



NAUGATUCK VALLEY  
COUNCIL of GOVERNMENTS

# 2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

*Moving the Region Forward*



203-757-0535



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# 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 with its residents' needs.

The NVCOG serves as the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Central Naugatuck Valley. In this capacity, the NVCOG is responsible for the federal transportation planning process, including programming all federal funds and measuring transportation system performance. Similarly, the NVCOG co-hosts to the Greater Bridgeport and Valley MPO, which includes the four lower valley municipalities of Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, and Shelton.

The NVCOG's core planning functions for the 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.



# Departing Remarks from NVCOG's Board Chair



As I bid farewell to this distinguished position, I cannot help but reflect on the tremendous growth and progress we have collectively achieved over the years. I enjoyed my membership in this COG because it offered me valuable insights into regional planning and development, as well as fostering collaboration across the Naugatuck Valley's diverse communities.

Our board members have diligently worked towards addressing challenges head-on. No matter our political differences, we continually united and discovered innovative solutions whenever we gathered around the table. Together we have tackled critical issues concerning transportation along the Waterbury Branch Line, brownfields remediation, environmental sustainability and public safety. I assure you that it has won and earned the respect of those at the state level, as well as the legislative leadership and staff.

People at this COG care deeply and work hard. I'll forever be grateful to our group that worked on the Kinneytown Dam project. During my tenure here, I believe that was both the most meaningful and difficult thing we have done. I truly believe that the mission of this COG, I hope, moving forward is going to be to keep Kinneytown right on that frontmost burner. It will have an incredible impact not only for the Valley, but also on all the communities up north. I'm extremely pleased with what we've accomplished.

It has been an honor to work alongside such dedicated professionals who share a common vision for the development and prosperity of our cities, towns and boroughs. Although my tenure as Board Chair has come to an end, I am confident that our shared commitment to regional cooperation will continue to drive positive change for years to come.

With sincere thanks,

Neil M. O'Leary

# Recognition for National and Regional Leadership



In June, the NVCOG's Executive Director, Rick Dunne, was honored with the 2023 President's Award at the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) Annual Conference. This prestigious recognition highlights his exceptional leadership and dedication to advancing regional concepts, approaches and programs throughout the year.

Dunne's impactful contributions span decades, leaving a mark on the local, regional, state and federal levels. His visionary advocacy for regionalism has not only shaped the NVCOG but has also influenced the broader landscape of collaborative planning and development.

Throughout his speech, Rick expressed his gratitude to his board, staff, DOT state officials, fellow COG directors and Lyle Wray, a longtime colleague, friend, mentor and collaborator who formerly served as Executive Director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments.

This recognition not only celebrates Dunne's exceptional leadership and contributions to the NVCOG but also underscores the significance of regional councils in driving positive change within communities.



## Regional Storytelling

The NVCOG showcased its communications expertise at NARC with panelist Desira Blanchard, the Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator. She discussed regional storytelling and how rebranding and messaging can shape views and compel engagement.



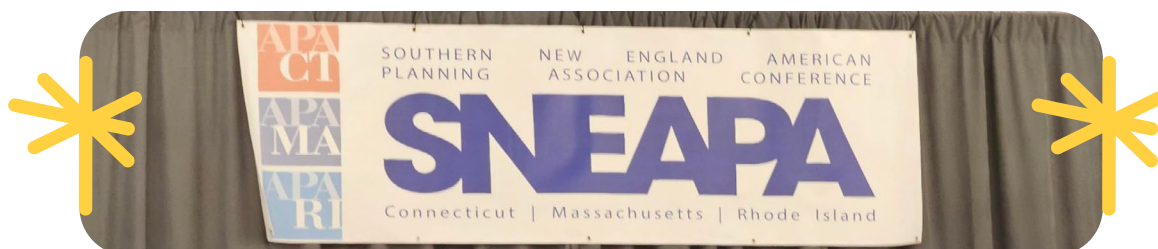
## SNEAPA

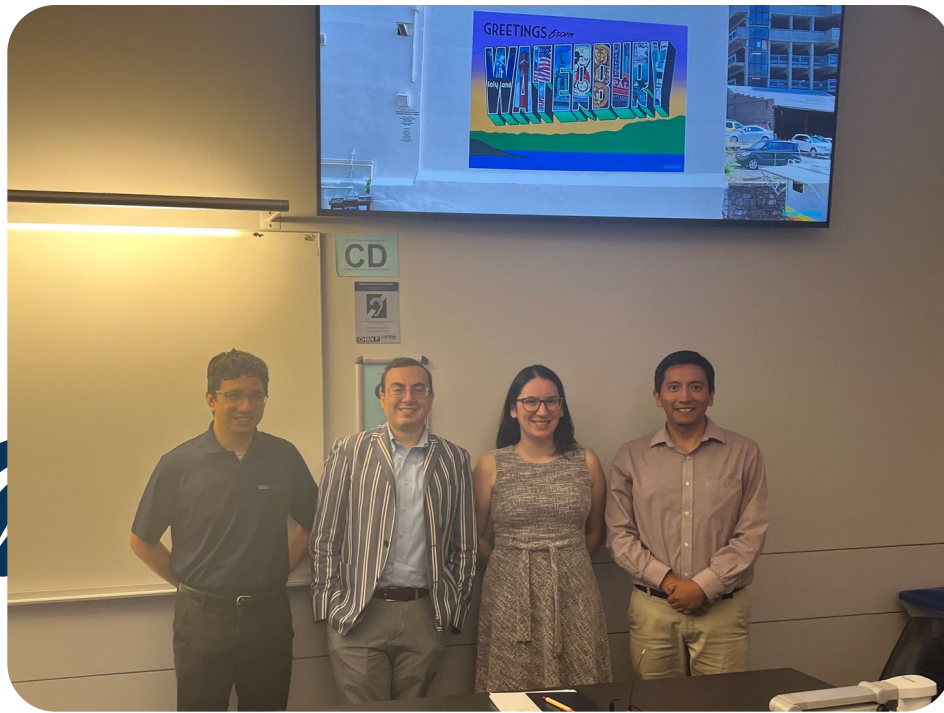
The 2023 Southern New England APA Planning Conference took place in New Haven, Connecticut. This annual regional planning event, organized by the American Planning Association chapters of Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut, drew over 500 professionals. The conference not only provided opportunities for professional development and networking, but also allowed numerous staff members to showcase their dedication to regional leadership and expertise in a variety of planning conversations.



