for promoting and improving the viability** of walking, particularly within the town centre. This mainly applies to short trips and as a component of integrated transport journeys. There is also potential to promote walking as part of defined tourist trails and leisure routes.

Water

- the River Thames offers the potential for the introduction of a river service (see paragraph C3.24).

Regeneration and Development

C3.14 A number of key development opportunities are focused on the town centre and central seafront areas and at Shoeburyness to the east of the Borough. These sites offer the opportunity for providing for quality integrated transport facilities, and for realising the potential of the River Thames as an important and sustainable transport mode. **The successful development of these sites and their integration within the transportation network will be crucial to the regeneration of Southend.**

a) Central Bus Station and Seaway Coach and Car Park

C3.15 Opportunities exist for the redevelopment/relocation and improvement/integration with other transport modes of the currently poor facilities at the Central Bus Station and Seaway Coach and Car Park. **Both facilities act as major visitor gateways to the town and their poor facilities create a negative image to the tourist detrimentally affecting the Borough Council's regeneration initiatives for the town.**

C3.16 This Local Transport Plan makes provision for the relocation of the Central Bus Station which will form an integral part of upgrading and prioritising bus facilities. It also makes provision for the upgrading of the poor facilities at the Seaway Coach and Car Park and to take advantage of the potential opportunities to provide links with the nearby proposed Hovercraft station (see paragraph C3.24).

b) South East Essex College Relocation

C3.17 The South East Essex College is currently based on two main sites within Southend, one within the town centre the other on its periphery. As part of its future development programme the College will be relocating its facilities to one central site which it has recently purchased and a planning application submitted. This lies adjacent to Southend High Street and the Central Railway Station. The College/University has also entered into a partnership with Essex University to provide for University courses. The new College will serve the educational needs of a catchment student population of some 700,000 pupils and will therefore be a significant catalyst for additional travel movements. Its central location adjacent a railway station offers **a unique and crucial opportunity for providing an integrated passenger transport facility** and ensuring that the majority of the

new travel movements to the new educational facility are available to the whole Thames Gateway extension area by modes of transport other than the car.

- C3.18 To realise this opportunity the College, Borough Council, c2c Rail and bus operators have established a working group. One aspect being pursued is the development of incentives to pupils to utilise passenger transport, particularly rail. The influx of pupils to this central location will also increase the potential spend in the adjacent retail and leisure outlets to the benefit of the local economy and enhancement of the Town Centre. It will also increase natural surveillance on this currently derelict site adjacent to a key transport node to the benefit of the safety and security of pedestrians and rail users.

c) Southend Victoria Railway Station

- C3.19 Southend Victoria Railway Station is the termini for the line to London Liverpool Street and is located at an important transport node between the central business/cultural district and retail areas, and **offers the potential for providing for a quality integrated passenger transport facility and improved direct covered pedestrian links to the Victoria Plaza Shopping Centre in the town centre.** It also offers the potential for improved pedestrian links to other transport nodes in the town centre as part of the Town Centre Enhancement Scheme, particularly the Bus Station and Central Rail Station serving the London Fenchurch Street line (see paragraph D5.5).

d) London-Southend Airport

- C3.20 London-Southend Airport although largely located within the neighbouring Rochford District, is owned by the Borough Council. With nearly 2,000 jobs dependant on the Airport, its direct transportation links with the rest of the UK and Europe, and its potential to provide additional facilities to attract 'briefcase' business, the Borough Council recognises that **the success of London-Southend Airport is crucial to the local economy and to the regeneration of Southend** and the Thames Gateway as a whole.
- C3.21 In order to foster its regeneration the Borough Council has granted a long-term lease to Regional Airports Limited to undertake the running and operation of the Airport. The Borough Council has also successfully promoted the redevelopment of part of the Airport perimeter for a retail park. The latter has provided valuable income to the Airport permitting a number of improvements to be made to the Airport's facilities, including improved landing equipment.
- C3.22 The Airport Company is currently developing a master plan in liaison with local authorities to provide for further major improvements in the Airport's facilities. A key element of this is the development of a new Airport railway station on the Southend Victoria to London Liverpool Street line, which abuts the Airport perimeter, and the development of a new Airport terminal building. Such a facility will significantly improve the integration of the airport within the regional transportation network and enable it to compete effectively with other London Airports in terms of journey time to the Capital. This is vital to the realisation of the Airport's potential and its target of increasing passenger throughput from the current 7,000 passengers per annum to 300,000. Planning permission has recently been granted for the new development by Rochford District Council.
- C3.23 As the redevelopment of the Airport progresses **it offers the potential to function as a wider integrated passenger transport facility.** It will be important that such potential is realised in order to ensure that the Airport is fully integrated into the local transportation network so that its business and other opportunities are available to as wider section of the local business community as possible. In particular, opportunities exist to provide bus links from the Airport to the London-Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness railway line and a proposed Hovercraft service to Kent. The latter would open up the opportunity for the Airport to access a significant new market of potential customers in the North Kent peninsula without passengers creating additional pressure on the east Thames river crossing.

