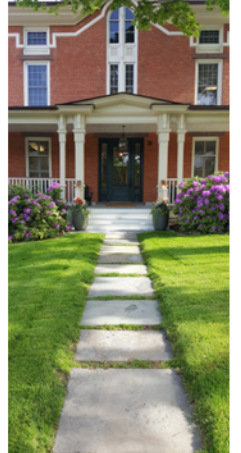


Western Connecticut

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



ANNUAL REPORT—FY2026

*A summary report of WestCOG's work
July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026*

Annual Report – Fiscal Year 2026

Western Connecticut Council of Governments

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Figure 1 WestCOG Office

- (1) Summarize the expenditure of such grant funds. [See Section IX.]
- (2) Describe any regional program, project or initiative currently provided or planned by the council. [See Sections II through VII.]
- (3) Review the performance of any existing regional program, project or initiative relative to its initial goals and objectives. [See Section I.]
- (4) Analyze the existing services provided by member municipalities or by the state that, in the opinion of the council, could be more effectively or efficiently provided on a regional basis. [See Section I.]
- (5) Provide recommendations for legislative action concerning potential impediments to the regionalization of services. [See Section VIII.]

I. WestCOG in Fiscal Year 2026

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) provides planning and services for its eighteen-member municipalities. This document, the annual report, provides a summary of the work performed at WestCOG.

A Council of Governments (COG) serves as a forum for local governments to coordinate and cooperate and to interface as a region with federal and state agencies. Under state law, WestCOG may provide a range of services. At the direction of its board, and funding permitting, these include joint provision of any local government service as well as participation in any grant or program that are available to county governments.

Municipal Members

The eighteen-member municipalities of WestCOG are home to 620,550 residents, making the Region the second most populous in Connecticut. (Source: 2020 census redistricting data)

Municipality	Chief Elected Official
Bethel	Dan Carter [Vice Chair]
Bridgewater	Curtis Read/ Eric Gsell
Brookfield	Steve Dunn [Member at large]
Danbury	Roberto Alves
Darien	Jon Zagrodzky [Treasurer]
Greenwich	Fred Camillo
New Canaan	Dionna Carlson
New Fairfield	Melissa Lindsey / Pat Del Monaco
New Milford	Peter Bass
Newtown	Jeff Capeci / Bruce Walczak [Member at
Norwalk	Harry Rilling / Barbara Smyth
Redding	Julia Pemberton [Secretary]
Ridgefield	Rudy Marconi [Chair]
Sherman	Don Lowe
Stamford	Caroline Simmons
Weston	Samantha Nestor
Westport	Jennifer Tooker / Kevin Christie
Wilton	Toni Boucher



Professional Staff

WestCOG employed fifteen staff members in FY-2026. In addition to nine temporary/seasonal staff workers during FY-2026:

Title	Name
Executive Director	Francis R. Pickering
Deputy Director	Michael Towle
Finance Director	Victoria Ricks
Office Manager	Cricket Carpenter
Transportation Director	Kristin Hadjstylianou
Senior Project Manager	Kevin Mahoney
Senior Project Manager	Charles Vidich
Program Director	Betsy Paynter
Project Manager	Jaclyn Reelick
Principal Planner	Todd Fontanella
Senior Planner	Kristin Floberg
Senior Planner	Mike Wilson
Planner	Farnaz Kamyab
Planner	Harrison Lewis
Associate Planner	Amal Malik
Associate Planner	Garrett Reed
Senior Data Scientist	Nick Trabka
Senior Data Scientist	Tucker Beckett
Data Scientist	Eddie Provitz
Data Scientist	Sagnik Chand
Temporary Staff	
Planning Aide 2025	Garrett Reed
Planning Aide 2025	Elizabeth Falk
Planning Aide 2025	Demetre Coles
Planning Aide 2026	Julia Kaiser
Planning Aide 2026	Howard Truax
Planning Aide 2026	Julianne Thibault
Sustainable CT Fellow 2025	Maya Aviles
Sustainable CT Fellow 2025	Sreya Mothukuri
Sustainable CT Fellow 2026	Lyah Muktavaram
Sustainable CT Fellow 2026	Brianna Jackson
Princeton Intern 2026	Kameil Crane

Internal Improvements

WestCOG has performed work internally to improve service provision for its municipal members. These changes and efforts are outlined below.

