



# Unified Planning Work Program

## FY 2024 - 2025

Approved May 26, 2023 by Vote of the NECCOG Council

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## **UPWP Overview**

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) establishes the transportation planning activities and programs for NECCOG during the course of the work program years 2024 and 2025. The transportation studies and planning efforts outlined in the UPWP are guided by the regional transportation vision, goals, issues, and priorities developed through the extensive long-range planning process. The purposes of the UPWP are to ensure that:

- ▢ It confirms for CONNDOT, FHWA, and FTA that an appropriate cooperative, comprehensive and continuing planning process is in place;
- ▢ It includes sufficient detail for CONNDOT to determine the eligibility of funding;
- ▢ Address issues in accordance with the requirements in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) and other federal planning regulations;
- ▢ It provides useful information for the public, the NECCOG Board of Directors, member towns, and partner agencies about how NECCOG activities are funded and how they complement each other to achieve progress toward adopted regional objectives;
- ▢ It supports program management and reporting; and
- ▢ Addresses the major transportation issues in the NECCOG region.

NECCOG makes every effort to include minority, low-income, and limited-English speaking populations in transportation planning. Throughout this document there are several tasks that specifically discuss the NECCOG's efforts to include these populations. In addition to the UPWP, NECCOG also maintains a Public Participation Plan, Title VI/Environmental Justice Plan and Limited English Proficiency Plan. These plans specify that the NECCOG must make all official documents accessible to all members of our community. The Title VI/Environmental Justice Plan also outlines a complaint process, should a member of these specialized populations feel as though they have been discriminated against. These documents work in tandem with the UPWP to outline NECCOG's goals and processes for regional transportation planning.

NECCOG is one of two rural regions in Connecticut and therefore not defined as an MPO. The formal planning process required for MPOs does not apply to rural regions - such as NECCOG. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act): A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU requires states to consult with rural locations in their planning and programming. Connecticut DOT not only maintains a strong communication/consultation process - they provide planning funds to the two rural COGs to undertake planning and technical assistance to their member towns - similar to the state's MPOs. The NECCOG UPWP has been prepared to define the work tasks and anticipated funding requirements for the NECCOG region for fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

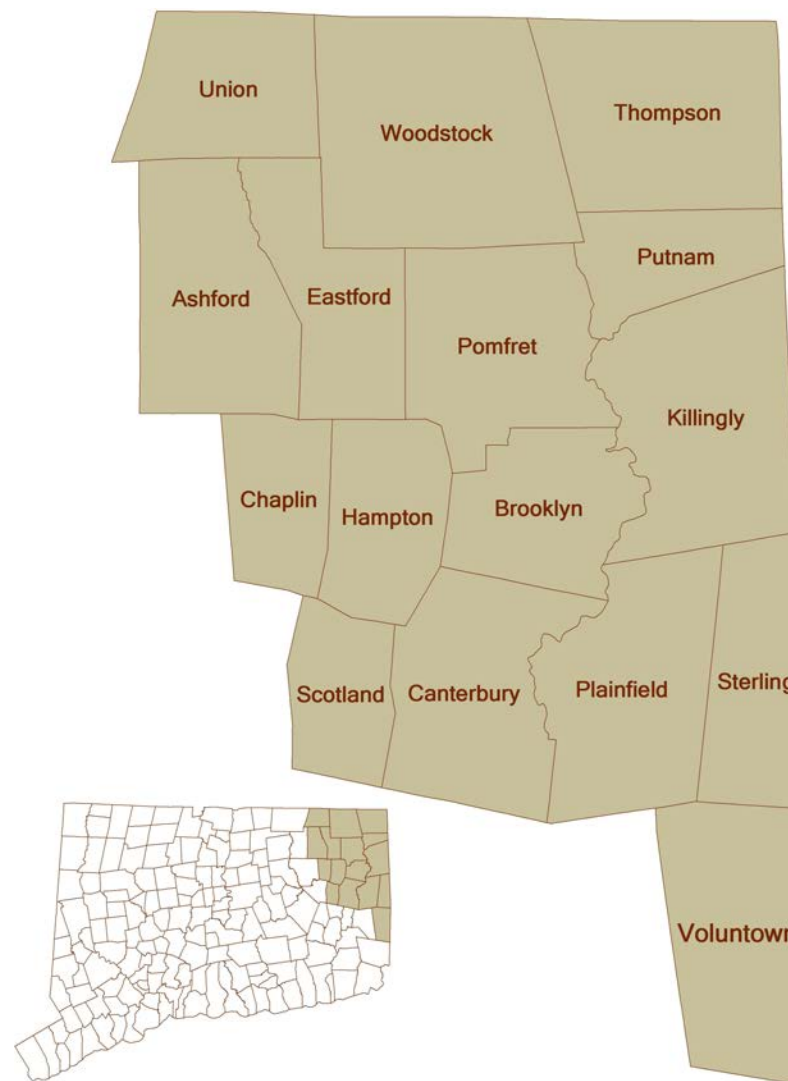
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## NECCOG Overview

NECCOG is a strong proponent and practitioner in the innovation, development, advocacy and application of regionalism. NECCOG, which is made up of 16 member towns, was founded in 1987. NECCOG is a chief-elected official driven — organized forum for the member towns to discuss, facilitate and develop responses to issues of mutual concern. NECCOG's member towns are Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Union, Voluntown and Woodstock. Each municipality is represented by their respective chief-elected official. NECCOG is statutorily authorized, but has no regulatory power. Funding for the organization comes from local, state and federal sources

NECCOG is focused on achieving results for our member towns through regionalism — offering a range of voluntary — member initiated programs and services — depending on the collective and/or individual needs of our member towns. These programs include: transportation planning and project assistance; engineering; land use planning and regulation development; economic development; administrative assistance; animal services; transit administration; property revaluation; emergency preparedness; geographic information services and paramedic intercept services. Our regional approach to problem solving enables our member towns to achieve efficiencies and economies of scale that individually would be difficult to realize. NECCOG's staff, acting as an extension of each member town, has a wide range of expertise and experience to address and assist our member towns with their collective and individual needs.

NECCOG is one of nine regional councils of governments in Connecticut organized under the provisions of sections 4-124i to 4-124p, inclusive of the Connecticut General Statutes. Connecticut does not have county government; each of the state's 169 municipalities operates



independently. NECCOG is also one of two (the other being the Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments) rural regions and is not a metropolitan planning region.

NECCOG is responsible, in coordination and consultation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CONNDOT), for making transportation decisions in the 16-town northeast region. NECCOG is the designated recipient of the United States Department of Transportation planning funds for use in performing transportation planning work through the CONNDOT. As a condition of the receipt of Federal Highway and transit capital or operating assistance, NECCOG is required to have a transportation planning process and a plan detailing that process referred to as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The work tasks described in UPWP are conducted on a continuous basis in order to maintain certification and eligibility for Federal Highway and transit funds, and to plan for the orderly and efficient development of the transportation system infrastructure.

## Mission

The mission of the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments is to serve as a chief-elected official driven - organized forum for the member towns to discuss, facilitate and develop responses to issues of mutual concern; having in place the staffing expertise to assist towns that they individually would not be able to either afford or justify, and; administer programs and projects for the betterment of the member towns collectively and individually.

## Goals

- ▶ Member initiated programs and projects resulting in measurable results
- ▶ Stay informed and take action on issues that are of mutual interest
- ▶ Seek solutions to issues of common concern through cost effective programs
- ▶ Provide a forum for communication and representation - facilitating the exchange of ideas and information
- ▶ To be responsive to our member towns
- ▶ Facilitate collaboration of regional solutions
- ▶ Consider new or expanded programs
- ▶ Maintain a workplace environment that cultivates and recognizes professional excellence, teamwork, and creativity
- ▶ Provide an expert resource for information and assistance in planning for a broad mix of local government services;
- ▶ Represent the interests and needs of member towns to local, regional, state and federal interests;
- ▶ Identify and be able to respond to unforeseen local or regional needs;
- ▶ Be efficient with staff time and resources

## Regional Overview

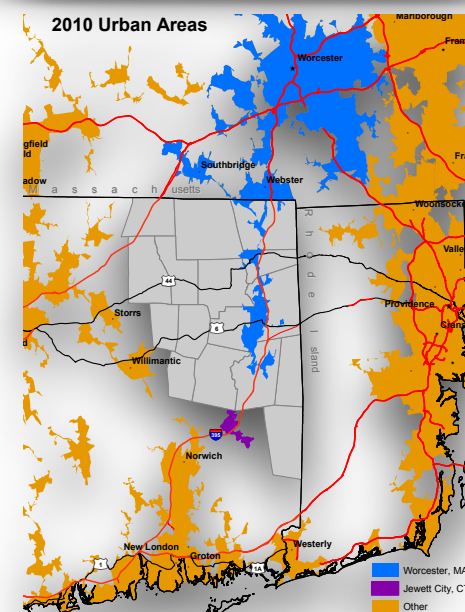
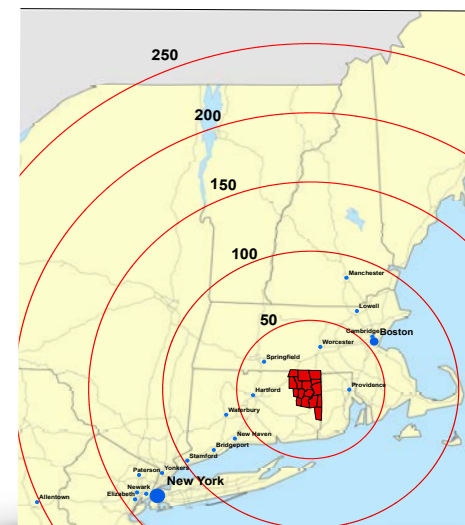
The region, served by the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, forms the northeastern corner of Connecticut and includes 16 of the state's 169 towns. The region is home to a range of natural and historic New England landscapes, making it quintessential New England. The area is characterized by rolling hills, forests, classic New England villages, former mill towns and farms.

Geographically the region is large, encompassing just over 10% of Connecticut's total area or 562.8 square miles. From a population perspective, the region is rural with just over 95,000 residents. The region historically been referred to as the "Quiet Corner" and more recently as the "Last Green Valley" because of its 1994 inclusion in the Quinebaug-Shetucket National Heritage Corridor, part of the Federal Designated National Heritage Corridor program. Compared to most of Connecticut, the region has been slow to develop and still retains much of its historic patterns of development, thereby presenting both opportunities and challenges when planning for land use, resource conservation and infrastructure.

