

CAPITOL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLAN

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

A GUIDE FOR TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS THROUGH 2035



The Capitol Region Transportation Plan defines a comprehensive program for improving our transportation system to meet travel needs through the year 2035. 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 recommends how the Region should spend its limited capital funds.

The Transportation Plan reaffirms the Council's commitment to policies established in earlier editions, including better transit, improved bike & pedestrian systems, a commitment to linking land use and transportation planning, support for Bradley International Airport, a commitment to a freight planning program and a continuation of our program to address environmental justice issues.

The goals upon which all other recommendations are based are:

- ***provide more & better travel choices***, and
- ***emphasize better management & operations over building new roadways***

This Plan has added recommendations from the Regional Pedestrian Plan and the Day Hill Road Study, and it has modified recommendations concerning Route 6.

Finally, the Plan responds to several new requirements that are part of the latest federal transportation legislation:

- consult with State & local agencies to assure consistency between land use & transportation plans,
- describe environmental mitigation activities, if any,
- emphasize management & operations, including congestion management, and
- emphasize safety & support the State Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

This **Executive Summary** serves as an outline of the issues, policies and recommendations that comprise the Capitol Region Transportation Plan. More detail and discussion is found in the complete document that can be obtained from the CRCOG offices by calling 860-522-2217, or downloaded from the Transportation Page of the CRCOG website: www.crcog.org/transportation.

Capitol Region Council of Governments

Adopted: April 25, 2007

2. TRANSIT SYSTEM



The private automobile is not the only way to travel within the Capitol Region. Alternative travel modes to the private automobile include local and express bus service, paratransit services provided for elderly and disabled residents, and rideshare services. These services play an important role in meeting the travel needs of our residents.

The Council of Governments recognizes that while transit is a small part of a much larger transportation system, it is a critical part nonetheless. And it is likely to become even more important as our roadways become more congested over time and people seek alternative ways to travel. Recommendations to place more emphasis on transit improvements as a way to improve mobility for those who rely on transit, provide viable travel choices for everyone, and reduce congestion on our streets are listed below:

- 1. Support the proposed rapid transit system** in the New Britain Busway corridor, the Griffin Busway corridor, the Manchester Busway corridor, the Rocky Hill Busway corridor, and the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail Service corridor.¹
- 2. Preserve the existing rail rights-of-way for future transportation**, while allowing for interim use by other transportation functions such as multi-use trails.
- 3. Continue to support efforts to improve, upgrade & enhance Union Station.**
- 4. Maintain and improve existing levels of bus, paratransit and vanpool services.**
- 5. Assure that the transit system is accessible to bicyclists.**
- 6. Continue the Jobs Access Program.**
- 7. Continue the Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation planning process.**
- 8. Support integrating advanced technologies (ITS)** into current transit and paratransit operations to improve their operational efficiency and service to the riding public. Opportunities exist in the New Britain Busway project and with the replacement of CT Transit's current radio system. High priority should be given to equipping major bus stops and transit centers with "next bus arrival" electronic signs.
- 9. Support improvements to the existing bus system**, including more hours of service, more timed transfer centers with increased service frequency, increased service frequency on express routes, new routes to provide for greater suburb to suburb service, circulators within activity centers, a circumferential route in the region's inner ring suburbs, modifications to create more direct service, and integration of alternate fueled vehicles in the transit fleet as soon as practicable.
- 10. Support the Downtown Circulator for Hartford.**
- 11. Examine the potential for a Buckland Hills circulator.**
- 12. Examine the potential benefits of reorienting service in downtown Hartford.**
- 13. Support improvements at bus stops and stations.**
- 14. Support transit oriented development along transit lines, as described in the earlier Land Use section.**



¹ Feasibility study for Griffin Busway suggests deferring construction until operating experience from New Britain Busway is available; feasibility study for Rocky Hill Busway is deferred indefinitely due to low projected ridership.

3. HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The regional highway system consists of a hierarchy of road types: freeways, arterials, and collector (or local) roadways. The freeways are limited access, grade-separated facilities whose function is to serve longer distance trips and through traffic. Arterial roadways are not limited access and generally have at-grade intersections. They typically serve a dual purpose of carrying longer distance trips, but also serve shorter trips and provide access to abutting land uses. The primary function of collector and local roads is to provide access to abutting properties.

Primary emphasis is on better operation & management of the existing system, and not on widening or new construction.

The focus of the Regional Transportation Plan is on the portion of the highway network that is of regional significance – the freeway and arterial roadways. It is the goal of the Plan to manage the system in a manner that the network can continue to function in a safe and efficient manner to serve the growing demand for travel in the future.

Freeways are the most important part of the Region’s roadway system. While they constitute only 3.0% of the total road miles in the Region, but they carry 46% of the total traffic. Recommendations that place the primary emphasis on safety and operational efficiency include:

1. Continue to develop the Congestion Management Program for the Hartford area.

2. Continue a regional Safety Management Program, by:

- including safety considerations in all CRCOG studies & for all modes of travel,
- continuing to monitor safety conditions & trends,
- support incident management efforts as a safety tool, and
- support the CT Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

3. Support statewide and regional incident management initiatives.

4. Support completion of the traffic management system and ITS projects. Assure that the Regional ITS Architecture is kept current.

5. Support operational improvements to I-84 from Hartford to Farmington, as follows:

- reconstructing the Rt4/Rt6/Rt9 interchange,
- constructing operational lanes, and
- reconfiguring interchange at Flatbush.

6. Conduct a corridor study of existing Route 6, due to the fact that the environmental issues concerning a relocated highway are not expected to be resolved in the near future.

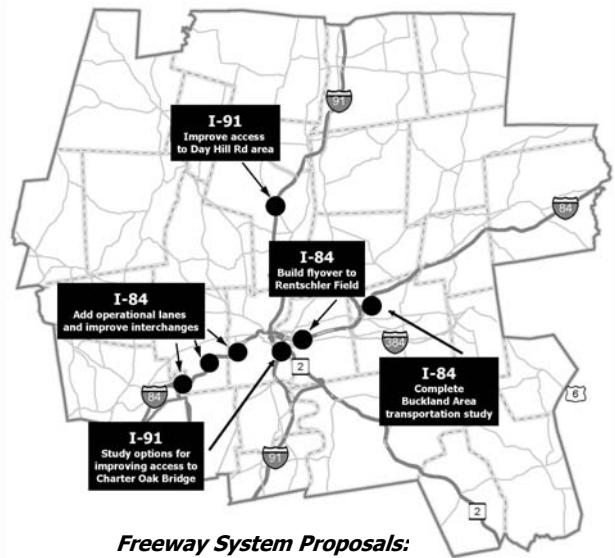
7. Complete the study of transportation problems in the Buckland area of Manchester.

8. Implement access improvements, by:

- building the flyover connection between I-84 and Rentschler Field,
- improving access to the Flatbush-Parkville-Elmwood redevelopment area from I-84, and
- improving access to the Day Hill - Griffin development area from I-91.

9. Study the need for operational improvements at the I-91 ramp northbound to the Charter Oak Bridge, and to Route 15 eastbound.

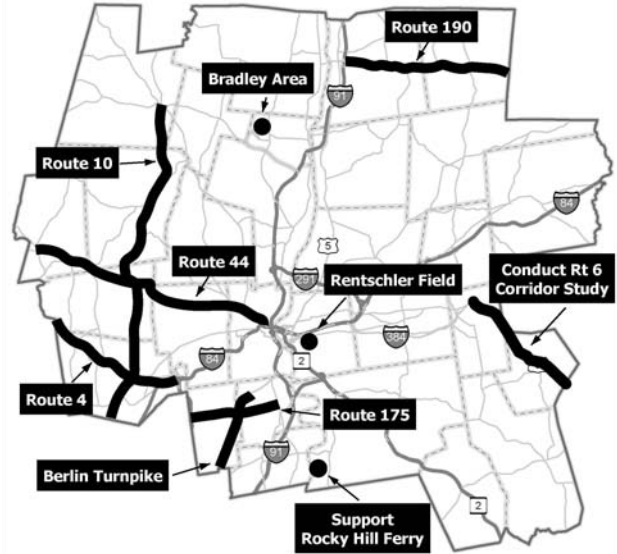
10. Evaluate problems on Route 2 and at the I-91/I-84 interchange.



