

The material herein consists of a brief
overview of key goals, findings and
recommendations of the Northwest Hills
Regional Transportation Plan

DRAFT

Recommendations

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NHCOG Regional Transportation Plan: Overview of Recommendations

The following outline provides an overview of the regional recommendations, providing a “backdrop” against which to review the list of recommendations.

In order to identify projects and then to prioritize them, we first identified regional vision, goals and policies, using input from the COG as well as many others who live and work in the region. From that list, we developed a shorter list of evaluation criteria based on the key messages that we had heard from municipal representatives, three public forums, other interviews, and survey results, as well as what we identify as general transportation needs and trends.

Key Regional Priorities:

We view the following as the key regional priorities based on the messages we heard from the various input sources:

1) Asset management	Maintain/optimize/ensure safety of existing system of roads, paths, sidewalks, transit, railroads, etc.
2) More focus on non-auto mobility	Make changes that focus on other forms of mobility such as transit, sidewalks, on-road bicycle travel, and off road trails. Latent demand for transit is very high.
3) Enhance livability	Make changes that enhance quality of life such as walkability, health, amenities, economic opportunities, connections, safety, ambience, etc.
4) Improve connections	Make better connections both within modes (transit, trails, bicycling) and between modes of travel (bikes on buses, parking and sidewalks, etc.
5) Maximize resources and economic opportunity	Work collaboratively to maximize transportation funding opportunities for the region to take advantage of the economic opportunities best suited for the region. *

**In terms of transportation’s effort or role in developing economic opportunity, several of the messages heard from stakeholders included the following specific areas of interest: 1) Ensuring access, quality of life and mobility in the region, 2) Taking better advantage of rail freight to attract or better service industries that need rail freight service, and 2) Recognition that tourism is a sizeable aspect of the region’s economy with some potential for growth.*

Regional and Local Initiatives

Two lists of initiatives have been developed:

- 1) Regional Initiatives/Recommendations
- 2) Local Projects with primarily:
 - a. Regional significance, or
 - b. Local significance

Summary of Needs and Directions by Mode

The regional initiatives are based on the following assessment of needs by mode:

1. Roadway/Bridge:

- The region is generally well-served by existing roadway system
- Some maintenance issues exist on state roadways
- Considerable maintenance issues exist on local roadways (due to lack of funding)
- Some intersection issues exist throughout the region as noted on the list of local projects. Some of these have regional significance. Intersection issues include both safety and operational issues as well as Complete Street's needs.
- Bicycle accommodation. There is room for much improvement in terms of shoulder additions or improvements, striping and other pavement markings to more safely accommodate bicyclists. Where possible, this should be piggy-backed with maintenance needs
- There is a need for some bridges to be replaced or repaired, based on CTDOT inspections
- Traffic speeding was recognized as a safety issue in some area. Within town centers, school zones, and certain commercial areas, there are opportunities to employ traffic calming measures
- Many communities also expressed interest in various aspects of complete streets measures to improve mobility, livability, ambience, and even economic viability
- Some instances of excessive truck traffic were noted.

2. Transit

- There is a very high degree of latent demand in the region which is going to increase. Much improvement is needed to increase service, especially to those without other travel options or those who choose to rely on transit as their primary means of travel.
- Key needs:
 - Elderly/disabled/low income
 - School/work trips for those without automobile options or lower income
 - Improved coverage (days/times/geography) and coordination (among various providers)
- There is a strong need for a more coordinated system
- There is a strong need for a marketing plan, signage and publicly available communications information about transit options
- There is a strong need for more coordinated communications and dispatch
- The Torrington Intermodal center/transit facility in the right location would have regional benefits

3. Rail:

- Improving tracks and other facilities and opportunities for freight travel is a priority
- Passenger rail of great interest, but there is an unknown level of demand. Connections to rail service into New York could be investigated, as could coordination with the passenger rail initiatives being pursued by the neighboring Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.
- Rail tourism may be a good rail “niche” for the region.

4. Bicycle travel—on-road:

- Shoulders and markings are much needed in key locations. Priorities for those locations need to be more clearly defined. Work with Statewide Bike/Ped Plan on this.
- Cross region bike routes (best rides) could be identified and more widely promoted as part of regional tourism marketing.

5. Pedestrians:

- More sidewalks are needed in many town centers and neighborhoods
- More crosswalks are needed in many town centers
- Sidewalk maintenance was noted in some locations. Typically, this is a local issue, but some regional assistance in the form of model ordinance may be helpful.