**The NVCOG's engagement in this significant regional event emphasizes the agency's commitment to regional planning excellence and collaboration.**

Christine O'Neill, Environmental Planner II, contributed to the panel "Planning for the Waste Crisis." Savannah-Nicole Villalba, AICP, AZT, Community Planning Director, participated on various panels showcasing expertise on food security and land use best practices. She also co-led the engaging mobile workshop "Neighbors and Nature Thriving Together." Desira Blanchard, Communications & Community Engagement Coordinator, took part in the thought-provoking discussion on "Building Inclusivity."



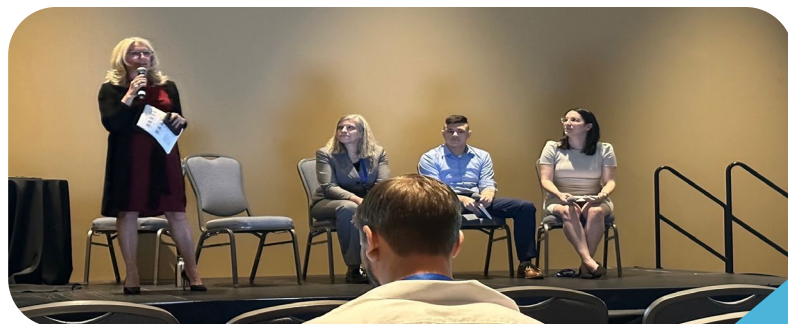


## Seminar at the UConn School of Engineering

In September, the NVCOG was invited to present for students in the Transportation and Urban Engineering (TUE) Seminar, taught by Professor Davis Chacon-Hurtado at the UConn School of Engineering. The presentation focused on actionable transportation planning. The NVCOG's Transportation Planning and Community Planning staff used the All-Stations Accessibility Program and subsequent engagement as a case study. This demonstrated how going beyond the plans can lead to informed, community driven planning processes. The presentation concluded with a discussion of how transportation and land use planning can work together to balance interests and proactively plan for future investment.

## APA National Planning Conference

Savannah-Nicole Villalba, AICP, AZT, Community Planning Director, spoke at the 2023 American Planning Association's National Planning Conference, "Moving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Toward Action" and shared her knowledge on creating an organizational Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.





# Powering Progress Through Community Planning



Recognizing the foundation of past efforts, this year the NVCOG expanded its Community Planning Department to provide technical assistance and capacity support in land use planning, zoning and housing matters. This enables the agency to assist member municipalities as they respond to state, regional and local policy changes.

The NVCOG staff actively aids local decision makers by conducting housing need and gap analyses, which inform local housing policy decisions. Notable contributions include Housing Needs Assessments (HNA) for Naugatuck and Watertown, which are integrated into their Affordable Housing Plans. Naugatuck adopted its [Affordable Housing Plan](#) in September 2023, whereas Watertown's plan is seeking adoption. The NVCOG staff provide technical assistance, including drafting Affordable Housing plans for municipalities such as [Bethlehem](#) and [Thomaston](#), as well as provide support with public engagement, data analysis and education.

The team also supported the adoption of [Naugatuck's Plan of Conservation and Development](#). Through the NVCOG's shared services program, staff also drafted Seymour's updated Zoning Regulations. Concurrently, the NVCOG staff backs municipalities in developing and updating Plans of Conservation and Development (POCD), aligning with the Connecticut State law ([CGS Sec. 8-23](#)). This collaborative effort ensures a robust connection between local issues, zoning codes and strategic planning. Naugatuck's POCD received a comprehensive review and data contribution, culminating in the adoption of the plan in December.

## Successful Land Use Training Sessions

In September, the NVCOG hosted two successful land use training sessions for commissioners from the Naugatuck Valley Planning Region and beyond to comply with [CGS Section 8-4c](#). These 4-hour training sessions were held at the City of Ansonia's Senior Center and the City of Waterbury's Veterans Memorial Hall. The events equipped commissioners with tools and insights to help them navigate complex land-use decisions, as well as providing a venue platform for networking and idea exchange.

Sixty-six commissioners within the Naugatuck Valley Planning Region received training from partners including the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), UConn Center for Land Use and Education and Research (CLEAR), The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), Partnership for Strong Communities (PSC) and the Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity (LCCHO).

Presentation materials are available on the [Education and Training web page](#).



66

commissioners  
in attendance





## Insightful Land Use Updates

The [Community Planning Newsletter](#) encapsulates crucial updates in land use policy and planning, tailored for municipal land use staff and decision-makers.

The [NVCOG Land Use Brief](#), featured in the newsletter, was launched to serve as a resource for municipal staff to support local-level decision making on land use topics. The Fall edition delved into [CGS Sec. 8-1c\(b\)](#), empowering municipalities to charge fees for expert reviews of applications. In the Summer, the focus was on the key changes from the 2023 Legislative Session, addressing zoning, planning, commission and municipal updates relevant to land use commissioners. The Spring edition offered essential guidance to municipal staff, ensuring compliance with the new considerations of CGS [Section 8-1cc](#), regarding outdoor dining regulations, effective May 1, 2023.