Connecticut is called "The Land of Steady Habits", but it is a dynamic state, not immune to the larger-scale trends that impact the whole nation. In particular, northeastern Connecticut bears the effects of concurrent major economic upheavals: the decline of small farms coinciding with out-migration from cities to form the suburbs, and the decline of American manufacturing.

Northeastern Connecticut is rural, yet it differs from some common percepts of what constitutes a rural setting. The region is one of two rural areas in Connecticut. Using the Federal Highway Administration definitions of rural, the NECCOG region is most similar to "Urban Boundary Rural"<sup>1</sup> given the region's proximity to metropolitan regions as well as the economic connections to those regions. Additionally, the NECCOG region, in part, lies within the Worcester Metropolitan Region.

The Region is close to New England's largest metropolitan areas: Providence, Rhode Island, and Worcester and Boston, Massachusetts - which collectively have a workforce of more than three million. The region is also within close commuting distance to Hartford and the New London area, the latter home to the Electric Boat Submarine Shipyard and Naval Submarine Base, and two of the



<sup>1</sup> Federal Highway Administration In Cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration Planning for Transportation in Rural Areas, July 2001  
Prepared by: Dye Management Group, Inc., pg. 5

largest Native American gaming casinos in the world. The proximity to these places makes the NECCOG region an ideal place to locate a home and is also an easy drive for persons outside the region to enjoy the region's many natural resources, scenic roadways (including the Route 169 National Scenic Byway) farms, antique stores, restaurants and other attractions - including two of the largest agricultural fairs (Brooklyn and Woodstock) in Connecticut.

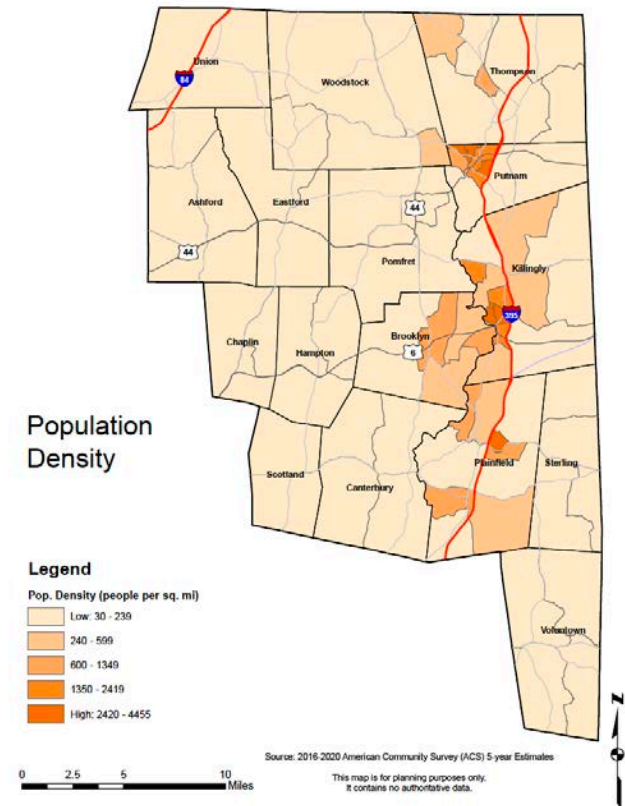
The region lies within easy access to more that 30 colleges and universities - including Quinebaug Valley Community Technical College<sup>2</sup> (QVCC.) QVCC has been and continues to be a key asset to the region and a critical piece of the economic well being of northeastern Connecticut..

### Demographics

From 1970 to 2020, the region grew by more than 36,000 people. The bulk of this growth, 30,000 people, occurred between 1970 and 2000. Population growth similar to the last 30 years of the past century is not anticipated. Population growth has been modest since 2000 and the 2020 Census shows a population decline for 11 of the 16 NECCOG towns. The region has gained only about 6,000 persons since 2020. There is no indication that this will change during the duration of the LRTP.

The majority and highest concentrations of residents is in association with the Route 12/I-395 corridor and especially the eleven mill villages.. However, most of the homes in which this part of the population resides is older in terms of the year built - 1970 and before. Many homes in the mill villages were a direct result of the mills in place dating back to the start of the Industrial Revolution. Most of the new residents in the past fifty years have moved into areas which were formally forest, open space or farmland.

The towns of northeastern Connecticut little ethnic diversity and are therefore not consistent with population trends regarding diversity within the rest of the state. About 11.4 percent of the region are people of color - compared to 37% of people in the state<sup>3</sup>. The region is older than



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<sup>2</sup> QVCC currently offer Associates Degree programs, with a range of specialties, in Allied Health, Art, Business, Communications, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Education, Engineering Science, English, History, Human Services, Languages, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, Technology Studies and pathway studies as a pressure to a four-year degree program. QVCC additional offers wide range of certificate programs

<sup>3</sup> Seaberry, C., Davila, K., Abraham, M. (2021). Town Equity Profile. New Haven, CT: DataHaven. Published September 2021. More information at [ctdatahaven.org](http://ctdatahaven.org)

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the median age for the state (41.1 years of age average). The state's younger population is much more racially diverse- and fewer younger people in the northeast translates to a lack of diversity within the region. With the exception of mill villages, rental units and single family homes are often beyond the means of affordability, posing a barrier to population growth in the area.

## Housing

According to the 2020 Census, the region had 38,153 households and 41,439 Housing Units. Residential housing growth has slowed considerably since 2010. The cost of new housing is one factor slowing this growth. Another is land use regulations (zoning, subdivision and wetlands) that has had a significant influence on housing construction. Each of the 16 towns has variations/interpretations/applications of these that often make it difficult from a process perspective or an affordability perspective to build new housing units.

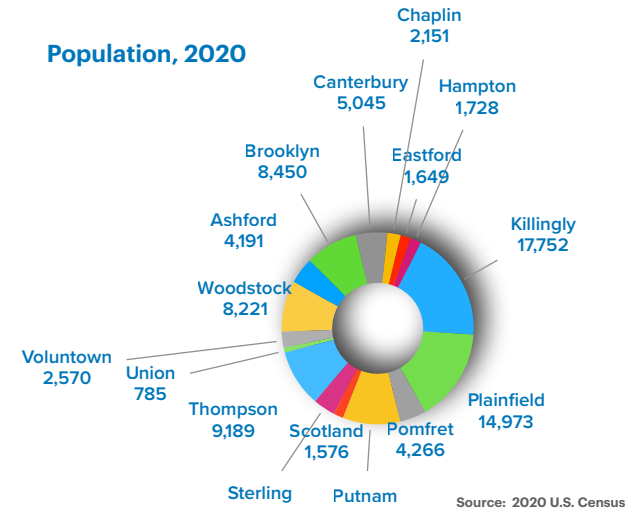
There is no immediate indication that new housing will accelerate. There is, however, an immediate need for affordable housing for a cross-section of the region's population. "...Connecticut is an expensive place to live and that the lack of affordability in many communities means that young people can't afford to live in the towns where they grew up, older residents can't afford to

### Families Living In Poverty

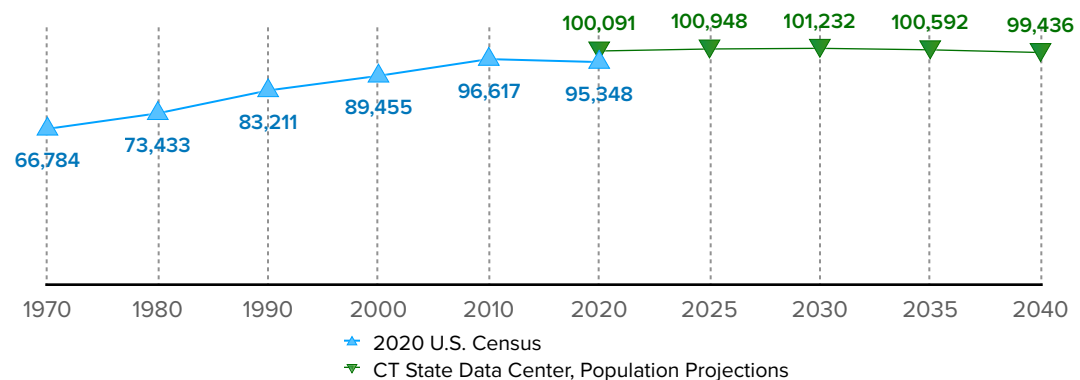
Town	ACS 2010	ACS 2020	Change 2010-2020
Ashford	2%	4.5%	2.5%
Brooklyn	6.7%	4.5%	-2.2%
Canterbury	2%	2.6%	0.6%
Chaplin	1.4%	6%	4.6%
Eastford	2.4%	2.7%	0.3%
Hampton	2.7%	2.4%	-0.3%
Killingly	8.7%	9.7%	1.0%
Plainfield	8%	6.9%	-1.1%
Pomfret	4.4%	3.3%	-1.1%
Putnam	8.2%	4.2%	-4.0%
Scotland	0%	0%	0.0%
Sterling	10.2%	7.1%	-3.1%
Thompson	6.2%	6.1%	-0.1%
Union	0%	3%	3.0%
Voluntown	0.7%	2.2%	1.5%
Woodstock	1.3%	1.5%	0.2%

Source: U.S. American Community Survey as prepared by the CTData Collaborative - <https://acs2020.ctdata.org>

