

# MAJOR POLICY DIRECTIONS

The Capitol Region Transportation Plan outlines a comprehensive program for improving our transportation system to meet travel needs through the year 2035. For the most part, it is a *systems /level/* plan that provides general policy guidance. It defines the Region's greatest needs, identifies which problems are the Region's highest priority, and outlines how the Region should spend its limited capital funds.

The Plan is also the sum of many specific and detailed studies. The recommendations of those studies, such as the Regional Transit Strategy, the bicycle and pedestrian plans, and several corridor studies, are summarized in this Plan. For details concerning existing and future conditions, alternatives analyzed and recommendation specifics, the actual study documents should be consulted. A list of all the studies that contributed to this Plan is found in Appendix A. The documents themselves can be accessed on the Publications page of the CRCOG website: [www.crcog.org/publications/transportation](http://www.crcog.org/publications/transportation).

**Policies Reaffirmed.** This latest version of the Transportation Plan reaffirms the Council's commitment to policies set in previous editions. It reaffirms the Council's commitment to developing a transportation system that offers more and better travel choices, and continues its emphasis on developing a good regional transit system as an alternative to the automobile. It also reaffirms and strengthens our commitment to developing a bicycle and pedestrian system. It also includes a strong commitment to linking land use and transportation planning, policy support for Bradley International Airport, the beginning of a freight planning program, and a commitment to environmental justice.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Policies Reaffirmed</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>More Travel Choices</b></li><li>• <b>Better Transit Options</b></li><li>• <b>Better Bike &amp; Walk Options</b></li><li>• <b>Better Systems Management</b></li><li>• <b>Link Land Use &amp; Transportation</b></li><li>• <b>Freight Planning</b></li><li>• <b>Environmental Justice</b></li></ul> |
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**More Travel Choices.** The 2007 Regional Transportation Plan continues to emphasize the desire to provide our Region's residents with more travel options, and to reduce their need to rely exclusively on the private automobile. While the automobile will continue to dominate most travel in the Region, we need to provide more opportunities for people to use alternate means of transportation. With the earlier adoptions of the Regional Transit Strategy, the Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plans, and the advance of New Britain Busway into final design, we have taken major steps toward achieving that goal. The Transportation Plan continues to be a true multi-modal plan.

**Land Use & Transportation Coordination.** The Plan continues to emphasize the coordination of transportation policies with the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development, or more generally, linking land use planning with transportation planning. The new Plan recognizes that a common goal of both disciplines needs to be promoting more livable communities in the Capitol Region. The policies adopted with the previous Plan committed CRCOG's transportation program to supporting livable community goals and the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. This Plan expands that commitment to include a coordination effort with State land use plans and policies.

**Continued Emphasis on Environmental Justice.** The Region reaffirms its commitment to address the transportation needs of all its residents including members of minority groups, low-income residents, and transit-dependent residents. The previous plans included a commitment to follow the basic principles of environmental justice. This Plan continues to build on the six years of progress since our initial commitment. It continues to include the environmental justice policies and procedures adopted previously and identifies a list of environmental justice issues of special interest.

**Continued Emphasis on Transit.** This Plan reaffirms the Council's commitment to the Regional Transit Strategy, reflects progress made over the last several years, and includes the results of major transit studies and initiatives: the New Britain Busway EIS and ongoing design, the New Haven – Springfield Rail Feasibility Study, the Griffin Busway Feasibility Study, and the Hartford East Busway Feasibility Study.

**Continued Emphasis on Pedestrian & Bike Travel.** The new Plan incorporates a CROG pedestrian policy adopted in June 2001 that calls for integrating pedestrian and bike improvements into roadway projects. This continues our efforts to promote non-motorized travel modes, a policy directive that was embraced as long ago as the adoption of the 1998 Plan, and reinforced with the adoption of the Regional Bicycle Plan in 2000. This Plan also includes the recommendations adopted in the 2005 Regional Pedestrian Plan.