Freeway System Proposals:
No new freeways.

Arterial roadways are the second most important part of the regional highway network. The arterial network comprises only 14.6% of the road network, but it carries about 30% of the total traffic. The Region recognizes the need to continue to maintain and improve its arterial roadways. Our approach to improving the roadway system is based on a planning requirement to include consideration of community concerns and an emphasis on better management of existing roads. Recommendations emphasizing safety and operational efficiency include:

1. **Continue to include Context Sensitive Design in corridor studies.**
2. **Improve and expand the regional network of computer controlled traffic signal systems.**
3. **Support roadway improvements proposed in previously adopted studies**, including the Bradley Area; Rt 4 in Farmington; Rt 10 from Granby to Farmington; Rt 44 from Hartford to Canton; Rt 175 in Wethersfield and Newington; the CCSU Area, Rt 190 Study in Enfield and Somers; the Berlin Turnpike in Wethersfield and Newington; and Rentschler Field in East Hartford.
4. **Continue to implement access management programs and policies**, by:
 - providing funding for access management plans, usually as part of a corridor study, and
 - requiring access management issues to be addressed as part of the design phase of any roadway improvement project.
5. **Support continued operation of the historic Rocky Hill – Glastonbury ferry**, with adequate hours of operation and a reasonable fare.



Arterial System: Corridor study locations & additional recommendations

Municipal roads. Municipalities own the vast majority of collector and local roads in the regional network. For the most part, these roads are maintained and improved with local funds. While the Region has not identified specific problems on these roads, we recognize that municipalities sometimes need financial assistance to correct the more serious problems. Therefore, the Plan's recommendation for collector roads is to continue to allow the use of federal funds to address serious problems on town roads.

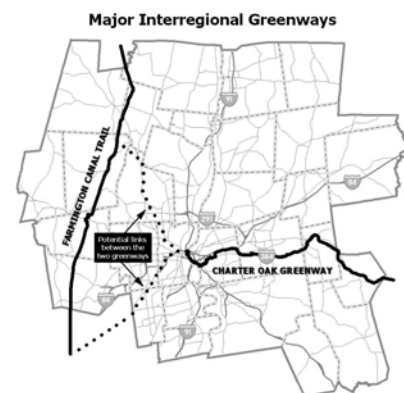
4. BIKES & PEDESTRIANS



CRCOG adopted the Capitol Region Bicycle Plan in April 2000. In subsequent years, a Policy for Integrating Bicycling and Walking into the Transportation Infrastructure was adopted; a series of Walkability Workshops were held; and a Capitol Region Pedestrian Plan was adopted. Each of these activities were intended to help the Region realize its goal of creating a bike and pedestrian friendly environment.

Recommendations for achieving this goal include:

1. **Provide proper facilities for cyclists and pedestrians**, by
 - integrating biking and walking facilities in the transportation infrastructure whenever possible and not cost prohibitive,
 - completing the Regional Greenway System, including a second tier of greenways that connect the Major Greenways (see maps on this page and the next),
 - including wide shoulders & designated bike lanes in roadways whenever possible, and especially into and out of Hartford,



- encouraging a more bike and pedestrian friendly land use, and
- supporting the provision of bike racks and lockers at bus stops, and special bike racks on buses.

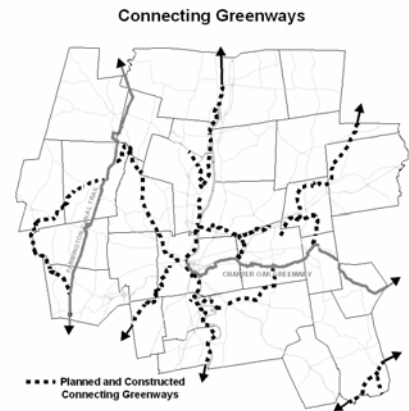
2. Address safety education and enforcement issues.

