



Public Outreach Policy

February 2020

Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Executive Committee

- ▶ Neil O'Leary, Mayor, Waterbury – Chairman
- ▶ Mark Lauretti, Mayor, Shelton – Vice Chairman
- ▶ Ed Mone, First Selectman, Thomaston – Secretary
- ▶ N. Warren "Pete" Hess, Mayor, Naugatuck – Treasurer
- ▶ Leonard Assard, First Selectman, Bethlehem
- ▶ Richard Dziekan, Mayor, Derby
- ▶ Tom Dunn, Mayor, Wolcott
- ▶ Kurt Miller, First Selectman, Seymour
- ▶ David Merchant, Mayor, Plymouth

Staff

- ▶ Rick Dunne, Executive Director
- ▶ Mark C. Nielsen, Director of Planning
- ▶ Michael Szpryngel, Finance Director
- ▶ Lesley Barewin, Senior Planner - Special Projects
- ▶ Trish Bauer, Office & Financial Manager
- ▶ Olivia Brandi, Program Coordinator
- ▶ Aaron Budris, Senior Regional Planner
- ▶ Richard Crowther, GIS Analyst
- ▶ John DiCarlo, Municipal Shared Services Coordinator
- ▶ Gabriel Filer, Transportation Planner*
- ▶ Christian Meyer, Supervising Transportation Planner
- ▶ Glenda Prentiss, GIS Program Coordinator
- ▶ Lauren Rizzo, Administrative Services Coordinator
- ▶ Ricardo Rodriguez, Regional Planner - Environmental
- ▶ Joanna Rogalski, Regional Planner / Emergency Management*
- ▶ Karen Svetz, P.E., Regional Transportation Engineer

* indicates principal authors

Sources of Copies

- | | |
|--|---|
| ▶ Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
49 Leavenworth Street, 3rd Floor
Waterbury, CT 06702 | EN Translations available by request. |
| ▶ Phone: (203) 757-0535 | ES Traducciones disponibles bajo petición. |
| ▶ Email: nvcog@nvcogct.org | IT Traduzioni disponibili su richiesta. |
| ▶ Website: www.nvcogct.gov | PL Tłumaczenia dostępne na zamówienie. |
| | PT Traduções disponíveis mediante solicitação. |
| | SQ Përkthime në dispozicion me kërkesë. |
| | ZH 可根据要求提供☒☒。 |

Acknowledgments

- ▶ All Maps & Photos by NVCOG Staff
- ▶ Icons by Icon Fair via The Noun Project



Introduction

Mission Statement

It is the goal of the NVCOG to fully engage residents and stakeholders in identifying planning priorities, developing programs and projects, and publishing final products. In particular, it is the NVCOG's goal to ensure meaningful access to participation in planning and policy decision-making processes for disadvantaged populations in our planning region.

About Us

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) is a regional Council of Governments (COG) comprising nineteen (19) cities and towns in west-central Connecticut. The NVCOG is also a host agency for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Greater Waterbury Urbanized Area (UZA), and is a partner in the Greater Bridgeport and Valley MPO. The NVCOG works closely with other federal, state, and local agencies to facilitate cooperation among its nineteen member municipalities regarding transportation, environmental, economic, and development policies and issues.

The NVCOG's roles as a COG and MPO host agency come with the responsibility to ensure the public has meaningful opportunities to participate at various stages in the planning and policy decision-making process. Meaningful public input helps ensure that projects and funds are equitably allocated. The NVCOG is fully committed to engaging residents and stakeholders in all stages of the planning process to learn the public's transportation and development wants and needs.

This document will outline the process for public participation and involvement, providing public outreach guidance and standards for NVCOG staff and engaged citizens. Public outreach is modeled as a continuous feedback loop, wherein the public is engaged at each step of planning and each public engagement opportunity informs the next step of decision-making. Through this feedback loop, the NVCOG hopes to foster a collaborative planning relationship with residents and workers in the NVCOG region.

Council of Governments (COG)

