



DRAFT
NHCOG Regional Transportation Plan

CONTENTS

Preface	4
Acknowledgments.....	5
NHCOG Board Members	5
NHCOG Staff	5
NHCOG Resolution Adopting the Plan	6
I. INTRODUCTION.....	7
A. Why a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)?	7
B. Engaging Stakeholders in the Regional Transportation Planning Process.....	9
II. PLANNING BASELINE.....	10
A. Population, Land Use and Growth in the Region.....	10
Population Density and Trends	10
Environmental Justice Populations	12
Jobs and Employment	13
Land Use	14
Key Land Use and Demographic Observations	14
B. Transportation System.....	15
Roadways	15
Traffic	15
Congestion.....	16
Accidents	18
Airports.....	20
Transit.....	21

Rail.....	22
Bicycles and Pedestrians	24
III. SUMMARY OF KEY BASELINE FINDINGS.....	28
Roadways/Bridges.....	28
Transit.....	28
Rail.....	29
Bicycle travel—on-road.....	29
Pedestrians.....	29
Off-road travel (trails/greenways)	29
IV. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION VISION AND POLICIES.....	30
A. Regional Vision.....	30
B. Key Regional Policies.....	31
V. REGIONAL INITIATIVES.....	32
VI. LOCAL PROJECTS.....	38
VII. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM.....	45
Five-Year Implementation Program.....	45
Financial Plan	46

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1: Northwest Hills Planning Region.....	8
Figure 2: RTP Planning Process	9
Figure 3: Population Growth Trends.....	11
Figure 4 : Population Trends by Age Group	11
Figure 5: Employment in the NHCOG Region- 2010	13
Figure 6: Historic Traffic Volume Trends.....	15
Figure 7: Roadway Capacity and Congestion	17
Figure 8: Accident Concentrations.....	19
Figure 9: Point Locations of Accidents	20
Figure 10: Existing Active Rail Lines	23
Figure 11: On-Road Bicycling and Sidewalk Issues	25
Figure 12: Existing and Proposed Trails and Greenways	27
Table 1: Connecticut Population Density by County.....	10
Table 2: NHCOG Seasonal and Year-Round Population Change.....	12
Table 3: Environmental Justice Populations	13
Table 4: High Accident Locations – 2015	18
Table 5: Summary of Transit/Paratransit Service Availability.....	21

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Transit and Paratransit Services
Appendix B: Outreach Process and Findings

Preface

As a Rural Regional Transportation Planning Organization, the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG) has responsibility to facilitate the participation of local officials and stakeholders in regional transportation planning. In addition, as federal funds are a primary source of financial support for the region's transportation programs, the NHCOG transportation planning process must strive to meet federal guidance with respect to serving broad transportation system goals with a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that:

- Establishes major policy by transportation mode
- Serves as a guide to transportation investments
- Addresses the requirements of federal policy and funding guidelines, including those for enhanced safety, maintaining infrastructure in a state of good repair, congestion reduction, system reliability, environmental sustainability, and freight movement and economic vitality
- Provides for public /stakeholder engagement
- Addresses the needs of low-income and minority or underserved populations in the region

It is the intent of this plan to:

- Voice a regional transportation vision
- Determine key regional needs and priorities
- Recommend a program of actions and improvements to address those priorities
- Compile a list of local projects, desired by the individual municipalities, for inclusion in the plan

Acknowledgments

The long range transportation plan for the Northwest Hills Council of Governments planning region was prepared in cooperation with its twenty-one member municipalities. It was completed under the NHCOG's FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program and funded through the UPWP by the U.S. Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration), Connecticut Department of Transportation and member municipalities.

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NHCOG Resolution Adopting the Plan

PROGRESS DRAFT

I. INTRODUCTION

This regional transportation plan (RTP) for the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG) defines the future transportation vision for the region. It sets transportation priorities, defines key needs, makes regional recommendations and lays out an implementation program to help move those recommendations forward. The 20- year horizon for the plan necessitates a broad perspective of the region's long term transportation needs across all modes of travel. The RTP priorities provide a framework for ongoing efforts to enhance the region's transportation system and set the stage for regional transportation funding.

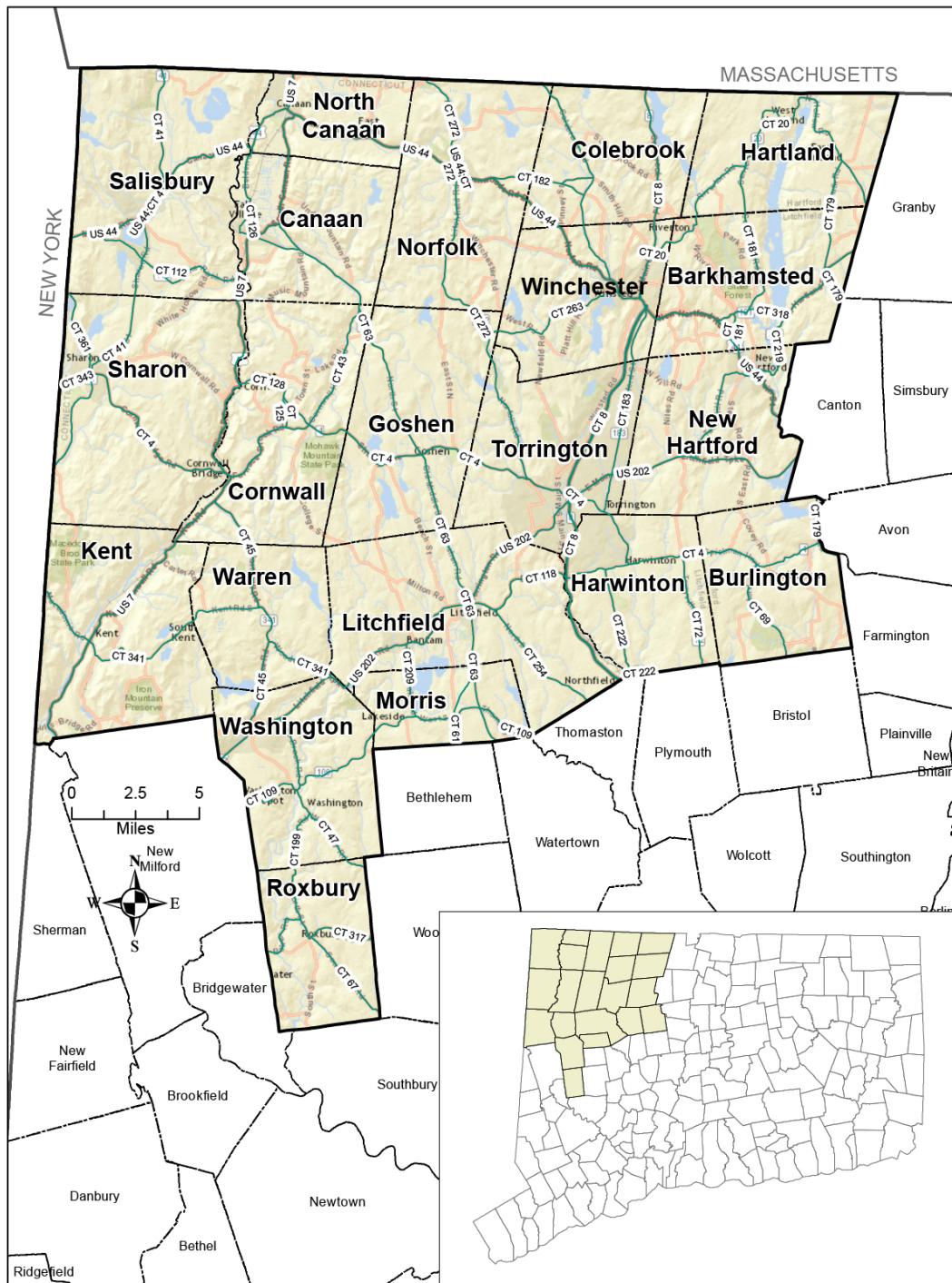
A. Why a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)?

This is the first RTP for this rural planning region. NHCOG was formed in 2014 through consolidation of the former Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments and Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials. NHCOG includes 21 municipalities, as shown in Figure 1. Its stated mission is to:

"make Northwest Connecticut a better place to live, do business, and visit by providing a forum for local officials to discuss issues of intermunicipal concern, promote regional cooperation, and direct various regional initiatives to enhance government planning, efficiency and service delivery."

This RTP serves the overall mission of this new region.

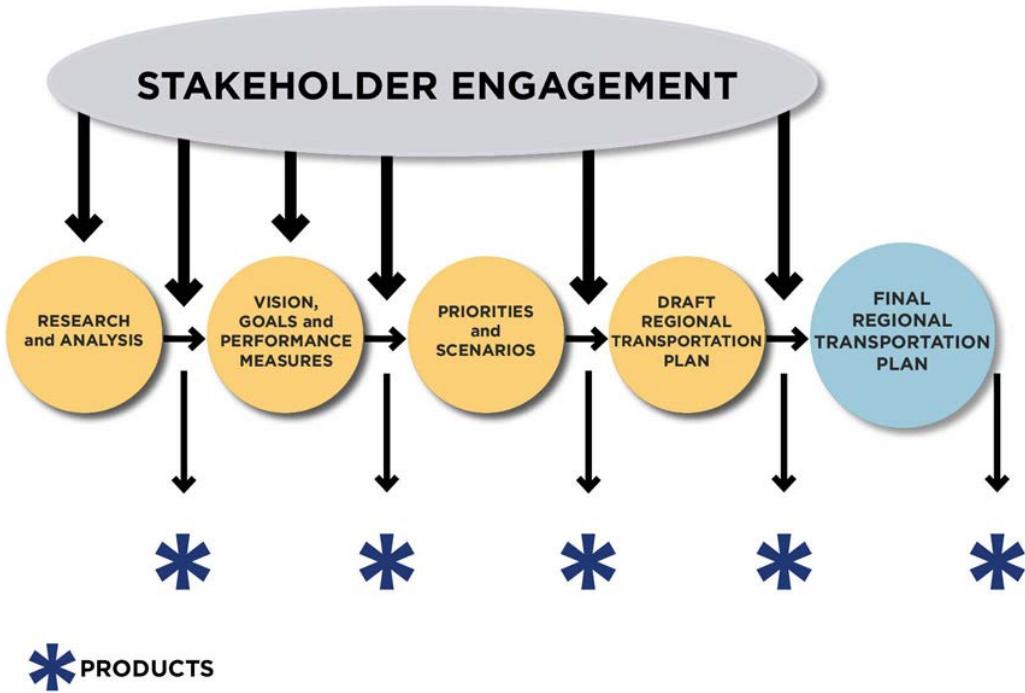
Figure 1:
Northwest Hills Planning Region



B. Engaging Stakeholders in the Regional Transportation Planning Process

Input from the region's stakeholders was critical to the development of this RTP. It was considered vital to plan success that outreach to stakeholders be an integral part of defining the vision, needs and priorities for the region. The RTP emerged from an iterative process that included as much creative stakeholder outreach as possible within the resources of this planning effort. Input was sought throughout the study from its earliest stages through review of plan recommendations. Figure 2 shows the vision for gaining input throughout the planning process.

Figure 2:
RTP Planning Process



The wide “net” of input opportunities included:

- ❖ Regular **NHCOG meetings** to get municipal and regional input and direction
- ❖ **Individual interviews** with each municipality to help determine each community's local and regional priorities
- ❖ A **widely available survey** of NHCOG population and workforce to help determine needs, priorities and long range vision
- ❖ **Three public forums** to get more specific input on transit, bicycle/pedestrian and rail needs. Key stakeholders in each of these areas of interest were invited to attend in addition to an invitation to the general public

- ❖ Several meetings with COG members and **key stakeholder groups** (e.g. NWC Economic Development Corporation) to gain feedback on the draft recommendations.

