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FY 2015–2016

**Naugatuck Valley
Council of Governments
Annual Report**

The 2015-2016 Annual Report of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments



A forum for chief elected officials to discuss issues of common concern and to develop programs to address them on a regional level.

The Council of Governments (NVCOG) is the regional planning organization for the Naugatuck Valley Region. The NVR, consisting of 19 municipalities in the greater Waterbury area, is one of the nine state-designated planning regions in Connecticut. The mission of the NVCOG is to support the needs of its member communities, and promote innovation, economies of scale, and regional cooperation. The NVCOG strives to implement and create programs and projects that better align the Naugatuck Valley to a changing future. This report details the ongoing accomplishments of the organization over the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

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Letter From Chairman of the Board



Mayor Neil O'Leary

It has been a fantastic year for the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments. We worked hard to help every city and town in our region. Since the consolidation of the new organization in early 2015, office renovations have been completed and the new space fully reflects both the impressive work that has been accomplished and projects we continue to undertake every day.

The collaboration of all member communities and external partners are crucial to this success. Local residents can be secure in our mission to move the region forward for their benefit through the expansion of programs and facilitation of infrastructure improvements. Among our recent accomplishments are facilitating more than \$20 million in local road funding through the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP), which is used to complete needed rehabilitation and enhancement of our local roads. We continue to support the Regional Brownfields Partnership and champion it as a model for our entire state in the remediation and repurposing of contaminated sites, with nearly \$1 million in grants announced during the past year.

As many Millennials desire proximity to lower Fairfield County and New York City but are restricted by the high cost of living there, they are seeking more affordable housing. This provides our region a unique opportunity in the coming decade, as these young people recognize the value the greater Naugatuck Valley offers. We must leverage this increased interest in our region as a place to work, learn and play to guide the continued development of key transportation infrastructure and encouragement of private investment streams into our region.

While our respective municipal budgets are stretched further with each year, we are working to determine greater economies of scale for members. The introduction of our municipal shared services programming was established with this very goal in mind. This innovative approach strives to coordinate services with communities across a regional scale to reduce costs to cities and towns and we will provide new opportunities in this regard in the coming year.

I thank my fellow municipal leaders and NVCOG staff for their incredibly dedicated and continued efforts towards achieving the goals set out by our member communities and working to make our region better than ever. We look forward to building on the successes of the last year and a-half.

Mayor Neil O'Leary
Chairman of the Board

NVision Corridor Conference



Mix-Master Rendering

The NVCOG hosted a conference in late January at the Palace Theater in downtown Waterbury. The conference focused on the need to improve and reclaim the Region’s existing infrastructure to enhance economic development and create sustainable and livable communities. The focus was on I-84, Route 8 and Waterbury branch line corridors.

The NVision Conference 2020 featured presentations from Commissioner James Redeker of the CT DOT, Deputy Commissioner Tim Sullivan from CT DECD, Waterbury Mayor Neil O’Leary, and State Comptroller Kevin Lembo. In addition, Senator Chris Murphy participated by providing an address via video.

Two panels were convened. The first involved discussions on “Developing Economically Sustainable Communities” and the second consisted of a speaker series talking about “Linking the Region.”

NVCOG developed and organized several of the presentations, conducted event planning, set the agenda, and confirmed speakers. 150 stakeholders registered for the conference.

A link to the presentation can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

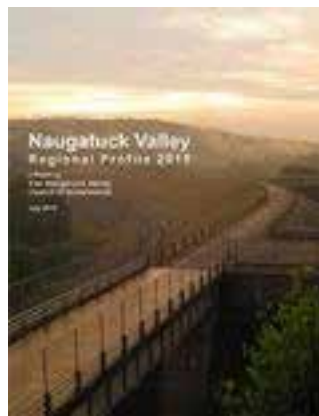
An aerial drone video of the region’s key transportation elements and problems within the corridors was developed for the conference. View [HERE](#).

