

NVision50: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Naugatuck Valley Planning Region & Central Naugatuck Valley MPO

Draft Executive Summary

February 2023



NAUGATUCK VALLEY
COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

About the Plan

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) prepared NVision50: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Naugatuck Valley Planning Region & Central Naugatuck Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (CNVMPO) in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), the municipal members of the NVCOG, and transportation stakeholders throughout the region. Input from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and feedback from residents and visitors to the region were crucial to establishing the long-term transportation vision for the region.

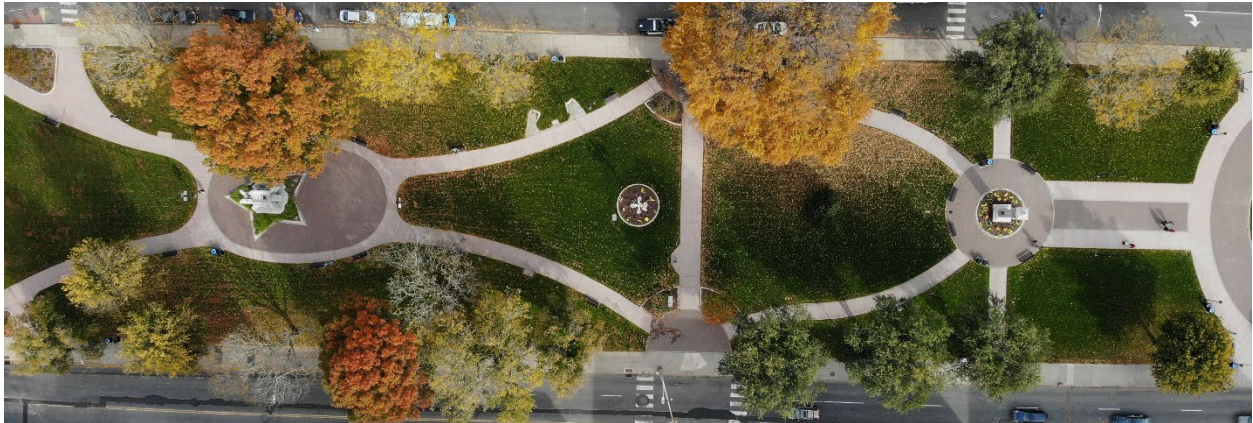


Figure 1 The Waterbury Green from Above

NVision50 sets the priorities, goals, and long-term vision for the multi-modal transportation system in the Naugatuck Valley Region. Through funding priorities, the plan aims to:

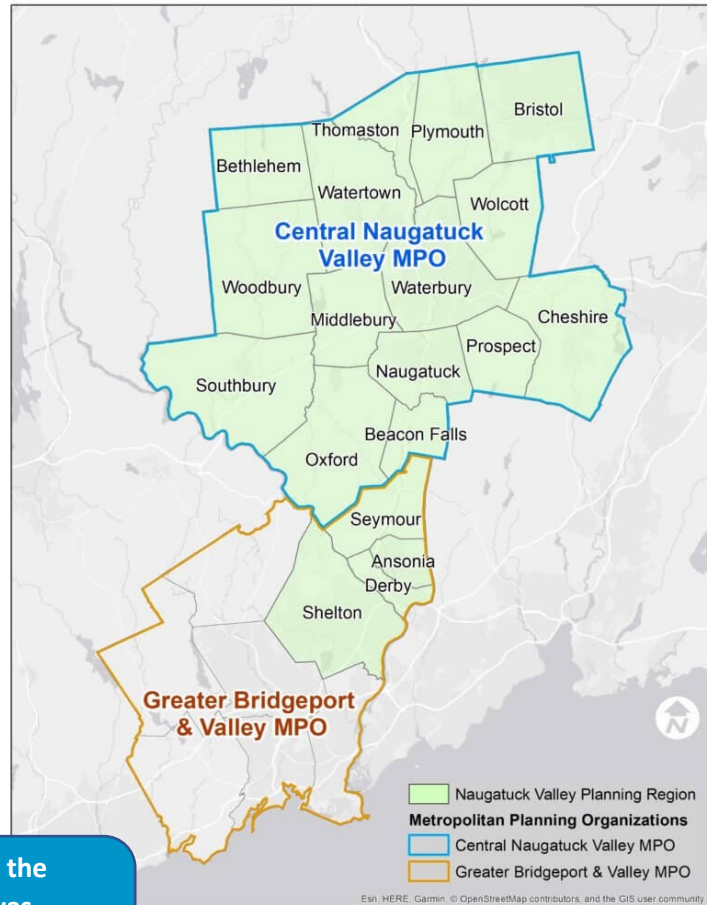
- Reduce and ultimately eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries
- Improve air quality and address noise and light pollution caused by the transportation system
- Provide more ways to travel by foot, mobility aid, bike, and micromobility devices
- Expand access to bus and rail, improving speed, reliability, and reducing wait times
- Establish a strong footing for future changes in transportation technology