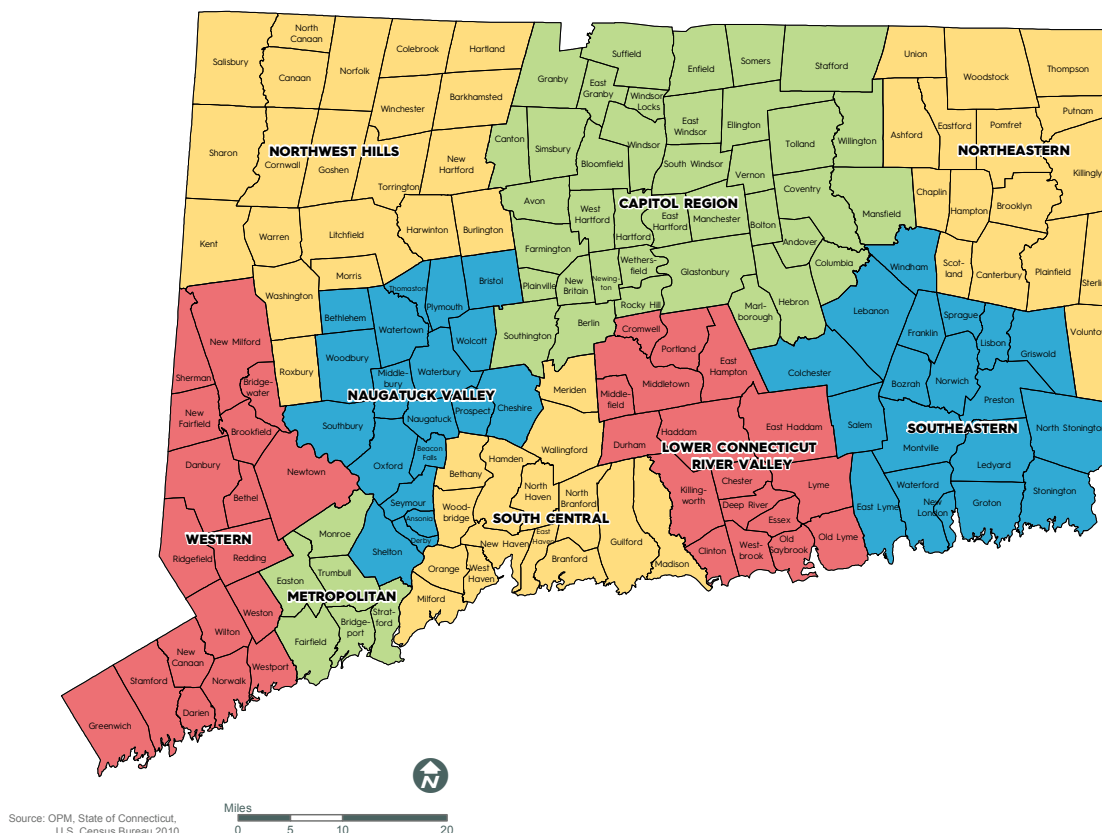
The NVCOG's role as a Council of Governments (or Council) is defined in Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 50 § 4-124i through § 4-124u. The NVCOG's decision-making body is its Council of the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) of each municipality, or member, in the planning region. Decision-making structures for the Council are defined in the organization bylaws. The Council oversees matters of regional planning and municipal services cooperation, including transportation priorities of neighboring MPO regions (see next section).

As a Council of Governments, the NVCOG's primary planning responsibility is the drafting of a regional planning document known as the **Regional Plan of Conservation and Development** (POCD). The Regional POCD makes recommendations for "land use, housing, principal highways and freeways, bridges, airports, parks, playgrounds, recreational areas, schools, public institutions, public utilities, agriculture and such other matters as will be beneficial to the area." (Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 127 § 8-35a.) and informs the State POCD. Public outreach requirements during the drafting of the POCD are also outlined in this statute.

NVCOG Members

- ▶ Ansonia
- ▶ Beacon Falls
- ▶ Bethlehem
- ▶ Bristol
- ▶ Cheshire
- ▶ Derby
- ▶ Middlebury
- ▶ Naugatuck
- ▶ Oxford
- ▶ Plymouth
- ▶ Prospect
- ▶ Seymour
- ▶ Shelton
- ▶ Southbury
- ▶ Thomaston
- ▶ Waterbury
- ▶ Watertown
- ▶ Wolcott
- ▶ Woodbury

Map 1: Councils of Government in Connecticut



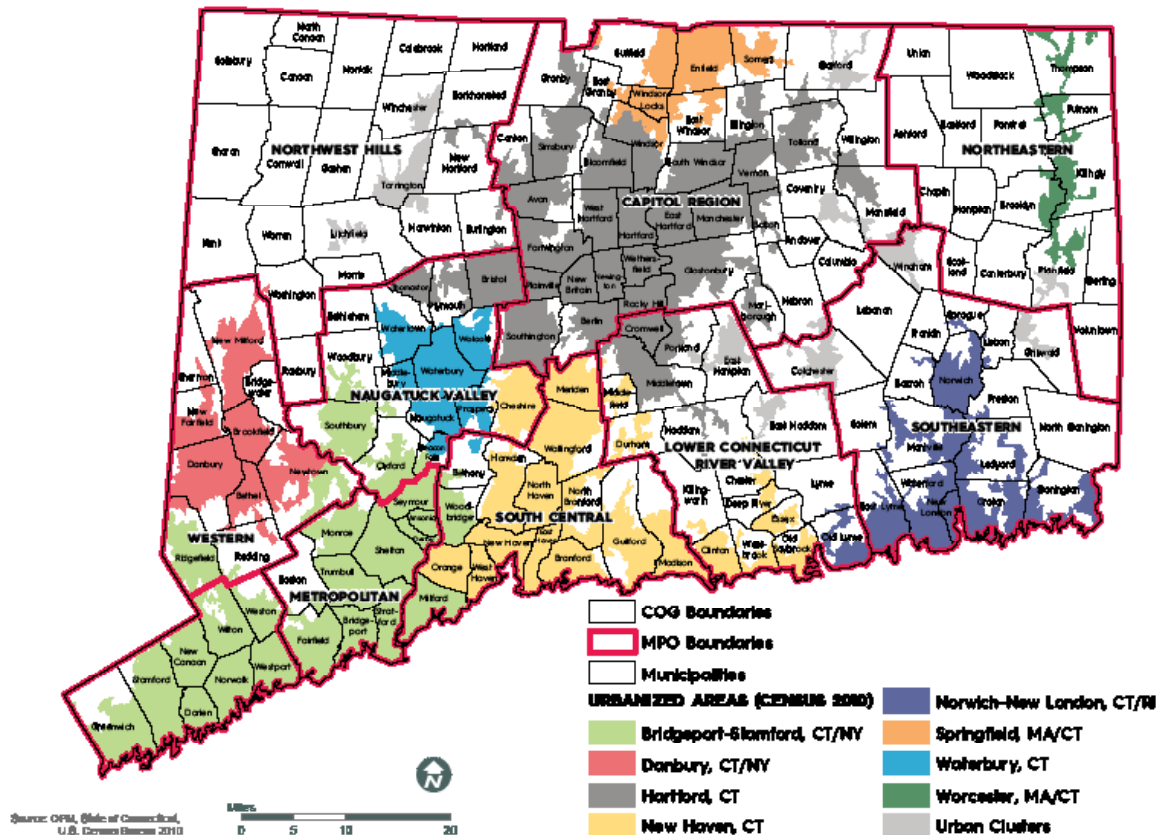
Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