Regional Data

The NVCOG provides census and other statistical information to municipal, non-profit, and private organizations in a variety of forms, including its website. A link to regional information can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

This past year the NVCOG has undertaken the updating of the Naugatuck Valley Regional Profile 2015. The document organizes and presents pertinent data regarding the NVCOG region from the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey, in part providing 5 year projection of demographic changes for the period. The update was recently completed and distributed to municipal officials in the region. A link to the 2015 profile can found by clicking [HERE](#).

In addition to the Regional Profile, the NVCOG collected economic data from a variety of sources and collated the information into an Economic Profile for the Naugatuck Valley region. A draft report was prepared and is currently under review.



Municipal Shared Services



Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Sharing services and purchasing among municipalities were identified as priorities in NVCOG's formation. Reducing costs and increasing efficiencies for programs are often the primary benefits of such programming. The former Council of Governments Central Naugatuck Valley has administered a regional household hazardous waste program for many years, the merged NVCOG continues the efforts of this program. The program exists to facilitate the proper disposal of hazardous materials through providing communities with the appropriate disposal channels.

19,580 gallons of hazardous waste, including flammable and corrosive materials, were collected in 2015 from 1,365 households.

The organization has worked during the past year on several initiatives designed to ensure that the shared service programs to be provided meet the needs of as many of its 19 municipalities as possible. In this regard: the NVCOG hired a municipal shared service coordinator, established a municipal shared services committee and subcommittees, conducted extensive interviews and online surveys with mayors, first selectmen, top administrative and finance staff.

In December 2015, staff applied for a Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) grant from the Office of Policy and Management for funding to conduct a study of the consolidation of multiple municipal wastewater treatment plants in order to bring about a reduction in user fees related to state and federally mandated improvements. In June 2016, OPM announced NVCOG will receive \$1.3 million to conduct this study. The grant was the largest of any awarded to a council of governments in this round of funding.



Derby Water Pollution Control Facility

Shared service programs for Information Technology (IT), regional parcel mapping and revaluation are scheduled to be introduced in early FY '17. In addition, NVCOG staff are collaborating with other Connecticut councils of government in preparing regional programming to help municipalities comply with new federal MS4 permitting standards

MS4 Requirements and Low Impact Development



Ansonia Downtown

The CT DEEP adopted a new [Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems \(MS4\) General Permit](#) on January 20, 2016. The new permit requirements become effective July 1, 2017 and apply to all MS4 municipalities partially or entirely within Urbanized Areas, as determined by the 2010 Census. Stormwater discharges are regulated by the US EPA, and, as such, the MS4 permit is federally mandated. The CT DEEP manages the program in Connecticut.

The NVCOG has been working to identify portions of the permit that require legal authorities to be established, and searching for inconsistencies between current municipal regulations and the MS4 requirements where new frameworks would have to be established. The three minimum control measures that require legal authorities are:

- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction site stormwater runoff control
- Post-construction stormwater management in new development or redevelopment

The post-construction stormwater management section includes language requiring that municipalities:

- Remove regulatory barriers to implementing Low Impact Development (LID) practices
- Require developers consider LID practices before other practices

To aid towns in compliance with these new permit requirements the NVCOG is working towards the development of specific action plans for each municipality in the Region, and identifying where towns will need to make changes to local regulations. This is being done with the specific intention of reducing barriers to low

impact development practices within local regulations. The action plans will include an assessment to the degree to which local regulations allow or encourage the consideration of LID practices as identified by UConn CLEAR and NEMO in their publication, "[Developing a Sustainable Community](#)." And, if barriers exist, how to eliminate those barriers. This assessment is underway and substantial progress was made during the summer of 2016. Upon completion of the municipal action plans, the NVCOG will present findings and proposed actions to meet the MS4 requirements to local planning and zoning commissions. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the 2016 calendar year.