### Population, 2020



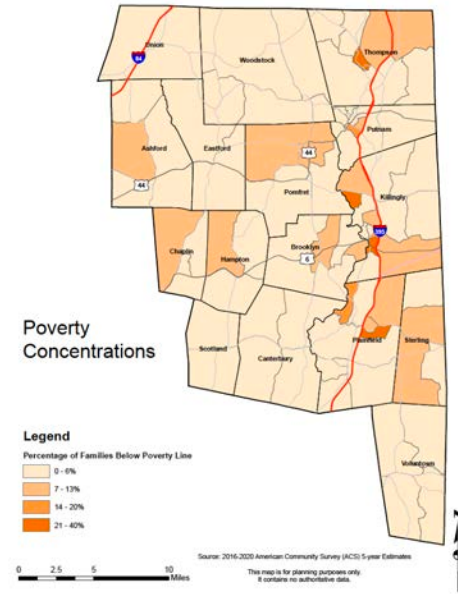
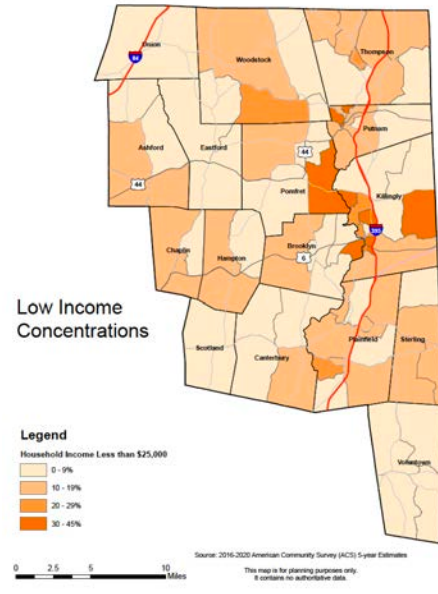
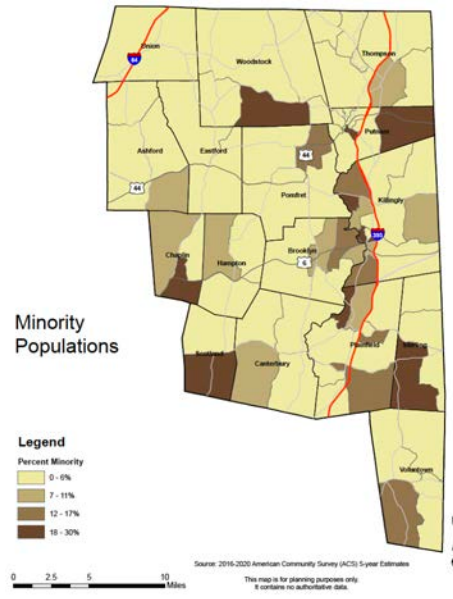
### Population Change and Projections



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downsize from single-family homes to an apartment in their community, and people employed in lower paying jobs within communities can't afford to live where they work.”<sup>4</sup> Resolving the affordability issue is a significant challenge for individual towns and the region.



## Economy

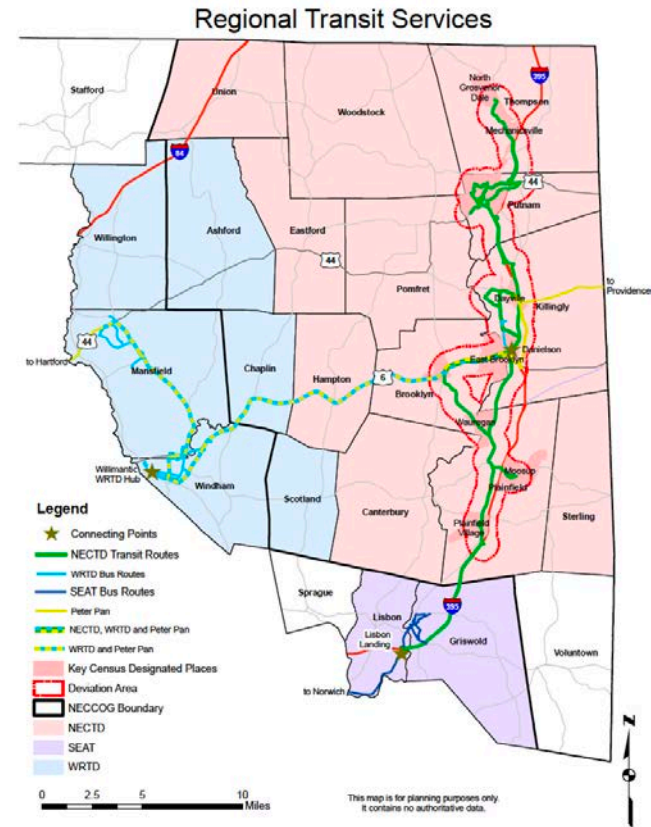
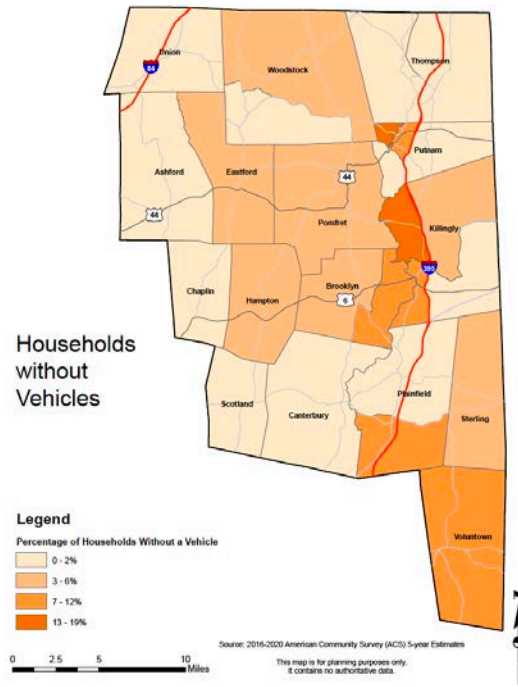
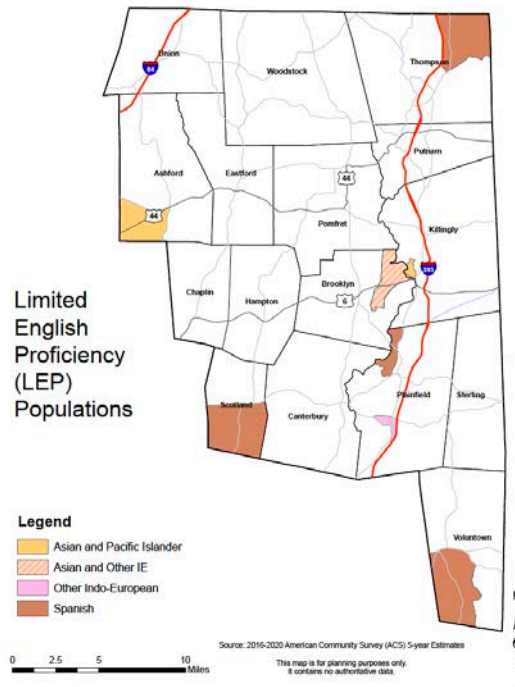
The Region's business profile is diverse. It includes plastics, photonics, food processing, electronics, and of all types, distribution centers, antiques dealers, retailers, agriculture, and more. During the last half of the 1990's, the I-395/Route 12 Corridor realized significant commercial and industrial growth from existing and new businesses. Like much of New England, northeastern Connecticut's industrial and commercial past was firmly anchored in manufacturing and its river mills in particular. Today, the original mill businesses are gone.

The economic elements of the region have changed significantly during past 50 years. There has been a significant decrease in traditional manufacturing, most often associated with the region's 11 mill villages to the region's industrial five parks and other locations. Multiple manufacturers are in the high-tech field and others have found the region to be a solid location. Due to the region's proximity to metropolitan

<sup>4</sup> Planning for Affordability in Connecticut - Affordable Housing Plan and Process Guidebook, pg. 5 - [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOH/AHPP-Guidebook\\_RPA\\_120120.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOH/AHPP-Guidebook_RPA_120120.pdf)

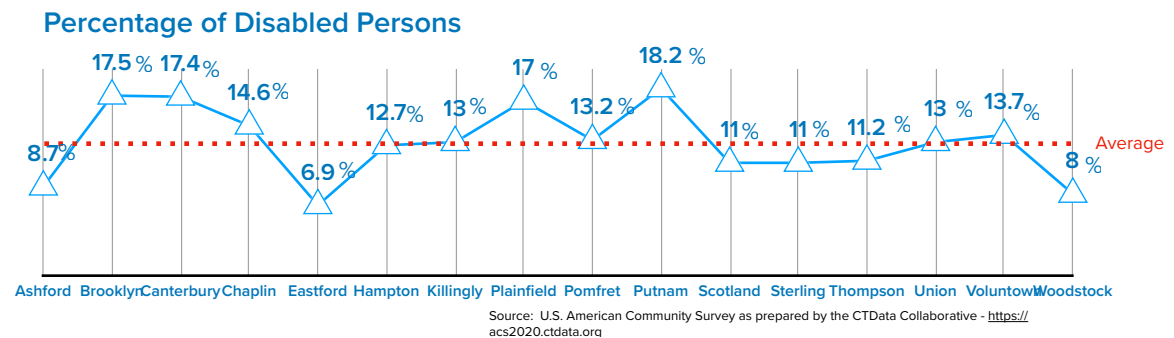
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areas and easy access to I-395 and I-84. It is not surprising, therefore, that the majority of the region's retail, manufacturing, distribution and other commerce are centered on or near the I-395 corridor.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the number of residents working remotely and starting home-based businesses - which makes access to high speed broadband essential. During the last half of the 1990's, the I-395/Route 12 Corridor realized significant commercial and industrial growth from existing and new



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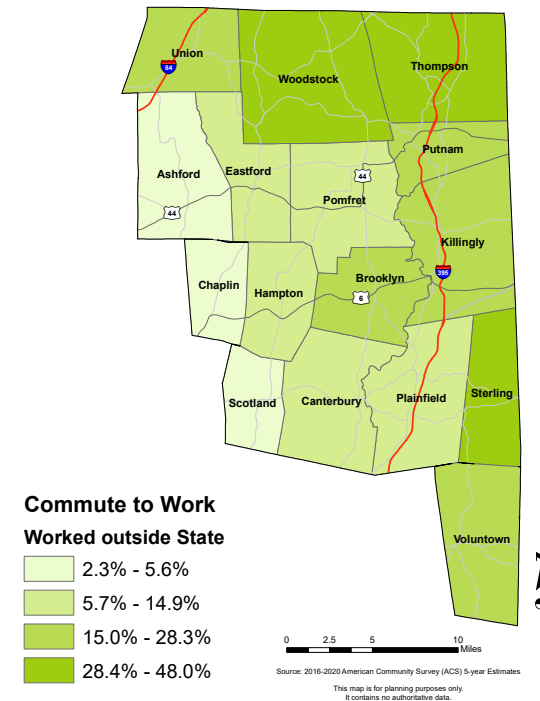
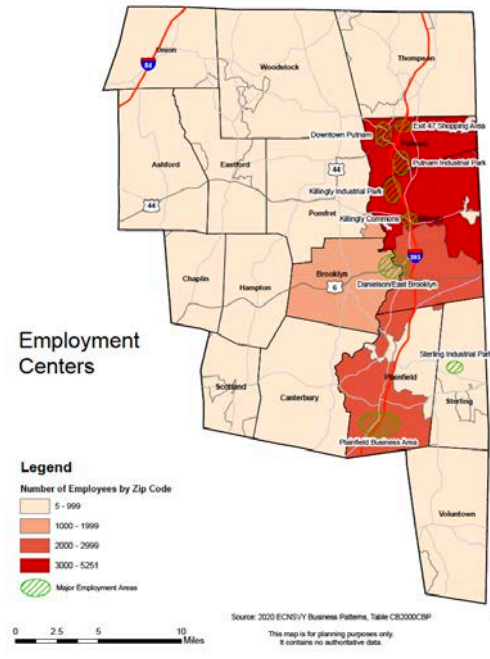
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businesses.