As a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) host agency, the NVCOG functions as the Central Naugatuck Valley MPO and cooperates with the Greater Bridgeport and Valley MPO on regional transportation planning processes and capital improvement programs for the two aforementioned MPO regions. MPOs are authorized by federal regulations, organized by municipalities as regions and designated by the Governor. MPOs conduct transportation planning and endorse the transportation improvement program for its constituent communities.

The NVCOG solely hosts the Central Naugatuck Valley MPO (CNVMPO), and as such all CNVMPO activities must conform to this public participation policy. The NVCOG shares hosting responsibility with MetroCOG, the RPO for Greater Bridgeport, for four NVCOG member municipalities in the Greater Bridgeport and Valley MPO (GBVMPO): Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, and Shelton. NVCOG activities that incorporate these four municipalities must still conform to this public participation policy, but MPO-related activities in these four municipalities must conform to both the [GBVMPO Public Participation Plan](#) and this policy, using the more stringent requirement in the case of conflicts.

CNVMPO Members			GBVMPO Members	
▶ Beacon Falls	▶ Naugatuck	▶ Thomaston	▶ Ansonia	
▶ Bethlehem	▶ Oxford	▶ Waterbury	▶ Derby	
▶ Bristol	▶ Plymouth	▶ Watertown	▶ Seymour	
▶ Cheshire	▶ Prospect	▶ Wolcott	▶ Shelton	
▶ Middlebury	▶ Southbury	▶ Woodbury		

Map 2: MPOs and Urbanized Areas in Connecticut



Air Quality Non-Attainment Area

As both MPOs lie in an air quality non-attainment area for both Particulate Matter 2.5 (2006) and for Ozone (2008), NVCOG must also include public outreach on designation of air-quality conformity for transportation plans and TIPs.

Civil Rights

The NVCOG is dedicated to seeking out and considering the needs of disadvantaged populations. Our agency has worked to identify geographic areas with EJ communities under Title VI, Environmental Justice, and ADA regulations.

Title VI, Language Access, & Environmental Justice

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits exclusion from participation in, denial of the benefits of, and discrimination under federally-assisted programs on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. The NVCOG works to ensure all programs and projects are consistent with the letter and the spirit of Title VI, regardless of assistance from federal or state programs.

The NVCOG also works to provide Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations in our planning region with meaningful access to planning activities. Specifically, there are populations of Spanish- and Polish-speaking LEPs across the region. The Spanish-speaking LEPs in the region largely identify as Puerto Rican. Because the NVCOG also operates the capital budget for the Valley Transit District, the agency has additional responsibilities under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to provide language access (Ex. Order #13166). For details on the agency's Title VI process, and for related language access information, see the [Title VI Program Plan](#).

In addition to Title VI responsibilities, the NVCOG is committed to supporting environmental justice in its planning activities, as outlined in Executive Order 12898. To this end, the NVCOG has identified locations within the planning region where target populations live, and regularly investigates the impacts of the NVCOG's planning activities on these populations. For more details on the NVCOG's Environmental Justice program, see the [Environmental Justice Plan & Analysis](#).

Age & Disability

The NVCOG is committed to ensuring residents of all ages and ability levels have access to our public outreach. To this end, the NVCOG has identified the locations of populations of senior residents (65+) in the region, and works to ensure that all public hearings and documents are available in accessible locations and formats.

Complaints Procedures

When the NVCOG receives complaints from the public about municipal or regional policies, planning decisions, ongoing projects, or the like, tracking and response is essential. Some topics, such as ADA accommodations and potential discrimination complaints, are required by statute to be tracked and addressed in a particular manner. Maintaining a process to track and address complaints will ensure that these legal requirements are met and that the NVCOG is doing its best to serve the public.

All complaints received by NVCOG staff should be recorded, along with the date and time of the complaint, in a spreadsheet on our internal servers. Complaints should then be immediately forwarded to the appropriate staff member within the NVCOG, including the designated Civil Rights Officer. All complaints received by the NVCOG shall be responded to within ten (10) business days by the appropriate staff member.

