



NAUGATUCK VALLEY
COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Front Cover: Waterbury, Credit: NVCOG Archives

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (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 2022-2023 fiscal year.

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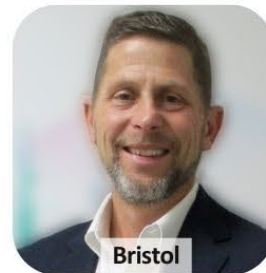
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Overview	1
Key Highlights	2
Environmental Planning	3
Waste Management Efforts	4
Trails Planning	6
Solar Energy Development	7
Kinneytown Dam	8
Community Planning	9
Regional Housing Profile	10
Statutory Land Use Referrals	11
Regional Plan of Conservation & Development (RPOCD)	11
Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	12
Maps & Data Analysis	12
Harnessing the Power of ArcGIS	13
Brownfields Program	14
Regional Brownfields Partnership (RBP)	15
Grants	15
Environmental Justice	15
RBP Annual Meeting	15
Success Stories	16
Transportation Planning	17
Programs	18
Studies & Plans	19
Projects	21
Public Outreach & Engagement	23
NVision 2022	24
Public Meetings	25
Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan	26
Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE)	27
Finance	28
Total Revenue, Indirect Expense, Direct Expense	28



INTRODUCTION

As a prominent regional planning organization, the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) plays a vital role in coordinating and advancing the growth, development, and prosperity of the 19 municipalities within the Naugatuck Valley region (NVR). The NVR is one of the nine state-designated planning regions in Connecticut. NVCOG exists as a valuable resource for its member communities, encouraging collaboration and coordination while also providing strategic capacity building, planning, and technical assistance. It is committed to encouraging municipal and regional economic growth across the Naugatuck Valley, supporting state and federal efforts, and aligning the region's potential and its residents' real needs.

The NVCOG's core planning functions for the Naugatuck Valley planning region include transportation, environmental, community planning, brownfields, and geographic information systems for the Naugatuck Valley planning region. This report encapsulates NVCOG's successful initiatives, projects, and partnerships undertaken throughout the previous year, showcasing the diligent efforts to foster regional planning and empower sustainable development. These endeavors have played a crucial role in advancing the region's long-term prosperity while addressing the evolving needs and priorities of our communities.





KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. Transportation Advancements:

Illustrating NVCOG's success in advancing transportation infrastructure, the report showcases major regional projects, such as the Derby-Shelton Bridge and Route 34 Reconstruction project. NVCOG has made noteworthy strides in transportation planning, including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan which captures the 20-year vision for the region, and the Regional Safety Plan which maps out a strategy to reduce fatal and serious injuries along the region's roadways.

2. Environmental Stewardship:

NVCOG remains committed to sustainability and preserving the region's natural resources. This dedication was demonstrated throughout the year by the promotion of several environmentally friendly initiatives, including solar energy programs, recycling and waste management initiatives, and the advocacy to remove a defunct hydroelectric Dam.

3. Community Development:

NVCOG is committed to promoting sustainable development practices that protect the environment and support economic growth. This was displayed through support to member municipalities in the form of technical assistance, expertise, and grants for brownfield remediation.

4. Informed Decision Making:

NVCOG is dedicated to providing technical assistance and capacity building for the region's decision makers on the issues that are most important to them. This was displayed through staff support to our member municipalities as they prepared their Affordable Housing Plans, solved complex planning and zoning matters, and embarked on various long-range planning efforts.

5. Data Visualization:

NVCOG's GIS Division leads in advancing data visualization efforts. Staff provide project support, including spatial applications and interactive maps, for initiatives like zoning maps, trail data, and bus routing software. These tools empower member municipalities and regional partners to make informed, data-driven decisions.

6. Community Engagement:

NVCOG actively fosters direct community relationships by participating in local events throughout the region. This year the NVCOG successfully held its NVision Conference, bringing together stakeholders to engage in open and inclusive discussion on building more equitable communities.



ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

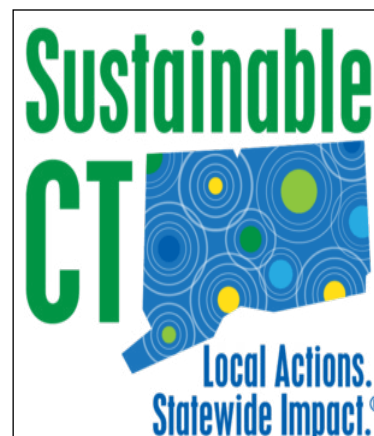
The Environmental Planning Department plays a pivotal role in steering the region towards a greener and more resilient future. Collaborating closely with member municipalities, environmental nonprofits, and state and federal agencies, NVCOG is committed to rectifying past environmental damage and mitigating the environmental footprint of future development.

Environmental planning staff pursue these objectives through a range of strategies, including advocating for well-informed local land use policies, leveraging grant funds for environmental projects, extending assistance to environmental organizations, and contributing to state-level environmental initiatives.

SUSTAINABLE CT

NVCOG plays a pivotal role in advancing sustainability through its partnership with Sustainable CT, which includes hosting one or more fellows annually. These student Fellows, placed during the summer months, collaborate closely with NVCOG to support municipalities in implementing sustainable actions and projects.

This collaborative effort aids in regional planning, progress tracking, and the establishment of sustainability frameworks. Notably, Southbury was recognized this year for its outstanding commitment to sustainability within the Sustainable CT program. This partnership exemplifies NVCOG's dedication to expanding the network of sustainability professionals, fostering environmental action, and achieving positive outcomes at both local and state levels.



Visit [NVCOG's Sustainable CT webpage](#) to view the registered and certified municipalities in the region.

Waste Management Efforts

SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

In 2021, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) introduced the Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) Grant Program, funded with \$5 million through PA 21-2 § 308. This grant was made available to municipalities, regional organizations, and Councils of Government to pilot unit-based pricing and/or organics diversion programs to educate towns and residents on the long-term benefits of these strategies.

Municipal Initiatives: Paving the Way

Working closely with DEEP's consultant, Waste Zero, NVCOG staff quickly engaged with each of the 19 member municipalities to discuss the opportunity. On October 25, the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) announced the first round of grant awards for the Sustainable Materials Management Grants to help municipalities address the state's waste challenges. Three NVCOG municipalities - Ansonia, Seymour, & Woodbury - were selected as grant recipients for trash reduction initiatives. In addition, NVCOG was awarded a grant to provide education and outreach to the municipalities.



Staff engage and educate the community about trash reduction pilot programs

The Trash Reduction Pilot Program in Ansonia kicked off on December 5, with 7,000 households participating. The program involved the distribution of color-coded bags to limit trash to two 15-gallon trash bags per week and the separation of food scraps for conversion into clean energy. These pilot projects are designed to gather valuable data that will inform the long-term implementation of unit-based pricing and organics diversion strategies, potentially leading to cost savings and waste reduction for towns.

NVCOG's environmental planning staff plays an integral role in actively ensuring the success of these pilot programs by offering educational and outreach services. This comprehensive engagement includes hosting community champions dinners, conducting recycling workshops, organizing kickoff fairs, sharing information through social media posts, and addressing residents' inquiries through phone calls and emails.