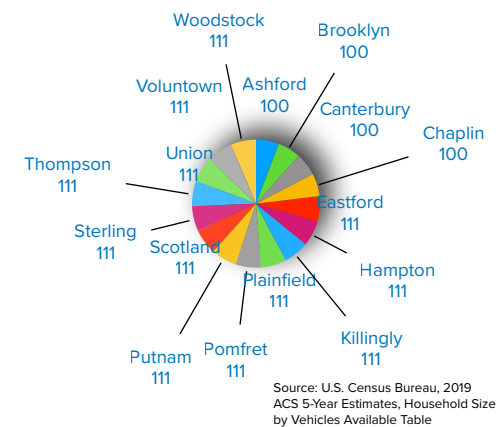
Today, the original mill businesses are gone. Several of the mills have been re-purposed to house new businesses and others now provide housing. Unfortunately, there are still multiple vacant mills in various states of decline. One large success at re-using a former industrial site is the former Anchor Glass site in the Dayville section of Killingly, which is now home to Killingly Commons, the largest shopping center in the region. Other successes include the former Hale Mill/Cargill Falls Mill in downtown Putnam is being rehabilitated into housing and commercial spaces, and marketing of those has begun. Warehouse distribution has become a significant part of the region - adding to its need for reliable truck and freight train service. However, manufacturing of both durable and non-durable goods still constitutes an important share of the local employment profile.

Income levels vary significantly between the rural areas of the region and those with a mill manufacturing historic past. The region's 11 mill villages have some of the lowest per capita and median household incomes in Connecticut. These are the locations with the lowest educational achievement levels and higher unemployment. A majority of the residents who have located in the region since the 1980s work outside of the region - including outside the state.

The interdependence of local economies has contributed to growth that somewhat preserves the rural-small urban development patterns of the early twentieth century. Residents of former farming communities like Pomfret and Woodstock can get their gas, groceries and clothing in malls and strip shopping centers in the former industrial corridor, which keeps those retail uses largely out of the rural towns. State-owned forest and parks, land trusts, and municipal regulations seek to also help preserve the rural character of the Quinebaug Valley. Towns



### Households Without Access



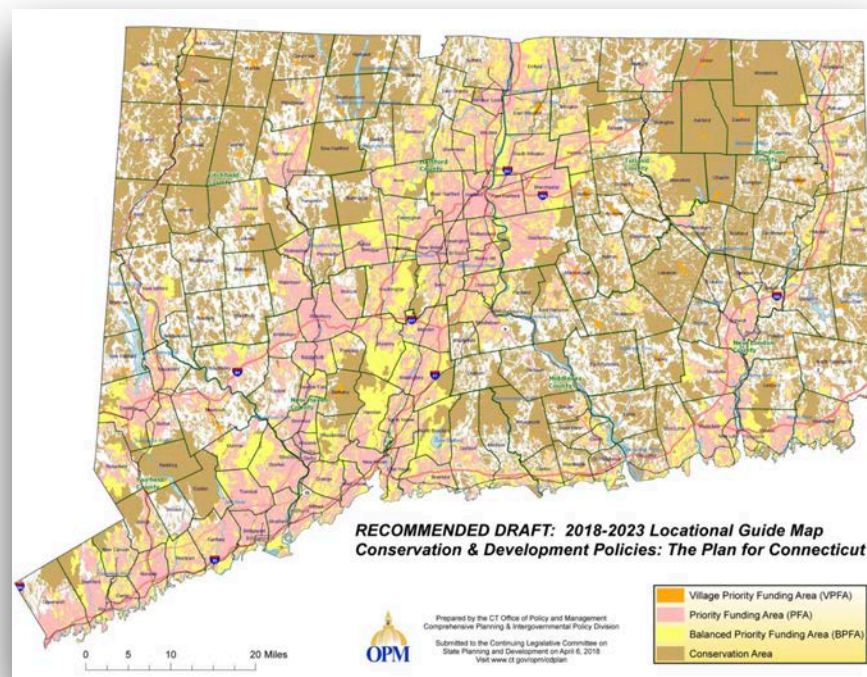
regulate land use through subdivision, wetlands and watercourses and zoning regulations and local ordinances. Land use regulations allow towns to manage development by implementing local plans of conservation and development, which have important effects on local tax bases.

Agriculture in the region is still an important element to the economic well being of the region. During the past 25 years there has been a transition from traditional agriculture (dairy, orchards and poultry - although they still operate) to direct sales to consumers for such things as wine, Christmas trees, and specialty crops. Several of the region's farms, vineyards, and orchards have also exhibited how agriculture may drive future tourism to northeastern Connecticut. "Agri-tourism" is a burgeoning sector of the tourism economy which offers visitors an opportunity to interact with, sample, and learn about, farm production and a region's agricultural history. Programs such as the CT Grown Program and the Connecticut Wine Trail promote many northeastern Connecticut establishments. Agri-tourism also includes bed and breakfasts and scenic drives. Most of the region is part of the Last Green Valley (Quinebaug & Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor) and, also features Route 169, a state highway, and federally designated National Scenic Byway - one of only two in Connecticut and 150 in the United States. Two large agricultural fairs, the Brooklyn Fair—the longest running agricultural fair in the country—and the Woodstock Fair, occur annually, each lasting four days attracting large crowds from Connecticut, New England, and beyond.

Tourism, while not a dominant industry, has opportunities to grow and strengthen. As a rural region, agriculture and outdoor recreation play important roles in the region's tourism economy. Connecticut Route 169 is designated as a National Scenic Byway and has become a significant destination and economic driver for the region. Outdoor recreation, as an element of tourism, includes several clusters and is focused, mainly, around the region's state parks and forests. Hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and camping, in and around the region's forests and parks, attract large numbers of people every year, both from inside and outside of the State.

## Land Use

Residential development during the past twenty-five years has been quite dispersed. Until this time growth and population density was focused on the traditional mill villages and town centers. Overall, population density is amongst the lowest in the state - despite having pockets with relatively high density.



Transportation and land use are strongly linked. The towns of northeastern Connecticut demonstrate two prominent land use patterns: colonial villages settled amidst farmable land and industrial-era mill villages developed along the waters of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers and their tributaries. The following are important factors affecting land use in the region, today:

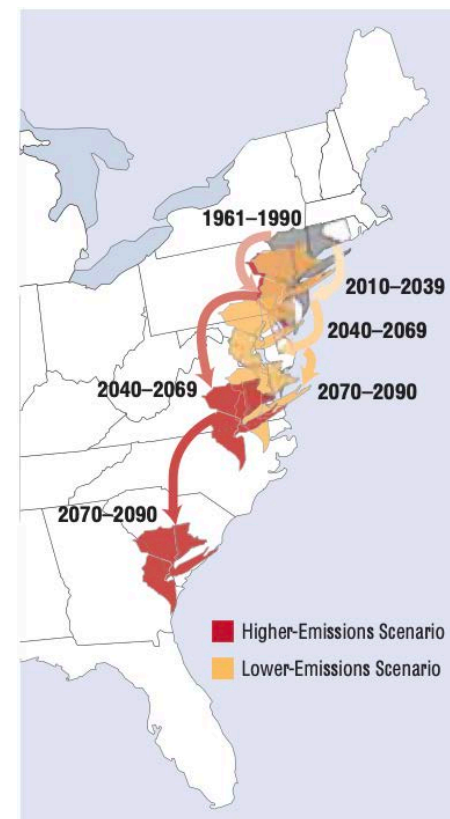
- Land use is planned for and controlled on the local level, and local government is primarily funded through property taxes.
- Towns often seek economic development by attracting and retaining industrial and commercial firms at the expense of natural, cultural and historic resources.
- Residential development has impacted the more rural areas of the region significantly in the past couple of decades (much more so than the mill villages) but the stock market crash of 2008 and the ensuing Great Recession slowed that trend.
- Commercial strip development and large distribution centers have proliferated in some pockets along Interstate 395 and Route 6.
- The “downtown” areas of larger mill villages have been slow to revitalize and in most cases are stagnated.
- The population density of the region is far less than the state as a whole. The shift away from mill-based manufacturing prompted housing development to occur in rural areas, rather than around former employment centers in the mill villages.

Connecticut’s Plan of Conservation and Development contains recommended land use for the state - including priority funding areas. The region has significant areas identified as Priority Funding Areas - which are in proximity to the Interstate 395 corridor.

### **Climate Change**

The Region’s climate is a humid continental climate - meaning there are noticeable extremes between the seasons. “The humid climate is known for its variable weather conditions due to its location in the midlatitudes and the year-round influence of the polar front. This climate lies in the boundary zone between many different air masses, principally polar tropical ones. Polar-type air masses collide with tropical type air masses causing uplift of the less dense and moister tropical air resulting in precipitation. Colliding along the polar front, these air masses turn and swirl into large extratropical cyclones steered by the polar front jet stream lying high in the troposphere. These huge systems

### **Migrating State Climates<sup>8</sup>**



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generally work their way across the surface in a west to east fashion, embedded in the dominate wind flow of the westerly wind belt.”<sup>5</sup>

The Region’s climate is categorized as a “humid continental climate” with four full seasons. Each season brings different weather conditions with regular precipitation and humidity that is relatively high year-round — there is no distinct “wet season” or “dry season”. The Region’s climate, however, appears to be changing, creating challenges in the near term as well as the long term. As referenced by the independent Union of Concerned Scientists’ 2007 publication, *Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast*<sup>6</sup>:

“Since 1970 the Northeast has been warming at a rate of nearly 0.5 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) per decade. Winter temperatures have risen even faster, at a rate of 1.3°F per decade from 1970 to 2000. This warming has been correlated with many other climate-related changes across the region, including: More frequent days with temperatures above 90°F; A longer growing season; Less winter precipitation falling as snow and more as rain; Reduced snowpack and increased snow density; Earlier breakup of winter ice on lakes and rivers; and Earlier spring snowmelt resulting in earlier peak river flows”

Like the rest of the planet, the region is impacted directly and indirectly by climate change. This has direct impacts on the region’s transportation system in terms of design, maintenance and cost. If the predictions hold, the region may have a climate profile more in line with the mid-Atlantic states of New Jersey and Maryland by 2050 and more like Virginia by the end of this century.