e) Opportunities for Water Based Transportation Links

- C3.24 Both the Partnership and the Borough Council recognise the potential of the River Thames for water transport. However, because of its estuarial location, water depths on the Southend foreshore restrict the opportunities to craft not requiring deep water, such as hovercraft, and those which can safely berth at the end of the Pier. Leisure craft already successfully use the pier head in the summer months to provide a number of services mainly to Kent and London which are significant tourist attractions.
- C3.25 Following negotiations with prospective developers a landing point within the central seafront area has been identified and a design for a landing/launch pad with passenger terminal and related facilities agreed for a hovercraft service. This would open up significant opportunities for business and tourism related travel to Kent and London, including the Millennium Dome site and other numerous tourist attractions along the River. This facility would be for foot passengers only and **its success will be very much dependant on the integration of the scheme** with other sustainable transportation modes.
- C3.26 The potential landing point for a hovercraft service to Southend would be located at the termination of a new sea defence facility proposed for the central seafront area. This has been developed by Halcrow Maritime based on the Essex Shoreline Management Plan and strategy document for Southend prepared by Mouchel Consulting on behalf of the Borough Council. Stage One of the scheme involves the development of an extensive new shingle beach at a cost of £5m, part funded through grant aid from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF). The scheme will make a significant contribution to improving tourist and leisure facilities in this location.

f) Opportunities at Shoeburyness

- C3.27 There are two major development opportunities at Shoeburyness in the eastern periphery of the Borough. The Ministry of Defence has declared some 80 hectares of land (Old Ranges) and approximately a further 75 hectare site (New Ranges) as surplus to requirements. The redevelopment of these sites is crucial to the regeneration of the Borough and in particular Shoeburyness, which suffers from a number of acute economic, and social problems (see paragraph C2.5).
- C3.28 A design brief has been jointly prepared by the Borough Council and MoD for the Old Ranges site. This provides for the potential provision of additional employment uses, housing and leisure facilities, including the provision of an important cycleway link along the seafront as part of the Sustrans National Network.
- C3.29 The New Ranges site offers the potential for introducing employment generating uses and for further extending the cycle network along the seafront into the neighbouring Rochford District and open countryside. The site also contains 21 kilometres of railway line linked to the Shoeburyness to London-Fenchurch Street line. This length of line is currently utilised for maintenance works and is of operational standard. **It therefore offers considerable potential for linking the site to the regional and national rail network and for providing for a wider integrated passenger transport facility including the possibility of the provision of a rail freight facility** dependant upon the type of development that is finally agreed as appropriate for the site.
- C3.30 Preferred development schemes have been selected for both sites by the MOD and the submission of planning applications are pending.
- C3.31 Given the site's peripheral location and relative isolation in relation to the rest of the Borough and Thames Gateway in particular, improved rail accessibility will not, however, solely provide the ingredients necessary for their successful redevelopment. Improvements to the highway network will also be essential if the full commercial potential of the sites is to be realised. (See paragraphs D4.15, D6.10 and D7.5)

Bridge Strengthening

- C3.32 The significant number of 40 tonne bridge assessment failures in the Borough presents the Local Authority with a serious problem. However, the Partnership has identified that by introducing a hierarchy of routes, there is the **opportunity to not only make best use of expenditure of resources on highways but also bridges**. This can be achieved by introducing traffic management measures on a number of bridges which do not form part of the route hierarchy and therefore do not require upgrading to 40 tonne capability. This helps meet the objectives of controlling the type of vehicle entering sensitive areas whilst saving resources on bridge strengthening.