COMPOSTER AND RAIN BARREL SALE

Each year the NVCOG offers quality composters, rain barrels, and accessories at reduced prices to residents of the Naugatuck Valley Region. Composting and rainwater harvesting have become increasingly important practices to mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure responsible resource management. Each composter is estimated to divert 500 lbs. of organic yard and food waste annually from the municipal solid waste stream, helping to transform waste into valuable compost for amending soil for vegetables, flowers, or lawns.

With ever-dwindling space to send our trash and the resulting increase in disposal fees, backyard composting is an easy way to reduce waste and municipal disposal costs. Combined with composters sold in 2021, NVCOG's efforts are helping divert an estimated 85,500 pounds of municipal solid waste annually.



Staff assist residents at annual composter and rain barrel sale

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION EVENTS

NVCOG administers a 15-town Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection program for residents of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethlehem, Derby, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Oxford, Prospect, Seymour, Southbury, Thomaston, Waterbury, Watertown, Wolcott, and Woodbury. Three hazardous waste disposal days are held annually.

HHW events give residents the opportunity to properly dispose of hazardous materials that are commonly used in the home including paint, pesticides, household cleaners, poisons, and chemicals. The goal of the program is to keep potentially hazardous waste out of landfills and sewers, providing extra protection for wetlands and waterways. In 2022, a total of 1,447 vehicle loads were served.



Cars line up to safely dispose of hazardous materials

Trails Planning

NAUGATUCK RIVER GREENWAY PLANNING

The Naugatuck Valley Greenway is an extensive multiuse trail system aimed at promoting active lifestyles, connecting communities, and preserving the natural beauty of the valley. This ambitious project encompasses a network of walking, rolling, running, and biking paths, spanning over 44 miles across 11 towns. When completed, the Greenway will provide a safe and scenic route for locals and visitors to explore the region. The team at NVCOG is available to provide guidance to member municipalities for trail planning and management at the local level. The environmental team has made tremendous progress in the last year, publishing new guidance and pursuing funding opportunities to advance the design and construction of trail segments.

NRG Trail Design and Management Guide

The agency released the [NRG Trail Design and Management Guide](#) in September. This comprehensive guide offers municipalities invaluable information and best practices as they develop and manage sections of the NRG Trail. The NRG Trail Design and Management Guide is also a valuable resource for towns in the region wishing to meet the management plan criteria for recreational trails grant applications. Municipalities are encouraged to utilize this guide to enhance the planning and management of their local multiuse trail projects.

Funding to Expand the Greenway



In March, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for \$1.5 billion through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity or RAISE discretionary grant program.

The City of Waterbury was awarded a \$23.1 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant in August of 2022. Funding will be used for construction on Waterbury's section of the Naugatuck Greenway Trail, West Main Street Renovation and Streetscaping Improvements, and the addition of electrical vehicle charging stations at the Downtown Waterbury Train Station.



OXFORD ROUTE 67 - ENHANCING ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The Town of Oxford was awarded a \$3.4 million Congressionally Directed Spending grant in December and will use the funds to build a mile-long multiuse path on Route 67. The path is integral to making the center of Oxford more walkable and bicycle-friendly. The Town of Oxford secured funding through Representative DeLauro's office for the next phase of the project.

This award followed shortly after the Oxford Board of Selectmen endorsed the [Oxford Route 67 Alternative Transportation Study](#) final report at their regular meeting on February 16. The report is the result of an 18-month planning process led by NVCOG staff that investigated the potential for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements along Route 67 in Oxford. Study recommendations include developing a 6.5-mile multiuse trail along the west side of Route 67 through Oxford, eventually connecting to the Larkin State Bridle Trail in Southford and the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail in Seymour via that town's sidewalk network.

Currently, the project is in the design phase. The path will run from Dutton Road to Quarry Walk, a mixed-use development with stores, medical and commercial office space, and 150 residential units. Plans include three pedestrian bridges to carry the path over watercourses, a sidewalk between Oxford Municipal Center/ Town Hall and Academy Road along with lighting, street furniture, and crosswalks.

Solar Energy Development

SOLSMART

SolSmart, a nationally recognized program led by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office, aims to support local and regional governments in identifying and implementing measures that simplify the adoption process of solar energy for businesses and residents alike. NVCOG's designation as a bronze SolSmart leader highlights the agency's role in advancing solar development, offering resources, and training municipal officials to lower solar-related soft costs. NVCOG is the 14th regional organization to achieve SolSmart status nationwide, and the 11th local or regional government within Connecticut to garner the designation. NVCOG aims to elevate its SolSmart standing to Silver upon the completion of hosting a training on solar inspections for staff in the NVCOG planning region in 2023.

Visit NVCOG's solar hub online at <https://nvcogct.gov/solar> for resources for municipalities, residents, and developers.



From left to right: Desira Blanchard, Christine O'Neill, Rick Dunne, and Aaron Budris proudly display the bronze SolSmart award



KINNEYTOWN DAM

For nearly two centuries the Kinneytown Dam has posed a barrier to migratory fish in the Naugatuck River, the largest tributary of the Housatonic River. Originating in Northwest Connecticut, this river spans 45 miles, encompassing a watershed area of approximately 310 square miles. Over the course of the year, substantial strides have been made to breathe new life into the river's ecosystem.

Advocacy and Collaborative Actions

Significant milestones were achieved in the effort to restore aquatic pathways at the Kinneytown Dam. Advocacy efforts gained traction when House Appropriations Committee Chair Rosa DeLauro and U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, along with local leaders and environmental organizations, urged Hydroland, to address non-compliance issues.

Several letters were addressed to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which oversees the hydroelectric facility's permit exemption, documenting the dam's impact and petitioning for compliance. Advocates including NVCOG, Save the Sound (STS) and the Naugatuck River Revival Group (NRRG), were among those who encouraged FERC to impose civil monetary penalties, as well as swift and decisive enforcement action.

Funding Allocation and Progress



The initiative got a major boost in December when the NVCOG and Save the Sound were recommended for \$15 million in funding through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal grant program.

The collaborative efforts have resulted in an anticipated project start date of April 1, 2023. This series of events have laid the groundwork for a collaborative goal to restore the Kinneytown Dam's aquatic pathways and revitalize the river's ecosystem. NVCOG developed an Interactive Story Map to further educate the public about the initiative.

Visit the Kinneytown Dam webpage to learn more and explore the [Interactive Story Map](#).



COMMUNITY PLANNING

The NVCOG's goal is to meet the needs of the communities that we serve. NVCOG has established a new Community Planning Department in alignment with this mission. The Community Planning Department reorganizes past efforts into a new, cohesive identity as well as adds additional staff.

Community planning staff provide technical assistance and capacity support to our municipalities in land use planning, zoning, and housing matters. This allows the agency to assist municipalities as they respond to state, regional, and local policy changes. Assistance can include, but is not limited to, plans, projects, initiatives, and education around community planning matters.