Transportation Programs

Metropolitan Planning Organizations



Route 8

The NVCOG serves as the host agency for the Central Naugatuck Valley MPO and the lower Valley portion of the Greater Bridgeport and Valley MPO, and conducts the federal metropolitan planning process for the respective MPOs. During the year, the following activities were completed:

- 7 meetings of the CNV MPO were held
- 6 meetings of the GBVMPO were held
- Worked on efforts to re-designate the GBVMPO to incorporate the four lower Valley municipalities into the CNV MPO

The current structure of the MPO boundaries within the jurisdiction of the Naugatuck Valley region creates several administrative burdens and inconsistencies with the federal metropolitan planning process. The NVCOG is working to rectify the misalignment of the planning boundaries and create a Naugatuck Valley MPO that is coterminous with the NVCOG planning region.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

During the year, the NVCOG maintained financially constrained TIPs for both MPOs and processed project amendments and Administrative Actions:

- 23 Amendments to the CNV MPO TIP
- 39 Actions to the CNV MPO TIP
- 22 Amendments to the GBV MPO TIP
- 23 Actions to the GBV MPO TIP

Transit Oriented Development - Model TOD Codes



Beacon Falls Downtown

The NVCOG completed a guide on transit oriented development (TOD) that focused on rail stations areas of the four former Valley Council of Governments municipalities. The document explores many of the land use and financial tools available to municipal governments to encourage development that is complementary to and supportive of expanded public transportation services. It focuses on those neighborhoods most favorable to TOD along the Waterbury Branch Line (WBL), examines existing zoning regulations, catalogues many of the existing zoning tools that are being used across Connecticut, as well as across the nation, identifies financial tools that could be used to promote future growth, and provides a model TOD overlay zone appropriate for adoption by the municipalities along the WBL.

Although this document is part of a greater planning initiative from the lower valley and Fairfield County, the content is applicable to all towns along the Waterbury Branch Line. For municipalities without access to the train, much of this document can be used to inform development decision intended to support existing bus lines. The document has been approved by the Regional Planning Commission and will be presented to the NVCOG board during the September meeting. Once the board approves the final document a link will be found by clicking [HERE](#).

Triennial Review

In April of this year, the Federal Transit Administration conducted its Triennial Review of NVCOG's federally-funded transit operations and development. The review is mandated by federal regulations (Title 49) and must be performed once every three years. The purpose of this process is both to ensure that NVCOG is fully compliant with FTA regulations, and to assist NVCOG with any potential improvements to its operations. The NVCOG completed the "Grantee Information Request and Review Package" in advance of the on-site visit and provided program and policies documents related to the NVCOG's transit capital program.

From this process, FTA made findings for corrective action in four areas. Most of these findings called for small process changes that were enacted during or shortly after the review process. Remaining corrective actions in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program are under review and expected to be implemented by the end of September.

Transportation - LOTCIP

LOTICIP

Since the inception of the state-funded Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) in 2014, the NVCOG has helped allocate nearly \$9 million for capital improvements throughout the Region.

Approved projects include:

- Wakelee Avenue Full Depth Reconstruction in the City of Ansonia (In Design)
- Spring Street Repaving in the Borough of Naugatuck (In Design)
- Waverly Road Bridge over the Farmill River in the City of Shelton (In Design)
- Sylvan Lake Road Reconstruction in the Town of Watertown (In Design)
- Traffic Signal Detector upgrades in the City of Bristol (Final Design Completed)
- River Road Bridge Reconstruction over the Pomperaug River in Southbury (Under Construction)
- Bemis Street Reconstruction in the Town of Plymouth (Under Construction)
- Mountain Road Resurfacing in the Town of Cheshire (Completed)

Demand for this program within the Region is very strong. In August, 2015, the NVCOG solicited new project proposals and 16 new project pre-applications were received. In response, the NVCOG hired a new Regional Transportation Engineer to assist member municipalities in refining project scopes and reviewing applications. The Program strives to ensure complete, accurate and regionally significant projects. To date, an additional eight project applications are currently being reviewed by the CT Department of Transportation for funding. The program is expected to grow in coming years as NVCOG staff works with municipalities to complete new applications for a broad array of road, bridge, bicycle and pedestrian enhancement and safety projects. The map to the left is an interactive map depicting all current LOTICIP projects by phase, to see a printable map of current projects click [HERE](#).

