

7. SPECIAL POLICIES

There are several policies and programs the Council has adopted that warrant special discussion. These special programs and policies are described in this section. They are:

- Transportation Security
- MPO Coordination
- Air Quality - Transportation Policy
- Demand Management Policy

Transportation Security

The tragedy of September 11, 2001 brought a new emphasis on transportation security at the federal, State, regional and local level. Our surface transportation systems are important considerations in planning for emergency preparedness because:

- The transportation system conveys people away from the site of an attack and provides access for emergency response teams. Ancillary transportation systems such as variable message signs and highway advisory radio can be used to detour the public around a major event. Transit vehicles can be used as a respite center for responders.
- The transportation system itself is vulnerable to attack, such as the bombing of a bridge or the hijacking of a transit vehicle. Protection of transportation facilities must be a high priority and the response in the event of an attack must be carefully planned and practiced.

The Capitol Region has been proactive in bringing people together to discuss and plan for the security of our regional surface transportation systems, with both security issues, valuable to the response and vulnerable to attack, being considered. These issues are being discussed within the transportation community in the Hartford area, but they are also discussed by the emergency services community in the area. Since CROG supports both a transportation planning function and a public safety planning function, we have also been able to coordinate the activities of each. Examples of recent transportation security planning efforts are provided below. CROG is committed to continuing to conduct and/or support such efforts in the future.

Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee. Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC) is part of CROG's Public Safety Council. CREPC developed and continues to update the Regional Emergency Disaster (RED) Plan. One element of that plan, the Regional Emergency Support Function (R-ESF 1), addresses transportation issues and how to incorporate them into the greater emergency response effort. The R-ESF 1 chapter of the RED Plan documents the coordination efforts of federal, State, regional, local and private entities involved in the transportation security effort.

Incident Management. In 2005, the Greater Hartford Incident Management Steering Committee merged with and assumed the role of the R-ESF 1 planning committee. Working through the R-ESF 1 gives the regional incident management effort new purpose and expands the scope of the working group to include emergency issues. Issues faced during an incident on a highway and during a major disaster are similar, and will be addressed by this "new" committee. The committee has also been expanded to include representatives of public transportation and dial-a-ride services.

Transit Security Forum. CT Transit sponsored FTA's "Connecting Communities: Emergency Preparedness and Security Forum" in Hartford on Jan. 8 and 9, 2003. This forum brought together emergency responders and transit providers in a unique opportunity to learn from each other. The goal of the forum was "to demonstrate the important role that transit plays in crisis situations and the importance of delivering a coordinated regional response to any emergency."

Transit Emergency Drills. CT Transit was the recipient of Federal Transit Administration funds supplied under the 2001 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Recovery from and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States. Four full scale emergency preparedness drills, two in the Hartford area and two in the New Haven area, took place between January and November 2003, and involved scenarios such as a bomb on a bus, a bus hijacking, a chemical agent in a building and an explosive device in a building. The drills were designed to make sure that “transit systems are well prepared for potential terrorist threats and attacks.” The FBI, State police and other emergency responders participated along with CT Transit personnel.

CT Transit held another drill in January 2007, in conjunction with the Hartford Police Department. The scenario involved an ex-CT Transit operator holding a bus with passengers hostage, after an attempt to blow up the bus failed. In this drill, the negotiation team was successful, and SWAT was only used for stand-by and clean-up.

Evacuation Planning. Following the hurricanes that hit the Gulf Coast in 2005, the federal government directed all states to develop emergency evacuation and sheltering plans. Connecticut had already begun work on evacuation planning, traffic management and mass sheltering, and is continuing that effort. The State is addressing three evacuation-planning scenarios, which essentially occur outside the Capitol Region, but impact the Region by virtue of its role in accepting evacuated persons from other parts of the State. CREPC planners and responders have also begun the process of developing a regional evacuation plan that will build on the State’s efforts.

MPO Coordination

CRCOG is committed to working cooperatively with all its neighboring regional planning agencies in the Hartford metropolitan area, as well as the planning agencies in the Springfield and New Haven areas. Since major transportation projects often extend across multiple regions, or even multiple metropolitan areas, it is important that the affected planning agencies, or metropolitan planning organizations (MPO),¹ work cooperatively. Coordination assures they are addressing *inter-regional* needs, as well as the needs of individual regions. It also assures that proposed improvements are not duplicative or conflicting.

Hartford MPO Coordination. The Hartford metropolitan area extends beyond the boundaries of the Capitol Region. Since the political boundaries of the regional planning agencies do not coincide with the functional limits of the Hartford metropolitan area, it is important that the regional agencies within the metropolitan area coordinate their planning efforts. In February 2003, the four MPOs that share some portion of the Hartford metropolitan area – CRCOG, the Central CT Regional Planning Agency, the Midstate Regional Planning Agency, and the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley signed an agreement to do so.² The agreement established a common goal to conduct the four transportation programs in a manner that assures that their plans are mutually supportive of major projects and programs to improve the transportation system in the Hartford urbanized area. The agreement also required agency activities be coordinated in a number of specific planning and programming areas. The specific clause governing planning activities is provided below.