Procurement Process Workflow

GRANTS

Projects and studies which are contracted must be procured consistently, transparently, and in compliance with applicable federal and state requirements. WestCOG is documenting a standardized procurement workflow to clarify responsibilities, reduce delays, and improve internal quality control. A clear process supports

timely project delivery and provides a repeatable framework for staff managing multiple regional transportation assignments. During FY2026, WestCOG developed the scope of this assignment with work planned to initiate in FY-2027. Once completed, the resource will provide staff with a common reference for future procurements and help maintain consistent records across federally funded transportation work.

Cybersecurity Upgrade

TECHNOLOGY

WestCOG’s technology systems support regional planning, municipal services, grants, data management, and public information. Protecting those systems requires ongoing investment in secure hardware, infrastructure, and practices. WestCOG administers this cybersecurity upgrade to reduce operational risk, strengthen continuity of service, and safeguard the information and tools used in its work with member municipalities and partner agencies. During FY2026, the cybersecurity upgrade reached approximately 75 percent completion. Work continues, funded under Department of Homeland Security, with the project scheduled through November 15, 2026.

Performance of existing regional programs, projects, or initiatives

WestCOG’s regional service efforts have been well received, with no adverse comments during the FY. All current projects are on track and, barring unforeseen disruptions, are expected to meet targets. Program and project descriptions are provided ahead.

Programmatic Challenges

The primary challenge to COG programs today is volatility at the federal level. Rapid executive actions, reversals, and shifting guidance have created instability in the programs on which Connecticut and its municipalities depend. Pauses, rescissions, and freezes—sometimes overturned or modified by the courts—have disrupted schedules, delayed initiatives, and complicated daily coordination.

COGs are not immune to these winds; our own work is shaped by the same turbulence that affects our cities and towns. Yet this is also where we add the most value. WestCOG helps our members navigate shifting policies and priorities, ensuring continuity of service when higher levels of government are in flux. Acting as the connective tissue between local, state, and federal government, we interpret evolving directives, coordinate regional responses, and keep projects moving forward. In this way, WestCOG both shares in the challenge and provides the partnership needed for the region to advance together.

Opportunities for service provision on a regional basis

WestCOG provides a range of services to member communities and continues to explore additional regional service opportunities. These services are listed below.

Current Regional Services¹

- Policy Priorities
- Land Use Commissioner Training
- Regional Data Collection
- Brownfield Grant Assistance Program
- Economic Grant Assistance Program
- Flood Grant Assistance Program
- Regional Map Viewer
- Data & Technology Technical Services
- Photos of the WestCOG Region
- Regional Waste Management Program
- Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping
- Bridge and Culvert Mapping
- Municipal ADA Plans
- Pre-Selected Planning Vendors
- Pre-Selected Engineering Vendors
- Sewer Feasibility Study
- Regional Firearm Training Facility
- Regional Parcel CAMA Improvement
- POCD Climate Provisions

Regional Services of Interest

- Local Transportation Project Planning/Development
- Regional Grant Preparation and Management
- Regional IT/IS Platforms
- Regional Cybersecurity
- Municipal Modernization
- Procurement Practices
- Stormwater Permit Services

¹ For OPM review, we apply “Regional Service” tags for respective programs.

II. Community Planning

Community Planning at WestCOG covers many of the key components associated with living in a community such as Housing, Economy, Public Safety, and Technology.