II. PLANNING BASELINE

The people, geography, and existing transportation resources set the baseline from which to consider current needs and relative priorities for transportation improvements. This background information provides insight into the character of the region and the challenges it faces.

A. Population, Land Use and Growth in the Region

Population Density and Trends

The U.S. Census defines an area as rural if it has less than 500 persons per square mile. The NHCOG area clearly meets that definition, and is comparatively the most rural area of the state of Connecticut overall, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1:
Connecticut Population Density by County

County	Persons per Square Mile
Hartford	1,216
Fairfield	1467
Litchfield	206
Middlesex	449
New Haven	1,427
New London	412
Tolland	372
Windham	231
State of Connecticut	738

Source: U.S. Census, 2010

The rural nature of the NHCOG region population presents challenges for providing transportation access to all its residents.

The population in the region has remained relatively stable in recent years and is anticipated to continue to remain so over the time frame of this RTP. Overall, population growth will be slow. Between 2015 and 2025, the population of the region is projected to grow by just one percent whereas the population of Connecticut is expected to grow by three percent. More significantly, it is an aging population with the proportion of those residents 65 and older growing while the proportion of younger residents is diminishing. Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate population trends in the region (source: US Census, ACS 2000, 2010, 2013, 5 year estimates).

Figure 3:
Population Growth Trends

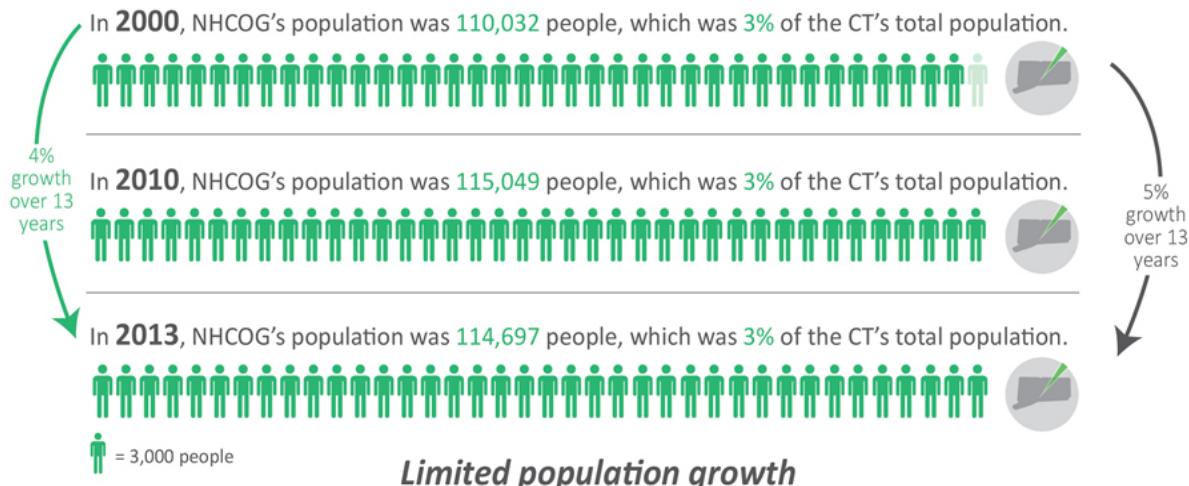


Figure 4 :
Population Trends by Age Group



A 2014 demographic analysis prepared for the region (Grossman Report, October 2014) investigated the impact of the seasonal population in the region on overall population trends. While seasonal population is much smaller in numbers than the full-time resident population, it is growing at a much faster pace and constitutes a significant element in the economy of many regional towns. As shown in Table 2, the seasonal population grew approximately 5 times faster than growth in the regular population between 2000 and 2010. Assuming that the seasonal population continues to increase at this pace, the net result would be an increase to more than 18,000 seasonal residents by the year 2025.

Table 2:
NHCOG Seasonal and Year-Round Population Change

NHCOG	2000	2010	Change	% Change
Seasonal Population	9,860	12,265	2,405	24%
Year-Round Population	110,032	115,225	5,193	4.7%
Total Population	119,892	127,490	7,598	6.3%

Source: Grossman Report, 2014

With regard to transportation, trip purposes for seasonal residents can be expected to vary from that of full-time residents in the region based on differences in lifestyle. The growth in seasonal population may have implications for projecting future traffic conditions in the region's communities and residents' preferred modes of travel. Growth in seasonal population is also related to growing interest and activity in tourism in the NHCOG region and recognition that this is perhaps an under-tapped aspect of the region's economy. For the most part, seasonal residents differ from year-round residents in that their travel patterns are more "recreation-related" rather than work-related. When seasonal residents are at home in the region, they collectively increase discretionary spending locally in restaurants, at entertainment venues, in specialty retail shops, and at recreational sites and facilities.

Environmental Justice Populations

The federal law on Environmental Justice (EJ) requires that transportation plans work to ensure that disadvantaged populations should have equal opportunity to benefits from improvements to the transportation network. Likewise, disadvantaged populations should not bear a higher burden of community impacts when new transportation infrastructure is built and should have adequate opportunity to participate in the decision-making process when new transportation projects are being considered. The federal definition for EJ populations are those who are minority or low-income.

For the purposes of illustrating potential transportation need in the NHCOG region, information was collected on both EJ populations and also on households with no vehicle and population 65 and older. These groups are historically more likely to be dependent on transit and other alternative means of travel aside from a personal automobile. A regional transportation plan must consider the needs of all potential travelers when establishing regional transportation system improvement priorities.

As Table 3 below demonstrates, the NHCOG region has a comparatively low percentage of low-income and minority populations with the exception of Torrington. However, because the region is so dispersed, residents with transportation needs are even more isolated and in more dire circumstances in a rural region than they may be in a more urban environment with more transit or other options.

Table 3:
Environmental Justice Populations

Geography	% of People Below the Poverty Level	% of People at 150% of Poverty Level	% Workers 16 and Over in Households with no Vehicle	% Households with no Vehicle Available	% 64 Years and Over
Torrington	11.1	19.2	2.9	9.6	17.8
NHCOG	6.4	12.6	1	3.5	18.7
State	6.5	16.4	1.8	4.8	15.5

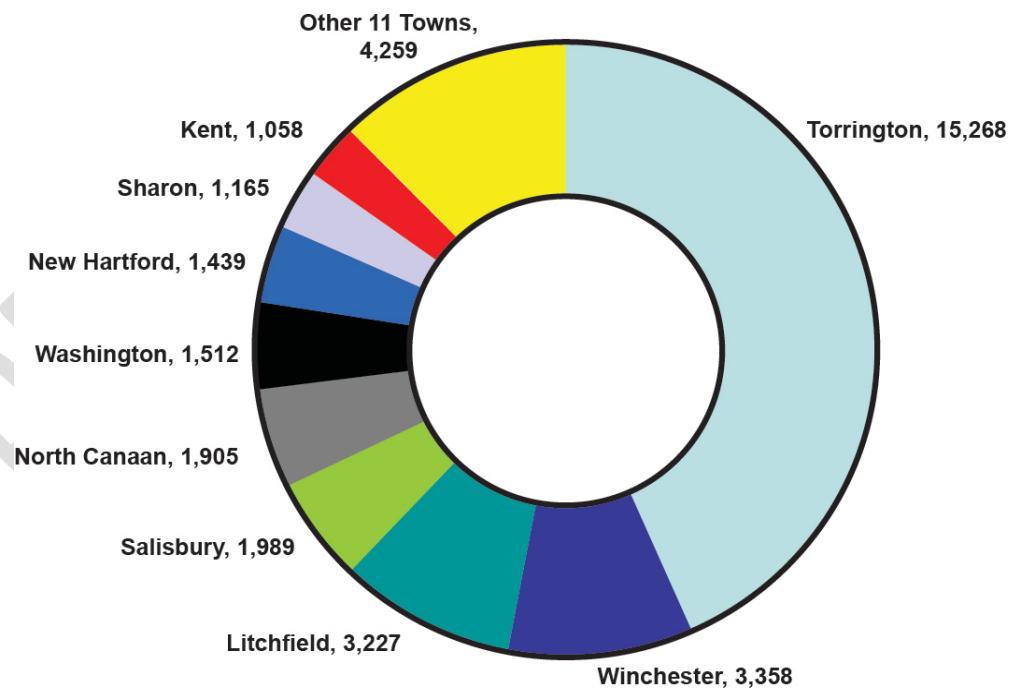
Source: U.S. Census, 2015 ACS Data

Incorporation of EJ considerations into the planning process for this RTP consists largely in recommendations for increased transit service, which is a large and growing need in the region.

Jobs and Employment

Unsurprisingly, the greatest number of jobs in the region are in Torrington and Winchester/Winsted. These towns are regional activity hubs and transportation connectivity to them is an essential element of the transportation network for the region as a whole. Overall, the number of jobs in the region has declined marginally in the past decade (5% or less) and is expected to remain relatively steady in the future. The employment in the region is summarized in Figure 5 (Source: Connecticut Dept. of Labor).

Figure 5:
Employment in the NHCOG Region- 2010



The Northwest CT “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy” (CEDS, April 2013) concluded the following with regard to relevant socio-economic conditions and trends in the region:

- None of the region’s communities, (with the possible exceptions of Torrington, Winchester and Litchfield) are large enough to provide the complete mixture of retail, service, or employment opportunities needed by residents.
- Larger communities such as Torrington, Winchester and Litchfield have historically been the centers of economic activity, a situation that is likely to continue.
- The region’s lack of population density may create a disincentive to businesses to locate retail and service businesses in smaller communities.
- The limited population growth projection means that there are likely to be few new businesses established that would be dependent on serving just regional residents; businesses that can serve both the resident population and tourists will have a better chance of succeeding.
- There is a need for additional employment opportunities in the region to keep the “young worker” group in the region.
- There will be an increasing demand for goods and services desired or needed by older residents.

Land Use

The NHCOG region is predominantly rural in terms of land use as well as population. According to the University of Connecticut, over 85% of the NHCOG region’s land cover is forests and agricultural fields—a figure much higher than the state as a whole. Land use in the NHCOG region is a mix of rural, suburban and limited urbanizing areas with a general pattern of town or village centers surrounded by suburban or rural residential development interspersed with largely undeveloped, agricultural or natural areas. The strong developed core of Torrington, Winchester, and Litchfield create an urbanized area in the eastern center of the region. North Canaan is a second comparatively large urbanized center with regional services available, acting as a smaller hub in the far northwestern corner of the region.

Plans for the NHCOG region have the following policies relevant to this RTP:

- Focus growth in locations where infrastructure is available or expandable and where open space and environmental quality can be protected
- Support local efforts to maintain the region’s rural character through policies and decisions that support farming, recreation, tourism, and forest management.
- Support local efforts to preserve open space and agricultural land.
- Support towns’ efforts to upgrade their infrastructure.

Key Land Use and Demographic Observations

The following summarizes key land use and demographic conditions and trends in the NHCOG region:

- The region is relatively stable in terms of total population, jobs, and land use patterns. There will be very slow growth.
- The demographics of the region are changing with regard to age and this will be a significant challenge for future mobility. The growth in senior population will have implications on travel needs.