Transportation Projects

Route 34 Reconstruction - Main Street Derby



Rt 34 Derby Downtown

Route 34 is a primary artery through much of the lower valley and operates as a key connection between the downtowns of Shelton and Derby. Route 34 also serves as the 'Main Street' for Derby and high traffic volumes, congestion and alignment pose several concerns. The reconstruction and major widening of Route 34 through downtown Derby was initiated several years ago- to combat congestion and improve safety for both motorists and pedestrians along this stretch of road, A critical element of the project is the understanding that, as the City's 'Main Street,' the design needs to remain cognizant of the dual purposes of addressing traffic operations and facilitating and encouraging pedestrian movement and bicycle use. The NVCOG administers the design of the project and serves as the liaison between the City, CTDOT and designer. During the year, the NVCOG met with the City and the state to ensure the project includes elements to support these multi-modal uses, restricts the speeds of traffic and deploys infrastructure appropriate for a downtown main street.

The Preliminary Design plans have been submitted to the NVCOG on for review and reflect comments provided during a public comment period. The NVCOG helped developed a concept for installing a bi-directional cycle track and wide pedestrian space along the south of the roadway. Design completion is scheduled for December 2017, with construction starting in early 2018.

To view a visualization of the reconstruction click [HERE](#).

Derby-Shelton Bridge Enhancements

The Derby-Shelton bridge carries Bridge Street (State Road 712) over the Housatonic River between downtown Shelton and Downtown Derby. The bridge further represents the primary crossing of the Housatonic River.

This project will improve the bridge's cosmetic appearance, providing an attractive gateway to the downtown areas of Derby and Shelton. Improvement to the bridge will improve traffic flow as well as fortify pedestrian and cycling infrastructures through the widening of sidewalks and the inclusion of bike lanes. These enhancements will enhance connections to both downtowns' appearance and functionality in conjunction with the planned Rt. 34 enhancements.

The project is an outgrowth of a previous visual design study sponsored by the Derby Shelton Rotary Club and a study completed by the NVCOG that looked at the pedestrian and bicycle connections between downtown Shelton and the Derby-Shelton rail station. During the year, the State Bond Commission authorized \$2 million for recommended improvements. The NVCOG prepared project summaries and support documents that were presented to the Bond Commission. With the state funds available, the NVCOG worked with the CTDOT in securing additional federal funds and initiate the project. Currently, the project is waiting for the design authorization from CTDOT. The NVCOG will be responsible for overseeing and administering the design phase.

Transportation Planning Studies

The Waterbury Area Bus Study (WATS)



The NVCOG is completing the “Waterbury Area Bus Study” (WATS) to identify short and long term enhancements to the existing fixed route bus system (CT Transit-Waterbury). A consultant is conducting the study under the direction of the NVCOG and a steering committee comprising various local stakeholders.

A draft market study published this year to the project website showed that the bus system is essential to the local economy and that, relative to other Connecticut systems, is very efficient. Additionally the draft analysis and recommendation for short-term recommendations was published. Recommendations were made to address fundamental service issues, including coverage gaps, reliability and underperforming routes. The assessment of possible long term changes was also completed during the year is currently under review. Findings will suggest needed enhancements to provide residents of greater Waterbury with local fixed-route bus service that is comparable to the services provided in other cities in Connecticut.

More information and project notes can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

Route 67 Spot Improvements, Seymour CT



Rt 67 Seymour

The Preliminary Engineering study is assessing the need for and feasibility of implementing various spot improvements along Route 67 from the intersection of Route 67 and Franklin Street, to just west of the intersection with Swan Avenue. The study, and the subsequent recommended improvements are designed to address heavy congestion and safety concerns through this corridor.