Agriculture and Vacant Land Coordination

ECONOMIC LAND USE

Access to affordable and suitable land is a significant barrier for new and expanding farmers, particularly in urban and high-cost areas of southwestern Connecticut. WestCOG is participating in a U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded initiative led by the University of Connecticut Extension to identify vacant and underutilized urban and peri-urban properties that may be suitable for agricultural use. The project brings together councils of governments, municipalities, land trusts, state agencies, agricultural organizations, and farmers to develop land-suitability criteria, use geographic analysis to identify potential properties, and connect landowners with farmers seeking opportunities to establish or expand agricultural operations. During FY2026, WestCOG coordinated discussions between Norwalk and Newtown regarding potential municipal properties that could be activated for agricultural use.

Brownfield Services

REGIONAL SERVICE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTAL HOUSING LAND USE

Brownfield planning can remove uncertainty that prevents contaminated or potentially contaminated property from returning to productive use. WestCOG's Brownfield Service's program provides technical support to member communities to assess, remediate, and ultimately redevelop brownfields. These efforts will improve public health, encourage economic growth and revitalize blighted properties into community assets. In FY-2026 WestCOG assisted six properties navigating the brownfield grant process.

- 275 Mason Street, Greenwich
- 290 Mason Street, Greenwich
- 650 Atlantic Street, Stamford
- Woodland-Pacific, Stamford
- Saugatuck, Westport
- Open Doors, Norwalk

Commercial and Industrial Zoning White Paper

COMPLETE LAND USE ECONOMIC

Traditional distinctions among commercial, industrial, and service uses do not always reflect how contemporary businesses operate or the impacts they generate. During FY2026, WestCOG published *Reexamining Commercial, Industrial, and Service-Industrial Zoning in Connecticut*, a white paper exploring how modern manufacturing, commerce, logistics, and service industries have blurred longstanding zoning categories. The publication provides planning and zoning commissions with research and practical examples to inform updates to zoning regulations and plans of conservation and development.

[Reexamining Industrial Zoning – Western Connecticut Council of Governments](#)

Economic Grant Services

REGIONAL SERVICE ECONOMIC GRANTS

WestCOG provides Economic Grant Services to help municipalities, businesses, and regional partners identify and pursue funding that advances the goals of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Through the Western Connecticut Economic Development District (WCEDD), WestCOG monitors programs offered by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), and other agencies. WestCOG helps prospective applicants evaluate eligibility, develop project concepts, coordinate partnerships, and connect proposed investments with regional priorities such as business retention, infrastructure, resilience, redevelopment, modernization, and workforce needs.

Emergency Support Function 1- Transportation

PUBLIC SAFETY TRANSPORTATION

Major emergencies can disrupt roads, transit, fuel movement, and access across municipal and regional boundaries. WestCOG supports Emergency Support Function 1 for transportation by coordinating with the Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, neighboring councils of governments, transportation agencies, and local partners. The recurring forum connects transportation planning expertise with emergency preparedness and response coordination. During FY2026, WestCOG continued quarterly coordination with the Naugatuck Valley, Northwest Hills, and Connecticut Metropolitan councils of governments in support of state emergency-management Regions 1 and 5.

Flood Grant Assistance Program

REGIONAL SERVICE PUBLIC SAFETY ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS

Flooding remains a significant hazard throughout Western Connecticut, and municipalities often require specialized technical assistance to identify mitigation opportunities and successfully navigate complex federal funding programs. Through the Flood Grant Assistance Program, WestCOG provides regional support to help municipalities (and their residents) pursue hazard mitigation funding, including assistance with project development, grant applications, administration, reporting, and coordination with state and federal partners.

[WEBPAGE: Flood Grant Assistance Program Webpage](#)

Hazard Mitigation Plan 2026 – 2031

PUBLIC SAFETY ENVIRONMENTAL

The regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) identifies risks from floods, storms, extreme temperatures, and other hazards and establishes actions that reduce future losses. A current, federally approved plan is also important to municipal eligibility for certain

mitigation grants. WestCOG coordinates the update for participating municipalities, compiles consistent regional information, facilitates local input, and develops a shared framework for mitigation priorities. During FY2026, WestCOG contracted with Dewberry and Resilient Land and Water identified critical facilities, performed a risk assessment, damage estimates, and coordinated with municipalities on their project priorities. The completion of the HMP is anticipated in FY-2027.