If a complaint concerns planning activities outside the NVCOG jurisdiction, the complainant should be informed of a more applicable outlet for the complaint. When appropriate, NVCOG staff should also forward complaints to other regional and local agencies. For specific processes related to ADA or Title VI complaints, please see the relevant program policies on the NVCOG website (www.nvcogct.gov).

Civil Rights (cont'd)

Outreach to Low-Income and Minority Communities

NVCOG has found that an effective way to engage the public is to work with local governments, community organizations, and individual stakeholders in distributing project information. All stakeholders are identified and contacted with the help of our partners. We will hold public meetings and distribute outreach materials at a variety of locations including transit hubs, community centers, municipal offices, etc. If needed we will also translate documents and outreach materials into LEP languages and have a translator present at public meetings.

During various projects our organization utilizes electronic surveys (e.g. SurveyMonkey) and mapping software. Upon request, NVCOG will convert electronic surveys to paper format. Other methods NVCOG employs include face to face contact and issuing public notices in newspapers and community calendars.

For methods that are not effective, we will work to amend those methods so they reach our LEP communities, or implement new outreach strategies that will engage the community as effectively as possible.

- Tracking Requests for Translated Documents via NVCOG's website, public meetings, etc.
- Ongoing review of Google Translate requests at NVCOG's website

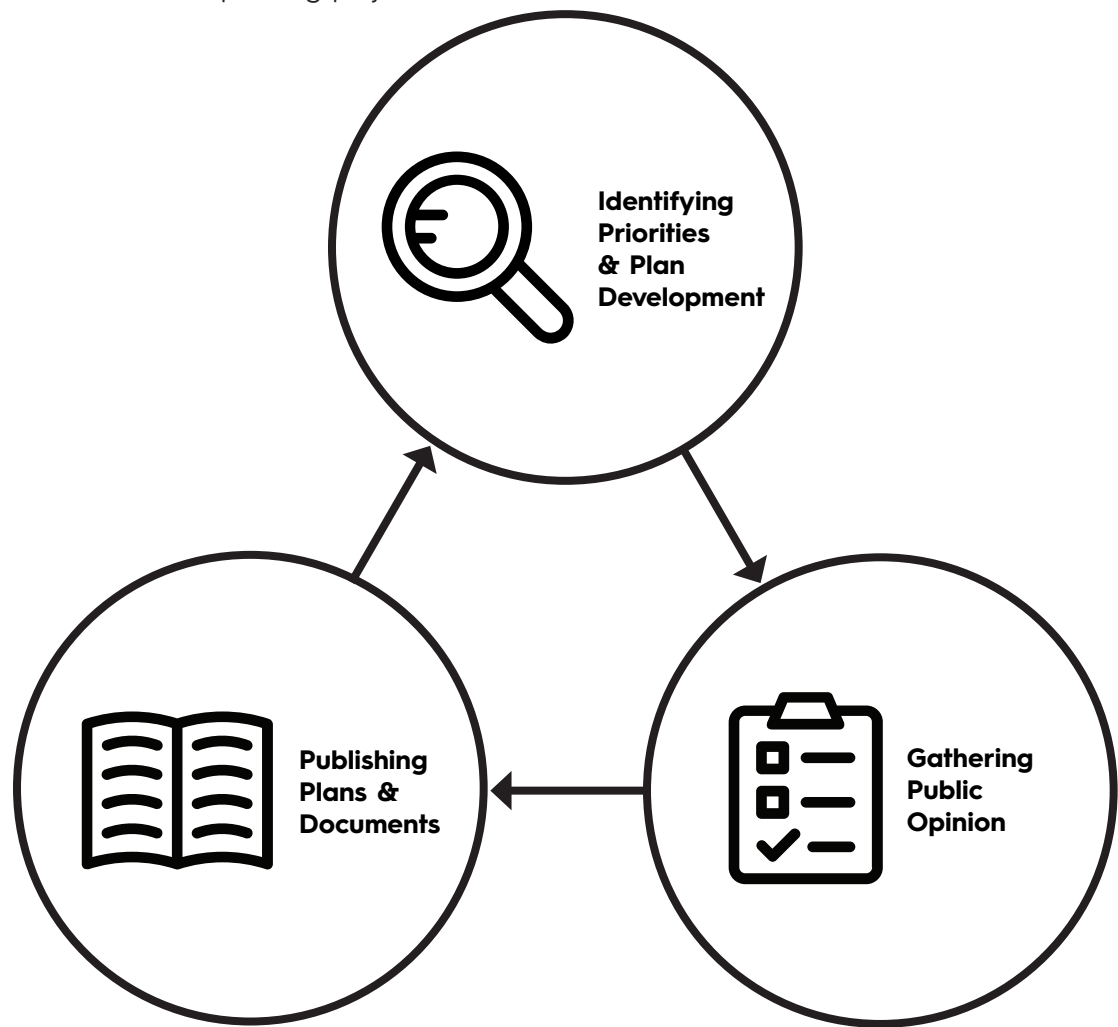
Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Limited English Proficiency Plan

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments will continuously monitor, evaluate and update the Limited English Proficiency Plan to ensure consistency with Title VI requirements. The monitoring of the Limited English Proficiency Plan will include:

- Annual monitoring of the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) data (5-Year Estimates) to ensure that any changing patterns of LEP Populations will be addressed in the Limited English Proficiency Plan.