- The region's lack of population density and slow labor force growth is a challenge for attracting traditional business, and dispersed locations of workers relative to jobs make non-auto commute options more challenging
- The region has aesthetic and agricultural assets which may provide additional future opportunities for tourism-related transportation assets to be enhanced. This is likely to be more successful if the region creates a plan and markets accordingly.
- The number of seasonal residents is expected to continue to grow; their travel needs may differ from the resident population in that they will generally not be making work trips. They may also be expected to be a significant contributor to demand for recreational trips; bicycling and walking

B. Transportation System

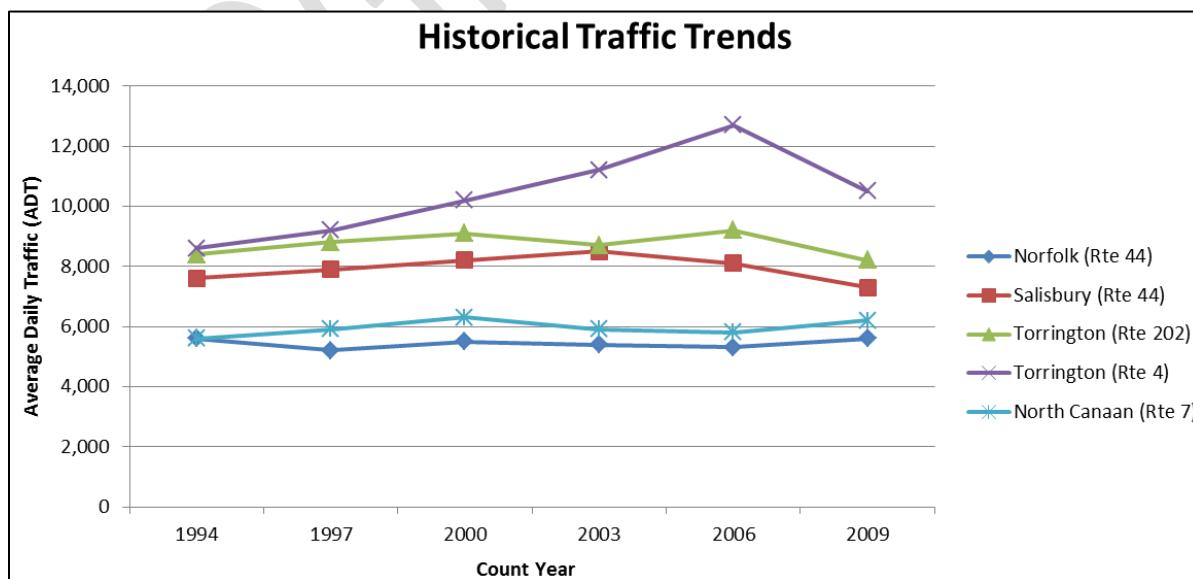
Roadways

The NHCOG region is served by an extensive system of U.S., state and local roadways and no interstate facilities. The nearest interstates are I-90 to the north, I-91 to the east, and I-84 to the south. Therefore, the region's highway network meets a critical transportation need within the region as well as to and from and through the region. It must accommodate a broad range of modes and services including automobiles, trucks, public transportation, on-street parking, bicycle facilities, and emergency response services.

Traffic

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) maintains a database of statewide traffic counts dating back to the early 1990s. Historical traffic data at four key locations in the NHCOG region from 1994 to 2009 are illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6:
Historic Traffic Volume Trends



Source: CTDOT Traffic Monitoring Volume Information

The data indicates little growth in traffic volume over a fifteen-year period, with the exception of the Route 4 location in Torrington.

While regional traffic volumes may not increase much into the future, the roadways will still continue to experience wear and tear, leading to continuing (and increasing) maintenance needs. If state resources are not consistently made available and utilized for general maintenance to local and state roads, costs to the Towns and State to maintain/repair roadways can be expected to rise.

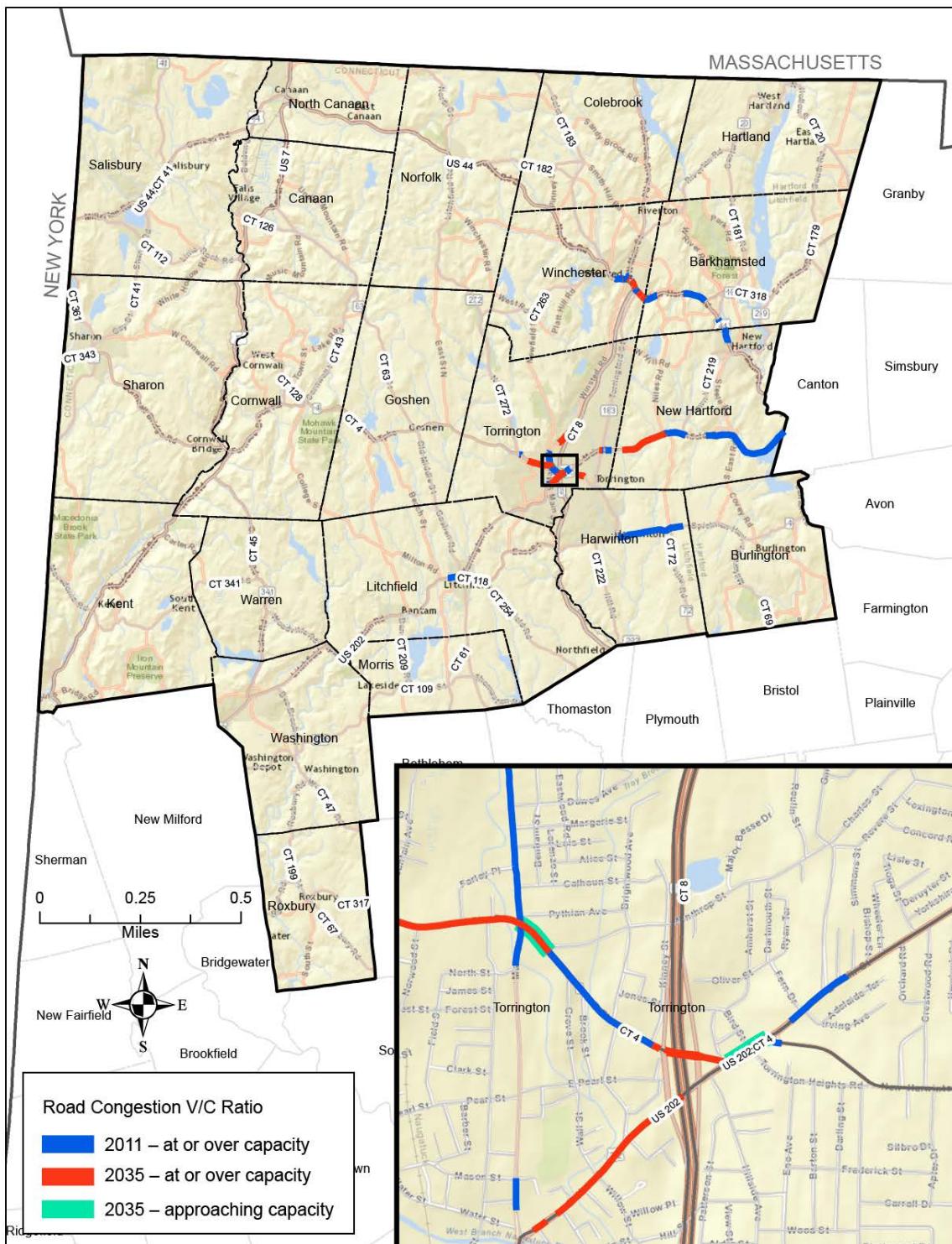
Discussions with local officials identified locations where anecdotal evidence is that truck traffic may be an issue. These include:

- Route 219 in Barkhamsted; the roadway is too narrow and winding to safely handle the many large trucks that travel there
- Route 7 between Kent and North Canaan; heavily used truck route with some truck speeding; trucks through downtowns/village centers can be an issue.

Congestion

Comparatively speaking, the region's roadways experience a low level of congestion overall. Traffic flow is generally steady with adequate capacity relative to traffic volumes. Nonetheless, there are a limited number of locations where periodic capacity issues occur. The 2011 *CTDOT Congestion Monitoring and Screening Report* documents these and they are illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7:
Roadway Capacity and Congestion



Accidents

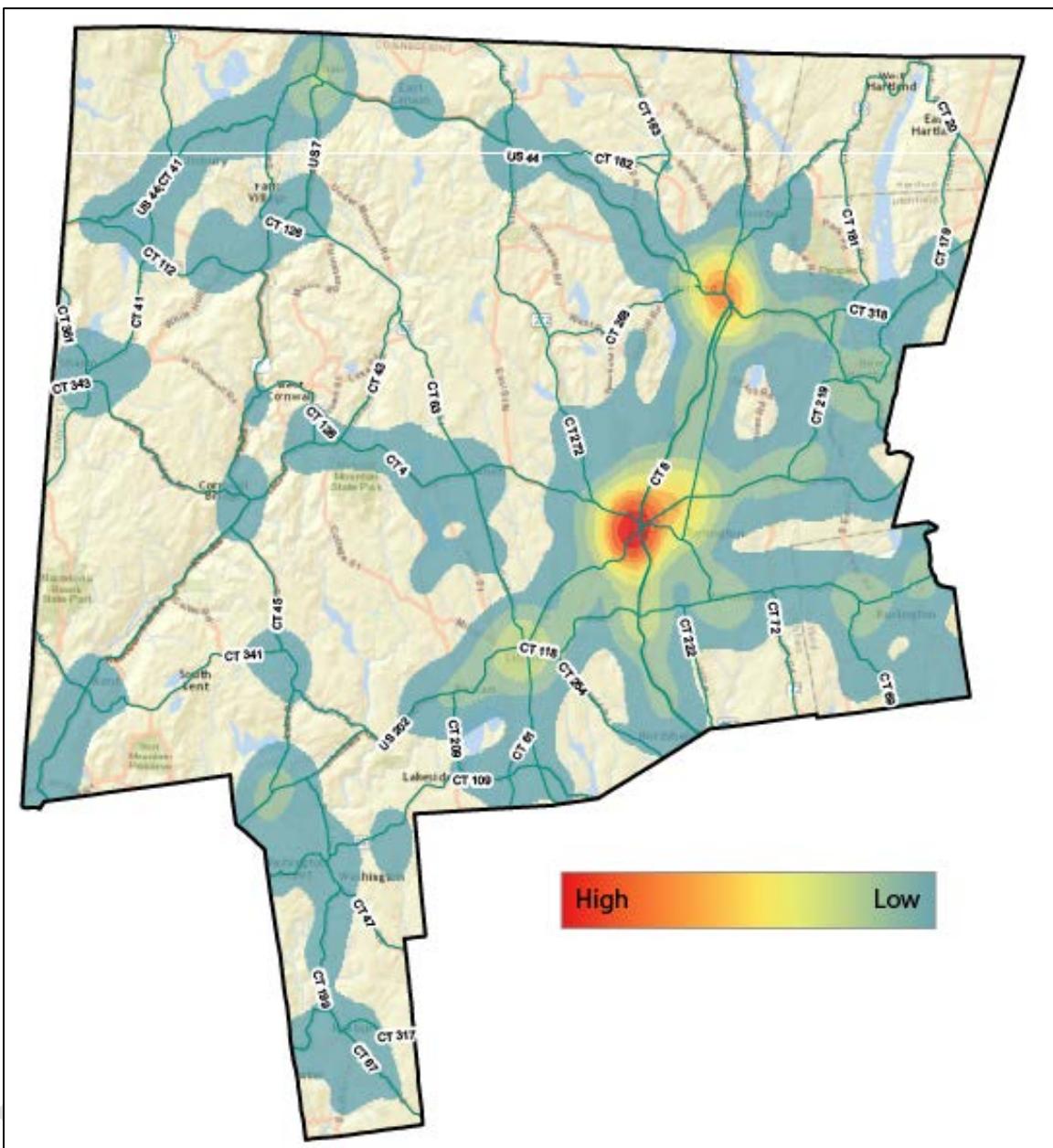
Accident data available from CTDOT found there were 2,000 crashes across the region reported in 2015. Not surprisingly, the highest concentration of crashes occurred in Torrington and Winsted where volumes are higher. Aside from Torrington and Winsted, a higher number of crashes occurred in North Canaan and Litchfield. Top accident locations are listed in Table 4. The concentration of accidents by location are shown in 8 and **Error! Reference source not found.**9. While this data shows number of accidents only and does not indicate the rate of accidents relative to the volume of traffic, it can be observed that the most accidents in the region occurred in the more urbanized areas where traffic volumes are higher.