The study is an update of previous study that looked at the entire corridor. The Preliminary Engineering study was completed in March of 2016. Milone & MacBroom, Inc. was the design consultant. A link to the preliminary design study can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

Accident history, traffic volumes and level of service at both signalized and unsignalized intersections were among the items studied. Pedestrian patterns were also reviewed. The report offers design alternatives and preliminary cost estimates to improve traffic and safety along the corridor while considering the impacts to and the needs of the adjacent residences and businesses, future redevelopment, and other interested or affected stakeholders. The draft report and recommendations were presented and reviewed by the public during a series of stakeholder and public outreach meetings held in the fall of 2015. Comments were received and incorporated into the final report, as appropriate. The NVCOG is working with the CTDOT with the initiation of the design phase of the project.

Land Use Planning and Referrals



NVCOG Land Use Mapping

The NVCOG operates to serve the needs of the communities that it represents. This strongly relates to supporting regional cooperation and acting as council to the communities, including focus on land use issues. This facet relates to the review of proposed amendments and changes to local zoning regulations and proposed development of land within 500 feet of a municipal border. The focus of the review is on how the proposed changes may result in implications for and affect adjacent and surrounding communities. The NVCOG, through its Regional Planning Commission (RPC), supports and provides guidance to the communities in the establishment and revision of mandated planning documents to aid in articulating a message that reflects each community's needs and concerns.

Referral Process

State statutes require that the NVCOG is notified of any amendment to local zoning regulations and maps, and land use developments within 500 feet of municipal boundaries within the Region. In addition, member municipalities as well as those communities that border the Region are required to refer updates and amendments to their Plans of Conservation and Development (POCD) to the NVCOG for review and comment. While this notification is required, the NVCOG's review and comments are advisory and designed to add a regional perspective to the proposed changes. The NVCOG also receives referrals from municipalities adjacent to its members.

68 referrals were completed by the NVCOG in the past year.

In addition, the NVCOG receives requests from municipal planning and zoning commission members and municipal planners for land use reviews and planning advice. The NVCOG conducts research and prepares memoranda. Once research is completed, the NVCOG shares its findings with the balance of its member municipalities.

Update of POCDs



Southbury Farm

Municipal Plans of Conservation and Development serve as guiding documents for the direction and mission of a community over the following decade and strongly informs the regional POCD prepared by the NVCOG, and ultimately the statewide POCD. The NVCOG traditionally operates in an advisory role with the creation of local reports, providing mapping assistance and technical support.

The NVCOG, during the past year, worked on updates of the POCDs for the communities of Derby, Seymour, and Ansonia. The POCD for Derby was completed and adopted by the city in June 2016. A link to the POCD can be found by clicking [HERE](#). A draft of the Seymour POCD has been completed and was recently presented to local planning and zoning staff for review. A link to the draft report can be found by clicking [HERE](#). The POCD update for Ansonia has not been started but is expected to be completed June of 2017.

Regional Brownfields Partnership (RBP)



The NVCOG brownfield program is guided by the Regional Brownfields Partnership, a network of municipalities and community organizations in west central Connecticut.

Strategic Assessment and Planning

Working closely with federal, state, and municipal leaders and staff, the NVCOG brownfields team utilizes and develops inventive solutions to the legal and financial challenges that have long plagued sites with existing environmental conditions.

Brownfields Grants

This fiscal year, the NVCOG received two assessments grants through the state of Connecticut's brownfield programs for projects in Derby and Beacon Falls. The NVCOG was additionally awarded a highly competitive \$400,000 assessment grant through EPA, and received \$427,000 in supplemental funding that will be made available for site cleanup through the NVCOG's EPA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). This funding forms the foundation of the NVCOG's brownfields services and will allow our brownfields team to continue providing assessment, planning, and remediation services to eligible municipalities of the RBP.