6. Off-road travel (trails/greenways):

- Trails are a key potential “draw” of the region for tourists and residents alike. They are beneficial to quality of life, safe travel, good health, and community viability.
- While there are many trail desires, a priority program needs to be developed for building/extending/completing segments of trail.

The recommended regional initiatives and local projects are itemized on the following pages.

NHTCOG Regional Transportation Plan

DRAFT Regional Recommendations

Number	Recommendation	Explanation/Rationale
GENERAL RECOMMENDATION		
1	Maintain NHTCOG participation in existing CTDOT programs such as LOTCIP, Rural Collectors, etc.	Up to date knowledge of state programs and practices and continued participation in state funding programs for the repair and maintenance of the regional roadway network should be a top priority in the region.
2	Advocate for increased funding for rural programs	A rural region such as NHTCOG misses out on various funding sources which are available to MPOs. It may be beneficial for the region to advocate more strongly for increased funding for rural roads and other rural transportation programs.
3	Consider retaining a part-time/on-call transportation engineer/planner(s) to facilitate the preparation of LOTCIP and Rural Collector Program applications and address other specific needs on a fee basis	NHTCOG is a large and diverse region with many transportation needs or desires. At the same time, the state is currently prioritizing transportation as a key state initiative. With a transportation engineer/planner on a fee basis, the region could more efficiently and effectively advance some of its transportation goals without necessarily adding staff.

ROADWAY NETWORK		
4	Promote the development of municipal pavement management plans for local roads	Paving of local roads is an on-going issue in the region. A pavement management plan can help municipalities develop priorities and direct resources to the highest needs.
5	Encourage more regional representation in the development of paving priorities for state roads in the region	Coordinate with the CTDOT District office to have regional input to paving plans, including priorities and other factors such as shoulder widening or pavement markings
6	Continue to take full advantage of available LOTCIP and Rural Collector Program funding for improvement of collector roadways	Maintenance and improvement of local roadways is a major municipal responsibility and accessing available state and federal funding is important
7	Identify areas with truck volume issues and conduct an assessment to see if there are workable solutions	Truck traffic is inevitable, necessary for the economy to function, and difficult to regulate if the trucks are in legal compliance. However, depending on the specific cause of truck traffic which is considered excessive locally, there may be measures that could improve conditions. Each case would need to be evaluated on its own merits.
8	Develop a plan for designation of additional scenic roads in the region	The designation of additional scenic roads could benefit the region from a tourism perspective. If towns in the region generally support this designation, a priority plan could be developed quite easily, based on consideration of designation criteria and supplemented by mapping, photos and lists of cultural resources in each potential scenic corridor.

9	Conduct a study of opportunities to provide electric vehicle charging stations throughout the region	Several charging stations already exist in the region. If the region desires to "get ahead" of this trend, CMAQ funding may be available to prepare a plan and then to carry out the plan recommendations.
10	Explore the issue of photo-enforcement to manage speeding	Speeding is clearly an issue mentioned by many, yet enforcement personnel are not sufficient to cover the territory. One option is to pursue photo enforcement at select locations to help enforce local traffic controls and raise funding to support local public safety personnel.
11	Conduct a Complete Streets pilot program through which a Complete Streets manual and program is developed for several towns in the region.	Many of the comments from both municipal officials and from other stakeholders relate to having more "complete streets" that safely accommodate all users. A Complete Streets Manual can be used by towns as a tool to employ complete streets design features when improving roadways and intersections and making downtown enhancements. This manual could also include incorporation of traffic calming measures, which were mentioned often in the region because of speeding and safety issues.
13	Work closely to stay abreast of the Statewide Freight Plan which is currently under development	This planning effort may provide some benefit the region, or at least some insight, both in terms of truck traffic issues and in terms of rail freight possibilities.
14	Maintain and expand the region's Public Works Equipment Cooperative Purchasing Program	This program saves money for participating towns every year and should be continued and expanded as appropriate.
TRANSIT SYSTEM/RAIL		
15	Complete Torrington Transit Center, including exploration of TOD, rail access, and complete streets improvements in the area	Work with CTDOT to ensure that this project meets regional goals of enhanced transit opportunities and connections in the area.