Land Use Commissioner Trainings

REGIONAL SERVICE LAND USE

Volunteer land-use commissioners make consequential decisions about development and community character while navigating complex legal and procedural requirements. WestCOG provides a regional training program for planning, zoning, combined commission, and zoning board of appeals members. Shared sessions give commissioners access to qualified instructors, fulfill state training needs, and allow officials from different municipalities to learn from common examples and questions. During FY2026, WestCOG held 5 new trainings.

[VIDEO: Safeguarding Public Water Supply](#)

[VIDEO: Re-examining Zoning in Connecticut: Commerce, Industry, and](#)

[VIDEO: Regulating Nonconforming Buildings Structure, Uses, and Lots](#)

[VIDEO: Flooding in CT through the Lens of Land Use & Zoning](#)

[VIDEO: Backyard Chicken Coops](#)

Land Use Referrals

LAND USE

Changes to zoning maps and regulations, subdivision rules, and municipal plans can affect neighboring communities and regional priorities. State referral requirements give municipalities an opportunity to identify cross-border impacts before local decisions are finalized. WestCOG reviews referred proposals for consistency with the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development, provides timely written comments, and maintains a regional record of this continuing planning function. During FY2026, WestCOG responded to 103 referrals from its municipalities.

Letters of Support

GRANTS

WestCOG issues letters of support or letters of consistency for municipal, nonprofit, and private organizations for grant applications that are in alignment with COG goals. In FY2026, WestCOG issued 10 letters of support and consistency.

Local Fire Protection Plan Compliance Assistance

REGIONAL SERVICE PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Act 26-144 requires every Connecticut municipality to establish a local fire protection plan by July 1, 2027, and submit it to the municipality's chief elected officer, legislative body, and emergency management director. The Act also requires fire protection entities to register annually with each municipality they serve and report material changes within 30 days. Because municipalities face the same deadline and substantially similar compliance requirements, WestCOG is coordinating a shared approach that will provide participating communities with qualified consultant support, standardized materials, and a consistent planning process. During FY2026, WestCOG developed the scope for the Regional Local Fire Protection Plan Compliance Assistance Project and prepared a regional approach to consultant procurement.

Municipal ADA Plans

REGIONAL SERVICE PUBLIC SAFETY TRANSPORTATION

Municipal buildings, facilities, programs, and services must be accessible to people with disabilities, yet completing comprehensive evaluations can require expertise and capacity that individual communities do not maintain. WestCOG retained WT Group to prepare Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plans for participating municipalities. WestCOG coordinates inspections, policy reviews, municipal engagement, and plan preparation to provide a consistent and economical regional approach to accessibility compliance. In FY 2026, accessibility audits were completed in nine municipalities, community engagement and program policy review occurred in five, and final report presentations were given to two municipalities, New Milford and Weston. The project is expected to be completed in March 2027.

Municipal Legal Notice Assessment

Connecticut municipalities must publish newspaper notices for land-use decisions, town meetings, assessments, procurement, taxation, and many other public actions. Rising publication costs, declining newspaper circulation, fragmented expense records, and growing expectations for accessible digital information have made these requirements an increasing financial and administrative burden. WestCOG initiated the Municipal Legal Notice Assessment during FY2026 to document statutory requirements, municipal expenses, notice content, newspaper practices, and opportunities to modernize publication while preserving transparency, public access, and legal compliance. The report is expected to be released in FY-2027.

Zoning Non-Conformities White Paper

COMPLETE LAND USE

Many properties, structures, and land uses throughout Connecticut were established under previous zoning regulations and are now considered non-conforming under current standards. These conditions are common in established communities and can create challenges for property owners, municipal officials, and planning and zoning commissions as they seek to balance existing

development patterns with current land use objectives. During FY2026, WestCOG published the Zoning Non-Conformities White Paper to examine the causes, treatment, and planning implications of non-conforming lots, structures, and uses. The paper provides municipalities with a resource to better understand zoning non-conformities and consider approaches for addressing these conditions through zoning regulations, updates to plans of conservation and development, and future land use planning.