Greenway Planning



Derby Greenway

The NVCOG plays a major role in non-motorized transportation planning for the Region. Central to a safe and convenient inter-regional bicycle and pedestrian network is the Naugatuck River Greenway (NRG), a planned 44-mile multipurpose trail adjacent to the Naugatuck River from Torrington to Derby. When complete, the Greenway will link 11 municipalities, reclaim the Naugatuck River for recreation, provide an alternate mode of transportation, drive tourism and economic development, and improve the quality of life for residents. Several sections of the greenway have been completed and are open to the public, and progress is being made to complete the remainder.

Significant progress has been made in planning for the NRG in the last year. Working with the NRG Steering Committee, the NVCOG developed a priority funding framework that identifies the limits of each section of trail, details the stage of planning or construction of each, and identifies sections that are priorities for future funding. The list was published as a report, to view the report click [HERE](#) and the interactive map version of the report is embedded on the main stage to your left.

The Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee



The Naugatuck River

The NVCOG provides administrative support to the Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee (NRGSC). The mission of the NRGSC is to help coordinate the planning and construction of the NRG. The committee is comprised of representatives from all 11 communities along the planned route, plus federal, state and regional agencies, nonprofit and community organizations, and other stakeholders. The National Park Service awarded the NRGSC with a Conservation Hero award in 2016 for work done to help reclaim the Naugatuck River for recreation, a great honor! More information can be found through clicking [HERE](#).

During the year, six meetings of the NRGSC were held. The NVCOG developed the meeting agendas, arranged presentations, and prepared the reports of meetings. In addition, the NVCOG developed and maintained the NRG progress map.

NRG Economic Impact Study

The NVCOG has partnered with the University of Connecticut (UConn) and the Connecticut Center for Economic Assessment (CCEA) to conduct the Naugatuck River Economic Impact Study. The study will provide towns along the NRG with information and guidance regarding local economic impacts that can result from the completion of sections of the trail. To date, the study Team has conducted long-duration counts of usage along the NRG at five locations, intercept surveys, and focus group meetings. A draft report was completed that monetizes the value of the NRG in terms of construction cost, consumer surplus, amenity and health benefits, direct expenditures, and indirect and induced economic impacts. The focus groups were held to learn best practices for trail development and operation from stakeholders. Three focus groups were convened. A final report was prepared that documents the results of these meetings. An intercept survey was developed and completed along open sections of the NRG and on segments of the Middlebury Greenway and the Sue Grossman Trail in Torrington. The survey included questions on how often respondents used the trail, how much money they spent using the trail and other demographic information. Both weekday and weekend dates were surveyed. In total, 386 surveys were completed.

It is intended that, when completed, the document will demonstrate the strong potential for return on investment on the trail in broader ways than direct spending, highlighting the far-reaching benefits that will help our communities thrive. The NVCOG will also extract the macro economic benefits from the report and prepare municipal-level highlights to guide decision-makers as they consider investing in constructing the NRG. More information regarding the economic impact study and the role that the study has on positioning of the NRG click [HERE](#).

NRG Uniform Signage Manual

The NRG is long and relatively complex, passing through 11 distinct municipalities and consisting of several completed and open sections, designated walking paths, and planned alignments. Prospective and current users need a clear and consistent wayfinding and signage system. Recognizing this need the NRGSC and the NVCOG are working on developing a uniform and common style manual to promote a shared identity among the 11 communities of the greenway corridor and build public awareness of the river as a regional and national treasure. The manual will provide specifications, engineering drawings and illustrations, defined color pallet, font style, and material and installation instructions for a family of trail-related signs. As part of this project, the logo for the NRG has been modified color scheme has been adopted. The suggested design elements are under development and review.

Geographic information Systems Services (GIS)



Zoning

GIS staff plays a strong supporting role in most projects undertaken by the NVCOG, as well as fulfilling specific requests made by member communities and regional partners. Maps for municipal POCDs were prepared for Cheshire, Oxford, and Seymour. Assistance was given to Wolcott in the preparation of an Economic Profile, and a community resources map was created for DataHaven. Updates to regional digital land use data were completed using aerial photography and google street view. Transportation mapping included accident locations, congested highway segments, project locations, and proposed routes for the Waterbury to Torrington recently offered bus route.