NVCOG believes that the public should be frequently and meaningfully engaged in regional planning and project development processes. The following public outreach guidelines are modeled on a continuous feedback “loop” format where NVCOG requests input from the public, incorporates that feedback into the plan, and requests further input. Likewise, the public may request information from NVCOG and give feedback relevant to its planning projects.



Caveats

If federal, state, or other regulations prescribe public participation requirements which are more specific or more comprehensive than NVCOG’s policies, these requirements shall supersede the public participation policies outlined below. Additionally, should public participation requirements change to become more specific or comprehensive, they shall override the NVCOG’s policies. When such incongruences come to light, it is the responsibility of NVCOG staff to consider whether an update to this document is necessary to better serve the population of the region.

Identifying Priorities & Plan Development

Maintaining continual and meaningful public outreach may encourage participation in long-term planning processes, and is essential to ensuring that the NVCOG's work fully considers residents' and stakeholders' needs and wants as it develops and prioritizes planning projects. To facilitate these interactions, the following policies are outlined governing day-to-day and other public communications.

Staff Availability

NVCOG staff are available to the public during regular work hours, 8:30am-4:30pm, at the NVCOG office in downtown Waterbury. Staff may also be reached by phone or email during these hours. Any immediate comments or complaints can always be submitted directly to NVCOG staff, assuming relevant staff are working, on-site, and available. When possible, scheduling a meeting will ensure that staff members are available to listen to, learn from and respond to the public.

NVCOG Board

The NVCOG Board directs NVCOG programs and policies, and as such has special requirements for public notice and access. These requirements may be found in their bylaws, available through the NVCOG website (www.nvcogct.gov). Copies are also available via mail by sending a written request to:

49 Leavenworth Street, 3rd Floor
Waterbury, CT 06702
(203) 757-0535, nvcogct@nvcogct.org

Email Lists & Maintenance

The NVCOG has set up a general public outreach email list through MailChimp, an internet based emailing service. This email list is available for the public to sign up for regular email updates about agency activities and events. Email list users are also welcome to unsubscribe from NVCOG emails at will. NVCOG staff shall monitor participation in the existing email list and create topic-specific lists for more targeted mailings as needed.

The general email list may be used to distribute a regular newsletter outlining upcoming public meetings, important meeting and event dates, or recently-published plan documents. The newsletter's distribution frequency and contents are at the discretion of NVCOG staff.

Additionally, individual projects may develop their own email lists. When feasible, these project-specific lists should be compiled with the same online email service as more general outreach lists to more easily merge the project list into the general list upon project completion. The footer area of project-specific public emails should include a link to subscribe or unsubscribe to the general public outreach list.

Social Media

The NVCOG maintains a presence on social media through Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The primary purpose of the NVCOG Facebook page is to maintain a relationship with the public. All full-time staff have Facebook posting privileges and are invited to post informative content about agency activities and broader planning trends. Posts need not be directly related to NVCOG planning activities and projects. The NVCOG reserves the right to delete comments which threaten the safety of individuals or groups, are personal attacks, disclose personal information, or are otherwise inappropriate. Complaints and public comments submitted through social media should be logged, tracked and addressed using the complaint procedure outlined on page 4.

Website Calendar & News Policies

The NVCOG website is an additional channel of communication between the NVCOG and the public. The site serves as a repository for all policy and planning documents created by and for the NVCOG, and displays an organizational calendar of events and a news feed, both of which are displayed on the main homepage.

The organizational calendar shall be updated with all publicly-accessible meetings, including meetings of the NVCOG Board, Regional Planning Commission (RPC), MPOs, and any Citizen Advisory Committees. The organizational calendar has been incorporated into the public notification guidelines for all public meetings.

The website's newsfeed should be updated regularly with all draft and final publications, as well as any special events or accolades such as a grant award.

Citizen Advisory Committees

Citizen Advisory Committees are standing committees of citizen representatives formed to consider a particular topic, project or plan of regional interest. Their function and membership depends on the needs of the Board, public input and planning project timelines.

Advisory committees are useful for developing a long-term, coordinated organizational perspective on particular issues, and to obtain the input of relevant experts and advocates on planning activities. Convening citizen advisory committees may aid in identifying new priorities or regional needs.

While these committees are very effective at identifying priorities and gaining citizen and expert input from the community, their facilitation may require significant NVCOG staff time. The cost of maintaining these committees should be balanced with their relevance. Citizen Advisory Committees may be disbanded and reconvened as needed, or may be formed with the understanding that they will disband once a planning project or plan has been fully realized.

NVCOG has developed the following policies regulating the public nature of Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC):

1. No CACs have decision-making powers unless specifically delegated by the NVCOG Board.
2. All meetings of CACs are open to the public, and shall be planned, located, and advertised consistent with the following policies:
 - a. Public notice of meetings shall be made seven (7) days before the meeting date. Notices shall include the location, time, and a proposed agenda.
 - b. When reasonable, a regular meeting schedule shall be adopted and meeting dates for a year shall be listed publicly on the committee's webpage.
 - c. Meeting minutes or summaries shall be published within seventy-two (72) hours on the website.
 - d. Meetings shall be held in a location that is accessible via transit and complies with ADA standards. Interpretive services shall be offered with three (3) days' notice.
 - i. Note of this accessibility shall be made in public notice of the meeting.
3. Committees may be formed and disbanded at the judgment of the Executive Director unless otherwise stated.