The department is committed to finding useful ways to support the region's decision makers, staff, and broader community. NVCOG staff have met with chief elected officials, land use commissions, and land use staff over the last fiscal year to re-solidify existing relationships. The intention of these meetings is to better understand current conditions, challenges, and opportunities to support municipalities on a local and regional level. The goal is to foster collaborative decision-making that aligns with short-, medium- and long-term municipal and regional goals. NVCOG staff have met with over half of the region's land use staff thus far.



REGIONAL HOUSING PROFILE

Serving 19 municipalities and over 450,000 individuals, the NVCOG planning region encompasses a variety of housing forms. This includes Waterbury's dense urban community, Bethlehem's rural environment, and Prospect's primarily suburban form.

Concerns around housing stock, the volatility of the market, and household's ability to pay for increasing housing costs without increased household income have been challenges throughout the state for many years. To address these challenges, the General Assembly implemented new housing policies to address limited affordable housing opportunities throughout the state. One of these efforts included [C.G.S. 8-30j](#), requiring municipalities to plan for affordable housing development.

In February the NVCOG published the [Regional Housing Profile](#) to assist municipalities with their affordable housing plans. The Profile details the requirements of C.G.S. 8-30j, municipal-specific data, and potential strategies municipalities can adopt to increase the number of affordable housing developments within their community.

The Regional Housing profile serves as an ongoing resource, continuing to aid towns in navigating affordable housing planning. Our staff have continued to assist municipalities as they complete their affordable housing plans.

STATUTORY LAND USE REFERRALS

The Connecticut General Statutes requires municipalities to refer certain proposed local-level land use changes to NVCOG for advisory review. One hundred and sixty-four (164) referrals were received in 2022 from municipalities.

The NVCOG Regional Planning Commission participates in the referral process. NVCOG staff evaluate the proposed land use action for regional significance or potential intermunicipal impacts. Staff may also offer specific recommendations based on the proposed land use change. The NVCOG's reviews are advisory and designed to add a regional perspective to the local-level decision making processes.

REGIONAL PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

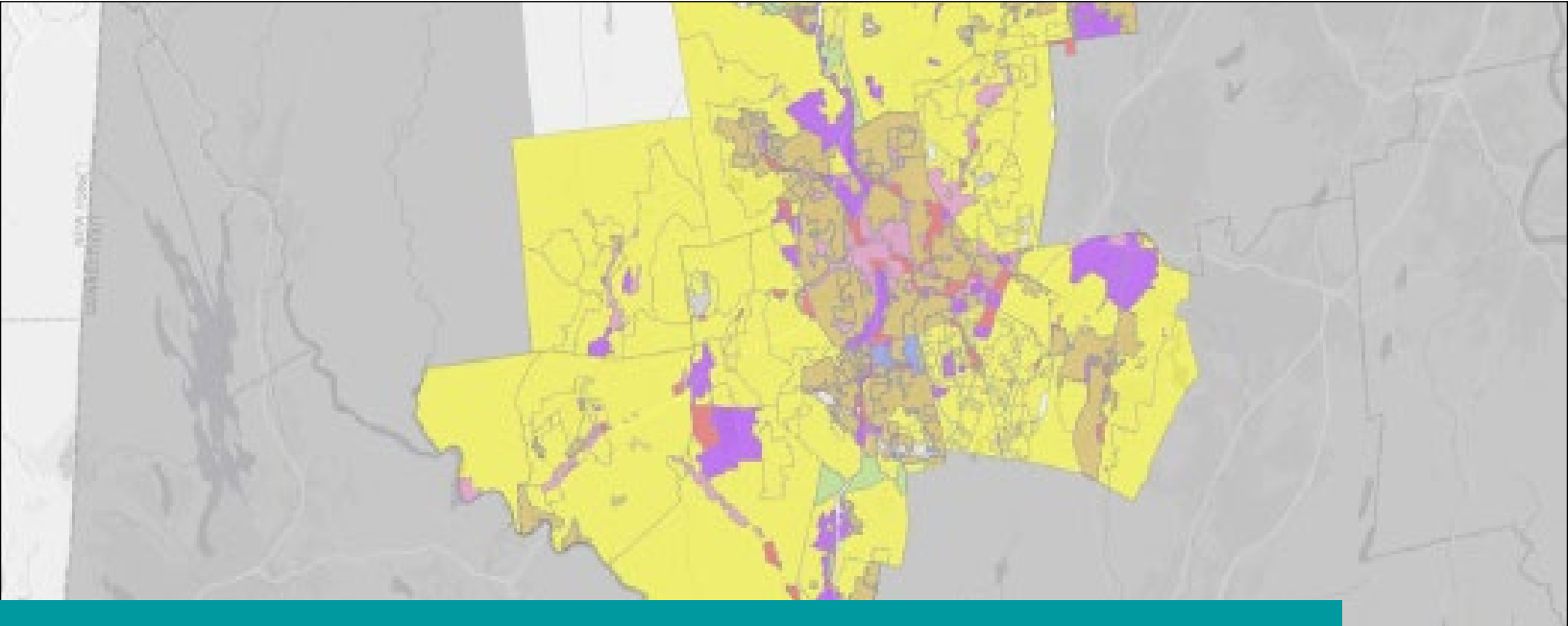
Community Planning is spearheading NVCOG's first Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD). The RPOCD is an advisory policy document that will help guide regional development and investment in the Naugatuck Valley over the next ten years.

A Regional Plan of Conservation and Development is a useful planning tool because it examines planning areas such as the economy, environment, housing, and transportation through a regional perspective. The Plan provides goals and strategies that will provide decision-makers with the information they need to make informed decisions that address the needs of their community and the region's future.

Over the course of this year, NVCOG staff garnered input from the general public and from local decision makers. NVCOG published a survey that was shared throughout the region, as well as conducted outreach to eleven municipality's boards and commissions.



RPOCD presentation to the Oxford Planning and Zoning Committee



GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) SERVICES

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff play a strong supporting role in most projects undertaken by the NVCOG, as well as fulfilling specific requests made by member communities and regional partners. This includes assisting with spatial analysis, developing custom web applications, and creating interactive maps. As a regional planning agency dedicated to fostering sustainable growth, NVCOG strives to empower our member municipalities and partner agencies in making informed decisions that will positively impact the community.

MAPS AND DATA ANALYSIS

NVCOG's GIS Department is tirelessly working to help local communities leverage mapping software and geospatial data to help develop comprehensive and informed plans for the region's infrastructure, transportation, land use, and community development. Through these technologies, the GIS Department can provide municipalities with invaluable insights that aid in understanding complex spatial relationships, identifying potential challenges, and making data-driven decisions. The analysis and mapping performed by the GIS staff have also been critical in establishing a deeper understanding of the region's communities and articulating that understanding in funding requests, resulting in better resource allocation.