16	Appoint a Transit Coordination Committee to work with other regional resources to both bring new transit service to better coordinate existing service	This committee would be largely comprised of major transit providers and advocates in the region. It would also coordinate with the part time Mobility Manager (which NHCOG will be getting as part of a Kennedy Center grant). A coordinating entity is needed to make recommendations about best practices such as up to date dispatching software and practices, marketing and communications, and other aspects of service delivery.
17	Using available and previously allocated CTDOT funds, hire a full or part time Regional Transit Coordinator	Transit service, particularly transit service to persons with no other mobility options, is a huge and growing need in the region, mentioned by many stakeholders. The Regional Transit Coordinator would work with the Transit Coordination Committee and also with the regional Mobility Manager (obtained through a Kennedy Center grant). There are many opportunities to improve transit in the region, but this task needs more specific focus and more staff resources.
18	Pursue the recommendations of the Rural Independent Transit System and revise to account for current conditions	Implementation of this plan is still desirable to meet existing needs. It should be implemented upon securing needed funding support from CTDOT.
19	Purchase new vehicles for paratransit service expansion	Funding is available and has already been allocated to the region under the New Freedoms Program.
20	Expand paratransit service in areas of greatest need using existing and new vehicles, available operating funds and the services of the new part-time Mobility Manager and Regional Transit Coordinator	More centralized attention to the coordination of service will allow existing resources from ALL providers to be used more efficiently and effectively.
21	Explore expansion or revision of transit service to NWCCC to better accommodate students and class schedules.	This was a prevalent issue at the public forum on transit where NWCCC advocated for enhanced service for students.

22	Prepare and implement a Transit Marketing and Communications Plan for the region.	Marketing and communications is a very key part of achieving greater transit success in the region. It is widely recognized by those providing transit that it is very difficult for users and potential users to know what services might be available and how to use them. Transit, especially paratransit, has such a multiplicity of providers that users and potential users don't know where to turn. There needs to be a single (if possible) or at least a much more highly coordinated and responsive system of information and dispatch. Dispatch needs to be highly trained and responsive for transit service to be substantially improved for its many users and potential users.	
23	Continue to build rail freight capacity on an aggressive schedule and take advantage of and meet unmet and potential demand. Continue also to advocate for rail system improvement and for other rail freight issues such as marketing of rail services to existing and potential customers and consideration of "track dependent uses" in zoning ordinances.	The region's rail lines for freight use are an asset that should be improved and more aggressively considered as part of the regional transportation assets. Track improvement is already underway, but more is needed. A fast-tracked rail program is important because the price of rail has fallen by over 30% this year; it would be prudent to purchase rail now and install it over the next few years. The rail price will not stay depressed for very long.	
24	Continue to coordinate with the railroads and with passenger rail advocates on the potential for service, and continue to stay abreast of the work that the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission is doing to advance passenger rail in that abutting region.	There is substantial interest in the region for passenger rail service, but it is unlikely that demand would be sufficient to support traditional service in much of the region. However, there are several "niche" markets that might be appropriate to the region, such as 1) rail tourism (which already exists and could potentially expand; 2) a public private demonstration project where by limited service could be "tried" for a period of time, or 3) exploration of shuttle service to NY or CT rail stations. Mention was also made of expansion of CTfastrak to Hartford. Demand for these services may be small, but interest does exist.	

25	Develop and implement a bus system publicity, signage and shelter plan	Underway.
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS		
26	Coordinate closely with the State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update process to establish regional on-road bicycle routes. These routes would then get prioritized for improvements such as paving, wider shoulders or pavement markings. This plan should also include signage for bike route designation and wayfinding	This planning effort is a great opportunity to benefit the region. But the region will have to communicate key needs and desires. The region will be working with active local bicycle groups to inform plans for local streets.
27	Undertake a small planning study to designate a regional trails connectivity plan	There is great interest in the region in a more widely connected network of trails for bicycle and pedestrian use. Many projects have been suggested. A relatively small planning study, guided by a steering committee of biking and hiking enthusiasts, could develop a priority plan for trail development, expansion or connection. Efforts should be made to prioritize the a) easiest and/or b) greatest benefit projects for early implementation. This will create more excitement in the region for other projects to be advanced. Efforts could also be made to identify non-traditional funding sources for these trails (municipal groups/organizations, civic groups, charitable organizations, etc.)
28	Develop a model sidewalk ordinance	This resource would help municipalities to advance their sidewalk projects