The planning process for NVision50 emphasized projects that:

- Are multimodal, supporting the full range of ways people and goods get around our region
- Provide a regional benefit, rather than project that focus their benefits on one town or local development
- Are spread broadly throughout the region, ensuring that projects of importance aren't concentrated in any one town
- Align with the goals of the NVCOG's Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, Policy Board, and those of the Connecticut Department of Transportation

The Region

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments represents the 19 town Naugatuck Valley Planning region, a diverse mix of economies, cultures, and geographies that makes up west-central Connecticut. Because the boundaries of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Councils of Governments (COGs) don't align in Western Connecticut, this plan plays a dual role of representing priorities and goals for the broader Naugatuck Valley Planning Region while limiting fiscal analysis and identification of projects to the CNVMPO area. Projects for the 4 Greater Bridgeport and Valley towns are identified in the MTP of the GBVMPO, created by the Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments with support from NVCOG Staff.



 **As of the 2020 Census, the region's population was 450,400. This is slight growth from 2010's 448,700**

Like most of the country, the Naugatuck Valley Planning Region is growing more diverse. Racial and ethnic minorities now make up nearly 30% of the region's population, with Waterbury remaining a majority-minority city.

Plan Development & Engagement Highlights

The creation of NVision50 was a collaborative effort across levels of government and greatly dependent on public input. The multi-year planning process began with NVCOG staff in November of 2020 and will culminate in the adoption of the plan by the NVCOG Board in February of 2023. Once accepted by the US DOT, this plan will guide transportation planning and development in the region until the next update in 2027. The goals and priorities identified in this plan represent the collective vision of stakeholders, staff, visitors, and residents of the region.

2 festivals with hundreds of conversations about priorities

687 responses to a multi-region survey

Input from stakeholders including rail, freight, and transit operators

Transportation Planning Priorities



The NVCOG defines Mobility Equity as:

- Mobility for all ages
- Mobility for all incomes
- Mobility for all abilities
- Mobility from anywhere to everywhere

In all planning activities in the region, including NVision50, equity is at the center. This plan aims to provide benefit greater than the burdens of the transportation system to all users and residents, regardless of location, age, ability, or income.

The Current System

The Naugatuck Valley Planning Region has a complex and aging infrastructure that includes an extensive network of highways and streets, a rail system that has been in place since the mid-19th century, a growing number of multi-use paths, and a general aviation airport. Within the current system, two concerns are consistently identified as the primary areas of concern: age of infrastructure and congestion on the road network.

Rail

The region’s rail network was almost entirely built or upgraded to its current state by the New Haven Railroad in the early 20th century. The Waterbury Line, operated by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Metro North Railroad, is the only passenger service in the region. Freight is moved by rail on the Waterbury Line, as well as the Waterbury Secondary, the Central CT Line, and the Maybrook Line, which is

maintained as active but currently does not have customers within our region.

Passenger rail service is limited and facilities are inadequate for modern standards. In addition to an expansion onto parts of the system only served by freight currently, upgrades are required to equipment, stations, and track. A recent project completed by the CTDOT included significant work to the Waterbury Line, an important start to bringing the desired frequency as well as a significant safety improvement.

Roads and Highways

The region’s 2,865 miles of roads include Interstates 84 and 691, as well as CT Route 8, as the core of the system. This core is then supplemented by a series of arterial state routes, and an extensive system of local roads.