Regional Planning Commission (RPC)

The RPC is a citizen advisory committee whose membership and duties are outlined in the NVCOG Bylaws. The RPC can only be disbanded through a vote of the NVCOG Board.



Gathering Public Opinion on Specific Projects

Meaningful public engagement helps NVCOG staff gather public opinion on draft and final editions of planning and policy documents. Planning and policy documents published by the NVCOG range in scope, from minor revisions of policy to sweeping master plans that will guide investment and policy for years to come. The NVCOG has developed a tiered process for public engagement to address this range. The following tiers are to be used when designing public engagement processes:

Major Projects

This tier is made up of broad, far-reaching documents with major impacts on policy and programming over several years. Many of these documents have specific public participation requirements. Because of the importance of this tier, several required products are called out specifically (see page 9). This tier also includes large highway and transit projects under design or construction overseen by the agency.

Minor Projects

This tier is made up of minor publications or studies not required by statute under Tasks 2 & 3 of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP, the program of all MPO activities to be performed by NVCOG staff during the Program's term), and interval updates to broad policy documents that do not substantially change the policy therein.

Regular Business

This tier is for regular meetings and announcements and minor plan or policy updates. This tier may also be an avenue for communicating pertinent local, regional, or national news of awards or grant opportunities.

NVCOG Documents and Projects

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Public Hearings	Informational Meetings	Public Notice	Comment Period
2	As Needed	Legal Notice, Calendar, Mailing List, Copies to Municipalities, Press Release, Social Media, Web Page	45 days

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Public Hearings	Informational Meetings	Public Notice	Comment Period
1	As Needed	Legal Notice, Calendar, Mailing List, Press Release, Social Media, Web Page	45 days

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Public Hearings	Informational Meetings	Public Notice	Comment Period
1	As Needed	Calendar, Mailing List, Press Release, Social Media	30 days

Regional Plan Of Conservation & Development (POCD)

Public Hearings	Informational Meetings	Public Notice	Comment Period
2	As Needed	Legal Notice, Calendar, Mailing List, Copies to Municipalities, Press Release, Social Media, Web Page	65 days

Other Major Projects

Public Hearings	Informational Meetings	Public Notice	Comment Period
1	As Needed	Legal Notice, Calendar, Mailing List, Press Release, Social Media, Web Page	45 days

Minor Projects

Public Hearings	Informational Meetings	Public Notice	Comment Period
0	1+	Legal Notice, Calendar, Newsletter Item, Social Media	30 days if applicable

Regular Business

Public Hearings	Informational Meetings	Public Notice	Comment Period
0	0+	Calendar, Newsletter Item, Social Media	30 days if applicable

Public Hearings

For certain projects, there is a statutory requirement to convene public hearings where presentations may be made and public comment may be formally registered. The NVCOG requires public hearings for all major projects. Public hearings must conform to the following standards:

- ▶ Held at convenient and accessible locations and times
- ▶ Public notice of meetings, at least one week in advance:
 - In a newspaper of large circulation in the affected area, preferably via a legal notice
 - through the mailing list or to a targeted mailing list, as appropriate
- ▶ Include contact person and phone number and email
- ▶ In an accessible location
- ▶ Interpretation/Translation and Signing available by request or by default
- ▶ Recorded and minutes transcribed
- ▶ Comments recorded by commenter name and agency if relevant

Public hearings must explain the following information at a minimum:

- ▶ The project's purpose, need, and consistency with the goals and objectives of any local urban planning;
- ▶ The project's alternatives, and major design features;
- ▶ The social, economic, environmental, and other impacts of the project; and
- ▶ The relocation assistance program and the right-of-way acquisition process.
- ▶ The agency's procedures for receiving both oral and written statements from the public.

In addition to the above requirements, major projects must be consistent with the public hearing regulations from the relevant funding authority (FHWA, FTA, etc.).

Public Informational Meetings

Public informational meetings are less formal public outreach events designed to inform the community and relevant stakeholders and to request input on planning programs and publications. When informational meetings are started early in the planning process and recur throughout the life of the project, potential impacts on disadvantaged populations, the environment, and other groups are identified and mitigation measures more easily incorporated into the plan.

The format of public informational meetings is more flexible, and is at the discretion of relevant NVCOG staff. A popular format is to go directly to regularly-scheduled or special meetings of partner organizations, rather than scheduling additional public informational meetings. Informational meetings shall be located in accessible meeting rooms, and interpretation/translation and signing shall be available by request. Public notice should be made at least one week in advance.

While informational meetings may be more informal than public hearings, complaints or comments from the public should be documented and saved and considered for inclusion in the final document, policy, or product. Participants and the public may also leave comment before or after an informational meeting.