3. Promote a regional culture supportive of cycling and walking, by

- planning and sponsoring a variety of promotional activities,
- involving the private sector in promoting cycling and walking,
- producing a regional cycling map, and
- promoting a new planning ethic that includes the needs of pedestrians in all transportation projects.

4. Support bike and pedestrian planning activities, by continuing to provide staff support to the regional bike and pedestrian program, including the bike and pedestrian planning committee.

5. Secure funding, for staff support and to implement these recommendations.



5. BRADLEY AIRPORT

The 2007 Transportation Plan recognizes the importance of Bradley International Airport as both a transportation facility and as an engine of economic growth. It includes a detailed policy supportive of improving the airport, improving access to the airport, or supporting other actions needed to fully realize the economic growth benefits that the Airport can generate. Specific recommendations on how these goals can be achieved, include:

1. Improve roadway access by extending Bradley Park Road, improving Bradley Park Road and International Drive, improving Route 75 from Route 20 to Route 140, & following an environmental review, building a 2-lane connector from Route 75 to the Route 190 bridge.

2. Improve transit access by including a transit connection from the airport to the proposed NHHS commuter rail service, and improving bus service for both air travelers and airport area workers.

3. Support opportunities for appropriate economic development, by

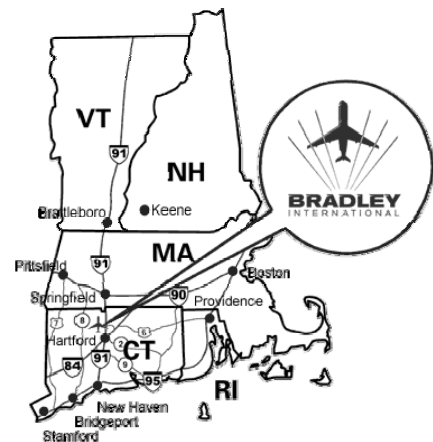
- continuing CRCOG's designation of the airport area as a Regional Growth Center, and continuing to develop policies that support economic growth in these areas,
- implementing the roadway improvements recommended above,
- supporting proposals to establish pre-approved development sites at the airport, and
- supporting policies that discourage noise-sensitive land uses near flight paths, and that encourage construction techniques with adequate noise insulation.

4. Support improvements to both domestic and international air passenger service.

5. Support improvements to air cargo capabilities and service.

6. Evaluate the potential for improving rail freight access and developing support facilities for trucks to make the airport a true multi-modal facility.

7. Encourage community sensitive planning, by involving local officials in the planning process.



6. FREIGHT TRANSPORT SYSTEM

The movement of goods plays an important role in economic growth that is often not fully appreciated. The efficient movement of goods is important even in economies dominated by financial, insurance, and service industries that do not rely on goods movement for their success. The mode of transport might be different to suit the higher value – lower bulk goods being shipped, but the need to efficiently move these goods in and out of the Region still exists.



Therefore, CRCOG, together with the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency, the Midstate Regional Planning Agency, and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, has begun a freight planning effort. A comprehensive study of freight movement in and through the Hartford Metropolitan region has been completed. It identified the region's heavy reliance on truck transport, the high volume of through traffic, and the strong imbalance of flows into the region as compared to flows out of the region. Based on information obtained through that

study, recommendations for freight transport include:

1. **Continue to develop a freight-planning program.**
2. **Continue to collaborate with other organizations on freight issues**, such as neighboring RPAs, the Bradley Development League, the MetroHartford Alliance, the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership, etc.

7. SPECIAL POLICIES

There are several policies and programs the Council has adopted that warrant special mention. They are:

Transportation Security: The tragedy of September 11, 2001 brought a new emphasis on transportation security at the federal, State, regional and local level. As a result, CRCOG has been proactive in bringing people together to plan for the security of our regional transportation systems and is committed to continuing to conduct and/or support security forums, emergency drills and the efforts of the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee.

