

3 Analysis of Existing and Potential Problems

3.1 Identification of Problems

A key part of the consultation process described in Chapter 5 was the identification of problems affecting the stakeholders. The consultees were invited to describe problems and/or issues relating to the transport network in Dalry; these could be based on their own personal experience, or be arising from complaints or approaches made by members of the public.

A summary listing of the problems is tabulated in **Appendix B** to this Report. It should be noted that the table presents the problems as identified in no particular order.

It will be seen that no specific problems relating to bus or rail services (other than issues relating to traffic congestion) have been identified as part of the consultation process.

3.2 Initial Analysis of the Problems

Initial analysis of the problems confirms that the bulk of the issues raised relate to congestion either along the A737, or through the Town Centre. The following table sorts the individual problems into key issues which are referred to as Principal Problems.

Ref	Principal Problem	Individual problem reference – see Appendix B	
		Real or Quantifiable problems	Perceived Problems
1	Conflicting demands and interests on the road network in Dalry causing congestion and delays	1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30	36, 38, 40
2	Peak hour train services to Glasgow currently at capacity (standing room only from Dalry)	Issue raised as an Uncertainty – see paragraph 3.4.2	
3	Community severance caused by the A737	9, 18, 24	
4	Environment & Safety related - covered by Government Objectives	17	37
5	Congestion being caused by bridge strikes and lack of observance of warning signs	3	
6	Minor network management issues - being actioned by others	21, 26, 31	
7	Beyond scope of study / not carried forward	14, 15, 32, 33, 34, 35, 39	4, 7, 13

3.3 Summary of Detailed Analysis

Each of the problems identified has been analysed in depth – a summary of the key issues are presented below. The last column of the table provided in **Appendix B** gives further information if required.

3.3.1 Congestion and delay on the A737 Corridor (Problems 1, 2, 16, 27, 29, 36, 38 & 40)

The most common problem reported to the study team was traffic congestion and the subsequent queuing on the A737 through Dalry. Whilst queuing in both directions was often initially alleged, further discussion normally confirmed that north bound queuing/delay was not generally an issue.

This was substantiated by the traffic surveys which confirmed that southbound delays during pm peak hour traffic are experienced on a regular basis. The surveys also showed that north bound delays were insignificant. The primary cause of the congestion along the A737 in Dalry is delay experienced at the Townend Street and New Street Junction during peak flows. This is exacerbated by both inappropriate and illegal parking in the vicinity of the same junction.

Problems 36, 38 and 40 are considered to be perceived problems in that they cannot easily be proven or quantified. These problems are summarised below:

- No. 36 poor transport links make it difficult to either maintain, or attract new, professionals into the area, and
- No. 38 congestion makes area unattractive to inward investment needed to counter high unemployment
- No. 40 poor transport links contribute to high unemployment

In each case it is considered that the quality of transport links (road and rail) is only one element of the multi-faceted issue of what is required to attract and maintain employers, professionals and inward investment into an area. To what extent the congestion and delay on the A737 corridor directly affect these issues is difficult to quantify. It is reasonable to accept however that any improvement in the journey times along the A737 through Dalry will be to the overall economic benefit of the area, as such therefore it is proposed to consider Problems 36, 38 and 40 as being part of Problem 1.

3.3.2 Congestion in Dalry Town Centre (Problems 5, 6, 8, 10, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28 and 30)

Multiple problems were reported relating to the congestion through the Town Centre, and the key issues are summarised as:

- a. high volume of traffic using North Street/New Street
- b. delays at the Traffic Lights for right turning traffic from Dalry Cross
- c. illegal / inappropriate parking generally
- d. illegal / inappropriate unloading by delivery vehicles to shops
- e. lack of enforcement of parking restrictions
- f. unwillingness to use the more remote off-street car parks
- g. inappropriate use of Vennel Street

The most emphatic was problem No.8 – general congestion along New Street from traffic lights to Dalry Cross, arising from consultation with the individual shop keepers and/or shop managers on both sides of New Street from the junction with Townend Street to the Cross. This uncovered strong unanimity regarding the traffic problems affecting the area. Typical quotes are:

- *“Cannot get parked in immediate vicinity of business. Terrible congestion. Major problems for deliveries” Penny Farthing Restaurant*
- *“Nightmare. Parking is diabolical. Drivers simply stop and park wherever. Need for a filter lane for traffic turning right at lights” J&J McCosh Solicitors*
- *“Everywhere is double parked. Police are very unsympathetic. Permanent traffic lights were a mistake, traffic used to always flow. Need a filter lane or mini roundabout. In order to turn right onto Townend St at traffic lights, drivers often jump red light” Last Minute Gift Shop*
- *“Too much traffic. Horrendous between 3-6pm with congestion. Lack of parking facilities” G&G Todd Newsagent*
- *“Crazy. No loading bays available. Huge problems between 4.30 - 6.30 with queuing traffic” Stalker Family Butcher*

The underlying or root problem is seen as being high traffic levels combined with the conflicting needs for car parking and shop deliveries.