Photos of the Region

REGIONAL SERVICE

WestCOG maintains a FLICKR account and photo inventory of the region. These photos are heavily leveraged in the drafting of WestCOG documents. The album of photos is made fully available to the public without restriction. Additional photos are added annually.

[Photos of the Region FLICKR Webpage](#)

Pre-Selected Consultant Services

COMPLETE REGIONAL SERVICE

WestCOG offers “On-Call Vendor” service for municipalities interested in performing a variety of planning and engineering projects. By establishing pre-selected vendors (through a rigorous bidding process) and establishing initial contracts; municipalities across Connecticut are enabled to negotiate contractual services without having to perform a full procurement process. Municipalities are not obligated to use the On-Call List and may choose to solicit for their own projects independently.

[WEBPAGE: Planning Pre-Selected Consultant Services](#)

[WEBPAGE: Transportation Engineering Pre-Selected Services](#)

Policy Priorities

REGIONAL SERVICE

Municipalities are affected by state and federal legislation, regulations, funding decisions, and administrative changes that can be difficult to track individually. WestCOG coordinates its member municipalities to identify shared priorities, analyzes proposals, and communicates regional perspectives to public officials and partner agencies. The program provides timely information to local leaders and ensures that regional planning and service-delivery considerations are represented in policy discussions. During FY2026, WestCOG maintained and updated its policy priorities and provided input on proposed legislation and other matters affecting member municipalities. In FY-2026 WestCOG put forth 45 legislative priorities and responded with written testimony on 51 Bills.

[WEBPAGE: Policy Priorities](#)

Regional Economic Plan

ECONOMIC

WestCOG’s Regional Economic Plan establishes shared economic priorities for Western Connecticut and maintains the region’s

eligibility for certain federal economic-development resources. The plan also serves as the Region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is recognized by the EDA and implemented by the Western Connecticut Economic Development District (WCEDD). The process links municipal priorities to a broader regional framework for investment and competitiveness.

During FY2026, WestCOG began the 2027 CEDS update with support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration Planning Partnership program and Regional Services Grant comprehensive-planning funds. The project remained on track. Work will continue through economic analysis, stakeholder engagement, strategy development, and preparation of the updated plan for district review and adoption.

[WestCOG’s Regional Economic Plan \(2023-2027\)](#)

Regional Housing Growth Plan

REGIONAL SERVICE HOUSING ECONOMIC LAND USE

Connecticut Special Session Public Act 25-1 established a new regional planning process which requires Regional (and local) Housing Growth Plans. The plans would align housing needs with land availability, infrastructure capacity, and local conditions. WestCOG coordinates this work for its 18 member municipalities, providing a consistent regional framework while incorporating municipal knowledge, priorities, and development constraints.

During FY2026, WestCOG launched the Regional Housing Growth Plan process, developed a multiyear project roadmap, and began preparing a Developable Land Inventory. WestCOG also began assembling supporting information on housing conditions, land use, public water, and wastewater infrastructure. During FY2027, WestCOG will engage municipalities through surveys, workshops, and technical review to prepare a Regional Housing Needs Assessment with recommended municipal affordable housing goals by June 1, 2027. The Regional Housing Growth Plan is scheduled for adoption by June 1, 2029.

[Regional Housing Growth Plan Webpage](#)

Sustainable CT Fellows Partnership

LAND USE HOUSING ENERGY ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSPORTATION LAND USE

The Sustainable CT Fellows program gives municipalities additional capacity to document local sustainability work while providing emerging professionals with applied experience. WestCOG hosts fellows, provides workspace, supervision, resources, and professional development, and connects them with member municipalities and regional projects. The partnership creates a shared source of short-term capacity that can serve multiple communities during the summer. The Summer Session of 2026 fellows worked on a collaborative project creating an inventory of tree policies across CT.