In the past year, the "Municipal Land Use Best Practice" spotlight showcased exemplary initiatives from various member municipalities including Southbury's "How to Legalize Unpermitted Work" brochure and Woodbury's Variance Guide. Naugatuck's "Proactive Business Outreach Strategy," emphasized strong connections with local businesses through trust, collaboration and open communication.

The "Sustainability Spotlight" provided readers with insights on incorporating sustainability into land use regulations. During the spring, it highlighted cool roofs for energy efficiency and urban heat island mitigation, underlining the importance of zoning support for reflective materials. In the summer, the focus was on mitigating light pollution, through practices like eliminating unnecessary decorative lighting. The latest spotlight explored the ecological benefits of native plants in movements like "No Mow May" and "Leave the Leaves."

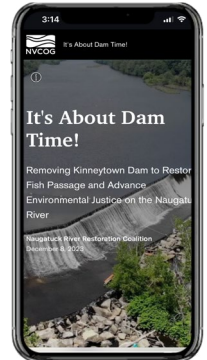


The "Community Conversations" article explored topics created in collaboration with land use staff, based on community interests/developments. The "People Behind the Plans," spotlight was created to highlight dedicated planners, administrators and land use staff shaping the Naugatuck Valley Region.

# From Data to Development



150+  
maps

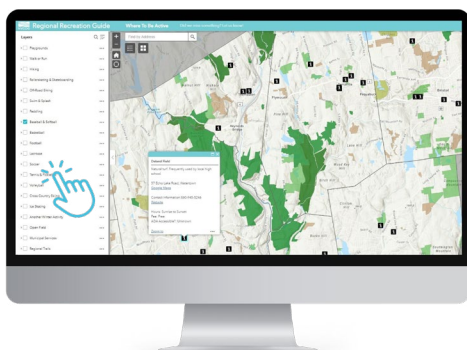


The NVCOG's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department assists local communities by leveraging mapping software and geospatial data to encourage the development of informed plans for infrastructure, transportation, land use and community development. This year the team provided invaluable insights, allowing municipalities to comprehend complex spatial relationships, identify existing challenges and make strategic data-driven decisions, resulting in a better understanding of the region's needs and optimum resource allocation.

The team's involvement in Transportation Planning initiatives such as the [Bristol Trail Study](#) and Waterbury Traffic Calming Study aided in the identification of safer connections for pedestrians and ways to optimize traffic conditions. GIS mapping activities in Environmental Planning, such as the creation of maps for the [Kinneytown Dam](#) and maps showing commercial/industrial activity in Aquifer Protection Areas contribute to raising awareness of unique challenges and promoting sustainable practices. The Community Planning Division benefits from data analysis and mapping support, which helps with local Housing Needs Assessments and Plans of Conservation and Development (POCDs), allowing for more informed recommendations. Additionally, staff contributed to the [Brownfields Program](#) by creating static maps to support Environmental Protection Agency grant applications by showcasing the project areas.

## Regional Recreation Guide

Discover physical activities in the region





## Grant Assistance for Key Initiatives

Throughout the year, successful efforts were made to secure funding for a range of crucial projects. Notably, staff created detailed maps to support multiple grant applications, including Wolcott's successful Recreational Trails Grant, which was awarded \$72,000 in February to go toward Scovill (Mill Pond Way) Trail Improvements. Additionally, the team successfully backed various other grants, including those for Safe Streets for All in June, Connecting Communities in July (for the communities of Seymour and Ansonia), PROTECT in July and Reconnecting Communities in September.

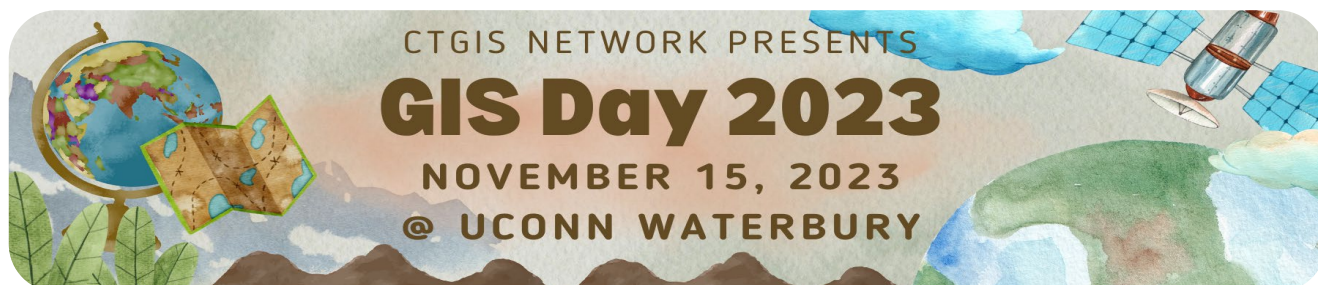
**These mapping efforts have been instrumental in securing an influx of funding, supporting the NVCOG's commitment to making impactful improvements.**



## Navigating Environmental Justice Through GIS

GIS staff compiled and organized a comprehensive list of Environmental Justice (EJ) data links and tools from federal and state departments. This collection, titled the [State and Federal GIS Data Sources](#), helps planning staff in efficient grant applications by ensuring easy access to diverse EJ datasets.

