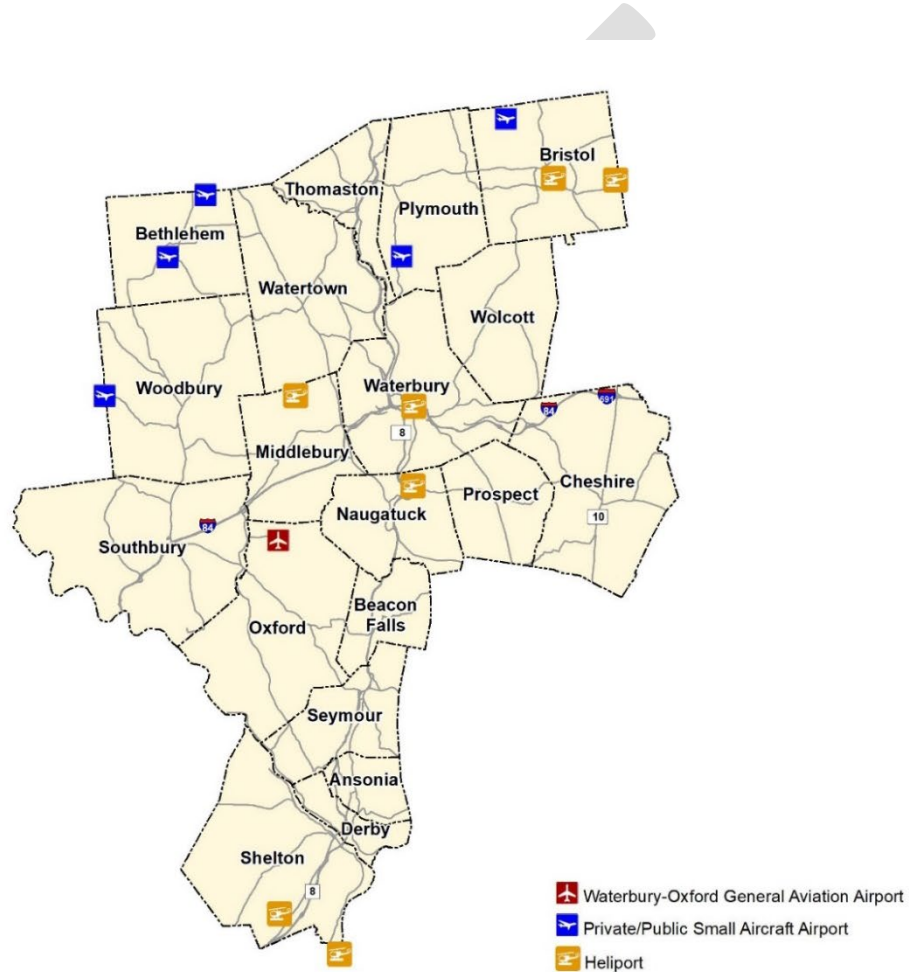


8.0 AVIATION

The NVCOG region hosts one general aviation (GA) airport, five small aircraft facilities, and six Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) registered heliports. The GA Airport and Heliports are managed by the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA). The region's publicly owned and operated GA service level airport is the Waterbury-Oxford Airport (OXC) located at the border of Oxford and Middlebury. The MTP will consider only general aviation airports.



Map 1 Locations of Airports and Heliports within the NVCOG Region

8.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

General Aviation Airports

OXC primarily services corporate, business, and recreational flight operations, and has no scheduled commercial airline service. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has categorized OXC as a “national asset” based on existing aviation activity such as the number and types of based aircraft. The “national asset” group includes general aviation airports which serve national and global markets. In 2019, OXC handled an average of 43 flights a day, approximately 15,700 operations a year, while in 2020, OXC handled an average of 44 flights a day, approximately 16,200 operations a year. Compared to the previous transportation plan, the number of operations has dropped significantly from 43,000 operations in 2017, a 63% decrease. Situated seven miles southwest of downtown Waterbury, it is accessible from Route 188 and I-84. The airport offers facilities for corporate, freight, and recreational flights. It is owned and operated by the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) and has provided general aviation services since its opening in 1971. It occupies 424 acres within a 3,000-acre zone of industrial land. The airport’s runway is 5,800 feet long by 100 feet wide. In 2021, there were 3 helicopters and 154 fixed-wing aircraft based at the Waterbury-Oxford Airport, of which 32 are medium and large corporate jets, 11 are multi-engine, and 111 are single-engine aircraft.