3.3.3 Railway Station Park and Ride Car Park capacity (problem 12)

It is often full with small overflow. Not considered to be a problem, but is an apparent constraint to growth of rail patronage outwith peak hours (during peak hours all seats on the trains to Glasgow are typically taken by the time the train reaches Dalry).

3.3.4 Community Severance caused by the A737 (problems 9, 18 and 24)

With the volume of traffic it carries (in excess of 8400 vehicles 2-way flow in 12 hour period) the A737 does form an effective barrier as it passes through Dalry and to a large extent it isolates the residents in the Garnock Street, Lynn Avenue and Merksworth Avenue area of Dalry on the east side of the A737. These residents (approximately 1000+) are obliged to cross the A737 to access the bulk of the community facilities, sports grounds, shops, bank, church, schools, health clinic, vets etc.

The only safe i.e. signal controlled, pedestrian crossing is at the main Traffic Light junction at the north end of Townend Street which could add over 700m to the journey of someone not prepared to cross at an uncontrolled point. The underlying problem is generally high traffic volume; on the A737 south of the Roche Way junction this is exacerbated by the relatively wide, downhill character of the road.

It is also noted that the width of the footway in places on the east side of Townend Street is less than standard which can lead to problems for pedestrians with prams or buggies.

3.4 Constraints, Uncertainties and Opportunities

3.4.1 Constraints

Given the scope of this study and the arising options. The only constraints identified at this time that would prevent the proposals being developed are funding and the objections to the demolition of No 43 New Street.

3.4.2 Uncertainties

The primary uncertainty at this stage is route corridor considerations and the impact of any related intervention measure on the transport network in and around Dalry. Such issues include:

- a. the prospective economic development at Hunterston and its potential impact on the road and rail network
- b. the impact of the recently opened Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston Bypass

3.4.3 Opportunities

Whilst not raised by consultees as an issue, there are a number of opportunities that should be considered as part of this appraisal. These include:

3.4.3.1 Improve connectivity of buses and trains (Opportunity 1)

There is no specifically scheduled bus service feeding the train services. It would seem desirable to pursue the provision of such a service with SPT.

3.4.3.2 Improvement of the existing footpath to Train Station (Opportunity 2)

There is an existing footpath running south west from Railway Station which provides a shorter, and car free, path to the train station for the residents of the south Dalry.

The path is believed to be a Right of Way, but has been allowed to become narrow and overgrown on the section between the River Garnock and the Station; as a consequence it is not frequently used by the residents of Dalry. Over much of its length the path has been identified, by North Ayrshire Council in conjunction with Sustrans, as part of a potential off-road cycle route through the Garnock Valley and has been included in the Local Plan as such. Unfortunately it is not being progressed due to land ownership problems. An opportunity therefore exists to enhance the path over this section to make it a more attractive proposition to walkers and cyclists.

3.4.3.3 Provision of cycle racks or secure cycle storage at the Railway station (Opportunity 3)

The lack of cycle racks or secure cycle storage at the Railway Station was not raised as an issue by any of the consultees. It would seem desirable however to enter discussion with SPT on this matter to check the current policy and if appropriate to pursue the provision of such facilities with SPT with a view to encouraging more commuters to leave their cars at home.

3.4.3.4 Provision of cycle racks or secure cycle storage in the Town Centre (Opportunity 4)

The lack of cycle racks or secure cycle storage at the Town Centre was not raised as an issue by any of the consultees. It would seem desirable however to examine the potential interest and benefit in such facilities which would potentially lead to reduced Town Centre congestion.

3.4.3.5 Establish Focus Group for New Street Shopkeepers (Opportunity 5)

From the consultations it seems apparent that there is a general consensus of unhappiness with the current situation in New Street vis-à-vis the congestion, parking and delivery off-loading. But there appears to be no organised response. There seems therefore to be an opportunity for the creation of a local focus group to manage the situation to common advantage (e.g. possible agreement of delivery times outwith peak hours, agreement of off-loading locations, pursuit of improvements etc).