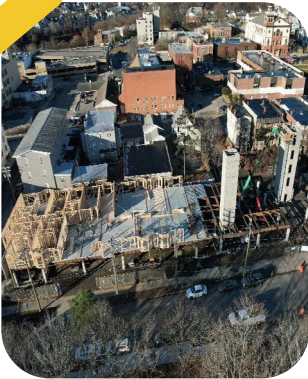
The presentation delivered at CT GIS Day garnered attention, reflecting the broader applicability of these efforts within the GIS community and emphasizing the importance of identifying EJ communities for fair treatment in the NVCOG projects. Learn more about the [NVCOG Environmental Justice Policy](#).



# Commitment to Brownfields Redevelopment

The Brownfields Program Department is committed to helping communities in Connecticut reclaim and revitalize contaminated properties, mitigate potential health risks and restore economic vitality, especially for historically underserved communities. Since obtaining its first grant in 1996, the NVCOG's brownfields program has actively managed more than \$10 million in federal grants leveraging more than \$100 million in state, local and private investment.

## Active Projects



### [67-71 Minerva Street - Derby](#)

The Connecticut Brownfields Landbank, assisted by NVCOG's Brownfields team, secured a \$650,000 DECD grant for the City of Derby, fueling remedial activities at the former autobody shop. In February, a public meeting was held at Derby City Hall to present key updates on upcoming work and answer public inquiries about the project. Remediation and construction commenced in September to transform the site into a mixed-use space. The city plans to create 96-high-quality apartments with commercial space and additional parking.



### [0 Andrew Avenue - Naugatuck](#)

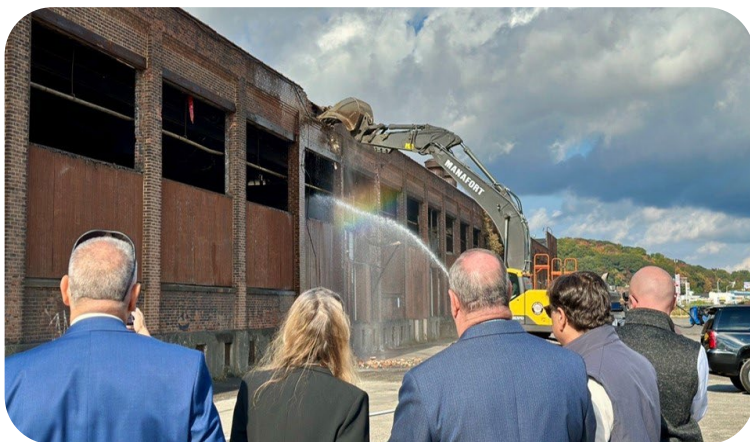
The NVCOG's Revolving Loan Fund Committee awarded the Borough of Naugatuck \$350,000 in supplemental funding for the removal of impacted soils at the former Risdon Manufacturing site. Environmental data collected from previously funded assessment sampling helped determine redevelopment options for future reuse. The Borough of Naugatuck and SLR jointly selected a remedial contractor who began work in September.



### [698 South Main Street \(Anamet\) - Waterbury](#)

The NVCOG's Revolving Loan Fund Committee awarded the Waterbury Development Corporation an additional \$277,000 for cleanup planning and remedial activities at 698 South Main Street, better known as the former Anamet Factory complex. This year, the city completed repairs of the 220,000 square-foot high-bay building's roof and has demolished eight smaller structures. The city plans to return the site to productive light-manufacturing use while maintaining green space adjacent to the Greenway Trail.





## Regional Brownfields Partnership

The NVCOG provides programmatic support to the [Regional Brownfields Partnership](#) of the West Central Connecticut (RBP), a voluntary, dues-paying affiliation of 25 municipalities. RBP municipalities appoint representatives to the Executive Board, where appointees could submit requests for assessment funding and project consultations on behalf of their municipalities. For cleanup projects, the NVCOG's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), offers subgrants to municipalities for cleanup and low-interest loans for various projects. This year, the NVCOG welcomed the Town of Redding as the 25th and newest member of the RBP.

**\$10+ million in federal grants leveraging \$100+ million  
in state, local and private investment.**

In December, the NVCOG hosted the [2023 annual meeting](#) of the RBP at Ansonia's newly revitalized Senior Center, a former brownfield. The meeting brought together partnership municipalities, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, Licensed Environmental Professionals and community organizations. The core focus was on the transformative impact of brownfields, championed by visionary Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), who embrace brownfields redevelopment. The commitment is clear - to reclaim vacant or abandoned brownfields sites, transforming them into tax-generating parcels that positively impact member communities.

## Success Stories

### George Tirado Jr. Park Opening in Waterbury

In September, a completed baseball field and community park opened on the remnants of a former industrial parcel in Waterbury's south end. In 2012, the former Nova Dye factory caught fire, leaving a contaminated and vacant parcel in one of the City's most underserved areas. In addition to \$3 million provided by the state of Connecticut's DEEP, NVCOG's Revolving Loan Fund Program provided a \$200,000 subgrant to close environmental data gaps.

The park, named after longtime Waterbury educator and coach George Tirado Sr., is adjacent to the Mad River and will provide a safe space for recreational opportunities in a part of the city that has limited access to green space.

October 2023

April 2022



\$3

million provided by  
CT DEEP







## O'Sullivan's Island Fishing and Viewing Platform in Derby

In July, the NVCOG joined Derby Mayor Dziekan, Rick Jacobson, Assistant Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Deputy Commissioner Mason Trumble, Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, to celebrate the opening of the handicapped-accessible fishing and viewing platform. The Pier will expand recreational opportunities along the river, supplemented by pedestrian traffic from the nearby Naugatuck River Greenway Trail.

