



Minutes
NVCOG Transportation Technical Advisory Committee
Wednesday, February 5, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. by Chairman Raymond Rogozinski. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the roll was called.

ROLL CALL

TTAC Members: Chairman Raymond Rogozinski, Bristol; Vice-Chair Sheila O'Malley, Ansonia; Philip Straker, Cheshire; James Stewart, Naugatuck; Matthew Tarnowski, Southbury; Glenn Clark, Thomaston; Roy Cavanaugh, Waterbury; Paul Bunevich, Watertown.

Guests: Grayson Wright, CT DOT; Michael D'Elia, The Kennedy Collective; Mark Jewell, BHB.

NVCOG Staff: Drew Baklik, Desira Blanchard, Patricia Bruder, Aaron Budris, Rich Donovan, Kevin Ellis, Christine O'Neill, Mark Nielsen, Kevin Ellis, Eytayo Olaleye, Kate Pipa, Joanna Rogalski.

PUBLIC COMMENT – none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Paul Bunevich MOVED to approve the minutes of December 4, 2024; SECONDED by Jerry Lukowski. Motion carried unanimously.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

LOTICIP Cost Change: Guernseytown Road (Kevin Ellis)

Kevin explained that this project has been completed, but there were overages totaling \$110,000 in the construction phase.

In general, overages are the responsibility of the town and are not eligible for additional reimbursement from the Department. However, in some cases, with justification and departmental approval, we can extend the extra balance.

The Department approved the overage because the utility relocation took a lot longer than planned. Also, during design, borings were done for the proposed roadway alignment, but during construction, the roadway alignment shifted due to the large amount of bedrock. There were construction issues with the new roadway alignment.

This will be forwarded to the CNVMPO for approval at their March 21st meeting.

Sheila O'Malley MOVED to approve allocation of additional LOTCIP funds for construction overages; SECONDED by Glenn Clark. Motion carried unanimously.

Waterbury Urban Area CMP (Rich Donovan)

Rich explained that on 10/31/23 we were designated as a TMA by action of the Secretary of USDOT. As such, we must develop and maintain a congestion management process (CMP). We are developing a document for review and plan to bring it to the March CNVMPO meeting for adoption.

It is an ongoing process to monitor and develop strategies to address congestion within the Urban Area. Some of the strategies we are working through that will end up in the report include targeted expansion, as we don't have the space or funding for major expansions of highways. We are looking at congestion management measures such as signal timing optimization, access management onto the major thoroughfares, expansion of active transportation networks such as extension of the Naugatuck River Greenway trails, projects on the Waterbury rail line to improve service, and expansion of the bus network.

Roy Cavanaugh MOVED to recommend adoption of the Waterbury Urban Area CMP to the CNVMPO Board; SECONDED by Jerry Lukowski. Motion carried unanimously.

2027 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update (Rich Donovan)

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

Rich explained, we are beginning the process of our next MTP update. This is our long-range transportation plan – it was last updated in 2023. It is a minimum of a 20-year period but must be updated every four years. We'd like to have it adopted by both the CNVMPO and the GBVMPO in the Spring of 2027. We will be working on better aligning the projects that we program over the long-term with the towns' interests - the projects most needed and prioritized on a local level. Our focus will be really leaning in on performance-based planning, so we have more ground to stand on in pushing these projects forward into prioritization at DOT.

We will be in touch over the next 6 months to get documents to TTAC members to make sure we get the priorities we need from you and to make sure they get into this 2027 document. Being in the MTP is a requirement for most federal and many state awards.

Active Transportation Plan (Mark Nielsen)

We're working on putting together an Active Transportation Plan for the region. It will be comprehensive, looking at all non-motorized modes.

We are reviewing the responses from the on-line survey and plan to reconvene the Project Advisory Committee. We want to update the Safety Assessment to identify hot spots and

examine contributing factors to some of the crashes with the goal of reducing the numbers. The goal is to complete this by the end of the fiscal year this July. Kate Pipa will be reaching out.

One initial concept will be to connect all 19 towns by a multi-use trail wherever possible. A Raise Grant has been received to design a portion of this project.

RAISE (Mark Nielsen)

We applied for and were awarded a RAISE grant from USDOT. The grant is to complete the design and environmental assessment for 17 miles of the Naugatuck River Greenway from Naugatuck to Thomaston. The intent is to complete full design plans for all the remaining sections. DEEP is allowing us to leverage State rec trails money as the non-federal share.

The design is out to bid with a deadline of 2/14. The target start date is 4/1. The selection board will consist of representatives from each town, and NVCOG staff. NVCOG will assist with keeping track of disbursements and reports.

Safe Streets for All (Rich Donovan)

In 2023 we were awarded funds to update our regional safety plan and turn it into a true Vision Zero action plan. We'll be going out for a consultant soon and hope to complete it by the end of 2025.

We have begun doing roadway safety audits ourselves – these were primarily done by DOT and a consultant. We have just about completed one and are under way with a second. We're putting together a formal process if you want us to take on this work in your community. Doing that work is among the best ways for us to take the full regional safety plan and make it more specific and actionable in each of the towns.

PROTECT (Mark Nielsen)

This is another successful application to US DOT for discretionary funding. NVCOG is partnering with 3 other COGs – Capitol Region, Northwest Hills, and Northeast – to develop a vulnerability assessment and resilience plan for *local* infrastructure. The focus is on local roads, bridges, and culverts that are vulnerable to inland flooding during a natural event.