Table 4:
High Accident Locations – 2015

Town	Location	Total Accidents Reported
Litchfield	Rte. 202/Rte. 63	30
Torrington	Rte. 183/Rte. 202	33
	Rte. 202/Rte. 8 / Rte. 4	45
	Rte. 4/Main St.	40
	Main St./Rte. 202	64
Winchester	Rte. 8/Rte. 44	59

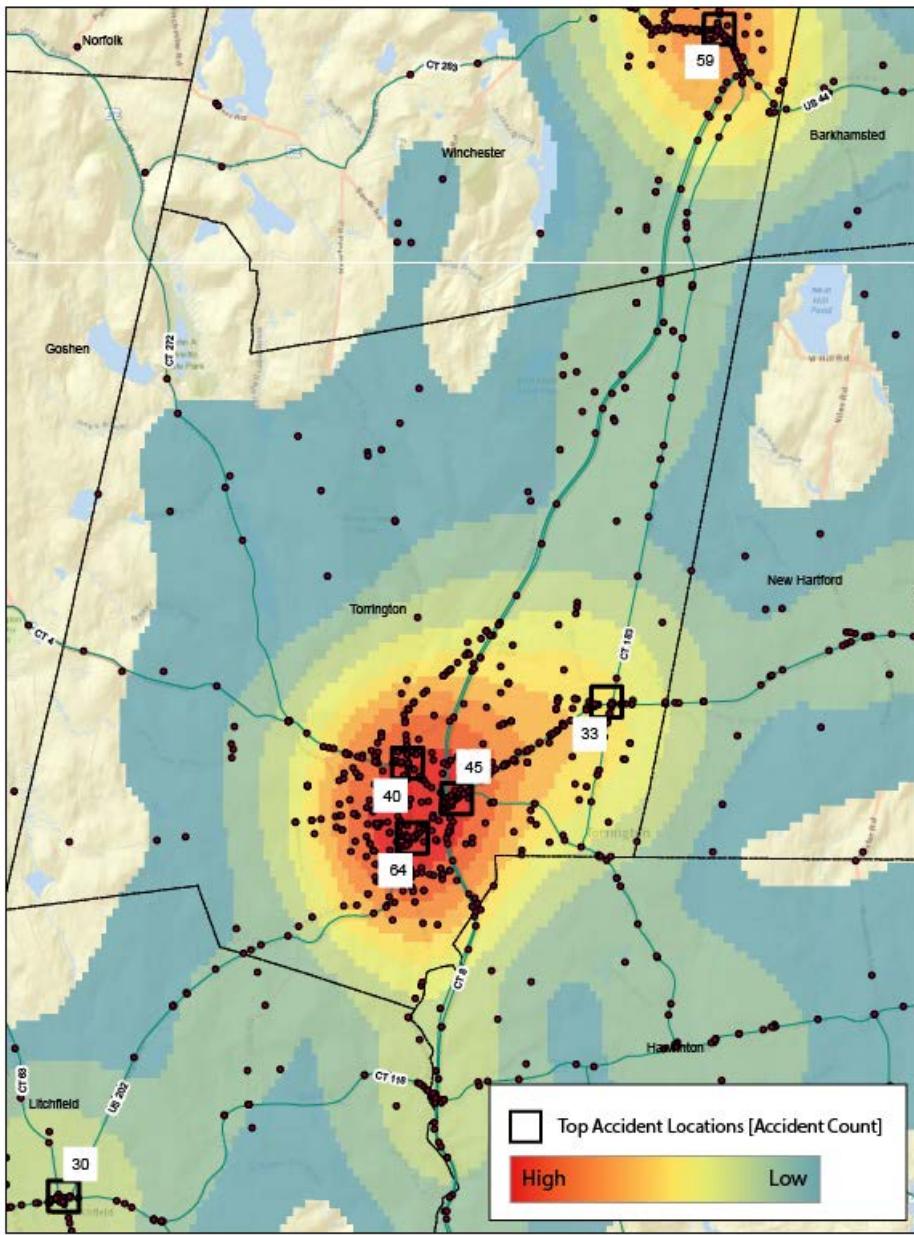
Source: CT Crash Data Repository (2015)

Figure 8:
Accident Concentrations



Source: CT Crash Data Repository (2015)

Figure 9:
Point Locations of Accidents



Airports

There are no public airports in the Northwest Hills region. Rather, the region is served by nearby regional airports and by Bradley International Airport, located in Windsor Locks. The nearest private regional airports are located in Simsbury and Plainville, Connecticut, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and Union Vale and Poughkeepsie, New York. Bradley International is Connecticut's principal airport and the primary one serving the travel and business needs of the NHCOG Region.

Until recently, the Litchfield Hills Region was also served by Johnnycake Mountain Meadows Airport, a privately owned general service airport located within the adjacent towns of Harwinton and Burlington. This facility, in operation since 1956, provided community access to the national airport system for small aircraft. Up to 65 general aviation aircraft, including a number of private helicopters, were based at the Airport. It offered a 50' x 3400' lighted runway, tie-downs, hanger space, fueling facilities, and repair service. The airport closed in 2004. Since its closure the airport runway areas have been converted back to their historical agricultural use.

Transit

The region is served by a wide array of disparate transit services most of which have limited geographies, ridership types, or timetables. Table 5 summarizes the availability of service in the region. A more comprehensive listing of these services is provided in **Appendix A** to this report. The largest or most centralized transit service in the region is provided by the Northwest Connecticut Transit District (NWCTD). NWCTD provides bus service (CandyStriper) for the general public with connections among Torrington, Litchfield, and Winsted. The service is a deviated-route service, meaning that if someone calls for a ride within a ½ mile distance of the regular route, the driver will make that side trip to pick them up or drop them off. In addition, the NWCTD offers dial-a-ride services (curb-to-curb) by appointment primarily to destinations in Torrington and Winsted. Other services tend to be tailored to a specific rider population such as senior center vans or jobs access for disabled workers. Overall, transit service within the region is scattered with a number of communities having very limited service available.

Table 5:
Summary of Transit/Paratransit Service Availability

Municipality*	Level of Core Service	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri	Sat.	Sun.
Barkhamsted								
Colebrook								
Cornwall								
Goshen								
Harwinton								
Litchfield								
Morris								
New Hartford								
Norfolk								
Torrington								
Winchester/Winsted								

* Towns not included in this table are only served by taxi or limited Dial-A-Ride Service with a reservation made 24-hours in advance.

Somewhat Higher Level of Service
Lower Level of Service
Lowest Level of Service
8+ of coverage
<8 hours of coverage
No coverage

Transit to places outside the region is also very limited. The NWCTD offers inter-regional dial-a-ride service to medical appointments at major hospitals outside the region and to West Farms Mall. There is one commuter bus which travels from Torrington to Hartford Monday through Friday. Commercial bus service (Peter Pan) makes a stop in Torrington on a limited schedule. A new commuter route recently began. A CTTransit bus route, the Torrington – Waterbury Flyer, began operations in June 2016. It runs Monday – Friday from 5:45 a.m. – 8:45 p.m. and travels on Route 8 from Torrington to Thomaston and Waterbury. It makes stops in Waterbury at the Department of Social Services, Metro-North railroad station, St. Mary's Hospital and UCONN Waterbury campus.

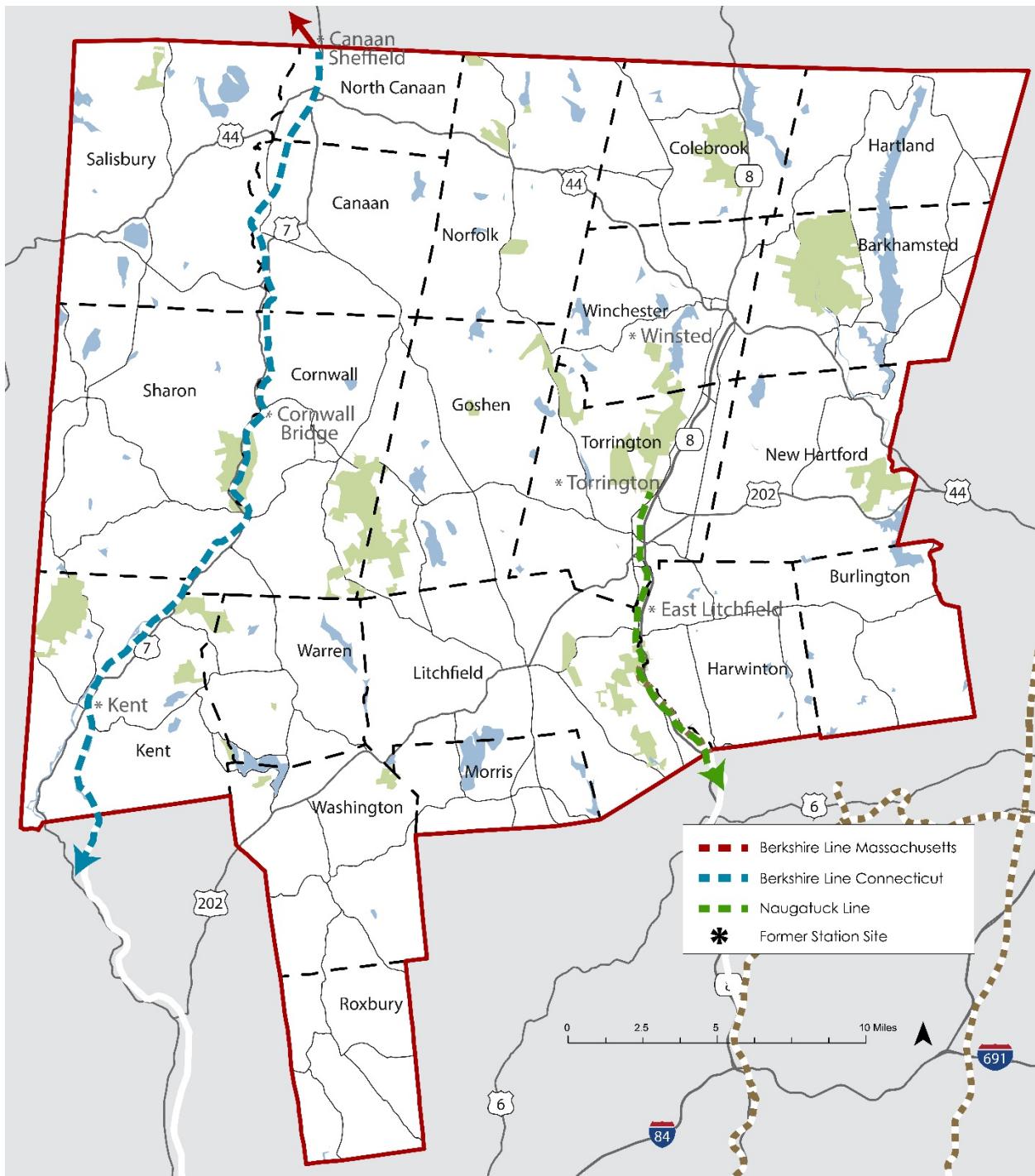
Local, knowledgeable transit stakeholders were asked to share their insights into key issues during the Transit Forum held on March 22, 2016. The most critical issues cited among these stakeholders were that the NHCOG transit network needs more service that is better coordinated among providers, more flexible, innovative service to respond to changing needs, and with better communication to all of the region's residents about available services.