The focus of the GIS program has historically been analysis and production of static maps for reports and presentations. More recently, with the expansion of the ArcGIS Online platform efforts are under way to expand programming to display map data that more readily allows user interaction, such as the map on the left. This map shows bus routes, major employers, and when zoomed in, bus and rail stops. More information can be accessed by clicking on the employer points or bus routes. It is our aim to supplement the creation of static maps with production of interactive resources including full integration of reports into a web-mapping format. This document represents some of the potential this format has for conveying information as ArcGIS Online Storymap.

Emergency Planning



The NVCOG emergency planning activities address two types of disaster events:

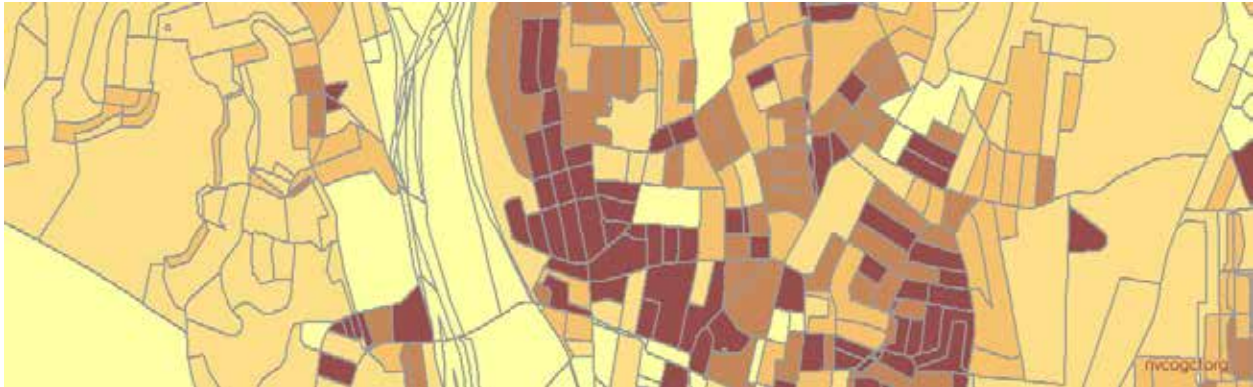
- Weather-related events - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hazard mitigation and resilience
- Terrorism-related events - State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) programs - Regional Emergency Planning Teams (REPT) and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)



The NVCOG members participate in REPT regions 2, 3 and 5. As of January 2016, there were five active CERT's, one of which was a two (2) town consolidated team. Over the past year, the NVCOG has participated in the following emergency planning activities:

- Training regarding small and large animal rescue and sheltering.
- Economic resiliency for small businesses during disaster recovery.
- FEMA emergency management training for senior municipal officials.
- Census of CERT teams active in 2015.
- Assisting municipalities with Homeland Security Grant Program memorandums of agreement.
- Assisting municipalities in prioritizing funds for regionally shared emergency equipment.
- Sharing information about regional, state and federal training opportunities.

Civil Rights



Demographic Banner

The NVCOG strives to engage the public in regional planning and project development. The NVCOG also works to engage historically disadvantaged populations to ensure planning and projects work to the benefit of all residents. To that end, the following programs have been developed or are under development:

Title VI Program

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act ensures that meaningful access to participate in government affairs is available to racial and ethnic minorities, including those who do not speak English proficiently. During the year, the NVCOG updated and revised its Title VI Plan. It incorporates the most recent FTA regulations and requirements. The NVCOG endorsed the Title VI Plan at its March, 2016 meeting.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program (DBE)

The NVCOG DBE Program aims to provide businesses owned by disadvantaged groups an equal playing field when competing for and winning contracts with our agency. In response to findings from the Triennial Review, the NVCOG developed new DBE goals and determined appropriate race-neutral measures.