## Municipal Structure and Finances

Connecticut does not have county government. Each of the state’s 169 towns operate independently within a statutory framework established by the General Assembly. The towns that make up NECCOG are, by Connecticut standards, small town in terms of population - however, a town’s obligations are essentially the same as Connecticut’s largest municipalities. Most major town government administrative offices are operated by elected First Selectmen, with the exception of Putnam and Killingly which have a mayor/town administrator and a town manager.

## Listing Of Locally Maintained Roads by Town as of December 31, 2020

Town	Total Unimproved Miles	Total Improved Miles	Total Miles
Ashford	15.4	15.19	30.59
Brooklyn	2.31	63.75	66.06
Canterbury	3.7	64.73	68.43
Chaplin	1.46	34.65	36.11
Eastford	0.30	33.28	33.58
Hampton	1.95	41.19	43.14
Killingly	8.63	122.97	131.60
Plainfield	0.61	100.29	101.29
Pomfret	7.22	57.19	64.41
Putnam	0.09	65.25	65.34
Scotland	0.00	28.17	28.17
Sterling	0.28	47.83	48.11
Thompson	2.08	96.01	98.09
Union	0.00	23.71	23.71
Voluntown	2.25	27.65	29.90
Woodstock	24.01	89.68	113.69
NECCOG Region	70.29	911.54	982.22

Source: Connecticut Department Of Transportation - Bureau Of Policy And Planning Office Of Roadway Information Systems Roadway Inventory Section - Listing Of Locally Maintained Roads By Town As Of

<sup>5</sup> Ritter, Michael E. *The Physical Environment: an Introduction to Physical Geography*. 2006. 7/18/12. [http://www.uwsp.edu/geo/faculty/ritter/geog101/textbook/title\\_page.html](http://www.uwsp.edu/geo/faculty/ritter/geog101/textbook/title_page.html)

<sup>6</sup> Frumhoff, P.C., J.J. McCarthy, J.M. Melillo, S.C. Moser, and D.J. Wuebbles. 2007. *Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast: Science, Impacts, and Solutions*. Synthesis report of the Northeast Climate Impacts Assessment (NECIA). Cambridge, MA: Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), Executive Summary, Page X.

Towns in Connecticut have no authority, other than what the General Assembly grants to raise revenue. As currently constituted this means that the primary source of funds are gained through the local property tax. The other primary source of funding comes through a variety of grants from the State to the towns based on differing formulas for each grant. Within each town budget there is the General Government account and the School Budget. The school budget is, in all cases, the dominant cost incurred by our towns.

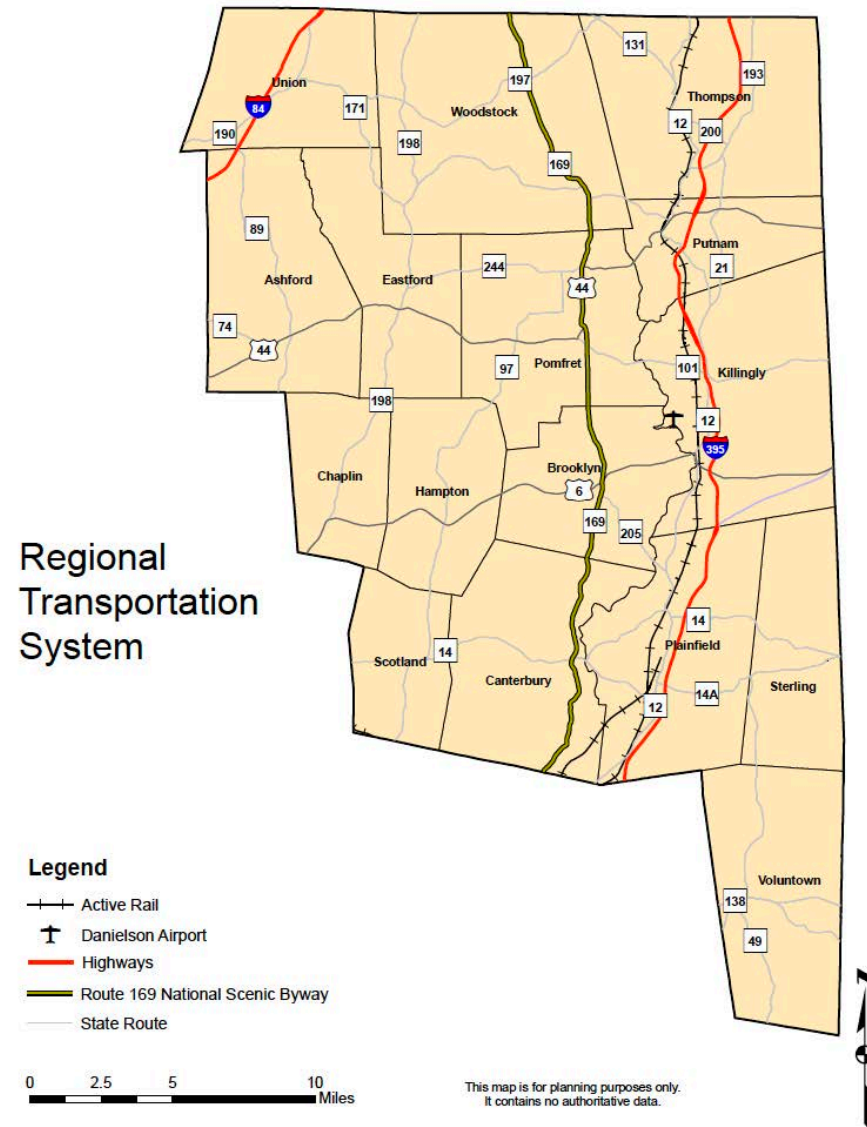
### Transportation

The Region's transportation system is mature, dating back to pre-colonial times, and is very much interconnected with the bordering states of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. NECCOG's transportation profile generally falls within the following categories:

- Roads and Bridges
- Public bus and commercial bus operations
- Aviation
- Freight
- Non-Motorized Transportation

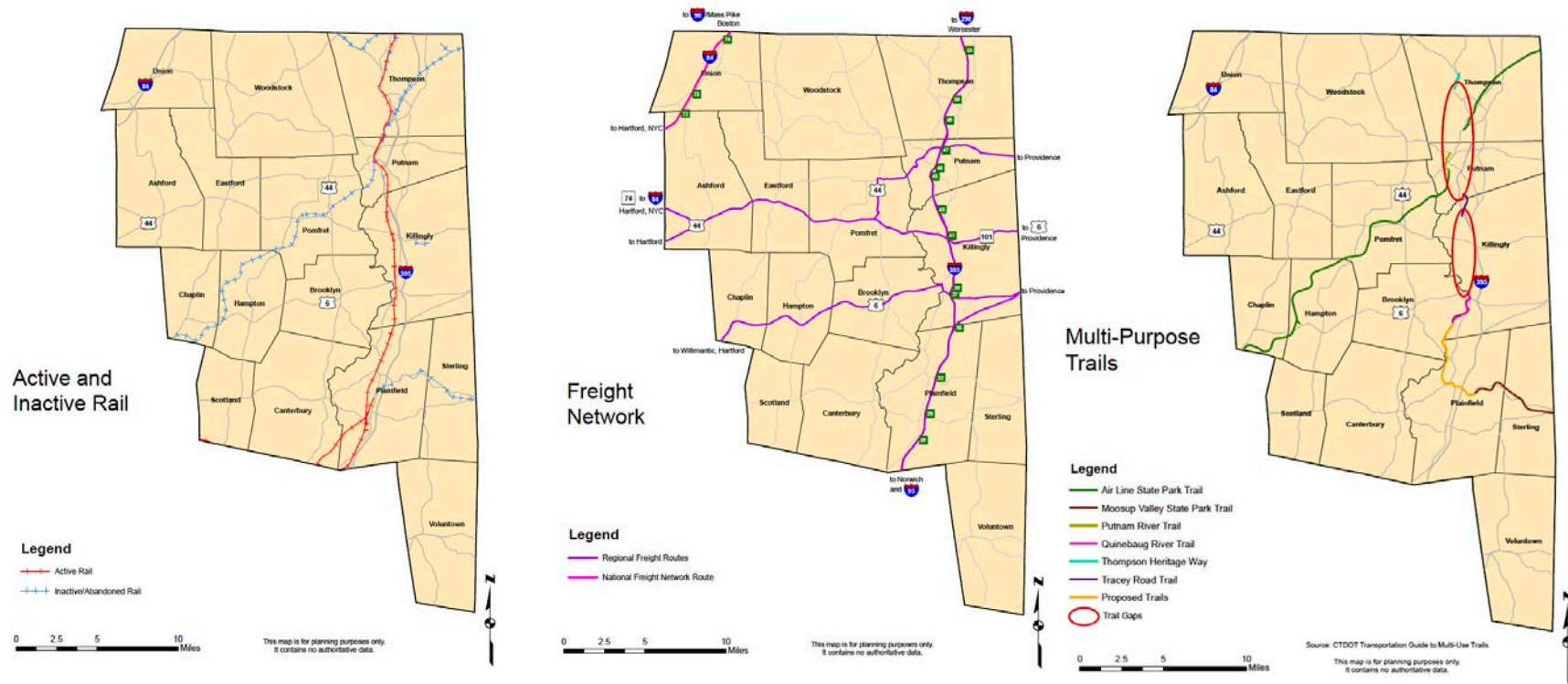
As a rural region, NECCOG's residents are faced with multiple challenges and barriers as it relates to transportation<sup>7</sup>:

- Lack of affordable cars and financing
- Costs of car repair and maintenance as well as access to car repair services/lack of financing for repairs
- Access to public transportation options



<sup>7</sup> Source: Friedman, Pamela. Transportation Needs in Rural Communities. Rural Assistance Center, March 2004. Rural Communities Academy, Rural Transportation: Setting the Context Rural Transportation Roundtable Charleston, West Virginia January 27-28, 2009

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- Funding challenges
- Gas prices
- Getting to jobs, education, training, child care, and access to healthcare
- Lack of drivers' licenses (never had one, revoked, suspended)
- Long commutes to jobs and Insurance costs
- Service is often limited or not available
- Many TANF participants and low-income rural residents rely on family and friends to meet their transportation needs
- Managing multiple stops to and from work activities (childcare, job, and education and training)

- Private services such as taxi services, Uber or Lift need greater customer volume to make their respective business models work. Additionally, the cost to the customer is prohibitive in most cases to justify the ride.