Coordination of Planning Activities. The four primary MPOs in the Hartford urbanized area (CRCOG, CCRPA, COGCNV, and MRPA) agree to coordinate their regional transportation plans, transportation improvement programs (TIPs), and annual work programs. The coordination efforts will include the exchange and review of annual work programs, regional transportation plans, and TIPs. Staff of the four MPOs will meet at least annually to review each other’s planning programs and to identify projects or programs of mutual interest or potential conflict.

¹ Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a federal term used to designate the regional planning agency responsible for approving the use of federal transportation funds within a given metropolitan area.

² COGCNV, which is the Waterbury MPO, is included in the agreement, but very little of their region falls within the Hartford metropolitan area boundary, and none of region abuts CRCOG.

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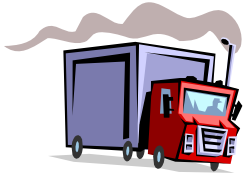
This coordination is achieved primarily through periodic meetings of the four agencies to discuss ongoing or scheduled planning activities. In preparation for this Plan update, a list of common issues, problems, activities, and projects was prepared.

Issue or Project in Common	Affected MPOs	Comment
ITS & Incident Management	CRCOG, CCRPA, MRPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 3 agencies support a common program for ITS & incident management • The Greater Hartford Incident Management Steering Committee (now called R-ESF-1) is a joint program of all 3 agencies. • All 3 agencies participate in the Capitol Region ITS architecture study. • The Capitol Region ITS Plan extends into MRPA and CCRPA to cover major freeway routes in those regions.
Congestion Management Process	CRCOG, CCRPA, MRPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 3 agencies support a common CMP for the Hartford metropolitan area.
Jobs Access	CRCOG, CCRPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRCOG and CCRPA support a common jobs access program. They serve on the same taskforce that manages the jobs access program that covers most of the Hartford metro area. • MRPA participates in the New Haven area jobs access program since program boundaries are based on the CT Dept of Social Service regions, which are not based on metro areas.
Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan	CRCOG, CCRPA, MRPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The three agencies are supporting the development of a single plan for the entire metro area. The Plan will be completed in 2007.
New Britain Busway	CRCOG, CCRPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Britain Busway is endorsed in the transportation plans of both agencies, and both agencies actively participate in joint planning activities with one another and the state DOT.
NHHS Commuter Rail	CRCOG, CCRPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRCOG and CCRPA both support this proposal & both participate in the advisory committee for the NHHS commuter rail EIS.
Farmington Canal Multi-Use Trail	CRCOG, CCRPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRCOG and CCRPA both endorse this trail, and both work with their affected towns to advance funding for this trail that will extend from New Haven to Northampton, MA.
Hartford – Middletown Rail	CRCOG, MRPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a potential conflict between the proposed uses for the Hartford – Middletown rail ROW. However, the long term nature of CRCOG's proposal, & the possibility of joint-use, greatly reduce any concern about conflict at this time. • CRCOG proposes a busway in the rail ROW. • MRPA supported the restoration of freight rail service. This service was restored in 2005 and is operating without problems. • CRCOG's proposed busway in this corridor is not scheduled until year 15-20 of the Plan. Joint use will be considered at such time as planning for the busway proposal is started.

Coordination with other MPOs. CRCOG also interacts regularly with both the Springfield MPO and the New Haven MPO. Since the Springfield region abuts the Capitol Region we have many common concerns such as Bradley International Airport, ITS and incident management on I-91, transit services for Enfield, the New Haven – Springfield Commuter Rail proposal, the study of the West Springfield freight rail yard, and the Farmington Canal Trail. We meet at least annually to review the status of our planning programs, and as required for studies such as the West Springfield rail yard study.

Even though the Midstate region lies between CROCOG and the New Haven MPO, we still coordinate with the New Haven MPO as needed for projects such as the New Haven – Springfield Commuter Rail. We also meet regularly with them as part of the I-91 TIA Board. The TIA meetings provide a forum for discussing issues of common concern.

Air Quality - Transportation Policy



Many metropolitan areas of the nation, including the Capitol Region, have serious air pollution or smog problems. These smog problems are caused in large part by emissions from automobiles. Because of the automobile's key role in the smog problem, the federal Clean Air Act of 1990 requires metropolitan areas to develop transportation plans that help reduce vehicle emissions that contribute to smog.

Our plans and programs are regularly evaluated through the air quality conformity process conducted by ConnDOT in cooperation with the regions and with CT DEP. These evaluations have always shown that our plans support the state air quality programs and goals.