Funding for the fishing pier was secured from several state and federal partners; including a \$200,000 grant from the state Department of Economic and Community Development for site assessments and soil remediation; a \$325,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and an additional \$204,252 from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Federal Sport Fish Restoration program.





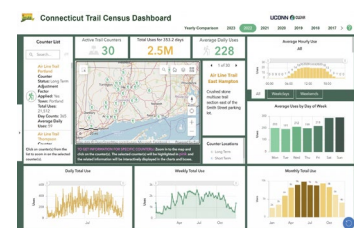
# Trailblazing Towards Sustainable Communities

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, the NVCOG is committed to rectifying past environmental damage and mitigating adverse impacts of future development.

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



NVCOG staff supports UConn's Connecticut Trail Census, tracking trail use statewide. In 2023, a new dashboard was launched for public and stakeholders' interaction with collected data.





## Naugatuck River Greenway Trail

The effort to construct the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail is progressing, with a goal of connecting all eleven Naugatuck River municipalities with a 40+ mile multiuse trail. The NRG Trail will extend between Derby and Torrington, promoting growth, environmental benefits and reconnecting the region to the river. In June, Waterbury's first segment of the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail and the City's newest park, Platt Park, opened along the Naugatuck River in the City's South End. The 2-mile NRG Trail section stretches from Bristol Street to Eagle Street. In September, the NVCOG and the City of Torrington celebrated the opening of a new section of the Naugatuck River Greenway at the John Toro Sports Complex, which connects to the existing Greenway, offering both urban and rural routes.

## Connecticut Recreational Trails Program

In May, Governor Ned Lamont and CTDEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes announced the release of approximately \$9 million through the Connecticut Recreational Trails Program. These funds are to be used to plan, build, expand and improve 50 multi-use trails across Connecticut.

Notably, Naugatuck, Waterbury, Ansonia, Thomaston and Watertown received awards for planning and designing sections of the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail. Additionally, Bristol, Shelton, Oxford and Wolcott were also awarded for the planning, construction, expansion and improvement of trails. The NVCOG collaborated with multiple municipalities on their applications, providing support in various aspects, including mapping, application review, guidance and letters of support.





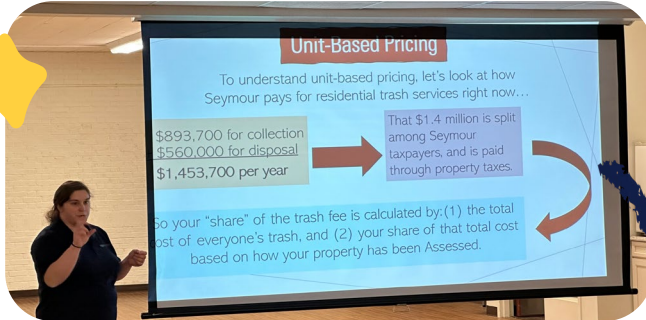
## Kinneytown Dam Removal

Supported by funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), the NVCOG is working on the Kinneytown Dam removal project. The goal is to restore fish passage, reduce flood risks both upstream and downstream, improve water quality, restore natural sediment flows and enhance access to the Naugatuck River for residents and visitors.

This year, the project kicked off in April with a \$15m award from NOAA's Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Grant program. Throughout the year, key milestones included Environmental Protection Agency assessments and Connecticut Brownfields Land Bank (CTBLB) due diligence for site acquisition. A sewer main relocation project in Seymour, made necessary because of the dam removal, was initiated. In December, the Kinneytown Dam [story map](#) was updated with contributions from partners Save the Sound and the Naugatuck River Revival Group.







## Sustainable Materials Management

In March, the NVCOG obtained a \$131K Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) grant from CTDEEP to support the [trash reduction pilots](#) in the region with education and outreach. Trash Reduction Pilot Programs were launched in Woodbury, Seymour and Middlebury, with grants totaling \$159,000, \$121,000 and \$115,000, respectively. These pilots targeted approximately 1,100 - 1,500 users each. This brings the total investment in the region from the SMM program to \$952,500.

The NVCOG's comprehensive engagement included tabling at transfer stations, hosting community champions dinners, conducting recycling workshops, organizing kickoff fairs, hosting informational webinars, disseminating information through social media posts and responding to residents' inquiries via phone calls and emails.

## Household Hazardous Waste

The 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 chance to properly dispose of hazardous materials 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 landfills and sewers, providing extra protection for wetlands and waterways.

**In 2023, 1905 vehicle loads were served.**

## Sustainable CT

Each summer, fellows are placed with Councils of Governments (COGs) to assist municipalities in achieving Sustainable CT certification and to support the COGs with sustainable actions and projects. Sustainable CT partners with Connecticut COGs to facilitate regional planning of sustainability initiatives, communicate and track progress and provide towns with frameworks for sustainability goals.

### Registered Municipalities

Ansonia, Bethlehem, Bristol, Cheshire, Derby, Naugatuck, Oxford, Prospect, Seymour, Southbury, Thomaston, Waterbury and Woodbury.

### Certified Municipalities

Bronze: Cheshire (2021), Southbury (2022)

Silver: Bristol (2023)

Previously Certified: Bristol (Bronze, 2018), Woodbury (Bronze, 2019), Waterbury (Bronze, 2020)



## Solar Energy Development

In December, the NVCOG achieved SolSmart Silver designation by training building officials in the region on best practices for inspections for solar installations and solar storage systems. The training welcomed over 100 attendees from throughout the state, including stakeholders from private firms, academia and tribal nations. The NVCOG has also established a robust online solar hub with resources for municipalities, developers and residents. It can be reached at [nvcogct.gov/solar](http://nvcogct.gov/solar). These and other actions taken are intended to make it faster, easier and more affordable for local residents, businesses and nonprofit organizations to install solar in this community.