As a region of mostly small towns, with limited tax bases - strongly dependent on the local property tax - there is a constant struggle between 'what ideally could be done, what needs to be done and what can be done.'

Roads form the foundation of the region's transportation infrastructure. "The road network across the region interfaces with every journey made on a daily basis, allowing the population to reach work, education, healthcare and to visit friends and loved ones." Roads dominate the region's transportation system because they are the principle means of travel for residents and commerce. The region has just under 1,000 miles of local roads and another 336 miles of state and federal roads, covering more than 1,300 miles. Maintaining the region's local road system is a major responsibility and expense for the towns. After education, road system management tops the region's spending lists. Towns are constantly challenged to maintain the current road system in a state of good repair within their given appropriation. "During periods of fiscal stress, it can be increasingly difficult for town officials to fund both operations and needed infrastructure maintenance. As a result, towns often defer critical infrastructure needs in order to fund daily services."<sup>8</sup>

The Region has several roadways that have been designated by the State as Scenic Byways. These include Routes 49, 97, 244 and 169 (which also has been designated as a National Scenic Byway). These roadways have become both a focal point for local pride in the beauty of these roadways and the rural character of the Region. These roadways have also become an important part of the Region's economy as visitors from across the Nation are visiting this area. This has helped many bed and breakfast establishments and restaurants to remain viable and for new ones to enter the market. Of particular note is Route 169 – designated as a National Scenic Byway. That designation has brought national and international exposure for this unique 32-mile unique scenic route.

Public transit (public or private) is very limited in the region. For the majority of the rural areas of the region, persons in need of a ride must depend on friend or family member to reach whatever destination is desired.

Public transit in the region is provided by the Northeastern Connecticut Transit District (NECTD) and the Windham Region Transit District (WRTD). There is also a connection to the Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) from NECTD. There are no inter-state connections via transit-based transportation to either Massachusetts or Rhode Island.

Freight has become a larger presence in the region during the past twenty years. Both truck and rail freight are active in the region. In large part this is due to an increase in the number of warehousing operations, the Ash Landfill in Putnam, mineral extraction and manufacturers in need of raw materials. The region has an active freight line, the Providence and Worcester Railroad, of which many businesses depend upon. The rail line, operates north from Massachusetts and south to the shore - a 10.8 mile stretch connects Plainfield to Willimantic.

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<sup>8</sup> Office of the State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability - Towns' Roads Management Plans, March 2015

The region has limited access to air transportation. Danielson Airport in Killingly is owned by the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA), a division of State of Connecticut. Danielson Airport can accommodate only small motorized aircraft and has a single runway that is slightly longer than half a mile but cannot be extended because of the Quinebaug River and surrounding land uses. Toutant Airport in Woodstock is used only for small personal aircraft but is open to the public. There is also one private airport in Woodstock and a private, unpaved airstrip in Ashford.

Nearby Windham Airport is also owned by the CAA and can accommodate some larger aircraft and has two runways; the largest of which is roughly 0.8 miles long. Worcester Regional Airport is the closest airport that can accommodate jet aircraft and that handles freight. Logan International Airport (Boston), T.F. Green Airport (Providence), and Bradley International Airport (Hartford-Springfield) are all within 90 minutes of the region.

The region has an extensive network of multi-purpose trails for hikers, bicyclists, and horse riders providing many opportunities for pedestrians, cyclists, other outdoor enthusiasts and non-motorized users, even in the more rural places. Many of these trails are sanctioned by the State (Airline Trail, East Coast Greenways and trails within state parks and forests) and others are locally maintained by towns, land trusts and others. Of particular note is the Air Line Trail State Park (Air Line Trail) that runs from the Connecticut River Valley, east, and passes through the region in Chaplin, Hampton, Pomfret, Putnam, and Thompson. Portions of the trail are unfinished but in progress in Putnam and Thompson, and the trail follows roads in much of Putnam. Plans and active construction are in place for the extension of the improvements to the trail to extend from Pomfret to Putnam as well as to fill certain gaps in Thompson.

As a region that covers approximately 10% of the state, public transit is extremely challenging given the random dispersion of persons needing rides - often at similar times to different locations. The two transit districts covering the region (WRTD and NECTD) simply do not have the resources (funding, buses and personnel) making it difficult to utilize resources for a comprehensive approach to transportation within the region.

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## FY24/25 UPWP

The NECCOG UPWP is divided into two tasks: (1) Administration and (2) Planning and Technical Assistance

- ▶ **Task 1 - Administration and Management of the Planning Process** - This task includes all administrative functions related to the maintenance of the UPWP. This task addresses coordination with federal, state and local partners (public, private and non-profit). This task also includes data collection, maintenance and development to support the planning process, including Geographic Information System activities. Additionally, this task address all public participation to ensure compliance with FOIA, Title VI and to ensure an inclusionary process.
- ▶ **Task 2 - Planning and Technical Assistance** - This task includes the specific and general activities and services to be provided to NECCOG member towns in terms of studies/research, technical assistance on transportation projects and other related matters.

NECCOG's UPWP embraces and continues to focus activities on the following **ten planning factors**:

1. Support the **economic vitality** of the region, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
  - ▶ **Land Use and Transportation Models**: Includes assessment of projected land uses in the region, identification of major growth corridors and analysis of related transportation improvements. COGs must promote the consistency of their MTP and proposed improvements with State and local planned growth and development patterns.
2. Increase the **safety** of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
  - ▶ **Safety of the Transportation System**: Safety should be an integral part of all planning efforts and project development. Conduct a review of related data, goals, objectives and strategies to promote safety within the State's transportation system. The Strategic Highway Safety Plan should be incorporated into the COGs' Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)s. Efforts should be incorporated into the MTP and will be evaluated in the Regional Transportation Safety Plan, while also assisting with MPO safety targets.
3. Increase the **security** of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
  - ▶ **Security of the Transportation System**: Again, Both MPOs and COGs should review both transit/highway networks and develop appropriate goals and strategies. Review current plans for emergency planning and security elements, identify critical facilities and transportation systems and help define the roles of the various players in promoting security.
4. Protect and enhance the **environment**, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

- ▶ **Air Quality/Environmental Planning:** Work with the Department in providing consideration to the impact of the transportation system on climate change and air quality within the region and make conformity determinations as needed. Planning studies should be coordinated with the NEPA process. Work with the DOT regarding electric vehicle charging infrastructure projects and programs.
- 5. Enhance the **integration and connectivity** of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight.
  - ▶ Connectivity to include access to town/city/neighborhood centers, and first/last mile connections
- 6. Increase the **accessibility and mobility** of people and for freight.
  - ▶ **Freight Planning:** Include in the transportation planning and programs, truck, rail, air and maritime freight transportation considerations, including regional and multimodal options, through information compilation, outreach to stakeholders, and analysis: Maintain a list of freight stakeholders in the (MPO or nonmetropolitan/COG area).
    - Maintain a list of major freight generators in the MPO/COG area.
    - Provide a GIS file of the major freight generators & stakeholders in the MPO/COG area.
    - Provide GIS data for freight supportive land use areas.
    - Maintain a list of system constraints for freight movements (multi-modal), i.e. local geometric challenges, local bridge height, weights, turning radii, etc.
    - Identify opportunities for truck parking locations
  - ▶ Enhance the **integration and connectivity of the transportation system**, across and between modes, for people and freight;
  - ▶ **Complete Streets:** COGs should consider the needs of users of all abilities, demographics and ages (specifically including, but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and vehicle operators) in the transportation planning of all roads. Complete streets can be defined as a means to provide safe access for all users by providing a comprehensive, integrated and connected multi-modal network of transportation options.
- 7. Promote efficient system **management and operation**;
  - ▶ Planning for Operations: COGs should address this for both transit and highway networks with a focus on mobility and safety. Strategies should be developed, which lead to capital and operational improvements needed to preserve the existing system. This will include work on the development and implementation of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) strategies and technologies in the region, as well as travel demand management. This task should include updates to the ITS Architecture, including transit ITS.
- 8. Emphasize the **preservation** of the existing transportation system.
- 9. Improve the **resiliency and reliability** of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.

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- ▶ Climate Change and Resiliency: NECCOG will work in cooperation with the Department and other state and local agencies to improve resilience to extreme storm events and support the Department's climate change and resiliency planning efforts.

10. Enhance **travel and tourism**.

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## **UPWP Task I - Administration and Management of the Planning Process**

### **Background**

Task I includes all elements related to the administration of the UPWP including assurances with regard to public participation and inclusion. For the administration of the UPWP, including the management of allocated funds, NECCOG will employ qualified persons. This work will include the management of UPWP funds in accordance with required rules, procedures and schedules and to ensure that each year a qualified audit firm reviews the fiscal functions of NECCOG. NECCOG will, as it has previously, rigorously adhere to Connecticut's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), NECCOG's Public Participation Policy, Title VI/Environmental Justice/Limited English Proficiency (LEP), ADA, Affirmative Action and other obligations. A fundamental part of NECCOG's UPWP administration is Public participation. NECCOG has a strong commitment to informing and seeking the input of the Region's residents - especially those under-involved populations within the region, including minority, low income, senior citizen and immobile populations for engagement in the planning activities and decisions of NECCOG. This includes the regular posting and copying of CONNDOT or regional notices and reports, posting regularly repeated activities such as STIP amendments and LRTP updates

### **Objectives**

- ▶ To guide and effectively Administer the Region's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP);
- ▶ To meet the needs of the member local governments and all federal and state requirements to maintain effective, efficient, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process;
- ▶ Maintain contact with "interested parties" and key stakeholders throughout the transportation planning process and remove any barriers to full participation to ensure an inclusive public participation process
- ▶ Keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continuous basis

### **Resources**

- ▶ NECCOG Staffing: Executive Director (not financially covered by UPWP funds), Fiscal Director, Director of Regional Planning, Senior Planner,, Regional Engineer, Regional Planners, Regional Grants and Project Coordinator, Regional GIS Technician and Administrative Assistant
- ▶ SPR and FTA grant funds, Local Funds
- ▶ GIS, software and related hardware