Tactical / Firearms Training

REGIONAL SERVICE PUBLIC SAFETY TECHNOLOGY

Police departments across Western Connecticut need access to modern, consistent training resources, but specialized equipment can be difficult for individual municipalities to procure and maintain. WestCOG is developing a regional equipment initiative that would expand shared training capacity, support realistic exercises, and reduce duplicated local investment. WestCOG coordinates project planning, funding, procurement preparation, and the governance considerations needed for participating agencies to use the equipment. During FY2026, WestCOG shifted the regional public-safety concept toward equipment and technology that can be deployed for shared training.

[Tactical/Firearms Training Webpage](#)

Western Connecticut Economic Development District

ECONOMIC

The Western Connecticut Economic Development District (WCEDD) provides a regional forum for aligning public- and private-sector economic priorities across WestCOG's 18 municipalities. WestCOG administers the federally and state-designated district, convenes its members, maintains the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and connects communities with economic-development information and funding opportunities. The district gives diverse local economies a shared voice and planning framework. During FY2026, WestCOG continued to convene WCEDD and implement the 2023–2028 economic strategy.

[WCEDD Webpage](#)

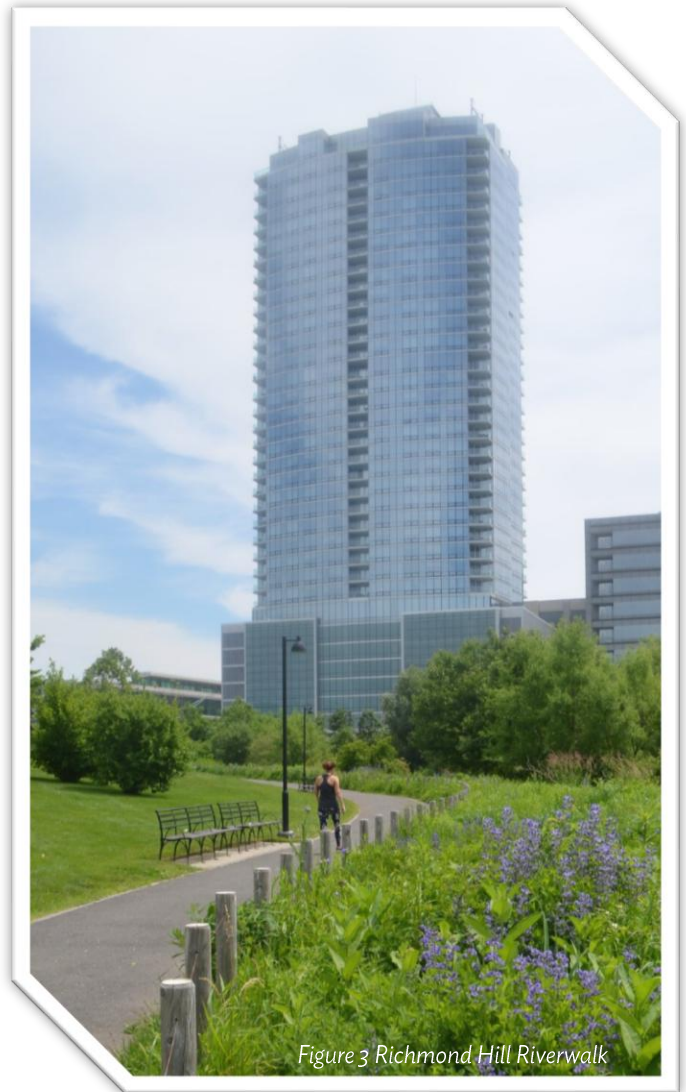


Figure 3 Richmond Hill Riverwalk

Figure 4 Westport Historical District



III. Transportation Planning

Active Transportation Microgrants Program

TRANSPORTATION GRANTS

WestCOG staff solicited for projects through CTDOT's Active Transportation Microgrants Program. The program funds non-infrastructure projects up to \$5,000 that support walking, biking, and rolling in Connecticut. Ten eligible organizations have applied and received funds in the past three quarters. The program has funded safety vests for police officers to hand out to pedestrians; pedestrian and bicycle safety workshops; purchases of bicycles for special-needs students; bicycle maintenance supplies and workshops, etc. The program continues to see increased interest quarter after quarter.