Traffic Management

- C3.33 The Partnership has identified that a number of transportation problems in the Borough originate from the poor enforcement of existing traffic regulations. The local police, who play an active role in the Partnership, accept that their resources are such that the enforcement of traffic regulations has a low priority and as a consequence they are not rigorously enforced in the Borough. The Partnership recognises that action is urgently needed to address this problem, especially as effective enforcement will be a vital ingredient in any future proposals to improve the transportation situation in the town.
- C3.34 The opportunity to pursue parking '**Decriminalisation**' is therefore welcomed by the Partnership and Borough Council. This process will effectively transfer the responsibility of enforcing traffic regulations from the police to the local authority. However, both parties are concerned that this process is very time consuming and could ultimately hinder and delay the introduction of important transportation schemes in the town which will be vital to achieving the objectives of the Partnership. In view of the acknowledged importance that this would have to making better use of the existing network, the early implementation of parking decriminalisation is being treated as a **high priority**.

Community Awareness and Social Inclusion

- C3.35 With traffic congestion now impinging on most peoples lives, and the recent changes in national and regional transport policy, the Partnership recognises that there is a real **opportunity to raise community awareness of the transport facilities available and the problems of continuing traffic growth**.
- C3.36 For example, with the Borough Council now responsible for education and social services, there is the opportunity to achieve more sustainable travel patterns to schools through 'safer routes to school' initiatives, and to increase mobility choice for those members of the community in most need through voluntary transport and related provisions. Given the compact nature of the Borough, number of short trips and significant commuter patterns, there is also the opportunity to reduce traffic congestion through the pursuance of Green Travel Plans to encourage employers to introduce such initiatives as flexi-working, car sharing, and incentives to use alternative means of travel to the car. There is also the potential to introduce 'pay as you use' car clubs (see also paragraph D3.2) within Southend to provide an alternative option to owning a vehicle. This also assists in widening travel choice, and in the promotion of social inclusion.
- C3.37 In addition, the work of the Partnership provides the opportunity for ensuring that all aspects of social inclusion are incorporated in each transportation mode. The needs of the disabled and other vulnerable groups have been clearly articulated by partners representing a range of local and national disability and related organisations. Their input to the implementation process has been vital in ensuring that these needs are appropriately catered for.

Data Collection

- C3.38 Unitary Status and the establishment of a Partnership approach has provided the Borough Council with the **opportunity to address the inadequacies of its transportation data base** which forms an important part of this Local Transport Plan. Further details of the action taken to provide necessary information and monitoring data are set out in the accompanying document '*1999/2000 Transport Data Report*' and '*Road Traffic Reduction Report*'.

The Partnership Approach

C3.39 ***To all the opportunities must be added the development of the Partnership itself. Without community support the Plan, however comprehensive, would be unlikely to succeed.***

C3.40 With transportation problems in Southend now affecting the viability of local businesses and the quality of life for all, the need for action is being recognised by increasing numbers of the local community. This is reflected in the growth of the Partnership that has taken place during the past two years.

C3.41 From its initial inauguration in July 1998 the ***Partnership membership has doubled in size*** as more and more organisations have become aware of its importance to the regeneration of Southend. It now consists of over 200 separate organisations.

C3.42 All members of the Partnership have recognised in a positive way the need for;

- *early involvement;*
- *interactive participation, with a two way dialogue;*
- *genuinely inclusive approach, involving all local interest groups;*
- *continuous;*
- *open; and*
- *providing effective feedback to participants.*

C3.43 This has enabled the Partnership to;

- *encourage joint working;*
- *permit the exchange of knowledge and expertise;*
- *facilitate the sharing of data;*
- *harness local knowledge and expertise;*
- *enable resources to be pooled together; and*
- *provide the opportunity for attracting additional resources.*

C3.44 Additionally, and possibly more importantly, it has;

- *allowed partners to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of each others problems;*
- *engendered trust between partners and a desire to work together to solve a common problem; and*
- *enabled partners to gain ownership of the Plan.*

These are acknowledged to be essential ingredients in the development of an Integrated Transportation Plan if it is to be successfully implemented and ***enduring***.

C3.45 For the Borough Council it has also created additional benefits. It has ***created local 'champions'*** committed to the cause and prepared to raise awareness amongst other local businesses and organisations. It has established a forum that is committed to implementing the Local Transport Plan provisions. It will also provide the basis for preparing the transportation elements of a number of related plans and strategies. For example, it will inform the Review of the Southend on Sea Borough Local Plan (see paragraphs B3.1 and C2.39), and local economic and Local Agenda 21 Quality of Life strategies together with the review of a number of related strategies such as the Community Safety Strategy.