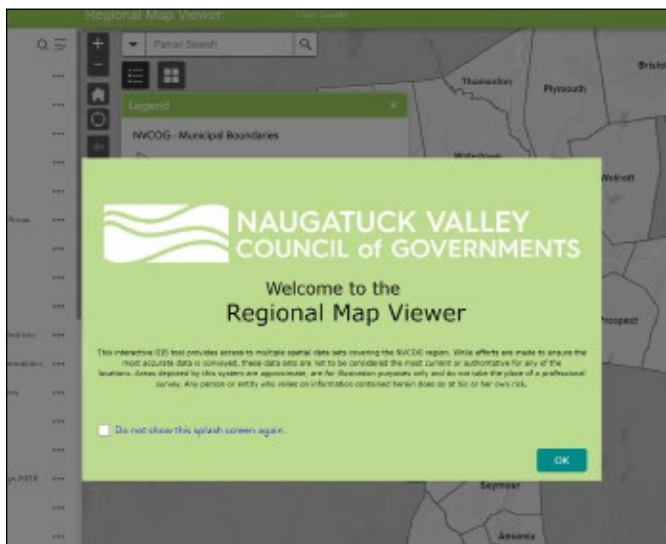
The GIS Department assisted with mapping and data analysis for:

- Town of Prospect Affordable Housing Plan
- Town of Thomaston Enterprise Zones
- Town of Southbury's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)
- Griffin Hospital area in Derby, street and sidewalk design review
- The cities of Derby and Ansonia to assist in adjusting their voting ward boundaries
- Town of Thomaston's Affordable Housing Plan
- Town of Seymour zoning map
- CT Trail Finder: prepared GIS trail data on behalf of trail managers
- CT Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Region 5 mobile app
- City of Shelton bus routing software assistance
- Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition: mailing list of all properties bordering streams in the watershed

HARNESSING THE POWER OF ARCGIS

ArcGIS, developed by Esri, is a powerful GIS software that allows organizations to analyze and visualize geospatial data. The focus of the GIS program has historically been spatial analysis and production of static maps for reports and presentations. NVCOG can leverage the capabilities of ArcGIS to provide our stakeholders and the public with a user-friendly tool for exploring and understanding the Naugatuck Valley region.

The NVCOG has developed comprehensive and visually appealing maps that capture a wide range of regional data. ArcGIS enables NVCOG to seamlessly integrate spatial data from various sources, including government agencies, research institutions, and community stakeholders, into a single interactive platform. NVCOG maintains a [Regional Map Viewer](#), an exceptional tool that provides access to general parcel data, zoning, land use, and open space. It also includes FEMA flood data and environmental data from CTECO. NVCOG also maintains a series of interactive maps such as the [Farmers' Markets & Agri-Tourism map](#) and the [Regional Recreation Guide](#), all of which were updated in 2022.



GIS aims to supplement the creation of static maps with the production of interactive resources including full integration of significant projects, initiative, and reports into a web-mapping format. The GIS Department collaborated with the Environmental Department to create the [Waste Crises Story Map](#), which explores proven, cost-effective strategies like unit-based pricing, separating food scraps from regular garbage so it can be made into renewable energy and other ideas. This initiative aligns with the NVCOG's commitment to utilize modern solutions and evolving technologies to increase outreach and information dissemination to Naugatuck Valley residents, stakeholders, and businesses.



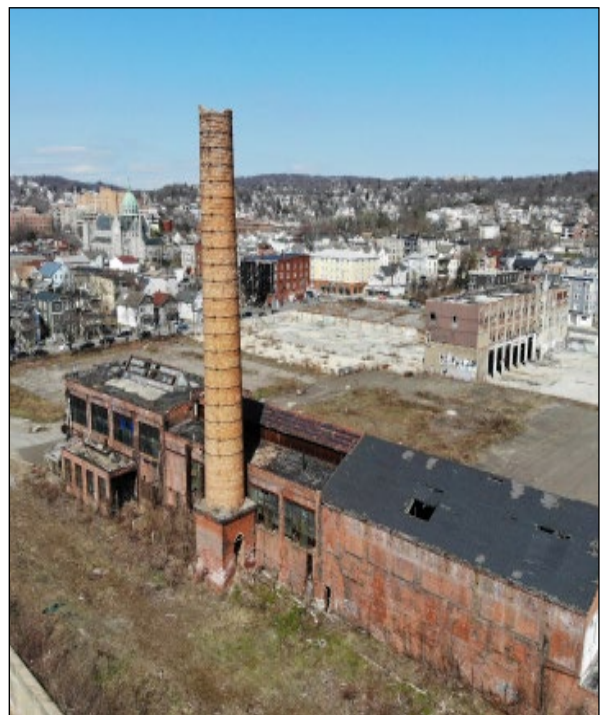


BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

The NVCOG oversees a successful Brownfields Program aimed at revitalizing underutilized and potentially contaminated properties. A brownfield is defined by Connecticut General Statutes §32-760 as “any abandoned or underutilized site where redevelopment, reuse or expansion has not occurred due to the presence or potential presence of pollution in the buildings, soil or groundwater that requires investigation or remediation before or in conjunction with the restoration, redevelopment, reuse and expansion of the property.” The NVCOG’s Brownfields Program represents a major initiative to create new opportunities for economic growth, environmental improvement, and healthier neighborhoods. By addressing the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites, NVCOG is leading the charge in transforming these once-derelict lands into thriving centers of commerce, recreation, and housing.

REGIONAL BROWNFIELDS PARTNERSHIP (RBP)

Brownfield sites are a blight on many communities in Connecticut. The revitalization of these critical properties requires ongoing coordination between municipalities, state and federal agencies, and the private sector. NVCOG’s Brownfield Redevelopment Program works with the support of the Regional Brownfields Partnership (RBP), a committee of 24 towns, to transform these sites from liabilities into valuable assets. This transformation is achieved through grants, low-interest loans, and technical assistance to help navigate the environmental process from site assessments to cleanup.



Former Anamet Manufacturing Complex located in Waterbury



SECURING GRANTS FOR TRANSFORMATION

Leveraging NVCOG's federal grants, staff secured over \$90 million in public and private investments. This year, the agency was awarded \$3.9 million from EPA's highly competitive Revolving Loan Fund competition. These additional funds will be used to continue our progress in revitalizing vacant and abandoned properties and turning them into community assets such as housing, recreation and open space, health facilities, social services, and commerce opportunities. With this latest award, our EPA funding exceeds \$10 million, enabling sustained collaboration with officials, organizations, and developers for brownfields development. This critical funding forms the foundation of the NVCOG's Brownfields services and will allow NVCOG staff to continue providing assessment, planning, and remediation services to eligible municipalities of the RBP.



Left to right: NVCOG Executive Director Rick Dunne and Brownfield Manager Ricardo Rodrigues

A FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental Justice (EJ) is central to NVCOG's brownfields work, aimed at revitalizing communities and improving the quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods. Historically, racial minorities and low-income populations have borne the brunt of environmental issues. Environmental Justice entails ensuring that no one faces disproportionate consequences of environmental pollution or is denied access to environmental benefits. Using mapping technologies like the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [EJScreen tool](#), NVCOG is able to identify and target communities most exposed to environmental burdens and vulnerable to health risks such as asthma and heart disease. NVCOG has 15 active brownfield projects with more than half in EJ Communities and are adding 4 new projects which include 313 Mill Street, Waterbury, 1 Main Street, Berlin, 300 Broad Street, Bristol, and 143 Wolcott Rd, Wolcott. NVCOG through the RBP, has invested over \$1.6 million within the South End of Waterbury. The Brownfields program, through collaboration with federal, state, and municipal leaders actively mitigates potential health risks and restores economic vitality, focusing on historically disadvantaged communities.