Congestion Management

TRANSPORTATION

A Congestion Management Process (CMP) is required of any federally designated Transportation Management Area (TMA). Areas of both Metropolitan Planning Organizations fall in the Bridgeport-Stamford Transportation Management Area. WestCOG, along with TMA partners, cooperatively updated a Congestion Management Process for 2023 that is consistent with guidance from FHWA and was done concurrently with the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. In coordination with TMA partners, a Monitoring Report was completed in October 2025 to review congestion data and evaluate progress on congestion reduction strategies and a full CMP update is underway and expected to be complete this fall

[!\[\]\(a69696d69cfd88b51cbd02e5288eca32_img.jpg\) Congestion Management Process and Monitoring Reports](#)

Connecticut Port Authority (CPA) Coordination

TRANSPORTATION

In the fourth quarter of FY 2026, the CPA initiated a discussion with WestCOG to talk about the CPA's transportation-related work – particularly to highlight the connections between marine and land-side transport – especially for freight. The CPA and WestCOG share a goal of reducing reliance on truck transportation and increasing marine transport of freight (and passengers). WestCOG will from this point forward be working closely with the CPA as they develop their website and upcoming reports to state officials. It is anticipated that CPA will advocate for landside transportation improvements that involve WestCOG's ongoing MPO activities.

LOTICIP and Regional Engineer

TRANSPORTATION GRANTS

The Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) provides funding for projects on roads throughout the region. WestCOG solicits and develops projects and programs funds. COG involvement enables efficiency in project delivery, freeing State resources for other activities. Responsibilities include

application and design review, with WestCOG's Regional Engineer giving programmatic and technical guidance to municipalities to advance and implement critical infrastructure projects. To date, WestCOG received over \$186 million in LOTICIP funding (state FY14-27). WestCOG has committed to funding 67 projects that are in various stages of project development, ranging from design to completion.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

TRANSPORTATION GRANTS

WestCOG hosts two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), which are federally mandated, designated and funded transportation policy-making organizations. These MPOs together comprise the WestCOG board, in addition to transit representatives, the COG Executive Director, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation. MPO designations provide access to federal funds, both formula-based and discretionary grants. To access these funds, an MPO must develop and maintain a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The two MPOs functionally operate as one region, with joint and concurrent meetings and shared documents.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

TRANSPORTATION GRANTS

This past year, the draft FY2027-2030 TIP was developed for both MPOs and included a public comment period from April 1st to May 1st. Public Information meetings were held on April 21st in Danbury, April 22nd in Stamford, as well as a virtual meeting on April 23rd. The federal FY2027-2030 TIPs for both MPOs were endorsed on May 21, 2026. The TIPs for Western Connecticut are programmed to deliver over \$3 billion in transportation investment during the federal FY2027-2030 period across the region.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

TRANSPORTATION

The federal 2023-2050 MTPs (formerly known as the Long-Range Transportation Plans) were endorsed on March 16, 2023. The MTPs purpose is to identify what investments and strategies are needed to improve and balance mobility within the region. WestCOG is currently working on a draft of the 2027 MTP. Public engagement events will be held starting this fall, and a draft of the plan is expected later this winter.

Norwalk Route 1 Corridor Master Plan Study

COMPLETE TRANSPORTATION

The Norwalk Route 1 Corridor Master Plan Study was completed in January 2026. It focused on the 2.9-mile-long section of Route 1 between West Norwalk Road/Darien town line to Belden Avenue/Spring Hill Avenue. The purpose was to provide a comprehensive transportation plan that improves mobility, safety, and accessibility for all users of the corridor.