**Better Systems Operation & Management.** This policy continues the emphasis on transportation solutions that are based on improving the efficiency of the existing infrastructure rather than building new infrastructure. As a result of this policy, the proposed plan includes a substantial financial commitment to system management methods such as freeway incident management, coordinated traffic signal systems, Intelligent Transportation Systems, and access management on arterial roads.

**New Recommendations.** New to this plan are recommendations from studies that were completed since the previous Plan that was adopted in 2004. They include: recommendations from the Regional Pedestrian Plan, adopted in 2004, and recommendations from the Day Hill Road Study adopted in 2006. A previous recommendation to construct an alternate Route 6 freeway through Bolton and Andover has been modified due to problems with obtaining environmental permits. That project has now been listed as a “non-funded need” and a study to determine replacement actions has been endorsed.

- Added or Modified*
- **Regional Pedestrian Plan**
  - **Day Hill Road Study**
  - **Route 6**

**New Federal Requirements.** This 2007 Plan has also been modified to respond directly to federal requirements that were made a part of the SAFETEA-LU transportation act. These requirements are briefly described below and are detailed elsewhere in the Plan.

**Consult with appropriate State and local agencies.** CROG staff met with State land use and environmental officials when developing this Plan as well as members of the Regional Planning Commission. Details of this effort are included in *Chapter 1: Linking Land Use and Transportation* and *Chapter 10: Public Outreach*.

**Promote consistency with State & local development plans.** CROG staff met with State land use officials to determine consistency between this Plan and the State Plan of Conservation and Development, and to determine areas of mutual interest. CROG staff also reviewed this Plan with the Regional Planning Commission and regional land use planners to ensure that the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development and the Regional Transportation Plan were consistent and supportive. The details of these reviews are described in *Chapter 1: Linking Land Use and Transportation*.

- New Federal Requirements*
- **Consult with State & local agencies**
  - **Consistency with State & local plans**
  - **Environmental mitigation activities**
  - **Emphasis on management & operations**
  - **Emphasis on congestion management**
  - **Emphasis on safety**
  - **Support the State Safety Plan**

***Address potential environmental mitigation activities.*** CRCOG staff also met with State environmental officials to determine if there were any significant environmental issues to consider, or environmentally sensitive areas potentially impacted by the projects proposed in this Plan. The regional land use plan was also reviewed for similar issues. No significant problems were identified, but as projects move forward to design, the potential for environmental impact and the need for mitigation will be addressed. This matter is also addressed in more detail in *Chapter 1: Linking Land Use and Transportation*.

***Place additional emphasis on management and operations.*** For many years now, CRCOG has recognized the fact that building new roadways has become not only prohibitively expensive, but also in many cases, unacceptable to our citizens. Our transportation plans have emphasized better management and operation of our existing transportation infrastructure. In addition to recommending improvements to our existing roadway system, our major transit proposals are designed to fit within existing rights-of-way. Proposals for bicycle and pedestrian improvements to existing roadways make our transportation system available to more of our citizens. While CRCOG has previously placed a stronger emphasis on improving existing facilities, we have included in this Plan a more clear description of our efforts in *Chapter 2: Transit Systems* and *Chapter 3: Highway System*.

***Place additional emphasis on congestion management.*** CRCOG has made a significant commitment to the management of congestion in the Hartford Metropolitan area through the Hartford Area Congestion Management Program. This program is described in depth in *Chapter 3: Highway System*.

***Place additional emphasis on safety.*** Safety for travelers who use our transportation system and its various modes has always been a high priority for CRCOG. A comprehensive statement of how safety fits into our transportation planning efforts is discussed in *Chapter 3: Highway System*.

***Refer to State Strategic Highway Safety Plan.*** CRCOG's commitment to supporting the State Strategic Highway Safety Plan is detailed in *Chapter 3: Highway System*.