Congestion along the freeway system is a recurring issue, especially within the GBVMPO portion of Route 8 and at the interchange between Route 8 and Interstate 84, known as the MixMaster. The region's auto-centric development outside of historic city centers has also led to congestion along major state routes, with frequent signals and driveways to large commercial centers.

Safety is a significant issue on the region's roads. In line with trends across Connecticut, 2022 continued the trend of increasing fatalities and serious injuries, especially for pedestrians and vulnerable users.



Figure 2 The Waterbury Line and Route 8 run alongside the Naugatuck River under the Prospect Street Bridge, Naugatuck

Being an older region, developed early in American history, much of the region's infrastructure is also old. In addition to the need to bring older roads and bridges to a state of good repair, there is also a concern for utilities buried within those streets, particularly in the urban core. Projects within the region often require additional time and planning as water infrastructure, old or disused electrical and gas lines, and rail for trolleys can often be found.

Transit

Within the region, five separate operators provide a fragmented and limited bus service. Within the core of the region, the Waterbury Division of CTtransit operates at long headways with limited service outside of Waterbury. The northeast corner of the region is served by the CTtransit Hartford Division's New Britain/Bristol service. CTtransit New Haven operates one route through Cheshire and Waterbury, and another that serves Derby, Seymour, and Ansonia. Finally, Greater Bridgeport Transit provides limited service into the southern portion of the region, entirely within the GBVMPO area. The Valley Transit District provides ADA and Dial-A-Ride services to the lower valley towns.

Aviation

The Naugatuck Valley Planning Region has a single general aviation airport, the Waterbury-Oxford Airport (OXC). This airport, under the control of the Connecticut Airport Authority, has recently seen improvements to its runway, the building of a Customs and Border Patrol facility, as well as significant completed and planned investments by private operators. Though limited in its traffic, the airport serves as an important economic driver within the region and a notable asset for growth.

Most residents fly commercially through one of the surrounding airports, including Bradley (BDL), located in Windsor Locks service Hartford and Springfield, MA, Tweed-New Haven (HVN), located in New Haven with limited but growing commercial flights to east coast destinations, or one of the Southern New York Airports including JFK International (JFK), La Guardia (LGA), or Westchester (HPN). Newark Liberty International (EWR) also serves the New York City area and provides service to residents of the NVCOG region.

Regional Transportation Needs

Based on the analysis of the current state of the system, clear trends and requirements emerged.

- Integration of a Safe Systems approach to roadway design is critical to save lives and prevent serious injuries
- Protected and comfortable bike lanes and sidewalks are required to support users of a truly multi-modal system
- Bus routes and governance need to be rationalized across the region, providing shorter headways, reliable service, and better connections between parts of the region
- Congestion on the freeway network must be addressed through a series of state-of-good-repair projects, minor improvements where appropriate, and travel demand management efforts



Figure 3 Waterbury Line Train at the platform of the Waterbury Station

CURIOS ABOUT WHAT IS BEING BUILT RIGHT NOW? FOLLOW THIS LINK TO SEE PROJECTS ON THE CURRENT TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

<https://nvcogct.gov/what-we-do/transportation-planning-2/transportation-improvement-programs/>

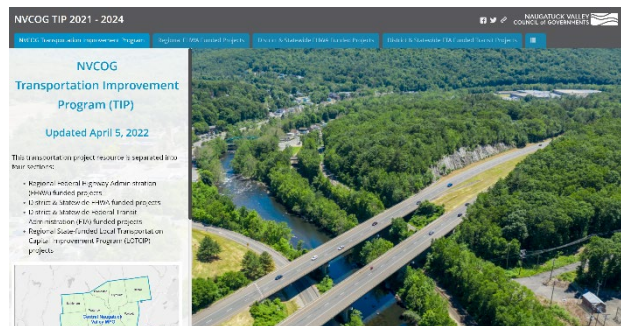
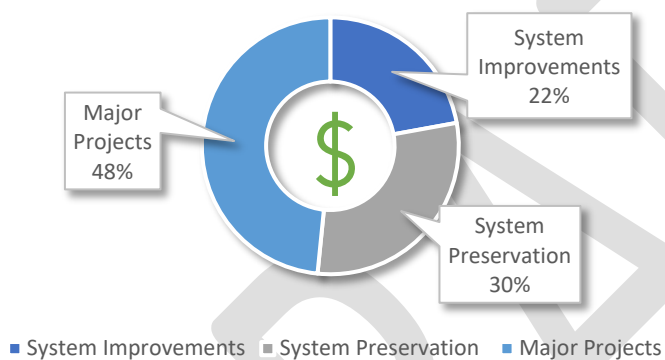