NHCOG Regional Transportation Plan LOCAL PROJECTS

No.	Mode*	Project	Needed for.....	Location	Regional Significance?
1	R	Improve intersection of Routes 219 and 318	Safety and improved operations	Barkhamsted	
2	R	Improve maintenance of Route 482	Asset management	Barkhamsted	
3	T	Establish regular bus service on Route 44 to Barkhamsted	Transit service need	Barkhamsted	Yes
4	BP	Create Riverton- New Hartford off-road trail	Off road trail network - enhance connectivity	Barkhamsted	Yes
5	BP	Provide off-road trail connection from Barkhamsted to Collinsville and Old Route 8 (East through New Hartford to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail/ Farmington River Trail and South to Winsted to the Sue Grossman Trail)	Off road trail network - enhance connectivity	Barkhamsted	Yes

6	R	Improve/reconfigure intersection of Route 4 at Punch Brook Road	Safety and improved operations	Burlington	
7	R	Improve/reconfigure intersection of Route 4 at Covey Road	Safety and improved operations	Burlington	
8	R	Improve sight lines/configuration of intersection of GW Turnpike with Route 4 at the green	Safety and improved operations	Burlington	Yes
9	P	Complete sidewalk network along Route 4 in town center	Safe walking environment/ complete streets	Burlington	
10	BP	Create sidewalk/trail connection to teen center and to high school and middle school	Safe walking environment	Burlington	
11	BP	Complete off-road trails connection from Burlington to Farmington	Off-road trail network - enhance connectivity (Farmington River Trail)	Burlington	Yes
12	O	Improve street lighting through the town center and along walking routes (on Route 4)	Enhanced safety/ambience	Burlington	

13	BP	Add walking/bicycle trail from Cornwall Bridge to West Cornwall	Off-road trail network - enhance connectivity	Cornwall	
14	P	Create pedestrian network/complete streets in Cornwall Bridge to make stronger village economic center	Safe bicycle and walking environments/complete streets	Cornwall	Yes
15	T	Develop coordinated program for best use of handicap access van in collaboration with Cornwall & NWCTD	Transit service need	Goshen	Yes
16	R	Repair and rebuild bridge over Hogback Dam (off of Route 8)	Asset management	Hartland	
17	R	Improve/reconfigure Route 4 at North Road	Safety and improved operations	Harwinton	Yes
18 19	R BP	Repave Route 72 Provide off-road trail south of Route 118 along east side of Naugatuck River	Asset management Off-road trail network - enhance connectivity (Naugatuck River Greenway)	Harwinton Harwinton	

20	R	Redesign Route 7 in downtown Kent	Complete the streets; congestion management	Kent	Yes
21	T	Add bus service from Great Barrington to North Canaan and then to Kent	Transit need-- interregional	Kent	Yes
22	O	Add public parking and signage in Kent off Route 7 to serve tourism	Support economic sustainability	Kent	
23	BP	Create continuous pedestrian network/ complete safe crossings in Bantam between Doyle Rd and just past Bantam Terrace (to Zinni's Restaurant) for a stronger Borough economic center - Safe walking environment	Support economic sustainability Complete the streets	Litchfield	
24	R	Improve safety of roadway curve and add signage at Wamogo High School entrance	Safety and improved operations	Litchfield	

25	R	Improve sight lines for turning movements at Fern Avenue and Chestnut Hill at Route 118	Safety and improved operations	Litchfield	
26	R	Improve intersection of Old Route 8 and Route 118 – multiple turning lanes are a safety issue	Safety and improved operations	Litchfield	
27	R	Improve signal coordination/conduct signal study of Route 118 at Route 202 and West Street	Safety and improved operations	Litchfield	
	R	Improve intersection of 202 and Old Turnpike Rd at both ends for better line of sight Eastbound and Westbound off 202 - Safety and improved operations	Safety and improved operations		

	BP	Improve/enhance sidewalk connectivity between 202 and Litchfield Community Field off of North Lake St - Safe walking environment	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity		
28	R	Install a traffic signal at Route 109 and 61, re-align intersection, and add crosswalks	Safety and improved operations	Morris	
29	BP	Construct an off-road trail connecting Morris and Litchfield Route 61 and through White Memorial	Off-road trail network	Morris	Yes
30	R	Improve access to Ski Sundown - Route 219 and Ratlun Rd. enhancements	Support economic sustainability	New Hartford	
31	R	Improve Route 202 at Cotton Hill Road and Cedar Lane	Safety and improved operations	New Hartford	
32	R	Reconfigure Route 44 through New Hartford as a Main Street/complete street	Safety, improved operations, and complete streets	New Hartford	Yes