ANNUAL MEETING & ACHIEVEMENTS

This year, the RBP Annual Meeting welcomed government officials, community members, and brownfield enthusiasts to explore the potential of brownfield sites and their exciting prospects. The meeting, held on November 30, 2022, at the Mattatuck Museum, was attended by over 60 participants. RBP Chair Board member Sheila O'Malley from the City of Ansonia highlighted opportunities for large scale redevelopment to ensure future financial and environmental sustainability in member communities.



Participants at the RBP Annual Meeting

The annual meeting showcased milestones such as ribbon-cuttings at the Franklin Avenue apartments in Torrington and the Bank Street Park in Waterbury, the NVision 2022 environmental justice panel discussion, and upcoming funding opportunities. Several representatives of member communities shared their success stories in reutilizing former brownfields sites.

SUCCESS STORIES

909 Bank Street, Waterbury

On June 14, Waterbury and the Brooklyn neighborhood gathered for a ribbon cutting to celebrate the official opening of the spectacular new playground at 909 Bank Street, where generations of families and children will spend time laughing and playing. The site had a variety of past uses and was ultimately left vacant after the former building burned in 2012. The City took ownership and initiative to remediate the site to provide the neighborhood with much-needed recreational space. The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments conducted an environmental assessment to facilitate potential site transfer of the former vacant property. Upon completion of assessment activities on site, the City of Waterbury was granted a \$220,000 sub-awarded through NVCOG's Revolving Loan Fund for remedial activities throughout the site.



*Brooklyn Neighborhood Park Dedication Ceremony |
Credit: [City of Waterbury](#)*

100 Franklin Street, Torrington

On October 07, Pennrose, and the City of Torrington celebrated the grand opening of Riverfront, a new mixed-income, mixed-use community at the site of the former Torrington Manufacturing Company (Torin). Located along the Naugatuck River at 100 Franklin Street in downtown Torrington, the brand-new community fosters a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown with 60 family apartments, 1,200 SF of retail space, and an extension of the Naugatuck Greenway Trail for the public. The Naugatuck Valley Council of Government's Revolving Loan Fund Committee sub granted the City of Torrington \$44,000 from its Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to help aid with cleanup planning at 100 Franklin Street.



Grand opening of Riverfront | Credit: [Pennrose](#)



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

At the heart of NVCOG's mission lies its pivotal role in regional transportation planning – an endeavor that secures a dependable and efficient transportation system for both its residents and visitors. The NVCOG, dually functioning as the host agency for the Central Naugatuck Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and co-host for the Greater Bridgeport and Valley MPO, is responsible for developing a vision for transportation in the region and deciding how to allocate federal and state transportation funds to transportation programs and projects that improve roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure.

The agency takes an active stance by conducting studies of the existing systems, advocating the best practices to enhance the network, and collaborating with municipalities to drive progress.



Planners adjust a traffic counter located in Ansonia

Transportation Programs

NVCOG'S COMMITMENT TO VISION ZERO

In September, NVCOG embraced the global Vision Zero campaign aspiring to eliminate traffic-related deaths and severe injuries by 2060. The NVision Zero program advances this goal by prioritizing road safety in municipal projects and program implementation. The commitment to eradicating traffic fatalities sets NVCOG among a select group of regions prioritizing effective traffic safety strategies. This commitment also marked the commencement of comprehensive crash data reporting updates and the development of a Vision Zero Plan for the Naugatuck Valley planning region. The agency also adopted an update to the Regional Transportation Safety Plan. The updated plan serves as a roadmap, enabling us to identify potential safety hazards, implement effective countermeasures, and reduce the number of traffic-related injuries and fatalities in our area. By placing a high priority on road safety, NVCOG ensures that everyone, regardless of mode of transportation, can travel with increased confidence and security.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is required by 23 CFR § 450.326 to maintain a detailed four-year spending plan that includes any project receiving federal funding. These plans are then aggregated at the state level into a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), cataloging federal expenditures across the state.

Both the Central Naugatuck Valley MPO and the Greater Bridgeport and Valley MPO managed ongoing or upcoming construction projects under the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). Efforts are in progress to develop the 2025-2028 TIP/STIP for adoption in the next year. By regularly updating and maintaining this program, the NVCOG can address current mobility challenges while laying the foundation for a more sustainable and connected future.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (LOTICIP)

The Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) is a state-funded program that aims to assist municipalities in enhancing and maintaining local transportation assets, including roads, bridges, sidewalks, and streetscapes. The NVCOG has been responsible for soliciting, programming and working with our towns to initiate and implement projects. In February, NVCOG achieved cumulative LOTICIP awards surpassing \$50 million. These funds supported multiple projects across the region, enabling municipalities to enhance transportation infrastructure for improved travel experiences. Since the program's inception, 13 projects have been completed, with another 9 currently under construction.

Transportation Studies and Plans

WEST MAIN STREET CORRIDOR STUDY

Early in the year, the NVCOG completed a study of the West Main Street Corridor in Waterbury. NVCOG lead the Study in coordination with the City of Waterbury and the CT Department of Transportation. West Main Street is a busy corridor that brings traffic across the Naugatuck River into downtown Waterbury. The street also connects large employers and important destinations in the city. The study, performed by Fuss and O'Neill as the primary consultant, explored the challenges and opportunities of the stretch of road from Route 8 to the Waterbury Green and presents solutions that may improve safety for all users including pedestrians, cyclists, public transit riders, and drivers.



West Main Street in Waterbury

Following the completion of the West Main Street Study and the NRG Phase I in Waterbury, the city was awarded a \$23.1 Million RAISE Grant for West Main Street renovation and streetscaping improvements, as well as for the construction of the NRG from Eagle Street north to West Main Street.

CT ROUTE 229 CORRIDOR STUDY

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG), along with the City of Bristol and Town of Southington, are excited to announce a draft of the CT Route 229 Corridor Study Final Report.

This comprehensive review looks at all aspects of the corridor in its current state, considers alternatives for improvement in key locations, and recommends concepts as outlined below. To access the full report, visit nvcog.org and navigate to the project page, or click [here](#).

IN ITS CURRENT CONDITION, SEVERAL PERSISTENT ISSUES WERE IDENTIFIED WITH ROUTE 229:

- Long delays at some of the busier intersections along the corridor
- Few amenities for cyclists
- Gaps in the sidewalk network, including missing or poorly marked crosswalks
- Difficult to access driveways and unsignalized streets

THE STUDY INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS:

- Along the entire length of the route, install a multi-use trail to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Fill sidewalk gaps opposite the multi-use trail to provide pedestrian access on both sides.
- Add an additional Southbound through lane from ESPN Drive to Executive Boulevard N. in Southington, ensuring two through lanes in either direction between I-84 and Route 22.
- Realign several intersections to improve operations and safety.