## Securing Funds and Advancing Projects

### Route 67 in Oxford

In 2022, the NVCOG supported the Town of Oxford in securing Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) for a multiuse trail along Route 67. This trail concept, which connects Dutton Road to Quarry Walk's commercial and residential center, is included in NVCOG's 2021 Route 67 Alternative Transportation Plan. In August, Senator Blumenthal announced a \$3.4 million award for designing and constructing the trail, enhancing pedestrian and cyclist access along the Route 67 corridor.

### Regional Flood Resilience

The NVCOG's [Regional Flood Resilience](#) project recieved a boost in funding by the CT DEEP Climate Resilience Fund with a \$689K award to focus on advancing culvert replacement and drainage system improvement projects in Ansonia, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, Thomaston, Waterbury and Wolcott. This initiative aims to mitigate stormwater flooding, repair infrastructure and integrate low-impact development elements. Deliverables will include preliminary designs, assistance with grant applications and guiding member municipalities through the funding identification and application process.

### Tandem Initiatives for Tree Canopy and Open Space

In August, the NVCOG was awarded two distinct grants from the U.S Forest Service, a \$100,000 grant for a [Regional Tree Canopy Assessment](#) and \$92,00 to research and catalog priority [Open Space](#) parcels across the region. In December, NVCOG hosted a Regional Open Space Inventory Stakeholder Kickoff to discuss the project and the roles envisioned for partners and stakeholders.

### Climate Pollution Reduction Grants

The \$5 billion Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG), established by the Inflation Reduction Act, focus on reducing greenhouse gas emmissions. In September, NVCOG secured a \$100K subaward from the South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) to support education, outreach and technical work for the 12 NVCOG municipalities that fall within New Haven County: Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Cheshire, Derby, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Oxford, Prospect, Seymour, Southbury, Waterbury and Wolcott.

This year, the NVCOG's [CPRG](#) outreach involved regional application design, public meetings, workshops, webinars and stakeholder engagement.



# Driving Progress and Connecting Communities

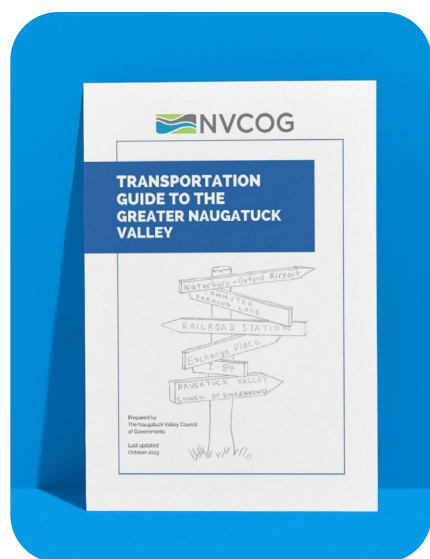
The NVCOG is working to improve transportation connections across the entire Naugatuck Valley Region with a safer, multi-modal network that meets the needs of all residents. The NVCOG plays a vital role in regional transportation planning, using its status as the host agency for the Central Naugatuck Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (CNVMPO) and co-host for the Greater Bridgeport and Valley MPO to enhance quality of life, spur economic development and promote environmental sustainability.

By leveraging its planning responsibilities and available state and federal funds, the NVCOG is improving the built environment in Valley communities with safety-focused roadway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that serve all residents. In 2023, the agency conducted studies of existing systems, advocated for transportation infrastructure improvements and collaborated with municipalities in pursuit of its mission to ensure transportation equity for all.





## Trusted Guide to Transportation Services



This year, the NVCOG released an updated version of the Transportation Guide to the Greater Naugatuck Valley. This comprehensive resource offers valuable information on routes, schedules and facilities within the region. The document will help foster public engagement and collaboration to continually improve regional transportation options.

A [digital version](#) is available on the NVCOG website. Print copies will also be available at local libraries, Town Halls and partner community-based organizations within the Naugatuck Valley Region in 2024, enabling public-facing staff to help residents identify the public transit routes that best serve them.

## Ongoing Project Developments



### [Derby-Shelton Bridge](#)

2023 saw completion of phases I and II of the project, moving traffic to the north side of the bridge while utility and roadway construction happened along the south side. Once utility work is completed in early spring 2024, parapet and cycle track construction can begin.



### [Route 34 in Derby](#)

In late Fall of 2023, traffic was moved to the new, southern lanes on Route 34 to facilitate reconstruction of the road's existing footprint. Work was completed on the new southern sidewalks, including pervious pavers, new street trees and new lighting, helping visualize how the new Downtown Derby will look.



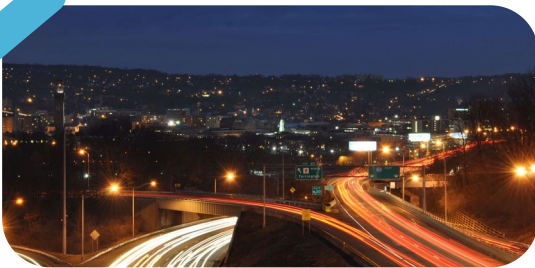
### [Route 67 in Seymour](#)

As a critical downtown to Seymour, Route 67 serves a variety of functions and users. Safety and traffic flow improvements under design for years were completed in 2023, with construction expected to begin on these improvements in early 2024. When completed, the new Route 67 should better serve all users, but especially pedestrians.

## Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Grant

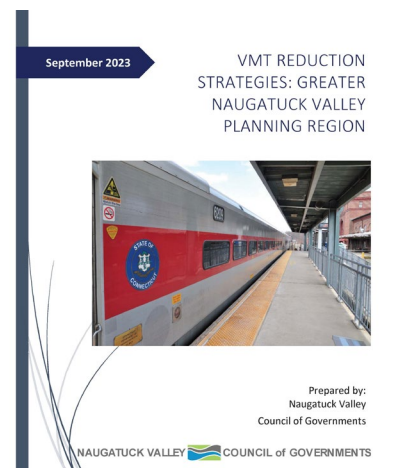
In October, Connecticut's Congressional Delegation secured a pivotal \$1.7 million for traffic and road safety projects in our state through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Within this funding, the NVCOG was awarded \$320,064 through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads for All ([SS4A](#)) grant program. Staff engineers and planners meticulously extracted crash data from the Connecticut Crash Data Repository ([CTCDR](#)), a web tool designed to offer comprehensive crash information collected by state and local police. Briefings were conducted before the NVCOG Transportation Technical Advisory Committee ([TTAC](#)), who provide recommendations to the NVCOG Board on transportation infrastructure, safety and maintenance.

U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal and other officials commemorated the award on November 20th at a press conference on the Waterbury Green. The NVCOG will use this funding to update the [NVision Zero Action Plan](#), which will employ a data-driven approach to identify dangerous roadway locations, propose conceptual improvements and address systemwide actions that will promote safety for all road users.



## Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction Strategy

The NVCOG Board formally endorsed a strategy for reducing regional Vehicle Miles Traveled in September, emphasizing the agency's strong commitment to fostering a cleaner environment and healthier communities. The region-wide [VMT Reduction Strategy](#) aims to reduce congestion for personal cars and freight trucks and improve infrastructure for non-motorized modes like walking, rolling and cycling.



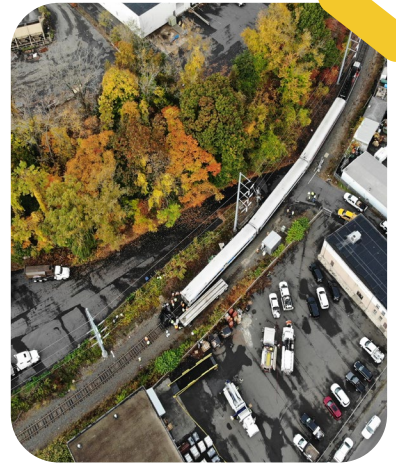


## Advancing Active Transportation

The NVCOG is undertaking a comprehensive planning process to identify potential [active transportation](#) improvements that yield safer, more user-friendly infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and users of other micro-mobility devices. This initiative aligns with the agency's broader goal of establishing a Complete Streets policy for the region. The Comprehensive Plan is expected to be finalized in Fall 2024.

## Revitalizing Transit

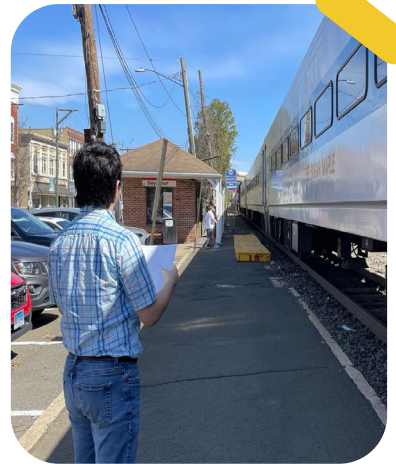
The NVCOG's Route 8 & Waterbury Branch Line Corridor/[Alternative Modes Assessment Study](#) comprehensively examined the Waterbury Rail Line and Route 8 corridor to develop strategies for improving public transit service frequency, connectivity and amenities in the area. Recommendations from this study, which was completed in August 2023, propose enhancements to the Waterbury Rail Line, potential Bus Rapid Transit along the Route 8 corridor between Shelton and Bridgeport and offers support for Transit Oriented Development along the corridor's transit network. This plan was developed after a multi-year planning process that involved robust public engagement and coordination with local and state officials. To better share the vision for the corridor, the NVCOG developed a visionary video of the study's recommendations.



## Enhancing Accessibility

Ensuring our transportation systems are integrated and accessible to all users is a critical priority for the NVCOG. Currently, all six stations along the [Waterbury Rail Line](#) are being redesigned to include better amenities and ADA compliant platforms. Improvements to the Derby-Shelton Station, supported by federal RAISE and state funds, have reached the 60% design phase, with construction planned for spring 2025. Simultaneously, improvements to the Ansonia, Seymour, Beacon Falls and Waterbury stations are all advancing through the 30% design phase.

Once completed, these stations will feature high-level platforms and enhanced amenities such as heating, full windscreen enclosure, real-time arrival boards, ticket vending, improved signage and passenger comforts. Plans for Naugatuck Station's relocation is also nearing realization, with design expected to be completed in autumn 2024 for a spring 2025 start to construction.



## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Federal regulations require each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to maintain a detailed four-year spending plan, known as a TIP, that includes any project receiving federal funding. The NVCOG TIP, along with TIPs from other Connecticut MPOs, are then compiled unchanged into a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that catalogs planned 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) in 2023. Development of the 2025-2028 TIP is in progress, with the plan on track for adoption in the next year. By regularly updating and maintaining its TIP plan, the NVCOG nimbly addresses current mobility challenges while laying the foundation for a more sustainable, future-focused regional transportation network.

## Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)

The Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) is a state-funded program that assists municipalities in enhancing local transportation assets, including roads, bridges, sidewalks and streetscapes. The NVCOG works with member municipalities to solicit project applications, program funding and initiate and implement projects. Using its integration of EcolInteractive, a cutting-edge planning software, the agency streamlines LOTICIP and TIP workflows. This enables the public to browse projects, view plan revisions, add comments and utilize an interactive map to explore active transportation, roadway, transit and other projects.