## **Activities and Outputs**

### **Activities**

- Unified Plan of Work posted on NECCOG website
- Developing meeting schedules, agendas and minutes of meetings - in accordance with FOIA
  - Have all publications and work products available electronically to the public via the NECCOG website (necog.org) and at the NECCOG offices. The web site will, at a minimum, contain the following information: contact information (mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail), meeting calendars, agendas and minutes, work products and publications (STIP, Long Range Transportation Plans, Unified Planning Work Program, Public Participation Plan and Title VI Environmental Justice Plan).
- Monitor, evaluate and amend the Unified Planning Work Program as needed
- Review and Act, in accordance with required procedures on STIP Actions and Amendments presented to the region by CONNDOT in accordance with Connecticut's Process for Consultation and Cooperation with Local Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas
- Purchase, as required, additional office equipment following guidelines set forth by CONNDOT and NECCOG Procurement Policies. (Ongoing throughout fiscal year)
- Maintain relationships to ensure strong coordination with regional , state and federal partners including but not limited to the FHWA, FTA, CONNDOT, Northeastern Connecticut Transit District, Windham Region Transit District, Southeastern Connecticut Transit District, Worcester Regional Transit Agency, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Agency, Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, Southeast Connecticut Council. Of Governments, Capital Region Council of Governments, CTCOG, regional non-profits, regional philanthropic organizations and other state/federal agencies.
- Complete and submit to CONNDOT/FHWA/FTA required UPWP, LOCHSTP, LOTCIP and other reports and invoices in timely and accurate fashion
- Attend quarterly and as requested meetings with CONNDOT, FHWA and FTA. (Ongoing throughout fiscal year)
- Provide training and continuing education opportunities to staff members in various technical areas through conferences, workshops, and professional development opportunities that may include travel throughout Connecticut and southern New England and, in some cases, national travel. (Ongoing throughout fiscal year)
- Complete Annual Audit in accordance with all Generally Accepted Accounting Standard

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- ▶ NECCOG will continue to develop and implement a strategy for addressing Title VI and Environmental Justice, Equity and Justice the mandates that deal with this topic and advance racial equity to support the underserved and disadvantaged communities in the region.
  - NECCOG will ensure that Transportation Equity is observed throughout all phases of project development.
  - NECCOG will promote social and economic opportunities for minority, low-income, transportation disadvantaged, senior citizen and immobile populations and or limited English proficiency (LEP) populations by providing equitable levels of access to affordable and reliable transportation options based on the needs of the populations being served.
  - Transportation Equity includes transportation accessibility and connectivity for non-motorized users such as pedestrians and bicyclists and persons with mobility challenges (ADA).

To ensure transportation equity, NECCOG, will make a full attempt to understand the needs of the communities they are trying to serve with proposed projects at both regional and neighborhood level affecting the target communities. Additionally, NECCOG will measure, understand and clearly define how projects will benefit underserved communities and what positive impacts projects will have on these communities.

- ▶ NECCOG will seek to engage in the planning activities and decisions of NECCOG business interests, transit providers, freight-haulers, and for inclusion in the planning activities and decisions of NECCOG.
- ▶ Holding public meetings at sites convenient to potentially affected citizens and promoting meetings in a manner appropriate to the population groups from which feedback is desired.
- ▶ Periodically review and assess the effectiveness of the Public Involvement Process to ensure that it reflects the requirements under current Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Planning (23 CFR 450.206): Metropolitan Transportation Planning rule that pertain to a public participation plan, entities that must be granted an opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process, and the documentation of such efforts in the MTPs, the publication of relevant documents and visualization techniques. Any updates to the public involvement process will be submitted to NECCOG's Department liaison.
- ▶ Review Title VI/Environmental Justice Plan as needed;
- ▶ Review Public Participation Plan as needed;

## **Outputs**

- ▶ UPWP actives conducted in accordance with all applicable standards
- ▶ A transparent UPWP that allows for any person or organization to understand the actions of NECCOG - ensuring that public and private stakeholders are well informed as to the planning process
- ▶ In-house staff trained and informed to properly execute the organizations obligations

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- Quarterly Reports, other required reports and annual audit prepared and submitted as required
- Agendas and Minutes of all meetings maintained in accordance with FOIA
- Unified Plan of Work posted on NECCOG website
- Posting of all requested documents from CONNDOT onto the NECCOG website - which will remain compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled users and usable for LEP persons
- Purchases made in accordance with NECCOG Purchasing Policy and CONNDOT requirements
- Title VI/Environmental Justice, Limited English Proficiency Plan, Affirmative Action Plan are current and posted on the website

**Outcomes or Impacts**

- An efficient, accountable, transparent, measurable and cost effective administration of the UPWP with a strong commitment to inclusive public participation - incorporating public views into decision-making - resulting in improved decisions

## UPWP Task II - Planning and Technical Assistance

### Background

NECCOG's role, in all of its programs and services, is to assist its member towns both regionally and individually. This is the same for planning and technical assistance under the UPWP. Our work under this Task can be divided into two elements: individual assistance and regional planning. Individually, the member towns of NECCOG are predominantly small with limited staffing capacity - especially in terms of addressing transportation infrastructure needs and navigating state and/or federal assistance. NECCOG has a long history of providing the expertise needed to our member towns to better enable them to make smart investments and to be successful in securing financial assistance. NECCOG routinely works with CONNDOT staff as a bridge to the towns to move projects forward and to facilitate local-state dialogue. Regionally, there are multiple issues applicable for study through the UPWP. These, in addition to basic transportation study/needs, include Housing, Economic Development, Natural Resources, Agriculture, Public Safety, Land Use and Access to Services.

### Objectives

- ▶ Assist individual member towns with transportation projects or planning
- ▶ Develop or expand priority regional planning activities

### Resources

- ▶ NECCOG Staffing: Executive Director (not financially covered by UPWP funds), Finance Director, Regional Planning Director, Senior Planner, Regional Engineer, Regional Planners, Regional Grants and Project Coordinator, Regional GIS Technician, Interns and Administrative Assistant
- ▶ SPR and FTA grant funds, Local Funds
- ▶ GIS, software and related hardware

### Activities and Outputs

- ▶ Assist member communities with planning and technical assistance related to specific transportation related projects. This includes, but is not limited to, projects under the Transportation Rural Improvement Program (TRIP), Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP), and long-term items such as major corridor studies and long-range plan updates<sup>9</sup>, Rural Minor/Major, Transportation Alternatives Program (PAP), the Local Bridge Program and transportation system improvements to improve mobility, safety, and security for area pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

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<sup>9</sup> NECCOG will send to its CONNDOT, FHWA and FTA liaisons an electronic copy of all completed highway and transit studies for their records and for project closeouts

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- Technical Capacity Enhancement of the Planning Process – NECCOG will have staff responsible for transportation planning attend CONNDOT, FHWA and/or FTA sanctioned training; webinars; and subscribe to appropriate publications.
  - Freight Planning- Review and assess current freight movement within the Region and project future freight transportation needs and demands in the transportation planning process. Freight planning will cover all applicable modes of transportation and will involve the gathering of information regarding local and regional freight facilities, routes and needs - adding this information to the Long Range Transportation Plan.
  - Participate in any Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study undertaken by the Department used to identify transportation issues, along with environmental concerns, in a corridor or a specific location before any project construction phasing is identified, and before specific problems and solutions are known.
  - Transit and Affordable Housing: Identify areas, including reclaimed brownfields, in the vicinity of existing and proposed rail and busway stations and along potential future public transit corridors that may be suitable for the construction of affordable housing.
  - Promote and assist in the application of Smart Growth
- ▶ Support member towns to update their plans plans of conservation and development, housing plans and land use regulations.
  - ▶ In coordination with CONNDOT, FHWA and Census, assist with Census Boundary Smoothing for the Urbanized Areas with the region.
  - ▶ NECCOG was awarded a Safe Streets and Roads for All discretionary grant to develop enhance the recently completed (2021) Regional Safety Plan. NECCOG will provide additional support for the development of this plan through both the Unified Planning Work Program. The Safe Streets and Roads for All will identify strategies and projects specific to improving safety outcomes that include infrastructure improvements, enforcement practices, information sharing and education. The plan will consider the safety needs for all modes of transportation and will include significant public outreach as part of the scope, allowing strong emphasis on equity considerations in developing recommended priorities.
  - ▶ Engage, inform, and facilitate collaboration among member towns, non-profit sector, business community and other public and private sector stakeholders.
  - ▶ Develop, in cooperation with CONNDOT and regional partners, a regional Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan
  - ▶ Coordinate with local, regional, state, and federal government partners to compete for discretionary grant programs, effectively implement provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and advance federal transportation policies and strategies.
  - ▶ Develop a Branding Plan for the Route 169 National Scenic Byway
  - ▶ Maintain and modify as needed the regions Long Range Transportation Plan through a performance-driven, outcome-based approach to planning for for the NECCOG region. NECCOG will work to ensure that the planning process is continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive;

and provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors [23 C.F.R. 450.306(a) and (b)]:

- Support the economic vitality of the region;
  - Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
  - Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
  - Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
  - Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
  - Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight;
  - Promote efficient system management and operations;
  - Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
  - Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system, and reduce or mitigate storm water impacts of surface transportation; and
  - Enhance travel and tourism
- ▶ Continue as the regional information resource by maintaining and improving the economic, demographic, geographic and land use data, including geographically referenced data layers for utilization in regional short-range and long-range planning efforts that is necessary to conduct regionally related transportation planning - and continue to refine GIS information, information delivery and expertise.
- ▶ Continue collaboration with local, regional, state, and federal organizations (member towns, CONNDOT, FHWA, FTA, General Assembly, University of Connecticut, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Department of Economic and Community Development) and other public and private entities/ stakeholders to foster the development of economically/environmentally sustainable transportation system.
- ▶ Assist member towns with IJJA applications and related project development
- ▶ Transit Planning/Assistance:
- Continue to assist NECTD, WRTD and SEAT in coordinating services in tune with the basic mobility needs of the elderly and disabled (FTA-5310) of the region and the exploration of inter-regional connections and needed transportation services to the more than 10,000 veterans residing in the NECCOG region.
  - Continue to assist NECTD in providing services under the Municipal Grant Program to the elderly and disabled of region.
  - Support improved coordination of inter-regional and intra-regional transit and paratransit services.
  - Plan and assist for improvements to bus stops, signage and shelters.