ROUTE 229 CORRIDOR STUDY

NVCOG, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, the City of Bristol, and the Town of Southington, completed a corridor study on CT Route 229 between Interstate 84 and US Route 6. The study's focus was on future development planning, enhancing safety, and improving access for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. The report recommends improvements to 13 major intersections along Route 229 to ease congestion and address safety concerns. One of the most significant outcomes was a multi-use side path for the full distance, providing a north-south link through Bristol for active transportation users. Extending sidewalks along with gateway and wayfinding signage is also suggested.

Through one or more funding sources, the study can be translated into a project that will improve safety, provide additional access, and yield economic development benefits.

A one-page public handbook for the Route 229 Corridor Study

NVISION50: METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

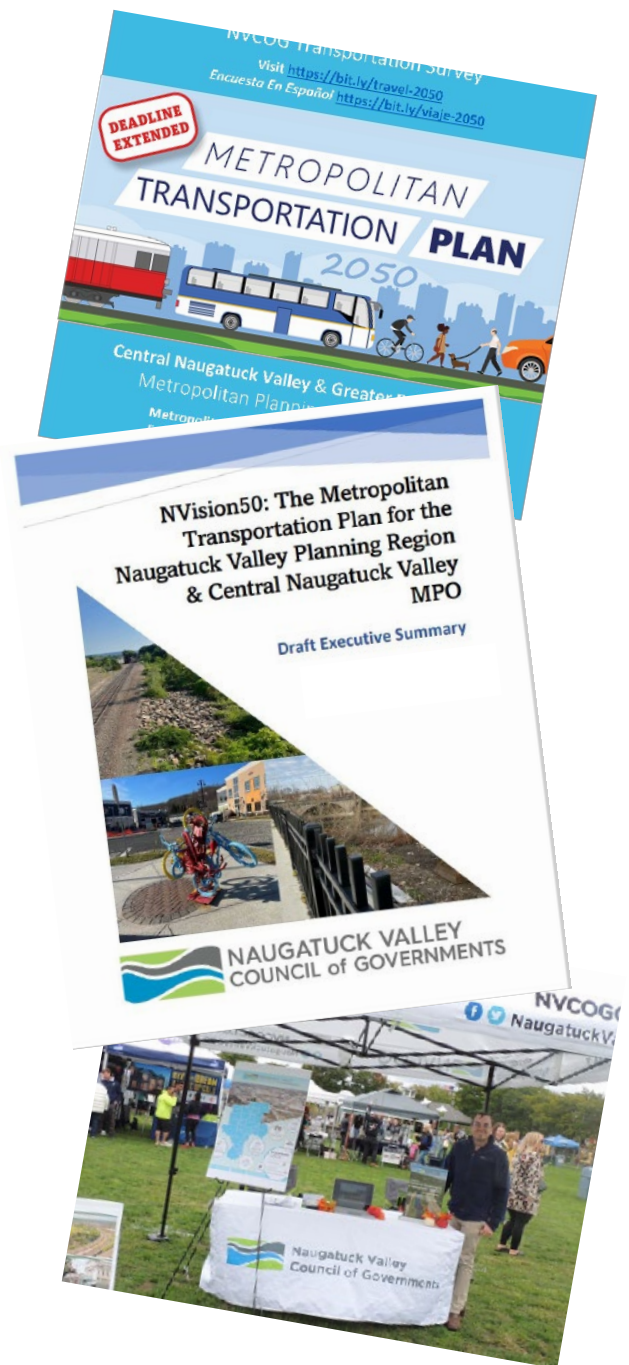
As federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations, both the Central Naugatuck Valley MPO and the Greater Bridgeport and Valley MPOs must create and maintain a 20+ year long range transportation plan, known as a Metropolitan Transportation Plan. This document must be updated every four years, including revised estimates of federal spending and updated goals and priorities for the region. Both MPOs must have updates completed by mid-2023, and NVCOG staff has been actively working on these plans over the course of the year.

Paving the Way for Clean Air

Along with the long-term vision for the region, the MTP contains a fiscally constrained project listing for the full 27-year period of the document. These projects, along with those of the other MPOs around the state, are aggregated into a full statewide model to predict traffic volumes, patterns, and compliance with federal Air Quality regulations.

Input Matters

To gather feedback on priorities and concerns within the region, NVCOG staff worked in conjunction with staff of the CT Metropolitan COG to develop a transportation survey. This survey, released to residents and visitors to towns in both regions, aimed to identify concerns about the transportation system, ideas from respondents for improvement, and to gauge reaction to some of the ongoing statewide and federal transportation trends. More than 670 responses were collected in total, and NVCOG and Metro COG employees sifted through them to ensure the data was accurately represented and incorporated into our respective MTPs.



THE NEW MIX: I-84/ROUTE 8 INTERCHANGE REPLACEMENT

The New Mix is the Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) program dedicated to planning for the long-term future of the Interstate 84 / Route 8 interchange in Waterbury, Connecticut. The Department anticipates completing the New Mix Planning and Environmental Linkage Study (PEL) by late-2023. Early actions recommended by the PEL could potentially commence within a few years.

Through the NVCOG staff's active participation on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), in partnership with the City of Waterbury, adjustments have been made to the priorities of the study to ensure better outcomes for not only the City of Waterbury, but for the region as well. NVCOG transportation staff continue to engage with the project team to ensure that early action items identified in the PEL align with the region's vision.

For a deeper dive into the details and additional resources, visit NVCOG's [New Mix webpage](#).

Transportation Projects

DERBY-SHELTON BRIDGE

The Derby-Shelton Bridge carries Bridge Street (State Road 712) over the Housatonic River between Downtown Shelton and Downtown Derby. This significant initiative aims to improve safety, accessibility, and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists crossing one of the region's most vital transportation links. The rehabilitation of the Derby/Shelton Bridge is a three-year project which began in 2021. The north side of the bridge was reconstructed in 2021, during 2022 the center lane of the bridge was under construction. Construction on the south side of the bridge will commence in June 2023 as part of Phase 3. The bridge was originally expected to open in the fall of 2023; however, due to delays resulting from the extensive amount of utilities crossing the bridge that had to be relocated, the bridge is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2024.

The project will feature a variety of improvements, including the replacement of bridge parapet walls, the addition of a second eastbound travel lane, wider sidewalks on the south side, dedicated bicycle lanes, and enhanced lighting. These enhancements will significantly increase safety and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, ensuring their seamless travel across the bridge and fostering a more inclusive transportation network.



Derby-Shelton Bridge over the Housatonic River between Downtown Shelton and Downtown Derby



ALL STATIONS ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAM

Under the All-Stations Accessibility Program initiated by the Connecticut Department of Transportation, substantial upgrades are in the works for all stations along the Waterbury Line. This program will see the construction of high-level platforms at all stations, including Waterbury, Ansonia, Seymour, and Beacon Falls. These platforms will not only support new Waterbury Line equipment, but they will also considerably improve accessibility for all riders.