An airport is considered a "national asset" if it is a part of the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS)

As the Fixed Base Operator (FBO), Atlantic Aviation offers servicing and maintenance as well as charter passenger service and air freight. Tradewind Aviation LLC, Clay Lacy Aviation, and Richmor Aviation offer charter passenger service. Atlantic Aviation and Clay Lacy provides medium and small jet servicing. Atlantic Aviation, Interstate Aviation, and Richmor Aviation provide flight school training. Executive Aircraft Interiors, Inc., offers complete refurbishment of single engine to large aircraft cabins.

An air traffic control tower was put into operation in 2001. The State of Connecticut has implemented various infrastructure improvements such as additional taxiways, gas mains, electrical service, and a sewer system. A rear access road, entrance improvements including a gateway, and additional signage were completed in 2018. The updated airport master plan includes several improvements over the next 20 years. These improvements include extending taxiways, constructing a heliport, and installation of new runway lights. Additional improvements if funding allows include additional hangars, a new administration building, a service road around the airport’s perimeter, and additional jet fuel storage facilities.

According to the CAA, the airport contributes 1000 jobs to the local economy, as well as \$182.4 million in economic contributions and \$10.05 million in state tax revenue. In 2013 the

Waterbury-Oxford Development Zone was designated by the state of Connecticut. Companies that move into the Development Zone may be eligible for property tax abatements and state corporation business tax credits. In 2014, Autonomy Technology Inc. (ATI) moved in within the development zone, contributing 20 full time jobs to the region within the first couple of years of operation. In July of 2022, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection office opened at the airport. This allows the airport to accept charter flights from outside the country. Hangers for charter flights are in short supply with other nearby airport at capacity. This new asset will continue to foster new growth for the Waterbury Oxford Airport.

Currently, Clay Lacy Aviation is expanding the Airport's capabilities in two construction phases. The first phase is a \$40 million expansion project adding 40,000 square foot hangar space and 5,000 square feet of office space in three phases. The first phase is expected to be open before the winter of 2023, the second phase in middle of 2024, and the third phase will be ready by the end of 2024. This project will create over 200 jobs for the airport.