Each COG will do an Initial assessment of the most vulnerable and high-priority local assets in their regions and come up with concepts of what can be done to address potential flooding from an event such as the August 2024 rainstorm event in Southbury, Oxford, and Seymour. It was unexpected but created so much damage.

After the assessment is done, projects would be eligible for other additional federal funding to correct some of the hazards we find. Information from this study will be tied into natural hazard mitigation plans next year and give a much better understanding of what the hazards might be.

As the only COG to receive a PROTECT grant – the others went to very large areas and states - we are excited to be a demonstration of what we can accomplish. The RFQ is set and may be released this week.

A key focus is to have good outreach to all the towns – we'll be meeting with Public Works, Emergency Management, and Inland-Wetlands – anybody that has knowledge of inland flooding to identify the most vulnerable locations. We will also be looking at rainfall totals during specific events.

In preparation we will be asking you to give us as many potential drainage problem areas as possible – a map or list of all culverts and structures on roads that you own.

Selection Committees and Advisory Committees (Rich Donovan)

NVCOG will have several RFQs for consultant services coming up, so we will be seeking volunteers to sit on selection committees. We need good representation from across the region to ensure it's fair. The selection process is very specific and must be well documented.

We plan to set up two advisory committees – one for safety analysis of projects across the region, and the other to review TIP projects and amendments as they come in. These subcommittees will review and recommend to the full NVCOG Board.

Ray, Sheila, and Jerry volunteered to do technical reviews of TIP amendments. Rich agreed that other municipal staff recommendations would be welcome, such as city engineers, if they're interested in serving on the safety advisory committee. A more formal request will be sent out for volunteers.

Section 5310 Grant FFY2024 – (Joanna Rogalski)

The Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Grant application period is open. It's a program that helps people with disabilities and older people get the transportation services that they need. The grant provides 80 percent with a 20 percent applicant match for the purchase of minivans and minibuses for disabled and elderly riders, as well as wheelchair lifts, ramps, and securing devices. It may also help pay for contracted transportation services for the disabled and elderly. Eligible entities include senior centers, adult resource centers, municipal governments, private non-profits and public transit agencies (Boards of Education are not eligible). NVCOG can help with the applications – email jrogalski@nvcogct.gov. The deadline is April 1st.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE (Drew Baklik)

We're in the infancy of this year's session, so most of what's out there is conceptual or bills to be raised. Those that come from leadership may have more staying power.

Flagged bills relevant to TTAC:

- HB 6679 - An Act Concerning the Local Bridge Program
- HB 5403 - An Act Prohibiting State Agencies and Municipalities From Purchasing Or Operating Certain Unmanned Aircraft Systems.
- HB 6309 – An Act Limiting the Projects Eligible For Grants From The Small Town Economic Assistance Program and SB 323 both aim to make changes to the use of STEAP funding
- HB 6829 – An Act Establishing a Rural Transit Expansion Fund. To establish a Rural Transit Expansion Fund to provide financial assistance for the purpose of expanding public transportation services provided in rural areas in the state.

Sheila expressed her hope that STEAP doesn't limit the project eligibilities and leaves it broad and general.

Drew is working on the RPIP Regional grant for municipal Animal Control. Bristol/Plymouth are looking to construct in Bristol. A draft has already been submitted to OPM for review before formal submission.

Rich explained that there is no question that the changes in administration will have an impact on discretionary funds available to us. We have had a lot of awards over the last 4 years to execute. Assuming that US DOT maintains their commitment to those, we'll still be busy for a while. We anticipate we'll be less competitive going forward

NVCOG is working closely with the Association of MPOs and National Association of Regional Councils, coordinating the work for Federal Transportation Reauthorization. IJA ends next year. Some of their key points are pushing for additional planning dollars and changes to the federal/local split. We're waiting to see what Congress will be willing to do with the reauthorization. We're going ahead with RFQs with the anticipation and expectation that funds will be released and provided to us.

CT was part of the large Climate Pollution Reduction grant – a huge project to put EV charging for large trucks along the Interstate through 4-5 states. We're not sure if that \$250 million grant award is on hold. We will move ahead and hope for the best.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Connecticut Trail Finder (Aaron Budris)

Aaron reviewed the free web application www.cttrailfinder.com

The main intent is for prospective trail users to find appropriate trails.

All the info is posted by the trail managers, themselves, not the public. It contains all vetted information and is a much better way to find trails. There are over 350 trail posts. Users can

sort by activity – biking, hiking, running, cross-country skiing, dirt biking. It can be sorted by difficulty level, trail surface, etc. Users can search within a distance of where they are. The app is user friendly on a phone or device. The map is zoomable. There are posts up on the greenway sections. Users can click on a post to see information on where to find benches, trailheads, scenic overlooks. There are direct links to the trail manager. Also available are trailside services such as food, ice cream, beer, bike shops. Businesses can post their own information there.

There are a lot of trails across the state, but very few in our region. If interested - we're thinking about including bigger municipal parks like Fulton Park, Veterans' Park, Rockwell Park - we can help get those posted. We already have GIS data for most of the trails in our region – we might already have 90 percent of the data you need to make those posts. We can help put together the narratives and get them posted. Contact Tom Dougherty or Aaron.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 10:20 a.m., Roy Cavanaugh MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Paul Bunevich. Motion carried unanimously.

Next meeting: April 2, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Bruder
Executive Administrative Clerk