Rail

0 shows the existing active rail lines in the region. The two railroads are the Housatonic RR on the Berkshire Line and the Naugatuck RR on the Naugatuck Line. Existing rail service in the region is limited to freight service on the Housatonic Line and seasonal tourism-based passenger service on the Naugatuck Line. Knowledgeable stakeholders actively involved in local rail operations and service were asked to share their insights into key issues during the Rail Forum held on April 7, 2016. They noted that tracks are in poor repair in many locations. Another key issue was that there is unmet demand and opportunity for more freight service in the region. Integrating that into communities will be a challenge.

The Housatonic RR was awarded \$10M in 2013 to use towards track improvement as part of the State's Rail Freight Improvement Program (RFIP). The Naugatuck RR received \$1.6M in 2013 to make upgrades north of Waterbury Branch Line. Work has been underway on track upgrades near Torrington and Thomaston for the past two years. Litchfield County accounts for 8.3% of outbound rail freight originating in Connecticut. The County's two main rail freight commodities are clay/concrete/glass, or stone, and nonmetallic minerals.

Figure 10:
Existing Active Rail Lines



Source: FHI, 2016

Bicycles and Pedestrians

Bicycling

The NHCOG region is a destination for on-road recreational bicycling enthusiasts, attracted by the rolling and challenging terrain and the scenic roadways. Local, knowledgeable and avid bicyclists were asked to share their insights into key routes and issues during the Bicycle and Pedestrian Forum held on March 22, 2016. shows information from those discussions. Overall, key issues for the region include:

- lack of consistent suitable and safe roadway shoulders for bicycling
- roadway shoulder maintenance
- Safety issues at some specific locations due to these or other conditions
- lack of wayfinding signage.

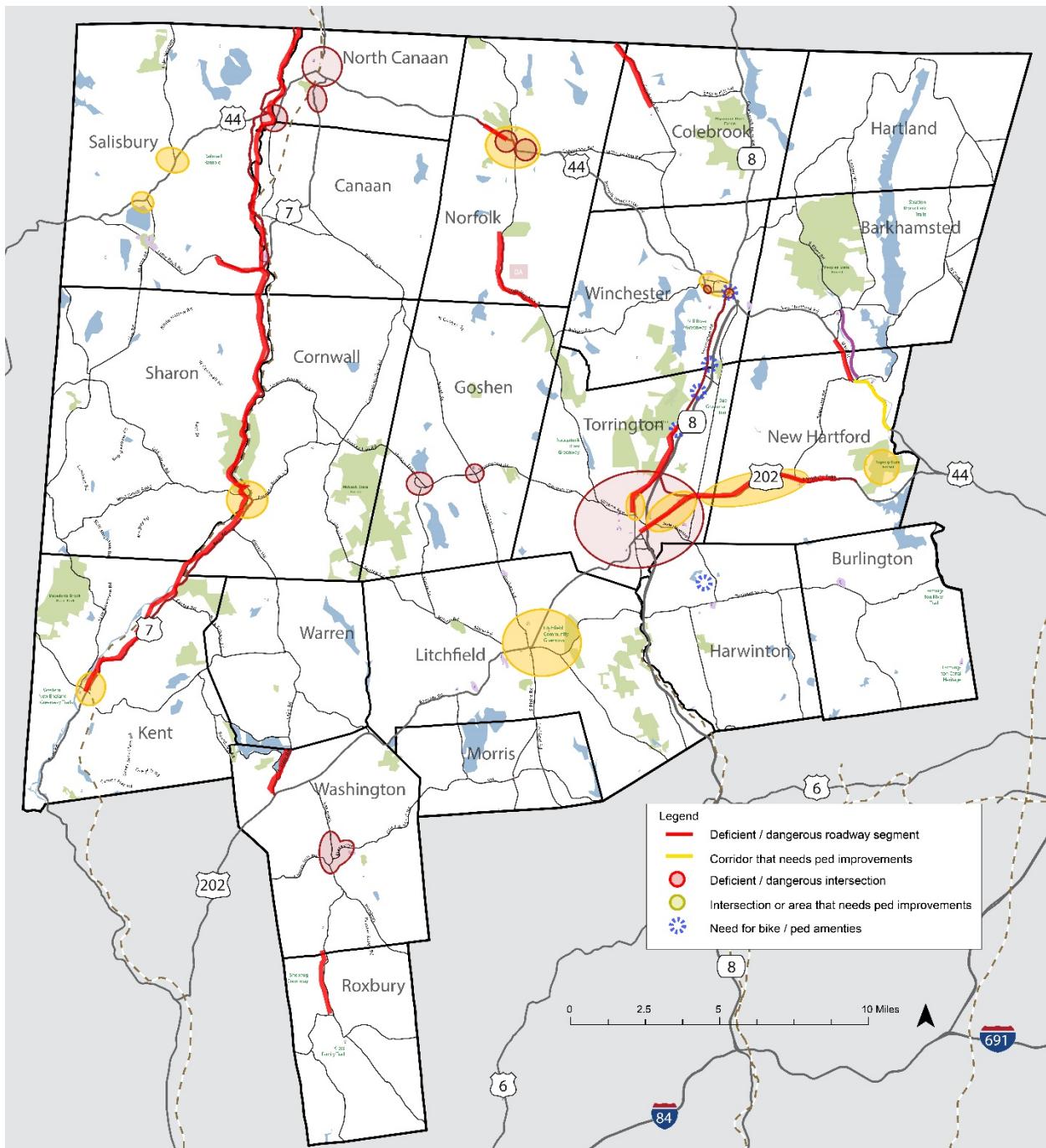
The on-road bicycling opportunities in the region support the region's tourism industry and identity. However, the inconsistent bicycling environment and absence of directional signage is seen as deterring some from taking advantage of the natural assets of the region for bicycling.

Sidewalks

Most towns in the region have some sidewalks in village and town centers. However, many stretches are intermittent, and there are numerous system gaps. Sidewalk conditions have not been comprehensively documented throughout the region as part of this RTP as they tend to be local, rather than regional, assets. However, the overall quality of life in the region is affected by the local sidewalk situations. Information gathered during the Bicycle and Pedestrian Forum provided some insights into areas where sidewalk issues currently exist, as shown in 1.

Torrington is recently completed an upgrade to sidewalks along a segment of Main Street with a streetscape project, and Winsted completed a similar project in 2011. With the exception of Kent, Torrington, and Winchester, none of the NHCOG municipalities have any ordinances dealing with maintenance or construction of sidewalks and municipal versus property-owner responsibilities. Among the region's municipalities, Burlington, Kent (draft regulations), North Canaan, Torrington, and Winchester have language in their zoning regulations addressing sidewalk requirements.

Figure 11:
On-Road Bicycling and Sidewalk Issues



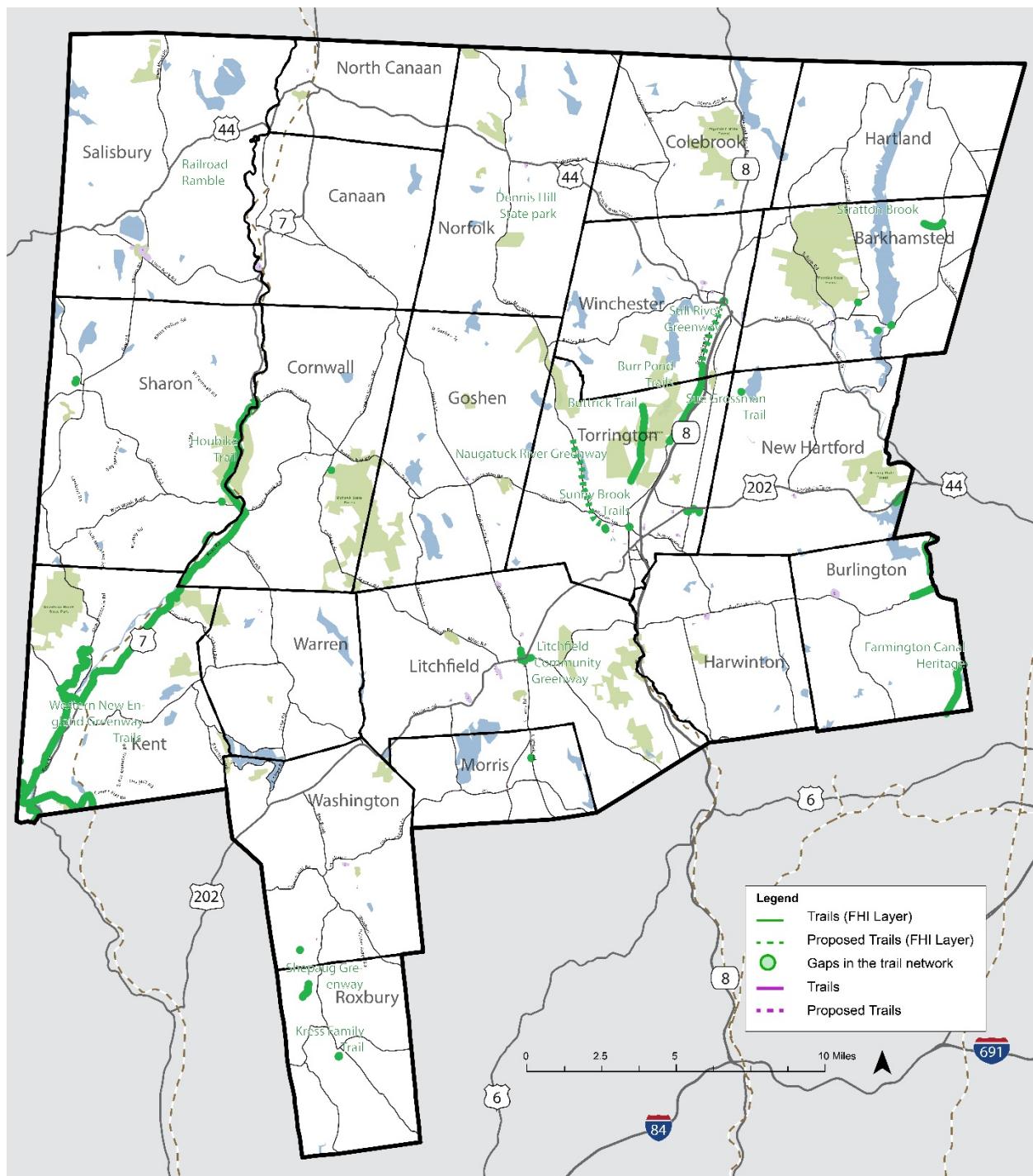
Source: FHI, 2016

Trails

There are variety of off-road trails in the region which provide access as well as recreational opportunities for bicyclists and pedestrians. There also are a number of Connecticut State Blue-Blazed hiking trails and sections of the Appalachian trail in the region. Yet, there are also many gaps in the network of trails. Connectivity is limited, making them less functional as actual travel corridors and for recreational use. The lack of connectivity among the trails and hiking paths undermines the value that a comprehensive system could provide to the region's quality of life and economy. 2 shows the location of existing and proposed trails in the NHCOG region. Upcoming trail projects indicated on the map include:

- Kent and Cornwall. Housatonic Bike (HouBike) Trail Alignment Study: Funding to study alternative routes for a seven-mile segment of the Housatonic Bike Trail which currently runs along US-7 between Kent and the Cornwall Bridge. The study will focus on the feasibility of re-routing the trail off of Rte. 7 in order to improve connectivity and accommodate a broader user group including casual riders, walkers, and families with children.
- Torrington and Winsted. Sue Grossman Still River Greenway: Funding to construct a two-mile extension of the existing three-mile Sue Grossman Still River Greenway from its current terminus in Winsted into the downtown, and prepare final design & construction plans for the remaining five miles from the current terminus in Torrington into downtown Torrington. The extension is designed to establish safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists between the two city centers
- Torrington. Naugatuck River Greenway: Funding to study alternative routes for this segment of the 44-mile greenway; from Thomaston Dam to Bogue Road in Torrington
- Torrington. Buttrick Trail: Funding to construct the Buttrick Trail and Bridge over the Still River

Figure 12:
Existing and Proposed Trails and Greenways



Source: FHI, 2016

III. SUMMARY OF KEY BASELINE FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of existing transportation facilities and conditions in the region, combined with input from municipalities, surveys, forums and other stakeholder meetings, the following assessment of regional transportation findings and needs was developed. This list is presented by mode.