The realization of this initiative follows a rigorous effort by NVCOG staff to gain support from stakeholders and the public, further reinforcing its standing as a longstanding regional priority. As the project enters the design phase, NVCOG will remain vigilant in ensuring that enhancements meet the need of all riders. This initiative is inextricably linked to the agency's continuous efforts to increase service accessibility, a goal that remains unwavering as we look ahead to the next years.

ROUTE 34 MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION

This project, in conjunction with the Derby-Shelton Bridge, has paved the way for transformative changes to downtown Derby and improved linkage between downtown Shelton and the Waterbury Line of Metro-North Railroad.

As the winter months settled in, progress persisted with utility work and the filling of the southern section of Route 34. The surface on the new southern lanes (Eastbound) are scheduled to be laid down in the summer of 2023.



PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

At any given time, the NVCOG is engaged in a wide range of projects and activities that have a direct influence on the lives of people, businesses, and other stakeholders throughout the region. Larger projects may take years to complete, with serious ramifications for communities. Even minor initiatives can have a significant impact on people's lives. As a result, the NVCOG works hard to involve the public in regional planning and project development. Additionally, NVCOG has made numerous changes to how it performs public outreach and involvement, as well as sought out opportunities to engage with its various partners and stakeholders

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH PUBLIC EVENTS

NVCOG recognizes the importance of building meaningful relationships directly with the community. For this reason, staff attend community events each summer and fall to actively engage with the community. Through participation and tabling at local events throughout the region, the staff is able to spark conversations and actively seek input from attendees. One of the agency's primary objectives is to establish an open and two-way communication channel with the community to better understand their needs, concerns, and aspirations. By having a physical presence at these events, NVCOG creates an informal and approachable platform to engage with residents, business owners, and other stakeholders.

You may have seen NVCOG staff at:

- Woodbury Earth Day
- Bristol Mum Festival
- Shelton Day
- Ansonia Nature Center Fall Festival
- Ansonia Nature Center Earth Day Event
- NHS of Waterbury's Housing Expo
- Waterbury Harry Potter Day





NAUGATUCK VALLEY CONFERENCE ON FOSTERING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

NVCOG successfully held its quadrennial NVision conference, with the theme “Fostering Equitable Development” throughout the region. On September 13, over 200 community leaders, stakeholders, and professionals from diverse sectors gathered at the Palace Theater in Waterbury to discuss methods to promote equity throughout the Naugatuck Valley.

Through keynote addresses, interactive panels, networking opportunities and an exhibitors’ hall attendees had the opportunity to hear from influential thought leaders and gain valuable knowledge that they could apply in their local communities.



Guests at the NVision 2022 Conference

NAUGATUCK VALLEY CONFERENCE ON FOSTERING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

FEATURING:



GOVERNOR
LAMONT



MAYOR
O'LEARY

SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 | 8 A.M.-2 P.M. | PALACE THEATER, WATERBURY, CT





Panelists discuss affordable housing development

The conference’s expert panelists tackled critical issues including the widespread adoption of micro-mobility devices for transportation equity, creating economic and social mobility through affordable housing, and capacity building to foster meaningful involvement for environmental justice communities.

The NVision Conference exemplifies NVCOG’s commitment to promoting fairness, inclusivity, and sustainability within the region. The NVCOG website has images, slideshows, and remarks from esteemed guests including Governor Ned Lamont and NVCOG Board Chair, and Waterbury Mayor Neil O’Leary.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY FORUMS

NVCOG aims to bring together individuals, organizations, and stakeholders from various sectors to discuss and explore innovative ways to protect the environment, promote sustainable practices, and forge a greener future for our communities. As a result, the agency organizes Environmental Sustainability Forums (ESFs).

NVCOG hosted three forums in 2022 on the topics of MS4 compliance, Commercial Waste Solutions, and Energy Efficiency. All forums are recorded and accessible on the ESF webpage at www.nvcoct.gov/ESF.



Participants convene during Environmental Sustainability Forum

METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING FORUM SPRING MEETING

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) hosted the 2022 Spring Meeting of the Metropolitan Area Planning (MAP) Forum on Friday, June 3. The MAP Forum, comprising representatives from metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and councils of governments (COGs) located throughout New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania, serves as a platform for exchanging ideas, knowledge sharing, and maintaining coordination of planning activities and interconnectedness between the multi-state regions. The 2022 Spring MAP Forum provided a unique opportunity for professionals to learn from each other, network, and explore innovative approaches to regional planning. A recording of the meeting can be accessed on the [NVCOG YouTube channel](#).

SHARING INSIGHT

This year NVCOG staff engaged in a number of presentations, aimed at fostering community engagement and knowledge sharing by connecting our experts with local organizations, businesses, and community groups. The NVCOG staff help advance the agency's educational outreach mission by sharing their expertise in topics related to planning and regional issues. Through these presentations, NVCOG staff shed light on the agency's mission, vision, and ongoing projects. This exciting initiative, focusing on exchanging knowledge and sharing expertise, aims to create meaningful connections and foster dialogue among diverse groups within the region.

Presentations were made to:

- Waterbury Bunker Hill Neighborhood Association
- The Valley Chamber of Commerce
- St. Thomas's Catholic Church in Oxford
- University of Connecticut
- Southern New England American Planning Association (SNEAPA) Conference
- CCAPA Hot Topics

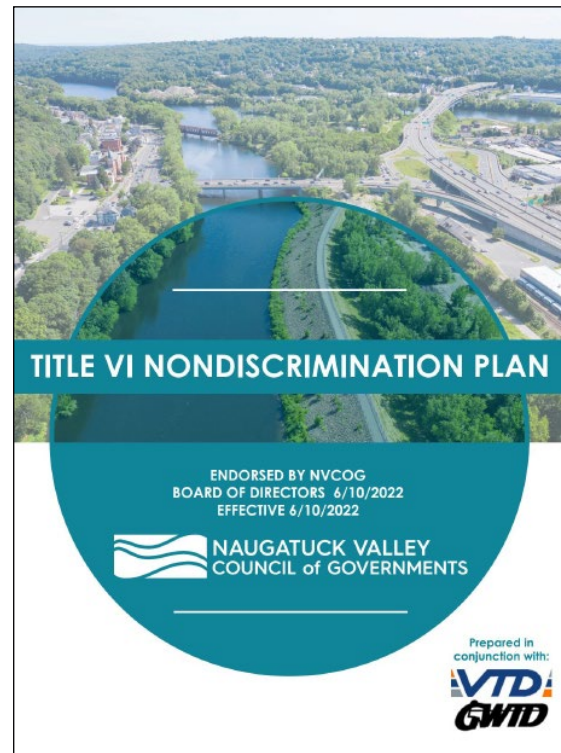


Assistant Director Mark Nielsen Presentation to the Valley Chamber| Credit: [Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce](#)

TITLE VI PROGRAM UPDATE

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensures that no person shall be excluded from participation, denied benefits, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. In striving to adhere to this critical legislation, NVCOG continuously evaluates its policies, programs, and practices to identify potential barriers and promote inclusive decision-making processes.