MPO Coordination: CRCOG is committed to working cooperatively with all its neighboring regional planning agencies. Coordination assures that major transportation projects address inter-regional needs and are not duplicative or conflicting.

Air Quality - Transportation Policy: The Capitol Region has conducted a full review of air quality-transportation issues, the results of which have helped us formulate much of our current transportation plan and programs in a manner that promotes better air quality. The current Plan reflects the Region's strong desire to reduce our reliance on automobiles. CRCOG will continue to work to support alternate travel modes and efforts to reduce diesel emissions.



Demand Management Policy: An important alternative approach for reducing congestion is to reduce, or otherwise modify, the *demand* for transportation. CRCOG will continue to encourage programs that focus on getting people to use an alternate form of transportation (bus or carpool), or to shift their travel to off-peak periods when there is excess capacity.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Capitol Region Council of Governments is committed to fully integrating the basic principles of environmental justice into all of its transportation planning programs and activities.

CRCOG has agreed to support items of special interest to minority and low-income households, including

- access to jobs,
- better transit services, including the provision of electronic technology (ITS) on the buses and in bus shelters,
- clean fuel vehicles, and
- pedestrian and bicycle safety in urban areas.

CRCOG also works to insure that environmental justice communities continue to have an opportunity to be heard in the Region's transportation planning programs and processes.

9. FINANCIAL PLAN

This section provides an overview of the cost of projects recommended in the Transportation Plan and an estimate of the revenues that will be used to finance the improvements. Many of the cost estimates and most of the revenue estimates are preliminary. The intent is to prepare an approximate, but realistic, estimate of total program cost; and a similar estimate of total revenues that the Region can expect to receive over the next 20 years. A goal of this process is to prepare a 'financially constrained plan' whose costs can be paid from the 20-year revenue stream.

A summary of estimated capital costs is shown below. The total estimated cost of the proposed capital improvements is about \$1,659,000,000. The total amount of State and federal transportation capital funds that will likely flow to the Region over the next 20 years will total about \$1,685,000,000. This revenue estimate is based on continuation of *existing annual revenues* and *anticipated special discretionary funds* that the Region has applied for

<u>Cost</u>	<u>Improvement Program</u>
1,082,000,000	Transit & Ridesharing Program
10,000,000	ITS for bus system
459,000,000	New Britain BRT
170,000,000	Griffin BRT
135,000,000	Manchester BRT (<i>phases 1a, 1b, & 1c</i>)
158,000,000	New Haven-Springfield Rail (<i>full cost = \$350,000,000, regional share = 45%</i>)
150,000,000	Rocky Hill BRT
501,000,000	Highway Program
60,000,000	I-84: Rt 6/Rt 9/ Rt 4
82,000,000	I-84: Hartford - Flatbush access
25,000,000	I-84: West Hartford - operational lanes
34,000,000	I-84: access to Rentschler redevelopment area
20,000,000	I-91: access to Day Hill industrial area
170,000,000	ARTERIAL improvements (from corridor studies)
110,000,000	MUNICIPAL roads
<i>study</i>	I-84: access to Buckland area area
<i>study</i>	I-91: NB access to Charter Oak Bridge
<i>unfunded need</i>	I-84: Hartford - Sisson access
<i>unfunded need</i>	RT 6: new freeway (<i>full cost = \$650,000,000, regional share = 50%</i>)
40,000,000	Bicycle & Pedestrian Program
30,000,000	Complete major interregional trails
10,000,000	Other bike & pedestrian programs
36,000,000	Bradley Airport
36,000,000	Better Roadway Access
(A)	Better Transit Access
(B)	Other policy recommendations
0	Freight Transport System
(B)	Freight policy recommendations
1,659,000,000	TOTAL CAPITAL COST
1,685,000,000	TOTAL REVENUES

(A) Costs are included in projects listed in the Transit section: NHHS Rail and Griffin Busway.

(B) Recommendations are general policy statements and do not include specific capital improvements or already received. A complete discussion of operating and maintenance costs is provided in the Full Plan.

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