Roadways/Bridges

- The region is generally well-served by its existing roadway system
- Some maintenance issues exist on state roadways
- Considerable maintenance issues exist on local roadways due to lack of funding for rural regional roadway maintenance
- Some intersection issues exist throughout the region as noted on the list of local projects. Many of these issues relate to vehicular or pedestrian safety, rather than congestion or delay. Some of these intersections have regional significance. Intersection issues also include Complete Streets needs. (Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.)
- There is room for much improvement in terms of shoulder maintenance and/or widening, striping and other pavement markings to more safely accommodate bicyclists. Where possible, this should be piggy-backed with regular maintenance needs
- There is a need for some bridges to be replaced or repaired, based on CTDOT inspections
- Speeding was recognized as a safety issue in some areas. Within town centers, school zones, and certain commercial areas, there may be opportunities to employ traffic calming measures
- Many communities also expressed interest in incorporating various Complete Streets measures to improve mobility, livability, ambience, and even economic viability
- Some instances of excessive truck traffic or truck traffic on roads ill-equipped for them were noted.

Transit

- There is a very high degree of latent demand¹ in the region which is going to increase as the population ages. Much improvement is needed to increase service, especially to those without other travel options as well as those who choose to rely on transit as their primary means of travel.
- Key needs include:
 - Elderly/disabled/low income
 - School/work trips for those without automobile options
 - Improved coverage (days/times/geography)
- There is a strong need for a more coordinated system throughout the region

¹ No survey was carried out documenting latent demand, but surveys and the body of evidence nationwide shows that latent demand for transit in rural regions, particularly for low income persons or persons with disabilities, virtually always exceeds the service available. This is amply illustrated also in the NHCOG region by the experience and testament of both transit providers, and municipalities, who receive calls inquiring about service. Most importantly, it is typical that the requests for service are only the “tip of the iceberg” with regard to unmet need.

- There is a strong need for an energetic marketing plan, system signage and publicly available information about transit options
- There is a strong need for more coordinated/centralized communications and dispatch
- Completion of the Torrington Intermodal Transportation Center in Downtown Torrington with transit amenities would have regional as well as local benefits in promoting greater coordination

Rail

- Improving tracks and other facilities and opportunities for freight travel is needed to ensure that rail remains a viable transportation resource
- Passenger rail of great interest in the region, but level of demand is unknown.
- Connections to rail service into New York is of interest to many, particularly those in the western part of the region.
- Passenger rail initiatives being pursued by the neighboring Berkshire Regional Planning Commission are also of interest
- Rail tourism may be a good rail “niche” for the region.

Bicycle travel—on-road

- Better roadway shoulders and markings are much needed in key locations. Priorities for those locations need to be more clearly defined.
- Cross region bike routes (best rides) could be identified and more widely promoted as part of regional tourism marketing. (note: this was done previously by the Litchfield Hills Travel Council which may provide a starting point for building on that effort).

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 a model ordinance may be helpful.

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.

IV. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION VISION AND POLICIES

Any plan must begin by identifying goals in order to set directions, help define policies, and aid in decision-making. Although this is a transportation plan, transportation is not divorced from other aspects of the region's infrastructure and identity. The goals for this transportation plan were developed through a process of input and listening to stakeholder concerns and priorities about the role of transportation in helping to determine quality of life.

This plan comes at a time when the transportation and demographic landscape is changing. Some of these changes include:

- Aging population (nationally, not just in the NHCOG region)
- Generational differences in lifestyles and travel desires
- Updated thinking in terms of roadway and street design
- Greater focus on non-automobile travel or on changed automobile paradigms
- Technology opportunities that didn't exist just a few years ago (zip cars, Uber, bikesharing, parking apps, transit apps, etc.)

At this time, the NHCOG region has an opportunity to better integrate its transportation and travel needs with the region's overall vision of its identity, which might include greater emphasis on and promotion of tourism, seasonal business, and modern agribusiness, for example. Whatever directions the region pursues, a critical element of success will be the regional ability to collaborate for greater benefit. Internal collaboration, so that the region can "speak with one voice", collaboration with state funding entities, and collaboration with the private sector, will all greatly benefit the region's ability to attract the funding and business necessary for the region to thrive.

A. Regional Vision

Through the stakeholder outreach and public involvement process for this RTP, the following long-term vision for the region's transportation plan was defined:

The Northwest Hills Region has unique natural assets and rural character which will be supported by a sustainable transportation system composed of many modes of travel. Transportation in the region supports its sense of destination, place, history, and vitality. It connects places we live, work, shop, eat, enjoy the outdoors, and find entertainment and cultural enrichment. The many components of the transportation network work in concert with each other to make it easy to access places by car, bicycle, transit, rail, and on foot. Streets in the heart of each community offer safe travel options for all modes, with "complete streets" elements that improve livability and sense of place.

This vision will primarily be accomplished through:

- *Preservation and enhancement of the existing network of roads, paths, sidewalks, transit, railroads, and bicycle ways*
- *New projects, policies and services which advance connectivity and strengthen the functioning of the system as a whole.*

B. Key Regional Policies

Based on the regional vision, and on the region's identified transportation needs, the following policies were identified to guide the NHCOG's decision-making for future investment in the region's transportation system.

PRIORITIES	POLICY TO:
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.

V. REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Two lists of initiatives have been developed as the outcome of the regional visioning process, identification of needs, and determination of priorities and policies:

- 1) Regional Initiatives/Recommendations
- 2) Local Projects

This section of the plan details the regional recommendations. These recommended initiatives are prioritized with ease of implementation noted. Where applicable, an order of magnitude costs for implementation is noted along with a suggested time frame.

The priorities were determined by the extent to which each recommended action meets following criteria:

- Meets the regional transportation system vision;
- Is consistent with regional transportation policies;
- Addresses identified issues and needs;
- Responds to stakeholder key concerns;
- Supports regional land use vision and economic development goals;
- Supports regional Smart Growth goals.

Number #	Recommendation	Implementation			
		Priority 1/2/3 (1 = highest)	Implementation Ease 1 = relatively easy 2 = moderately difficult 3 = difficult	Time Frame	Order of Magnitude Cost
	GENERAL RECOMMENDATION				
1	Maintain NHCOG participation in existing CTDOT programs such as LOTCIP, Rural Collectors, etc.	1	2	Ongoing	Under \$50,000
2	Advocate for increased funding for rural programs	1	2	Ongoing	Under \$50,000
3	Consider retaining a part-time/on-call transportation engineer/planner(s) to facilitate the preparation of LOTCIP and Rural Collector Program applications, perhaps carry out some of the recommended planning studies, and address other specific needs on a fee basis	2	2	1-2 years	\$50k/year
	ROADWAY NETWORK				
4	Promote the development of municipal pavement management plans for local roads	1	2	Ongoing	Under \$50,000
5	Encourage more regional representation in the development of paving priorities for state roads in the region	1	1	Ongoing	Under \$50,000
6	Identify areas with truck volume issues and conduct an assessment to see if there are workable solutions	2-3	1	3-5 years	\$15k

Number #	Recommendation	Implementation			
		Priority 1/2/3 (1 = highest)	Implementation Ease 1 = relatively easy 2 = moderately difficult 3 = difficult	Time Frame	Order of Magnitude Cost
7	Develop a plan for designation of additional scenic roads in the region	3	1	5-7 years	\$30k
8	Conduct a study of opportunities to provide electric vehicle charging stations throughout the region	3	1	5-7 years	\$30k
9	Explore the issue of photo-enforcement to manage speeding	3	1	1-2 years	Under \$50,000
10	Prepare a model Complete Streets Pilot Project for community center in region	2	2	1-2 years	\$50k
11	Stay abreast of the Statewide Freight Plan which is currently under development	2	1	Ongoing	Minimal cost
12	Maintain and expand the region's Public Works Equipment Cooperative Purchasing Program	1	1	Ongoing	Under \$50,000
TRANSIT SYSTEM/RAIL					
13	Complete Torrington Intermodal Transportation Center, including exploration of TOD, rail access, and complete streets improvements in the area	1-2	3	7-10 years	Over \$10m

Number #	Recommendation	Implementation			
		Priority 1/2/3 (1 = highest)	Implementation Ease 1 = relatively easy 2 = moderately difficult 3 = difficult	Time Frame	Order of Magnitude Cost
14	Appoint a Transit Coordination Committee to work with other regional resources to both bring new transit service to better coordinate existing service	1	2	1-2 years	Under \$50,000
15	Using available and previously allocated CTDOT funds, hire a full or part time Regional Transit Coordinator	1	2	1-2 years	\$30k/year
16	Pursue the recommendations of the Rural Independent Transit System and revise to account for current conditions	1	2	Ongoing	Over \$50,000
17	Purchase new vehicles for paratransit service expansion	1-2	2	5-7 years	Over \$50,000
18	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	1	3	5-7 years	Over \$50,000
19	Explore expansion or revision of transit service to NWCCC to better accommodate students and class schedules.	1	1	1-2 years	Over \$50,000
20	Prepare and implement a Transit Marketing and Communications Plan for the region.	1	2	3-5 years	\$50k

Number #	Recommendation	Implementation			
		Priority 1/2/3 (1 = highest)	Implementation Ease 1 = relatively easy 2 = moderately difficult 3 = difficult	Time Frame	Order of Magnitude Cost
21	Continue to build rail freight capacity and 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.	2	3	7-10 years	Under \$50,000
22	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.	2-3	2	Ongoing	Minimal cost
23	Develop and implement a bus system publicity, signage and shelter plan	1	2		Under \$50,000

Number #	Recommendation	Implementation			
		Priority 1/2/3 (1 = highest)	Implementation Ease 1 = relatively easy 2 = moderately difficult 3 = difficult	Time Frame	Order of Magnitude Cost
	BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS				
24	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	2	1	Ongoing	Minimal cost
25	Undertake a small planning study to designate a regional trails connectivity plan	1	1	1-2 years	\$15k
26	Develop a model sidewalk ordinance	2	1	1-2 years	\$30k

VI. LOCAL PROJECTS

The following local projects were identified by each community as needed improvements. Those with regional or local significance are noted. A project of regional significance is one that would impact a roadway or other facility that serves as a principal connection for commuting to jobs or regional shopping destinations or inter-regional recreational travel among more than one community in the region.