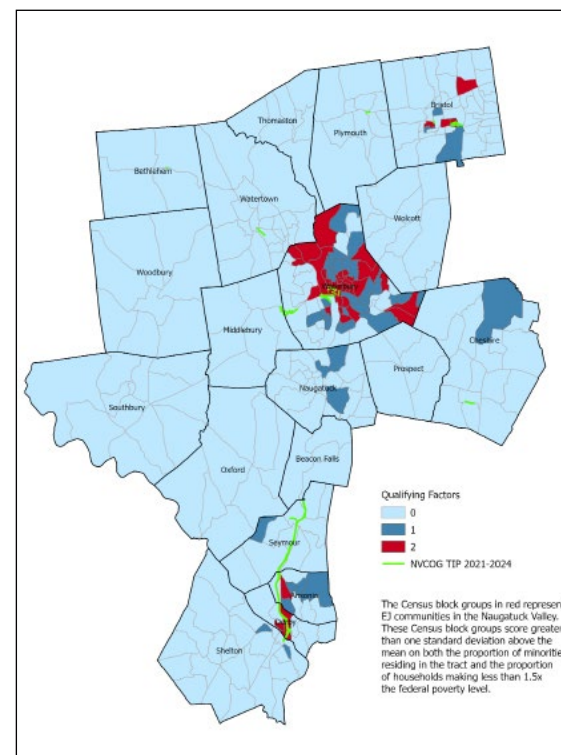
NVCOG undertook an extensive review and updating process of its Title VI Plan. The revised plan underscores NVCOG's unwavering commitment to promoting fair and equitable practices throughout all its transportation programs and services within the region. NVCOG's Board of Directors embraced this commitment and endorsed the [Title VI Plan](#) at its June 2022 meeting. The following sections are included in the Plan.



NVCOG Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan

Environmental Justice Analysis

During the year, the NVCOG initiated an update of its EJ program and completed an assessment to identify 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). Under the updated program, NVCOG conducted an analysis of its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to identify and rectify any disproportionate distribution of resources, benefits, and environmental burdens that may adversely affect marginalized populations.



*TIP Projects programed in NVCOG
Environmental Justice Census Blocks*

Public Participation Plan

This plan reflects NVCOG's commitment to fostering an inclusive and collaborative approach to regional planning, ensuring that the voices of all stakeholders are heard and valued. Key features of the updated Public Participation Plan include:

1. Increased Accessibility:

NVCOG is dedicated to ensuring that public meetings, workshops, and outreach sessions are conveniently located and accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities and limited mobility. Accommodations such as virtual meetings and translations services will be provided to ensure broader public participation.

2. Inclusive Outreach:

Recognizing the importance of inclusivity, NVCOG will prioritize reaching communities that have historically been underrepresented in decision-making processes. The organization will collaborate with local organizations, community leaders, and non-profits to conduct targeted outreach through public meetings, bilingual resources, and virtual outreach events.

3. Expanded Communication Channels:

NVCOG recognizes the importance of reaching out to a broader audience, utilizing various communication channels such as social media platforms.



Community members engage with NVCOG staff during Woodbury Earth Day

DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM (DBE)

DBEs have historically faced several challenges in breaking into the public contracting realm. NVCOG has taken concrete steps to foster a level playing field, enabling DBEs to have equitable access to the various contracting opportunities offered by the agency.

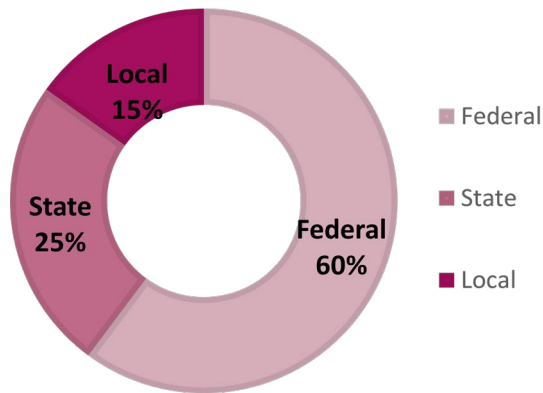
Recognizing the importance of inclusivity and equal access to opportunities, NVCOG embarked on a comprehensive study and consultation process to determine realistic and measurable goals for DBE participation. The newly developed DBE goals set by NVCOG will serve as a benchmark for NVCOG's commitment to promoting diversity and providing opportunities to small and minority-owned businesses.

FINANCE

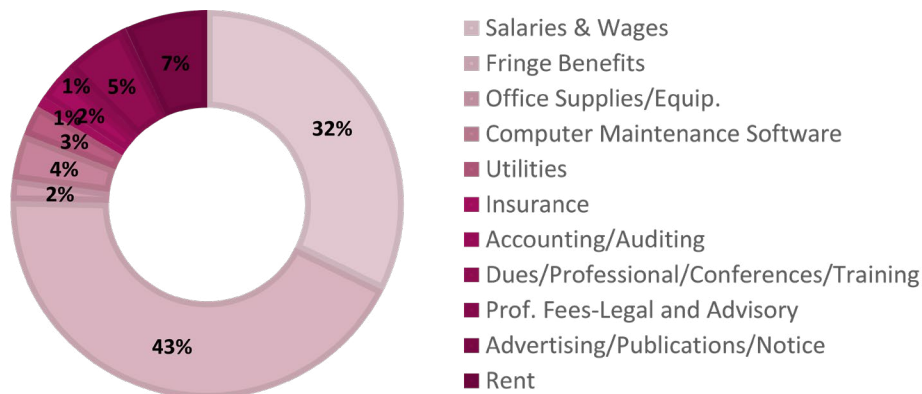
FY 2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

NVCOG's financial overview reflects responsible management with revenues covering direct expenses including salaries, wages, and fringe benefits. Additionally, indirect expenses such as office supplies, utilities, and insurance are essential for operations. NVCOG remains committed to efficient financial stewardship while serving member Towns.

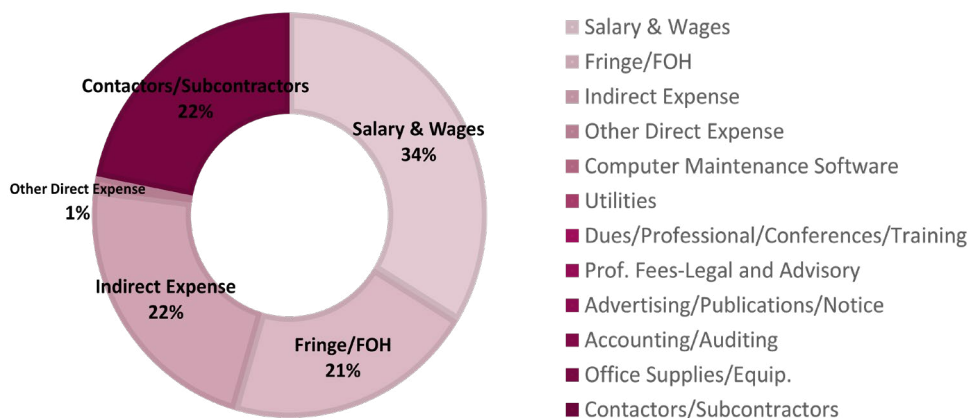
Total Revenue



Indirect Expense



Direct Expense





For a physical copy, contact the
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