Waterbury Oxford Airport, Oxford



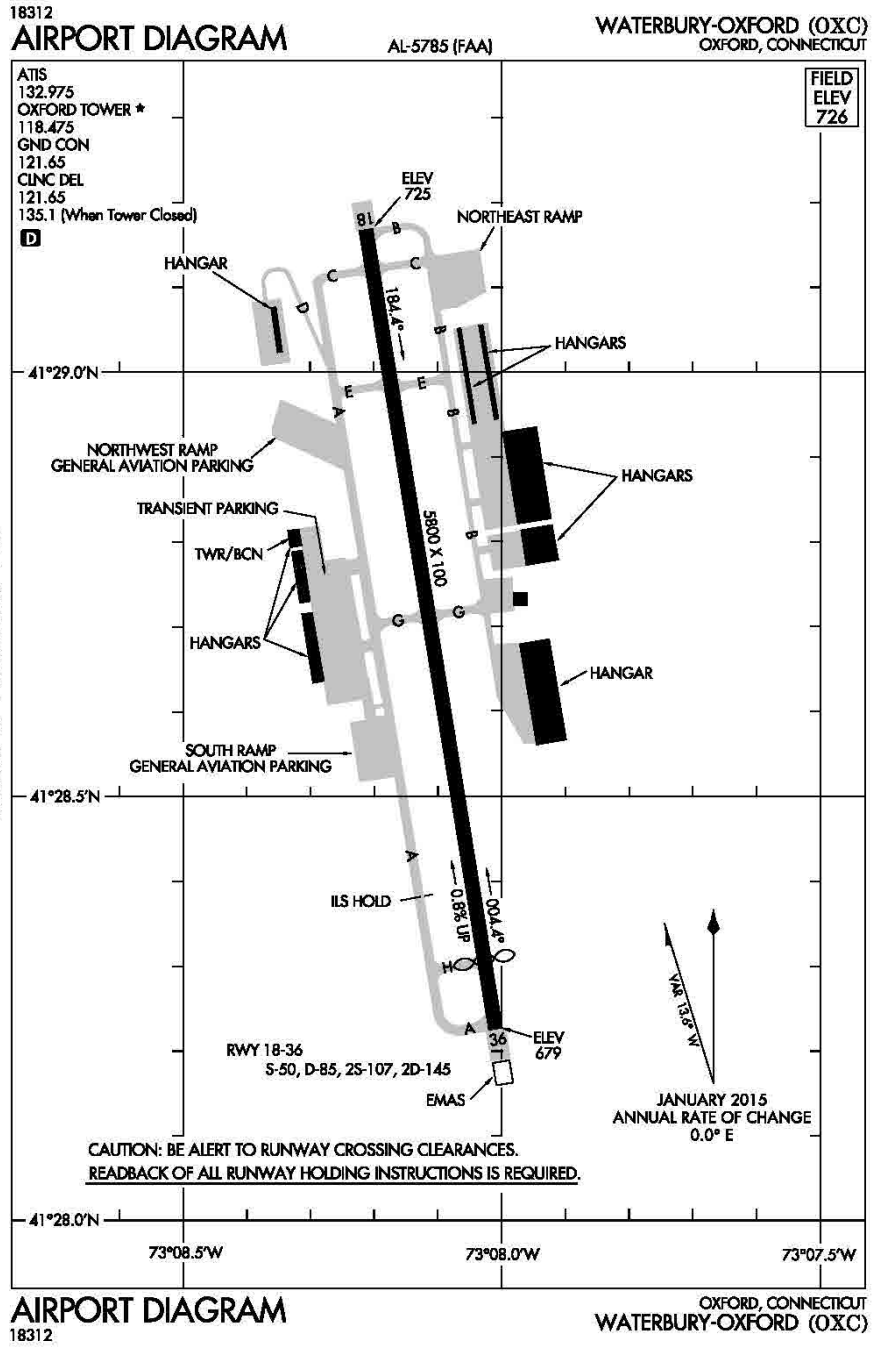


Figure 1 Airport Diagram, Source: Federal Aviation Administration website <https://aeronav.faa.gov/d-tpp/1813/05785AD.PDF>

Heliports

Heliports are managed by the Connecticut Airport Authority; however, takings of property are under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Transportation (CGS §13b-39). There are currently six (6) operational FAA registered heliports in the NVCOG region (see table below for details). This MTP will not include or consider Heliport projects.

Heliport name	Location	Type	Operational?	# of Runways
Bristol Hospital Heliport	Bristol, Connecticut	Heliport	Operational	1
Ultimate Heliport	Bristol, Connecticut	Heliport	Operational	1
St Mary's Heliport	Waterbury, Connecticut	Heliport	Operational	1
Rondo Heliport	Naugatuck, Connecticut	Heliport	Operational	1
Miry Dam Heliport	Middlebury, Connecticut	Heliport	Operational	1
Itt Heliport	Shelton, Connecticut	Heliport	Operational	1

Table 1 Source: <http://www.airnav.com/airports/us/ct?type=H&use=R>

As per the Connecticut Statewide Airport System Plan (CSASP) (2016), between the years 2006 and 2016, the following factors affected demand for air carriers and general aviation transportation services at airports within Connecticut:

- Economic conditions, employment/unemployment, and income/debt levels
- Changes in population
- Changes in air service patterns due to consolidation
- Aviation fuel prices
- Changes in airline and general aviation fleets
- Competing services in nearby states
- Fares and the cost of inputs
- Corporate profits

Between 2003 and 2018, a series of one-time events (terrorism, recessions, fuel spikes, and industry consolidation) have depressed the demand for aviation nationally and in CT. Despite predictions of growth, the actual number of aircraft and operations out of the airport were significantly lower. Predictions for 2018 anticipated 280 based aircraft and 81,707 operations. However, there were only 163 based aircraft and 34,437 operations. Despite this, the airport is anticipating growth over the next 10 years, with an average of 2 new operations per day until 2032.

Other nearby airports and their long term decisions also impact OXC. Tweed Airport located in New Haven is expected to get significant upgrades within the next couple of years. The upgrades include a new four-gate 74,000 square-foot terminal and daily service from a new airline.

Bradley Airport, located in Windsor Locks, is Connecticut's primary commercial airport within the state mainly servicing domestic destinations and nearby international destinations with non-stop flights. Westchester Airport serves a similar role serving some domestic non-stop flights. A \$230 million investment is being made in the terminal at the airport. The improvements will focus on making room for more airlines, passengers, and amenities within the terminal.

Sikorsky Memorial Airport, which is currently owned by the City of Bridgeport, will possibly change hands soon. The City of Bridgeport is looking to sell the airport to CAA. The implication of the sale is not clear yet, but if the ownership does change, there is a possibility that CAA will expand service at this location and complete \$60 million worth in upgrades.

Additional non-stop destinations include LaGuardia Airport and John F. Kennedy International Airport. LaGuardia Airport serves several domestic destinations across the country while John F. Kennedy International Airport serves several domestic and international destinations around the world.