No.	Mode*	Project	Need	Location	Regional Significance?
1	R	Improve intersection of Routes 219 and 318	Safety and improved operations	Barkhamsted	Yes
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 Farmington River Trail and to high school/middle school complex from Town Center	Safe walking environment	Burlington	

No.	Mode*	Project	Need	Location	Regional Significance?
11	BP	Reconstruct 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	Rank and then implement sight line improvements on Route 4	Safety and improved roadway operations	Goshen	
17	R	Add left turn lane on Route 4 at Beach Street	Safety and improved roadway operations	Goshen	
18	R	Improve horizontal geometry on Route 4 at East Street North and East Street South	Safety and improved roadway operations	Goshen	
19	R	Repair and rebuild bridge over Hogback Dam (off of Route 8)	Asset management	Hartland	
20	R	Improve/reconfigure Route 4 at North Road	Safety and improved operations	Harwinton	Yes
21	R	Repave Route 72	Asset management	Harwinton	
22	BP	Provide off-road trail south of Route 118 along east side of Naugatuck River (Naugatuck River Greenway)	Off-road trail network - enhance connectivity	Harwinton	

No.	Mode*	Project	Need	Location	Regional Significance?
23	R	Redesign Route 7 in downtown Kent	Complete the streets; congestion management	Kent	Yes
24	T	Add bus service from Great Barrington to North Canaan and then to Kent	Transit need--interregional	Kent	Yes
25	O	Add public parking and signage in Kent off Route 7 to serve tourism	Support economic sustainability	Kent	
26	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	
27	R	Improve safety of roadway curve and add signage at Wamogo High School entrance	Safety and improved operations	Litchfield	
28	R	Improve sight lines for turning movements at Fern Avenue and Chestnut Hill at Route 118	Safety and improved operations	Litchfield	
29	R	Improve intersection of Old Route 8 and Route 118 – multiple turning lanes are a safety issue	Safety and improved operations	Litchfield	Yes
30	R	Improve signal coordination/conduct signal study of Route 118 at Route 202 and West Street	Safety and improved operations	Litchfield	
31	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	Litchfield	
32	BP	Improve/enhance sidewalk connectivity between 202 and Litchfield Community Field off of North Lake St - Safe walking environment	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity	Litchfield	

No.	Mode*	Project	Need	Location	Regional Significance?
33	R	Install a traffic signal at Route 109 and 61, re-align intersection, and add crosswalks	Safety and improved operations	Morris	
34	BP	Construct an off-road trail connecting Morris and Litchfield Route 61 and through White Memorial	Off-road trail network – Enhance connectivity	Morris	Yes
35	R	Improve access to Ski Sundown - Route 219 and Ratlum Rd. enhancements	Support economic sustainability	New Hartford	
36	R	Improve Route 202 at Cotton Hill Road and Cedar Lane	Safety and improved operations	New Hartford	
37	R	Reconfigure Route 44 through New Hartford as a Main Street/complete street	Safety, improved operations, and complete streets	New Hartford	Yes
38	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	
39	O	Provide new/more public parking in town center off Route 44	Support economic sustainability	New Hartford	
40	BP	Construct trail segment between New Hartford Center and Collinsville via Satan's Kingdom to connect to the established trails in Canton	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity	New Hartford	
41	BP	Construct trail from New Hartford Town Center to Pleasant Valley in Barkhamsted	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity	New Hartford	
42	R	Replace bridge on Goshen East Street using a context sensitive design	Safety and improved operations and livability	Norfolk	
43	P	Complete network of good quality Village center sidewalks	Safe walking environment/ complete streets	Norfolk	Yes
44	BP	Create off-road trails along rail line to North Canaan	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity	Norfolk	
45	BP	Create off-road trail from Winchester Center to Norfolk	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity	Norfolk	

No.	Mode*	Project	Need	Location	Regional Significance?
46	O	Add public parking spot to serve tourism along Route 44 in town center	Support economic sustainability	Norfolk	Yes
47	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
48	T	Complete a municipal Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan	Transit need	North Canaan	
49	T	Expand on Geer transit service	Transit need	North Canaan	
50	P	Complete sidewalk network in the town center and improve sidewalk conditions	Safe bicycle and walking environments/ complete streets region-wide	North Canaan	Yes
51	BP	Provide an off-road trail from the senior center to the park	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity	Roxbury	
52	R	Realign and improve the intersection of Transylvania Road & Rt. 67	Safety, improved operations,	Roxbury	
53		Realign and improve the intersection of Davenport Road and Rt. 199	Safety, improved operations,	Roxbury	
54	R	Realign and improve the Botsford Hill Road and Rt. 67 intersection	Safety, improved operations,	Roxbury	
55	P	Add crosswalk from Town Hall to Post Office	Safe walking environment; livability	Roxbury	
56	T	Add bus service from Salisbury to Winsted/Winchester	Transit need	Salisbury	Yes
57	R	Replace bridge on West Cornwall Road with context-sensitive design	Safety and improved operations and livability	Sharon	

No.	Mode*	Project	Need	Location	Regional Significance?
58	R	Reconfigure the 5-way intersection of Main Street, East Main (202 and 4), Litchfield Street, Water Street, and Franklin Street	Safety, improved operations, complete streets, support economic sustainability, enhanced livability	Torrington	Yes
59	R	Improve intersection of Torringford West and Route 202	Safety and improved operations	Torrington	
60	R	Improve intersection of Main Street (Route 4) and Pearl Street	Safety and improved operations	Torrington	
61	P	Add bicycle and pedestrian amenities on Route 44/East Main Street	Promote safe walking environment/ complete streets region-wide	Torrington	Yes
62	BP	Complete off-road trail from Torrington to Litchfield	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity (Naugatuck River Greenway)	Torrington	Yes
63	BP	Complete off-road trail connections; Torrington to Farmington	Off-road trail network- enhance connectivity	Torrington	Yes
64	BP	Extend Sue Grossman Still River Greenway further south into downtown Torrington	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity	Torrington	Yes
65	BP	Torrington Streetscape and Riverwalk; the addition of a Riverwalk between Main Street and Prospect Street.	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity	Torrington	
66	R	Develop and program a culvert replacement program	Asset Management	Warren	
67	R	Improve Route 45 and repave it between town center and Cornwall town center	Safety, improve operations, and complete the streets	Warren	Yes
68	R	Close the route 45 bypass; and add a town-center sidewalk	Safety, improve operations, and complete the streets	Warren	
69	B	Provide bike lanes around Lake Waramug and to connecting towns - Kent/Litchfield/Route 202 New Preston	Safe bicycling environment/ complete bicycle	Warren	Yes

No.	Mode*	Project	Need	Location	Regional Significance?
			route connectivity region-wide		
70	P	Complete sidewalk network in Depot Business District	Safe walking environment/ complete streets region-wide	Washington	Yes
71	OP	Provide added public parking spaces and improve pedestrian access in Depot Business District	Support economic sustainability	Washington	
72	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	Yes
73	BP	Rebuild shoulders along Rt. 109\Calhoun St. and Rt. 47\Green Hill RD.	Improve safety of roadway and bicycling conditions	Washington	
74	RBP	Complete reconfiguration of Winsted Main Street consistent with existing plans	Safety, improved operations, and complete streets	Winsted	Yes
75	R	Improve Newfield Road from Route 8 to Winchester Center	Safety and improved operations	Winsted	
76	RBP	Implement 'Complete Streets' concept for downtown Winsted	Safety, livability and complete streets	Winsted	Yes
77	BP	Complete Sue Grossman Trail - off-road trail from Winsted to Torrington	Off-road trail – enhance connectivity	Winsted	Yes
78	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

VII. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Historically, it has been challenging for rural regions to compete with more densely populated urban and suburban areas for limited available funds for transportation system improvements. To the extent that the region has clearly articulated its needs and related priority projects in the RTP, this will strengthen the case for financial support in applications to State and Federal agencies for the region's projects. If the region demonstrates that it has a program in place to make progress on meeting its transportation vision and advancing its priorities, this can be a convincing tool to funding agencies that money will be well-spent. The following implementation program organizes the region's priorities for the coming five years and offers implementation steps to advance those near-term projects and initiatives.

The NHCOG will have lead responsibility for implementing the recommendations contained in this Regional Transportation Plan. However, realizing this plan's vision and recommended initiatives will be a collaborative effort. It will rely largely on the 21 towns of the region speaking with one voice to funding agencies to advance the region's priorities. The NHCOG Board should also actively seek the cooperation, support (financial and otherwise), and involvement of other interested parties such as area legislators, local bicycling advocacy groups, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the local business community, and social service agencies. Ongoing coordination with CT DOT will also be especially important for effective communication of the region's needs and system improvement priorities.

Five-Year Implementation Program

Based on the findings of the RTP with respect to priority projects, ease of implementation/taking first steps, and time-frames, the following initiatives are recommended as the focus of implementation efforts in the coming five years:

1. Retain a part-time/on-call transportation engineer to facilitate the preparation of LOTCIP and Rural Collector Program applications and address other specific needs on a fee basis
2. Establish a process for more regional representation in the development of paving priorities for state roads in the region
3. Implement a model Complete Streets Plan for a community center in the region to illustrate benefits.
4. Continue to support progress on completion of the Torrington Transit Center
5. Appoint a Transit Coordination Committee
6. Hire a full or part time Regional Transit Coordinator to facilitate transit collaboration and coordinate implementation of the Rural Independent Transit Service.
7. Expand transit service to NWCCC
8. Prepare and implement a Transit Marketing and Communications Plan
9. Develop and implement a bus system publicity, signage and shelter plan
10. Undertake a planning study to designate priorities for regional trails connectivity

Financial Plan

The NHCOG region has access to periodic sources of funding that can be employed to advance the region's priorities. The following financial resources are anticipated and their potential use in advancing the five-year implementation plan is recommended as follows:

Funding Source	Relevant Allowed Uses	Anticipated \$	Recommended Application
LOTCIP	Improvement of collector roadways in urbanized areas of region	\$1 million allocated to NHCOG annually	Priority road improvements on local collector roadways in urbanized areas.
Rural Collector Funds	Improvement of collector roadways in rural areas of region. Requires a 10% local match.	\$1 million allocated to NHCOG annually	Priority road improvements on local collector roadways in rural areas of region.
TAP funds	Surface transportation projects in categories not typically eligible for funding under other federal sources; On-and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, multi-use trail projects, and safe routes to school projects	Projects of \$500,000 or greater. Requires 20% non-federal match. Competitive grant.	Bus signage and wayfinding, and transit coordination, marketing and communications activities; regional trails projects
Urban Action Grants	Issued by State Bond Commission for eligible towns (e.g. Torrington)	Competitive Grant	Priority capital improvements in urban area. Bicycle and pedestrian access for the Torrington Transit Center
STEAP Grants	Issued by the State Bond Commission and can be used by small towns for Capital Projects	Up to \$500,000; Competitive Grant	Priority local road improvements with economic development benefits
Responsible Growth/TOD Grant Program	Construction projects that expand on previous state investment in TOD or planning or construction projects that demonstrate responsible growth through consistency with the <i>Conservation & Development</i>	Future funding past 2016 grants uncertain	Advance planning for the Torrington Transit Center Trail development and connectivity.

Funding Source	Relevant Allowed Uses	Anticipated \$	Recommended Application
	<i>Policies: The Plan for Connecticut 2013-2018.</i>		
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program	Projects that will improve air quality.	Competitive grant	Electric vehicle fueling station projects
DEEP Recreational Trails	Construction of new trails; Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails; Access to trails by persons with disabilities; Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment; Acquisition of land or easements for a trail, or for trail corridors; Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection as related to recreational trails.	Typically, just over \$1 million dollars; 30% motorized trails, 20% projects \$5,000 or less, 5% educational programs. Competitive grant.	Regional trail connectivity priorities
Private Non-Profits	Kennedy Center Grant	N/A	Part – time Mobility manager/transit coordinator position
Public-Private Partnerships	Generally, projects that advance private company interests while serving public need such as downtown enhancement projects	N/A	Main Street/Village Center pedestrian network priorities

APPENDIX A
TRANSIT AND PARATRANSIT SERVICES

PROGRESS DRAFT

APPENDIX B

OUTREACH PROCESS AND FINDINGS

The two chief components of the outreach process were an online survey and a series of transportation forums. Over 345 people participated in a transportation survey and approximately 75 people attended the three regional transportation forums. The input they provided and the outcomes of that process are summarized below. This input was central to defining the region's transportation vision, determining the criteria for evaluating potential regional projects and initiatives, and ultimately determining the priorities that will guide future transportation decisions in the region. Consequently, in addition to input from municipalities in the region (in the form of the NHCOG Board of Directors), the vision and priorities were shaped by a comprehensive stakeholder outreach process. Their input helped to ensure that the RTP responds to and is sensitive to the unique conditions of the Northwest Hills Region.