Notably, LOTICIP funding was used in 2023 to reconstruct Seymour’s Holbrook Road, making the town’s crucial link safer and more usable for all residents. This road project is the result of the NVCOG and the Town of Seymour’s tireless efforts and robust collaboration between local and state authorities.

The Elm Street Reconstruction Project in Thomaston was also secured through LOTICIP. The town held its first public engagement meeting in November, providing residents an opportunity to actively contribute their insights. Thanks to strong public participation, the project will emphasize community involvement in the envisioned upgrade; changes include improved drainage, enhanced pedestrian facilities and a connection to the Naugatuck River Greenway. Key figures present during the meeting included First Selectman Mone, Tighe and Bond engineers and NVCOG staff.





## Bristol Pequabuck River Trail Study



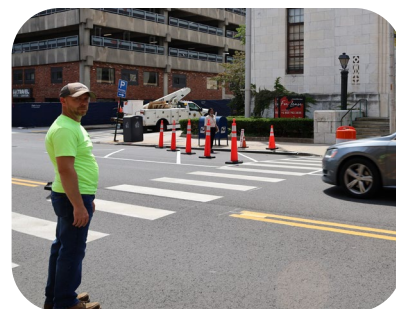
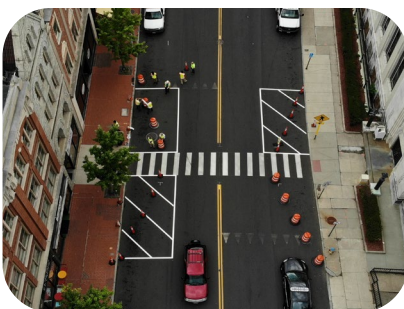
In July, the City of Bristol and NVCOG completed the [Pequabuck River Trail Study](#), which proposed conceptual routing options for a multi-use trail to connect the West End to Downtown and Route 229. A preferred alternative, identified through collaboration and public engagement, ensures access to the Pequabuck River and establishes active transportation connections to ongoing economic development activities in Downtown Bristol. The city secured a \$320,000 grant with funding through CTDEEP's Recreational Trails program to design phases I and II.





## Complete Streets Academy Initiative

The NVCOG and its partner communities Waterbury and Bristol participated in the 2023 [Complete Streets Academy](#), enabling implementation of impactful traffic calming projects in the jurisdictions. The Complete Streets Leadership Academies are a National Complete Streets Coalition and Smart Growth America initiative training public employees and officials in Complete Street best practices, intergovernmental and regional coordination and “quick-build” temporary infrastructure projects on state roads. Connecticut and three other states were selected for the competitive academy in 2023.



Waterbury’s project made Grand Street a more vibrant, pedestrian-friendly location leveraging low-cost materials like tape, cones and tubular markers to daylight crosswalks and shorten their crossing distance. The project was in place through late September.

**Data showed an 11% reduction in traffic speeds within the first two weeks, a crucial step towards enhancing community safety as lowering speeds at the 85th percentile can significantly reduce traffic-related accidents.**



Bristol implemented temporary pedestrian safety improvements on West Street, including narrowing the roadway and adding visual elements and improved crosswalks near the Boys & Girls Club of Bristol. The NVCOG staff joined Mayor Caggiano of Bristol and the Connecticut Department of Transportation’s Safe Routes to School office to engage Bristol youth and promote pedestrian safety.



## Navigating the Road Ahead

Looking ahead, the NVCOG will continue leading the region in establishing a transportation system that connects all residents and visitors to their destinations, complete with safety-focused infrastructure and improved public transit. The U.S. Department of Transportation recently designated the Waterbury Urbanized Area, a key part of the Central Naugatuck Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (CNVMPO) as a [Transportation Management Area \(TMA\)](#). This empowers the CNVMPO to enhance transportation infrastructure and services more effectively. This change will help the NVCOG drive more transformative projects across the Naugatuck Valley Planning Region in 2024.

[NVision50](#), the CNVMPO's 2023 update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, demonstrates the NVCOG's strong commitment to transportation safety, accessibility and environmental impact mitigation. Federal regulations require MPOs to maintain long-range transportation plans that identify major deficiencies in the transportation system, goals and performance measure targets for the region and a fiscally constrained project listing to achieve those goals. NVision50 will serve as the NVCOG's framework for building a transportation system that all residents and visitors to our region can get where they need to go over the next four years. The GBVMPO and CNVMPO adopted their current Metropolitan Transportation Plans in March and will prepare the next update for spring of 2027.





# Planners at the Heart of the Community

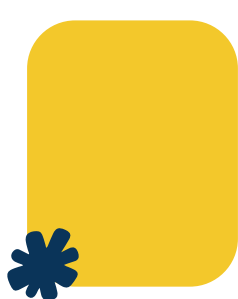
Planners from NVCOG actively engage with various communities across the Naugatuck Valley Planning Region. Events like Shelton Day and the Bristol Mum Festival provide opportunities to foster connections and gather valuable insights, shaping local and regional initiatives.



During the celebration of Bike Month, staff partnered with Bike Cheshire to go on a bike ride along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, showcasing safe and accessible biking areas and observing adaptive reuse of a former brownfields site in the region.



It's not just about planning for the future – it's about actively participating in the present to create positive change.



The NVCOG staff is dedicated to making a difference in the community, whether it is through toy drives, school supply programs or volunteering for the United Way's Day of Caring. Our primary focus is on supporting local causes and being an integral part of the communities we serve.





## **A Regional Council of Governments & Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Delivering projects, plans and services to improve our communities.

For a physical copy, contact the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments:

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