8.3 SYSTEM DEFICIENCIES, ISSUES & PROBLEMS

Connecticut Airport System Challenges and Recommendations

Airport infrastructure generally serves higher-end economic contributors than other transportation infrastructure, and thus infrastructure challenges may affect economic conditions at regional and state scales. Key CT airport system challenges are outlined in the table below.

Connecticut Airport System Challenges (2016)	
Category	Challenges or Influences
Aviation Industry Trends	Aircraft Size and Performance Cargo Growth Viability of General Aviation Airport Traffic Control Tower Closures Socioeconomic Conditions
In-State Dynamics	Airport Development Restrictions and Incentives Airport Roles & Closures Governance Structures
Neighboring State Influences	Commercial Airport Proximity Destinations Served Competition for Cargo Vying for Business Aircraft
Capacity/Development Constraints	System Capacity Physical Constraints Environmental Regulations Varying Political/Municipal Viewpoints Community Perception

Table 2 Source: Connecticut Statewide Airport System Plan (CSASP) (2016)

A challenge faced by OXC and other airports in Connecticut is the lack of a new CSASP update since the 2016-2021 plan. NVCOG and other stakeholders must encourage the CAA to undertake an update to this important planning document and to maintain current, realistic plans moving forward to ensure that continuous projects and maintenance are occurring.

Based on the airport system analysis completed as part of the 2016 CSASP, recommendations for CT GA system infrastructure include the following:

- Undertake long-term efforts to reduce airport development constraints: legislative, environmental, and physical

- Support development and expansion of economic incentive zones near airports and establish airport land use compatibility guidelines
- Prepare hangar and service development areas at target high-end airports
- Undertake pavement and improvements to comply with FAA design standards
- Advocacy and aviation technical contribution

Waterbury-Oxford Airport Challenges and Recommendations

OXC created a 20 year plan for the airport in 2018. The plan outlines the goals for the next 20 years, inventory of existing airports, activity forecasts, facility requirements, and proposed alternatives for the site. Their plan outlines several short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals for the airport.

OXC advantages included:

- Proximity to Metropolitan New York area and ability to attract corporate activity
- Favorable tax structure
- Cooperation and support from surrounding communities
- Airport and its on-site businesses perceived as valued employers within the community

Based on their plan, NVCOG's recommendations for OXC airport includes:

- Ensure airport maintenance continues at current levels
- Pursue infrastructure improvements such as taxiway construction, heliport construction, additional lighting, a deicing facility, and additional service buildings.
- Develop high-end GA hangar facilities
- Support local development around the airport that will foster economic development for both the community and the airport
- Create a bus shuttle between the airport and Downtown Waterbury or expand CTtransit route 442 to OXC to provide a transit connection to the airport and to the local jobs surrounding the airport.

8.4 PROJECTS

Development of the OXC and heliports is managed by the CAA. Documents which guide OXC development include the following:

- Waterbury-Oxford Master Plan (2018)
- Waterbury-Oxford Business Plan (2012)
- Connecticut Statewide Airport System Plan (CSASP) (2016)
- Waterbury-Oxford Airport Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Evaluation for Obstructions (2017)

The following OXC airport projects are underway or planned over the next few years:

INCREASED HANGAR SPACE

The lack of adequate hangar space limits growth. Additional hangars and tie-down areas are recommended in CTDOT's Waterbury-Oxford Airport Master Plan. OXC wants to construct another 668,750 square feet of hanger space by the year 2038.

SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

The Waterbury-Oxford Airport Master Plan calls for safety improvements including expanded taxiways, new lighting, and obstruction removal. Concurrent with the latest master plan update, an airport noise study was completed by the Federal Aviation Administration to understand the noise impacts of the airport and to identify the areas around the airport that are eligible for noise abatement. The study found that some residences in Middlebury experience noise levels considered incompatible with residential uses. CTDOT has initiated a voluntary buyout program for the Triangle Hills subdivision in Middlebury. The study also recommends that undeveloped, land near the airport be rezoned for non-residential uses.

RUNWAY RECONSTRUCTION

In the Fall of 2017, the yearlong Runway Reconstruction Construction Project commenced. This project addressed non-conforming runway safety areas at each end of the runway to bring the airport into safety conformance for its general aviation designation. Additional improvements included new runway and taxiway lighting in the work areas, replacement of drainage and structures, removal of runway taxiway "A" and two connector taxiways to eliminate direct runway access. This project was completed in 2018.