Environmental Justice Program

The NVCOG Environmental Justice Program will evaluate the NVCOG planning activities and projects to ensure minority and low-income residents are not negatively impacted by building relationships with these communities and developing a framework for discussing project alternatives. During the year, the NVCOG initiated an update of its EJ program and completed an assessment to identified populations of concern and their location. The assessment was based on the most recent data available from the American Community Survey (US Bureau of the Census). A draft of the NVCOG Environmental Justice Program was prepared.

Public Participation Policy

The NVCOG is working on drafting an official public participation policy. The intent of the finished document will be to provide the public an accessible, proactive and predictable means of engaging with the NVCOG

Financial Statements

The NVCOG receives funding from federal departments, including the US Department of Transportation and Environmental Protection Agency, to conduct its regional planning programs and implement various assessment projects. State resources are provided to the NVCOG to assist municipalities deliver services to residents, expand voluntary cooperation among member communities, and plan the future land patterns that promote efficient transportation systems, sustainable land use, preserve natural resources, and stimulate effective economic development. Member municipalities support these planning efforts through direct contributions to the NVCOG. Their membership dues help leverage the NVCOG's ability to receive grant funds from various federal programs.

As is evident from the NVCOG's accomplishments presented in this Annual Report, funding support from all three levels of government are effectively and efficiently used to strengthen our member communities, advocate for the region and our cities and towns with the State and Federal governments, ensure environmental sustainability, revitalize core areas, and save tax dollars through shared services and direct assistance.

The most recently completed audit of the NVCOG's revenues and expenses is for State Fiscal Year 2015, which ended on June 30, 2015. The financial audit for SFY 2016 will be completed in December of this year.

Revenues from all sources totaled \$934,979 in SFY 2015. Federal sources were provided from the US DOT to support the NVCOG's metropolitan transportation planning as required by federal transportation acts and from the EPA as part of the NVCOG's administration and oversight of the Brownfields Partnership. State Grant-in-Aid (SGIA) funds were provided to the NVCOG to conduct required regional planning and to support the merger of the Valley and Central Naugatuck Valley COGs. Contributions from local governments totaled \$114,065, to support NVCOG functions and the Brownfields Partnership.

Overall, expenses totaled \$990,987, which exceeded revenues by \$56,008. The shortfall was attributable to the expenses to merge the two agencies and renovate the office space to accommodate the large staff. In addition assets were transferred from the former Valley COG to new agency.

Special Activity Grants Awarded & Announced

\$2.55M announced over the past year.

The application for, and receiving of grants remains an integral part of the NVCOGs activities and serve to aid in the funding of projects and studies that would not traditionally be funded through standard state and federal funding. More importantly these grants target studies and projects that are important to our constituency, this includes the grants aimed at the remediation of contaminated sites as well as funding for studies and improvements to the NRG.



Executive Director Rick Dunn accepting EPA Assessment Grant

Looking Forward into the Coming Year

This coming year the NVCOG will build upon the successes of 2015-2016 with both the continuation of current projects and the initiation of new projects. This will include:

- A continued effort to provide services to member communities and work to foster broader regional cooperation.
- Ongoing attempts to consolidate and re-designate the the MPO region boundaries such that they would operate coterminous with the NVCOG region.
- Working towards the development of a long range transportation plan that reflects travel patterns across all municipalities and accounts for the changing needs of the region.
- Create a regional POCD that reflects the consolidation of the old VCOG and COGCNV regions and is consistent with the goals established through the municipal POCDs.
- With the revised mandates to MS4s the NVCOG will continue to work with our communities towards reaching compliance, and encourage and demonstrate the benefits of the implementation of LID infrastructures.
- Continue to foster the application of sustainable development practices that seek to achieve greener and more livable communities.
- Build upon the inauguration of the Municipal Shared Services program and seek out activities to leverage the greater economies of scale the program is intended to achieve.
- Work towards completion of the Alternative Modes Corridor Study to gain understanding of how to better serve the NVCOG region.