Publishing Plans & Documents

Public Records Policy

The NVCOG shall comply with all applicable federal and state “Freedom of Information Laws.” Physical and/or electronic copies of all governing bylaws, policies, agreements, agendas minutes, referrals, resolutions, grant applications, contracts, budgets, audit reports, and other relevant documents shall be made available to the public by request, or are available for review at the NVCOG office during working hours. Additionally, many of these documents are freely available via the NVCOG website. The NVCOG maintains internal audits and financial records, documentation of which is available to the CTDOT Office of Contract Compliance or any other appropriate party by request.

RPC Endorsement

All minor and major projects should seek endorsement from the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) before entering a public comment period. Products should be made available to the RPC one week before a regular meeting. At the time of the meeting, the RPC shall decide whether to endorse the document or to provide until the next RPC meeting for revisions.

Translations

All future major projects should be translated into Spanish. NVCOG shall translate draft plans during a public comment period upon request. The [NVCOG Title VI Program Plan](#) and the [NVCOG Environmental Justice Policy](#) both find that significant portions of the NVCOG region speak Spanish as a primary language, with a majority of Spanish-speakers being of Puerto Rican descent.

Public Comment Period

Before the final publication of a program or plan, it is necessary to provide the public a period of public comment during which interested parties and stakeholders may make comments or recommendations on the program or plan at their leisure. The NVCOG recognizes that regardless of the scheduling of any public hearings or informational meetings, there are likely to be affected individuals who cannot attend. Public comment periods allow all interested parties input towards the development of programs and plans before final publication.

Public comment periods for documents published by the NVCOG shall last for the appropriate term as listed in the table on page 9. The public shall be made aware of public comment periods through a legal notice in relevant newspapers, an announcement on the NVCOG website as a news item, and a post on NVCOG’s social media platforms. Should there be a relevant sub-group of the NVCOG mailing list (e.g., a project-specific or topic-specific sub-group), the public comment period shall be advertised via the mailing list. Comment periods for major projects should always be advertised to the full mailing list.

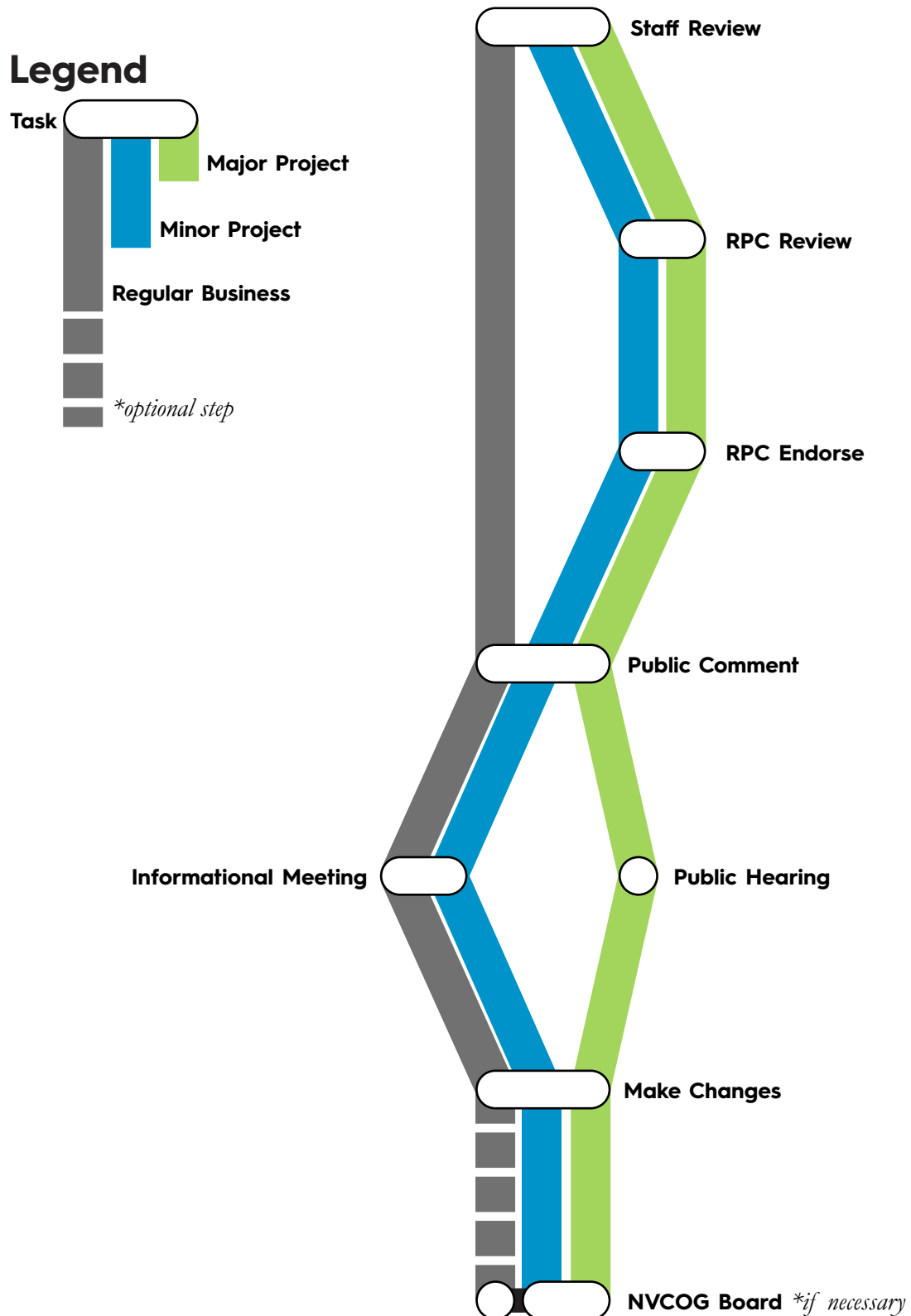
Included in the public comment notice should be reference to any scheduled public hearings or informational meetings, as well as contact information for relevant staff members. During the public comment period, copies of the draft document(s) must be made available by request via the website, mail, and in person at the NVCOG office. Major projects should be made available at the city and town halls of member municipalities.