33	BP	Establish and maintain bicycle lanes and safe walking environment on Route 44 at town gateways	Safe bicycle and walking environments/ complete streets region-wide	New Hartford	
34	O	Provide new/more public parking in town center off Route 44	Support economic sustainability	New Hartford	
35	R	Replace bridge on Goshen East Street using a context sensitive design	Safety and improved operations and livability	Norfolk	
36	P	Complete network of good quality Village center sidewalks	Safe walking environment/ complete streets	Norfolk	Yes
37	BP	Create off-road trails along rail line to North Canaan	Off-road trail network	Norfolk	
38	BP	Create off-road trail from Winchester Center to Norfolk	Off-road trail network	Norfolk	
39	O	Add public parking spot to serve tourism along Route 44 in town center	Support economic sustainability	Norfolk	Yes

40	R	Improve safety and condition of rail track crossing on Route 7 in downtown N. Canaan	Safety, improved operations, and complete streets	North Canaan	Yes
41	T	Complete a municipal Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan	Transit need	North Canaan	
42	T	Expand on Geer transit service	Transit need	North Canaan	
43	P	Complete sidewalk network in the town center and improve sidewalk conditions	Safe bicycle and walking environments/ complete streets region-wide	North Canaan	Yes
44	BP	Provide an off-road trail from the senior center to the park	Off-road trail network; livability	Roxbury	
45	R	Realign and improve the intersection of Transylvania Road & Rt. 67	Safety, improved operations,	Roxbury	
46		Realign and improve the intersection of Davenport Road and Rt. 199	Safety, improved operations,	Roxbury	

47	R	Realign and improve the Botsford Hill Road and Rt. 67 intersection	Safety, improved operations,	Roxbury	
48	P	Add crosswalk from Town Hall to Post Office	Safe walking environment; livability	Roxbury	
49	T	Add bus service from Salisbury to Winsted/Winchester	Transit need	Salisbury	Yes
50	R	Replace bridge on West Cornwall Road with context-sensitive design	Safety and improved operations and livability	Sharon	
51	R	Reconfigure the 5-way intersection of Main Street and East Main (202 and 4)	Safety, improved operations, complete streets, support economic sustainability, enhanced livability	Torrington	Yes
52	R	Improve intersection of Torrington West and Route 202	Safety and improved operations	Torrington	

53	R	Improve intersection of Main Street (Route 4) and Pearl Street	Safety and improved operations	Torrington	
54	P	Complete and improve sidewalk network in downtown Torrington	Promote safe walking environment/ complete streets region-wide	Torrington	Yes
55	BP	Complete off-road trail from Torrington to Litchfield	Off-road trail network (Naugatuck River Greenway)	Torrington	Yes
56	BP	Complete off-road trail connections; Torrington to Farmington	Off-road trail network	Torrington	Yes
57	R	Develop and program a culvert replacement program	Asset Management	Warren	
58	R	Improve Route 45 and repave it between town center and Cornwall town center	Safety, improve operations, and complete the streets	Warren	Yes
59	R	Close the route 45 bypass; and add a town-center sidewalk	Safety, improve operations, and complete the streets	Warren	

60	B	Provide bike lanes around Lake Waramug and to connecting towns - Kent/Litchfield/Route 202 New Preston	Safe bicycling environment/ complete bicycle route connectivity region-wide	Warren	Yes
61	P	Complete sidewalk network in Depot Business District	Safe walking environment/ complete streets region-wide	Washington	Yes
62	OP	Provide added public parking spaces and improve pedestrian access in Depot Business District	Support economic sustainability	Washington	
63	BP	Add to roadway shoulders/lanes and improve bicycling conditions for Lake Waramaug; Rt. 45, 478, and 202 corridors, for bicycle travel from New Milford to Litchfield	Improve safety and quality of bicycling access and conditions	Washington	

64	BP	Rebuild shoulders along Rt. 109\Calhoun St. and Rt. 47\Green Hill RD.	Improve safety of roadway and bicycling conditions	Washington	
65	RBP	Complete reconfiguration of Winsted Main Street consistent with existing plans	Safety, improved operations, and complete streets	Winsted	Yes
66	R	Improve Newfield Road from Route 8 to Winchester Center	Safety and improved operations	Winsted	
67	RBP	Implement 'Complete Streets' concept for downtown Winsted	Safety, livability and complete streets	Winsted	Yes
68	BP	Complete Sue Grossman Trail - off-road trail from Winsted to Torrington	Off-road trail network	Winsted	Yes
69	P	Complete sidewalk network along Route 44 east (to Stop N Shop plaza)	Safe bicycle and walking environments/ complete streets region-wide	Winsted	

*Mode: R - Road; BP - Bike/Pedestrian; T- Transit; O-Parking