Figure 4 NVCOG TIP Project Map

Funding and Projects

NVision50 contains the goals and vision for the CNVMPO that can be implemented by 2050 based on reasonably expected funding levels. These revenue estimates, provided by the CTDOT, provide for three types of projects; Major Projects of Statewide Importance, or projects controlled by the CTDOT that are vital for the highest levels of the transportation system, Improvements, which are projects that redesign infrastructure to address functional or safety issues, and Preservation, which rebuild existing infrastructure in place to reach and maintain a state of good repair. Though there are concepts and ideas for the region that would require expenditures beyond current funding expectations, these projects are included in out years of the plan as vision projects, though are not on the full project listing page to maintain fiscal constraint.

Allocation of Funds to the CNVMPO

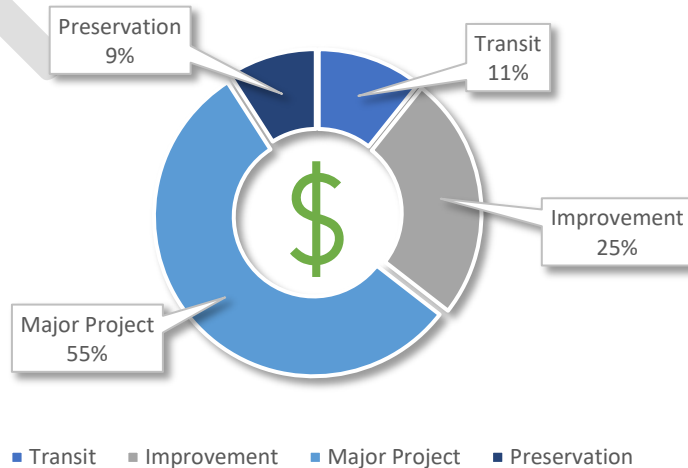


Within the expected funding limits of the MTP period, projects were identified and programmed into all major areas of the transportation system that fall under the purview of the NVCOG. Because the CAA operates airports with separate funding sources, no aviation projects were included.

Within the reasonable funding estimates for the region, four major categories received funding:

- Improvements: \$1,410,205,000
- Major Projects: \$3,154,250,000
- System Preservation: \$516,389,000
- Transit: \$610,831,000

Programmed Projects



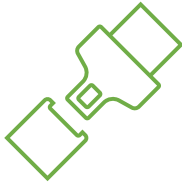
Outcomes of NVision50

NVision50 will result in improvements in the key focus areas of the NVCOG Region's Planning Priorities. At the center of it all, these projects aim to better distribute the benefits and burdens of the transportation system across the region.

Active Transportation



NVision50 supports the completion of the Naugatuck River Greenway and its connecting trails, along with improvements to sidewalks and cycling infrastructure along the region's roads.

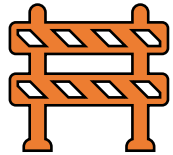


Improvements to roads and vulnerable user spaces will help the region achieve the goal of zero fatalities by 2060

Safety

Efficiency

Improvements to the region's roads, bridges, rail, and trails will bring the condition of the transportation system back to a state of good repair



Build out of all projects in NVision50 offers additional travel options in all towns and for all people, advancing mobility equity



Mobility Equity

Mode Choice



Transit improvements, from infrastructure to service, will provide more options and ensure that everyone can get to where they are going



NVision50 supports a healthier environment through reduced congestion, implementation of reduced emission vehicles, and promoting mode shift to public transit, walking/rolling, and cycling

Environmental Protection

Freight

Reduction in congestion and improvements to the regional rail network will support the safe and efficient movement of freight into and out of the region