NVCOG Board Approval

The final step in the publication of any program or plan is approval by the NVCOG Board. Staff will consult the NVCOG Administrative Assistant to arrange a time the program or plan may be brought before the Board.

Standard Publication Procedure

The following flowchart shows the proper flow of final document publication for all NVCOG documents.



NVCOG Board Actions

There are two actions the NVCOG Board may take regarding NVCOG programs and policies: Approve or Endorse.

1. **Approve:** The NVCOG Board accepts the stance and the goals of the document or policy.
2. **Endorse:** The NVCOG Board endorses the facts and subsequent analysis provided by NVCOG staff. Endorsement indicates an acceptance of factual analysis, and does not necessarily indicate approval or disapproval.

Policy Revisions

Revisions to this policy should follow the procedure for minor projects, excepting that the public comment period shall be forty-five (45) days. Because this document governs all other public participation requirements it is helpful to give additional time to the public and to staff to provide and incorporate meaningful comments.

Minor technical edits to this policy (e.g., changes in software) do not require a public engagement process.



Procedures and Guidelines for Public Participation in Remote Meetings

On March 14, 2020, Governor Lamont signed Executive Order 7B which suspends the in-person open meeting requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (provided certain conditions are met) in an effort to mitigate the risk of transmitting COVID-19 through in-person public meetings and proceedings. The Council has taken steps necessary to ensure that the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) will satisfy the conditions set forth in Executive Order 7B for holding NVCOG and Central Naugatuck Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (CNVMPO) meetings remotely by video conference until in-person public meetings requirements are reinstated by the State.

Virtual NVCOG and CNVMPO board meetings will be recorded while being streamed live via YouTube. The embedded video and link to view the live meetings will be made available on the NVCOG website before the meeting starts. Meetings of the public advisory committees and commissions of NVCOG will only be recorded.

All meetings welcome public participation including meetings held remotely pursuant to Executive Order 7B. NVCOG staff will post virtual meeting agendas on the NVCOG website, as is done with in-person meetings.

Please use the contact information on the agenda to submit written comment on agenda item. If you would like to speak during the virtual meeting, a form will be available with access information. The procedure for public comment during virtual meetings is as follows:

Written Comments

- The public may submit written comments to the board for NVCOG and CNVMPO meetings and to members of the NVCOG Committees and Commissions for the corresponding meetings, up to two hours before each meeting.
- All public comments will be presented at the beginning of each meeting. All commenters must include their name and address and if they desire, their professional affiliation.
- All written public comments will be made public.
- Written comments can be sent to the email address provided on the meeting agenda posted on the NVCOG website, or mailed to:

Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments
49 Leavenworth Street, 3rd Floor
Waterbury, CT 06702

Verbal Comments

- To submit a verbal comment, the commenter will need to fill out a form that will be available on the NVCOG website with the posting of the meeting agenda. Instructions to call into the virtual meeting will be provided once the form is submitted.



NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

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- The form will ask commenters for their full name, address, and if they desire, their professional affiliation, all the information required to provide public comment, along with their phone number to identify each person in the virtual meeting.
- Comments on agenda items will be heard during the first designated portion of the meeting.
- Commenters must state their full name, address, and if they desire, their professional affiliation before speaking. If they do not, they cannot be allowed to continue.
- Commenters are limited to 2 minutes each, waivable at the discretion of the Chairman.
- Please be respectful of others.

Posting of the Meeting Record

After the virtual meetings have concluded, the meeting access information will be void. All meeting minutes will be posted to the NVCOG website within seven days, including a link to YouTube for a video of the recorded meeting. All is in accordance with state and federal information access laws and regulations.



**NAUGATUCK VALLEY
COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS**

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RESOLUTION 2017-24

PUBLIC OUTREACH POLICY

I certify that the following is a true copy of the vote of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments at its meeting on March 10, 2017 in Waterbury, Connecticut, at which a quorum was present.

WHEREAS, the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) engages in planning and project development that directly affects the public at large.

WHEREAS, State and Federal legislation require the NVCOG to inform the public at large of planning and projects which may affect them, and further the State and Federal governments define specific regulation of this process.

WHEREAS, NVCOG staff have developed a Public Outreach Policy informed by State and Federal legislation and regulation, as well as best practice, to guide the NVCOG's public outreach efforts.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the NVCOG approves of the Public Outreach Policy defining the minimum level of public outreach required of the NVCOG for typical planning and project development.

Dated at Waterbury, Connecticut, on 3-10, 2017

Agency: Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Signed

Neil O'Leary, Chairman





NVCOG

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