Air Quality Supportive Policies & Practices. In addition to the conformity process that we are required to conduct, CROCOG has conducted several special studies to examine air quality issues and options for reducing emissions. The findings and conclusions of those studies have helped us formulate much of our current transportation plan and programs in a manner that promotes better air quality.

This current transportation plan reflects the Region's strong desire to reduce our reliance on automobiles by developing travel alternatives such as transit, traveling by bicycle, and walking. The plan also includes demand management (next section) and land use policies (Chapter 2) that support practices to reduce exhaust emissions by reducing travel demand.

Special Diesel Policy & Program. The current plan also reflects a strong policy regarding the reduction of diesel exhaust emissions. CROCOG's Environmental Justice Advisory Board identified diesel emissions as an air quality issue that disproportionately affects low-income urban neighborhoods. The issue was raised because there is a high incidence of asthma in these neighborhoods, and evidence suggests that diesel emissions, especially particulates, are part of the cause of this urban health problem. To address the problem, the Environmental Justice Advisory Board suggested that CROCOG incorporate the goal of reducing diesel emissions into its various transportation plans and policies.

Transit Buses. The diesel exhaust reduction goal led CROCOG to propose a special project to retrofit CT Transit buses with diesel particulate filters. CROCOG applied for funding and was able to secure the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds to pay for the retrofitting. CT Transit is currently conducting the retrofits for both its Hartford and New Haven fleets.

Construction Equipment. More recently the EJAB recommended that the Plan's recommendation for clean diesel buses be expanded to include clean diesel construction equipment used on highway projects. While expanding the recommendation to include highway construction equipment is reasonable, it must be focused on policy initiatives rather than project-based or funding initiatives. Highway construction equipment is owned by private companies, so change must be achieved by modifying the construction bidding requirements. Bidders can be required to use clean diesel equipment, and ConnDOT already does so on its largest construction projects.

Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus Demonstration. CROCOG was an important partner in the development of the hydrogen fuel cell bus demonstration. The demonstration project is intended to test the viability of this zero-emission form of transportation. The project started in April 2007, will last at least two years, and will test the fuel cell bus under a variety of weather and operating conditions. The objective is to advance the technology closer to the ultimate goal: making fuel cell buses economically viable to regular transit bus service.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Support Alternate Travel Modes.** Support alternate travel modes such as the projects recommended in the transit and bicycle sections of this Plan.
2. **Reduce Diesel Emissions.** CROCOG supports the reduction of diesel emissions from all sources, but especially encourages programs to reduce emissions from public transit vehicles. CROCOG further encourages ConnDOT to expand their current bidding requirements, regarding clean diesel equipment use on State transportation construction projects, to include more projects.
3. **Support Fuel Cell Bus Demonstration.** CROCOG should continue to support the hydrogen fuel cell bus demonstration.

Demand Management Policy



Many options for reducing congestion focus on increasing the *capacity* of the transportation system (or transportation *supply*). An important alternative approach is to reduce, or otherwise modify, the *demand* for transportation. This does not necessarily mean getting people to make fewer trips. More often demand management is focused 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.

Examples include:

- staggered work hours to spread peak demand
- flexible work hours to allow more use of transit or ridesharing
- reduced bus fares to encourage use of transit
- telecommuting to eliminate commuting trips
- elimination of employee parking subsidies to encourage transit use
- 4-day work weeks to eliminate commuting trips

The Council has studied demand management options as part of several previous studies. These include a special analysis of demand management done for the 1994 update of the Transportation Plan, the Major Investment Study for the Griffin corridor in 1995, and the Regional Transit Strategy in 2000. The analyses consistently demonstrate that some techniques such as increasing parking fees, eliminating employee parking subsidies, or providing transportation allowances to employees, can be effective at reducing vehicle miles of travel, increasing transit ridership, and reducing vehicle exhaust emissions. The difficulty with these techniques is that they often rely on voluntary participation of private employers to implement them. Voluntary programs are often not effective, and making them mandatory through legislative action is often politically unpopular.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Encourage TDM.** The Council should try to integrate demand management into our transportation programs whenever possible. A special effort should be made to introduce some demand management techniques to support the Regional Transit Strategy. We should also promote new federal and state “deduct a ride” programs that use income tax deductions to encourage use of transit and ridesharing instead of driving alone to work. Encourage the State legislature to act as an example to private employers by offering a full transit subsidy to State employees.
1. **Support Rideshare Programs.** The Council should continue to support rideshare programs that encourage alternatives to driving alone to work. While the primary function of the rideshare programs is encouraging commuters to use carpools or vanpools, the various programs in the State also promote public transit as well as transportation demand management initiatives such as deduct-a-ride and telecommuting.