Online Survey

The online survey, conducted via Survey Monkey, (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NHCOG>) was initially made available to the public in November and December of 2015. Close to 250 responses were collected during this time period. This survey was promoted by representatives from the Northwest Hills Towns as well as via the NHCOG website and email blasts and mailing lists.

Following a series of targeted forums, facilitated by the study team, and requests from participants, the survey was reopened for the month of April, 2016. The survey remained open between April 1st and May 2nd, generating an additional 90 responses.

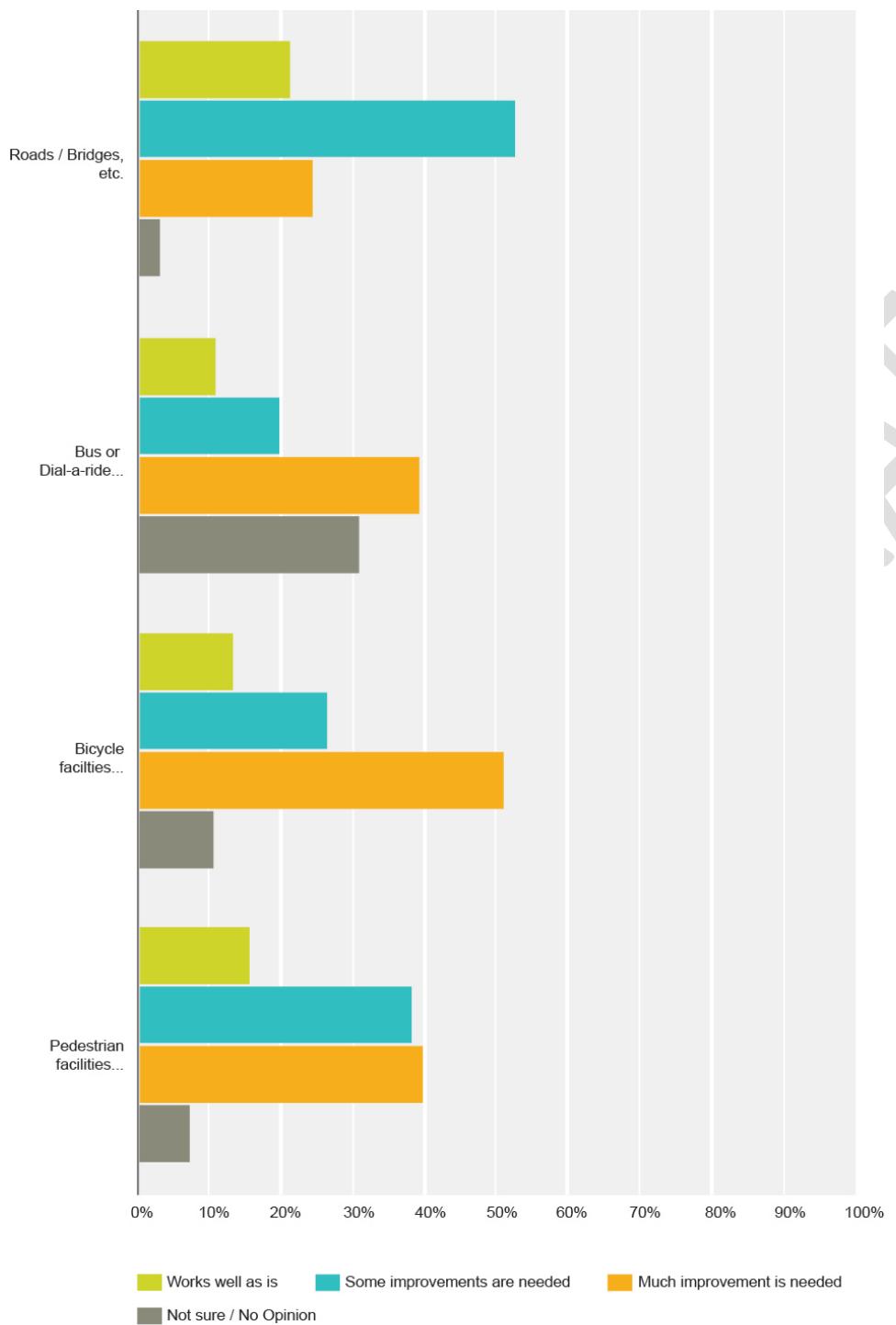
In terms of comments received, there were several key themes that were frequent throughout the survey responses. These include:

- Need for dial-a-ride services for seniors, disabled
- Need for transit options for those without a vehicle, access to jobs, schools, hospitals, etc.
- Pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements
- Better roadway and bridge maintenance
- Passenger rail service throughout the region, with better connections to New York

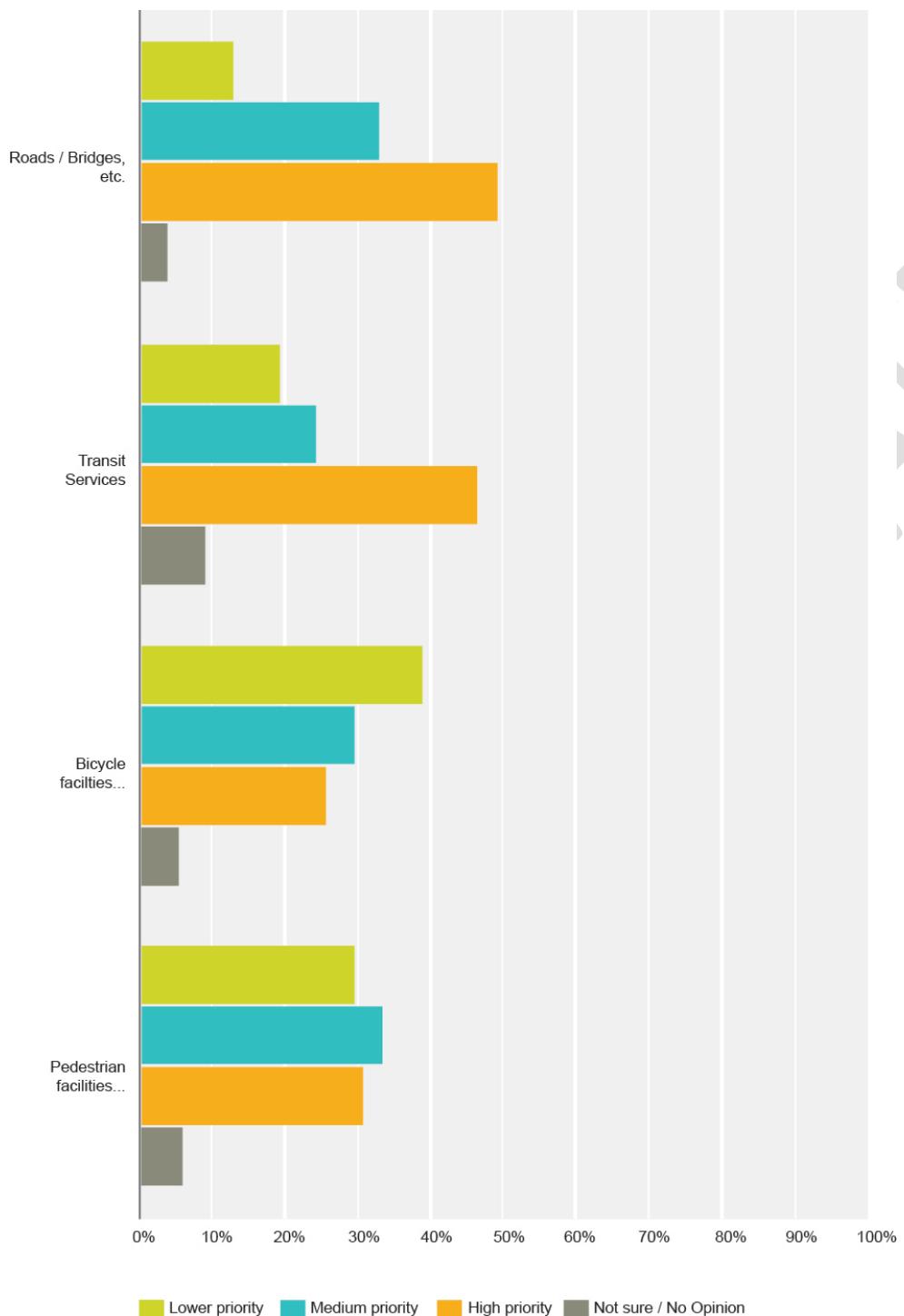
The survey asked about the general condition of Roads/Bridges, bus or dial-a-ride service, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities. Respondents were asked to rank each category based on its condition; does it work well as is, needs some improvement, much improvement is needed, or not sure/have no opinion?

Similar to previous results, most commonly (44 responses), Roads and Bridges were identified as needing some improvement. Bus or dial-a-ride service, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities were identified most frequently as needing "Much improvement". A small number of respondents felt that the transportation systems worked well as is and a small number also were not sure or had no opinion. The outcomes of the assessment of needs is shown in the graphs below.

Survey Question: How would you rate the condition of the transportation system overall?



Survey Question: What are your priorities for Improvements?



TRANSPORTATION FORUMS

One forum of regional planning and zoning commissions was held in October, 2015 and three transportation forums were held in March and April of 2016. Each forum focused on exploring the issues and opportunities for travel by a specific mode. The key findings of each forum were as follows:

Transit Forum – Issues and Opportunities

- Enhance and expand bus and paratransit services to better serve transit-dependent populations and broaden access to jobs for all
- Increase public awareness about services; Need for clearly identified bus stops with shelters; need for a rebranding of the bus service
- Coordinate transit routes with community/other college hours
- Provide more intercity bus transit; Provide more service between towns
- Provide more evening service
- Eliminate stigmatism associated with some transit service
- Identify possible ways to combine services among existing providers
- Leverage private funds
- Address disconnect between transit availability and employment/jobs
- Expand Medical transportation options
- Connect hubs of people with hubs of time
- Build a Ride-share program
- Centralize dispatch

Bicycle and Pedestrian Forum- Issues and Opportunities

- Complete streets are a priority
- Strengthen the sidewalk network to increase connectivity, with an emphasis on village and town centers
- More sidewalks in good repair and benches and other amenities
- Expand safe bicycle travelways along the region's arterial road network
- Promote a network of off-road bicycle/pedestrian facilities that link key destinations
- Shoulders on the roadways need to be consistent
- Specific facility issues include:
 - Sidewalks
 - Torrington East Main Street
 - Winchester – Winsted; Sidewalk from Route 8 to Stop 'n Shop
 - Winsted Road
 - Winsted to Highland Lake (both beaches)
 - Trails
 - Expand Sue Grossman Greenway
 - Connecting New Hartford to Canton (Sue Grossman to Farmington River Trail)
 - Trail from Cornwall Bridge to West Cornwall
 - Kent Village to Kent Village State Park
 - Add Burr Pond Trail and John Muir Trail and Sunny Brook State Park

- More— more consistent wayfinding signage

Rail Forum – Issues and Opportunities

- Opportunities for expanded and more robust regional freight service
- Need to develop regional transit hub with a rail component (in Torrington)
- There is a desire for passenger rail in the region; the strongest opportunities may lie with tourism related passenger service
- Track conditions are poor and are a first priority for investment/upgrades

Planning and Zoning Commissioners' Forum – Needs and Opportunities

- Rail and bus connections
- Improved bus service and connections
- Off-road trail development and trail connections
- Need for regional airport
- Local road maintenance and intersection improvements (improve rotary in Goshen)
- Bike-friendly roads
- Local sidewalk improvements; roadway lighting
- Public transportation out of the region to other state destinations (beaches, entertainment for example)
- Rail service: freight and passenger
- Limited access road to Hartford
- Funding for local road maintenance
- Transportation access for aging population
- Speeding and traffic calming opportunities
- Better taxi system
- Where state roads serve as Main Street – complete the streets, maintain ‘Main Street’ character
- More fuel efficient means of travel where rural region requires travel over long distances