- Use of commuter parking lots: Assist the Department's Bureau of Public Transportation by conducting, on a quarterly basis, counts of the vehicles using the commuter parking lots located in your region.
  - Continue to coordinate and cooperate with the Bureau of Public Transportation on the continuing development of and updates to this plan and on the selection of projects for the various programs that fall under it.
  - Identify areas within the region that either have or could expand affordable housing options - coupled with the enhancement of transit services to make such locations more desirable for such housing.
  - Improved coordination of inter-regional and intra-regional transit and paratransit services.
  - Improvements to bus stops, signage and shelters.
  - Use of commuter parking lots: Assist the Department's Bureau of Public Transportation by conducting, on a quarterly basis, counts of the vehicles using the commuter parking lots located in the region.
  - Transit security.
- ▶ Assist the Department regarding regional goals for the transportation system and in the development of a set of performance measures by which the attainment of these goals may be tracked. Assist the Department with FHWA reporting as needed - including providing any traffic count data to the Bureau of Policy and Planning.

## **Outputs**

- ▶ Direct Technical Assistance to member towns (project development and/or administrative assistance)
- ▶ Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan completion
- ▶ Branding Plan for the Route 169 National Scenic Byway completion or to a logical stage of development for further actions
- ▶ Long Range Transportation Plan completion and implementation or to a logical stage of development for further actions
- ▶ Transportation related planning progress for Freight, Transit, Economic Development, Natural Resources and Natural Hazard Mitigation
- ▶ Identified studies acted on either to completion or to a logical stage of development for further actions and the results posted/published on the NECCOG website
- ▶ Updated Urban Census boundaries

## **Outcomes**

- ▶ A regional transportation planning and assistance program that member towns, the public, partner organizations and business community have confidence that their participation will result in mutual benefits.

## Appendix A - Staffing

Burden Fringe and Overhead Rate (most recent) - 74.52%

Position	Responsibilities	Maximum Hourly Rate
Director of Regional Planning	Lead staff for LOCHSTP, Rural Collector Program TAP and other project specific activities. Lead GIS person for the COG. Planning and technical assistance to towns - including project development	\$80
Senior Planner	Overall administration of the UPWP for the organization, including: direct contact with the Department of Transportation, quarterly and other reporting requirements, planning, technical assistance and ensuring adherence to public participation, environmental justice	\$70
Fiscal Director	Ensures the proper financial reporting in accordance with Department standards and Generally Accepted Accounting Principals. This person may assist in the production of public meetings or similar outreach events.	\$80
Regional Planners	Planning (including GIS work) and technical assistance to towns - including project development	\$60
Regional Engineer	Planning and technical assistance to towns - including project development. This position will be the lead staff for pavement condition inventory and individual project engineering	\$60
Regional Grants and Projects Coordinator	Assist with proper financial reporting and grant management	\$40
Regional GIS Technician	Provide technical support for various mapping and related analysis for planning and project specific work activities	\$40
Administrative Assistant	Provide administrative support.	\$35
Intern or Program Assistant	Planning and technical assistance to towns and NECCOG staff	\$30

## Appendix B - Anticipated Revenues

FY24						
Estimated SPR	Estimated FTA Section 5311	Total Federal	State Match	Local match	Total	Agreement Amount
\$223,877	\$21,000	\$244,877	\$30,610	\$30,610	\$327,097	<b>\$296,487</b>

FY25						
Estimated SPR	Estimated FTA Section 5311	Total Federal	State match	Local match	Total	Agreement Amount
\$223,877	\$21,000	\$244,877	\$30,610	\$30,610	\$327,097	<b>\$296,487</b>

## Appendix C - Planning Costs

BFO - 74.52%

FTA -Program Element	% of Work Program	FY 24	FY 25
Task 1: Administration and Management of the Planning Process	11.9%	\$2,500	\$2,500
Task 2: Planning and Technical Assistance	88.1%	\$18,500	\$18,500
Totals		<b>\$21,000</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>

SPR -Program Element	% of Work Program	FY 24	FY 25
Task 1: Management of the Planning Process	5%	\$14,824	\$14,824
Task 2: Planning and Technical Assistance	95%	\$281,663	\$281,663
Totals		<b>\$296,487</b>	<b>\$296,487</b>

## **Appendix D - Connecticut's Process For Consultation And Cooperation With Local Officials In Non-Metropolitan Areas, Revised June 2021**

### **Purpose and Background**

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department) has, for the past 25 years, involved the Rural Regional Planning Organizations, now referred to as the Rural Council of Governments (rural COGs), in the preparation of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). In 23 CFR 450.210 there is a requirement that each State develop a documented process for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials in the statewide transportation planning process. The following process is designed to fulfill this requirement by documenting the involvement of the rural COGs in the statewide transportation planning process.

Specifically, 23 CFR 450.210(b) states that "The State shall have a documented process(es) for cooperating with nonmetropolitan local officials representing units of general purpose local government and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation that is separate and discrete from the public involvement process and provides an opportunity for their participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. ." There are two rural COGs in the state of Connecticut: the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments. In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, COG Boards are made up of local elected officials; therefore, local governments in the rural areas are involved, and will continue to be involved in the Transportation Planning Process through their participation in the rural COGs.

The Department's Council of Governments (COG) Coordination section serves as the liaison between the Department and the rural COGs and consists of a staff of full-time liaisons. The liaisons are assigned to specific COGs to enable them to develop both ongoing and mutually beneficial relationships with the local elected officials, as well as a good working knowledge of the issues and concerns specific to each region. The liaisons attend COG Transportation and Board meetings and are in continuous communication with the rural COG staff.

The rural COG Boards help the Department to coordinate transportation planning, research, project selection and project development, and also help to resolve inter-municipal transportation issues. Each fiscal year, the Department provides state and federal planning funds to the rural COGs for highway and transit planning. The Department also assists the rural COGs in developing their Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs) that identify the major transportation issues in their regions and outline the planning tasks necessary to address them. In addition, the rural COGs conduct other transportation planning activities, such as undertaking transit and highway corridor studies, and providing technical assistance to local municipalities.

### **Regional Transportation Plan**

To ensure statewide planning coverage, the Department recommends and encourages each rural COG to update its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) every four years, which is consistent with the requirement on the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in non-attainment areas to update their Metropolitan Transportation Plans[23 CFR 450.324(c)]. As the rural COGs develop their RTP's, there is ongoing coordination and consultative review of and comment on the

documents by the Department prior to adoption by the Region. The needs and priorities identified in the RTPs and MTPs are taken into consideration in the development of the State's Long-Range Transportation Plan

### **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program**

The Department drafts the STIP for rural portions of the state, consistent with 23 CFR 450.218(c). Member towns submit projects through their rural COGs for eventual inclusion in the STIP under several federal programs (Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)-Other Urban, STBG-Rural, STBG- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ), and the Scenic Byways Program). The Department scopes the proposed projects and, depending on complexity, need, and funding availability, includes them in the draft STIP. The Department submits the draft STIP to the rural COGs for review and comment on the projects listed for their area. The rural COGs make this document available to the elected officials of their member towns, as well as to the public, for local review and discussion at publicly noticed rural COG meetings. There is also a review and comment period of 30 days for any Statewide Transportation Improvement Program amendments and a 14-day review period for actions submitted to a rural COG by the Department. Any comments forwarded to the Department by the rural COGs are addressed, and the rural portion of the STIP is incorporated into the final STIP.

The Department's Office of Capital Services coordinates with the Rural Transit Districts' Executive Director/Manager and the Department's Bureau of Public Transportation who oversees the transit services provided by the Rural Transit Districts to ensure their capital and operating needs are met. The FTA Section 5311 capital and operating projects are programmed in the Department's 5-year Capital Plan. The projects programmed in the Capital Plan for the Rural Transit District are then submitted to the STIP unit for approval by the rural COGs and eventually incorporated into STIP.

### **Project solicitation**

STBG-Rural Funding is made available to each rural COG through the Department's STP-Rural Major/Minor Collector Program. Funding has been increased from \$1 million to \$2 million per year, and the non-federal share to municipalities has been decreased from 20 percent to 10 percent with the Department absorbing the additional 10 percent. A portion of CMAQ funding is set aside for the rural COGs and MPOs for projects selected on a competitive basis. STBG TAP rural funds are also available to the Rural COGs for projects selected on a competitive basis. It is the rural COG's responsibility to solicit its member towns and to develop projects for all three of these programs.

### **Capital Plan**

The Department develops a yearly draft 5-year Capital Plan which is consistent with the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and also reflects projects and programs authorized by the legislature. The Rural COGs are asked to review and comment on this draft list of projects to continue the consultation process on the selection of projects for the outer years of the Plan.

### **Additional Consultation**

The Department uses other methods to have ongoing and recurring consultation with rural COGs. It holds rural COG and the MPO Quarterly Coordination Meetings at the Department with an option to participate remotely and holds monthly COG Teleconference Meetings during the other eight months of the year. These meetings provide a forum for the rural COGs, MPOs, the CTDOT and the USDOT to discuss and find solutions to common problems and present

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and discuss relevant information. The Department requests that each rural COG review and comment on the draft Statewide LRTP and on the Department's draft Capital Plan. In each of its four Districts, the Department has a Municipal Systems Action Team (MSAT) that assists the municipalities with the construction administration required on Federally funded projects.

## Appendix E - Performance Based Planning and Programing

"Performance-based planning and programming applies performance management principles to transportation system policy and investment decisions, providing a link between management and long-range decisions about policies and investments that an agency makes in its transportation system. Performance-based planning and programming is a system-level, data-driven process to identify strategies and investments. Long-range planning helps to define key goals and objectives and to analyze and evaluate strategies and scenarios for meeting goals. Connecting performance measures to goals and objectives through target setting provides a basis for understanding and sharing information with stakeholders and the public.

With the 2012 passage of the Federal surface transportation legislation, "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act" (MAP-21), performance-based planning has taken on even greater significance. MAP-21 calls for statewide and metropolitan planning processes to incorporate a more comprehensive performance-based approach to decision making.

The objectives-driven, performance-based approach to planning for operations is an example of performance-based planning focused on one area: operations. The same processes and principles are used in both planning for operations and performance-based planning. The planning for operations approach falls under the larger planning activity of performance-based planning. By expanding the objectives-driven, performance-based approach for operations to other areas such as safety, asset management, freight, and others, a region or State can build a comprehensive performance-based planning process."

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration - [https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/plan4ops/performance\\_based.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/plan4ops/performance_based.htm)