The Plan was developed through a partnership with the City of Norwalk, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and the Norwalk Transit District. Key recommendations include

completing sidewalks on both sides of Route 1, adding high-visibility crosswalks at all signalized intersections, building a continuous multi-use path for bicyclists and pedestrians, enhancing bus stops with shelters and seating, and modernizing traffic signals to reduce stop-and-go congestion while improving pedestrian safety. The plan also proposes “right-sizing” portions of the roadway by reallocating excess travel lanes to medians, green infrastructure, and multimodal facilities. Several intersections along the corridor also have recommendations for redesigns to improve visibility and reduce crash risk.

The study outlines a phased implementation strategy spanning near-, medium-, and long-term actions, paired with cost estimates, funding opportunities, and identified implementation partners. The recommendations form a practical roadmap to improve safety, mobility, economic vitality, and quality of life along Route 1, positioning the corridor to better serve residents, workers, visitors, and the broader region.

[!\[\]\(d219eb33a83c47f5c6c63c27bbe267cb_img.jpg\) **WEBPAGE:** *Norwalk Route 1 Corridor Master Plan Study*](#)

Rail Improvements – Noise Pollution Abatement Feasibility Study

TRANSPORTATION

Following CTDOT approval, WestCOG hired SRF Consulting Group and began work on the New Canaan Branch Noise Pollution Abatement Feasibility Study. SRF is assisting with this three-municipality effort (Stamford, New Canaan and Darien) This study is analyzing existing rail line and grade crossing conditions, determining what infrastructure improvements may be required at specific grade crossings at which trains currently must sound their horns, and identifying where it would be feasible to implement quiet zones in the vicinity of these crossings. If implemented, residents and other sensitive receptors (churches, schools, medical facilities) in the vicinity of the Branch would potentially benefit. This study is the next step following a meeting on train horn noise held in Stamford by State Representative Matt Blumenthal in January 2020 which was attended by the CTDOT Commissioner and other area legislators, and residents who worked together to organize the event. Many members of the public attended this event and shared their concerns for disruptions to their quality of life due to train horns. The study was completed in October 2024 following a public meeting; subsequent meetings were held in January and March 2025 by CT legislators with WestCOG participation. WestCOG is currently working with CTDOT to plan for a Phase II effort, subject to approval by the municipalities.

Rail Improvements - Value Capture

TRANSPORTATION

The United States Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grant Program was a unique opportunity for the USDOT to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives. The BUILD program enabled USDOT to use a rigorous merit-based process to select projects with exceptional benefits. WestCOG was awarded an

USDOT federal FY21 BUILD grant to conduct a Danbury and New Canaan Branch Value Capture Feasibility Study. The study investigated the potential of using alternative funding mechanisms such as value capture as a tool to pay for infrastructure improvements on the branch lines, including potential electrification and extension of the Danbury Branch northward to Brookfield and New Milford, which has been a longstanding regional goal. Staff procured a consultant team comprising AECOM, Fitzgerald & Halliday and Goman+York and commenced work on the Study in Spring 2023; the study was completed in February 2025. Staff presented an overview of the Study at the national AMPO conference in September 2025. In FY 2026, staff planned for meetings with officials in Danbury, Norwalk and Stamford to discuss the potential for value capture tool implementation in their communities. These meetings took place in the first quarter of FY 2027.

Regional Freight Plan

TRANSPORTATION

Staff initiated work on a Request for Qualifications (with CTDOT’s approval) to procure a consultant team for this Plan. The Plan’s purpose is to identify actionable transportation tasks that the HV and SWR MPOs can support which will benefit freight movement in the region. The Plan will build upon (rather than duplicate) the substantial planning work already undertaken by CTDOT and the MAP Forum, as well as by WestCOG in the development of the 2023 WestCOG Regional Freight Profile. Consultant procurement activities in the first two quarters of FY 2027 will lead to a Plan kick-off; the Plan’s development is anticipated to occur over twelve months.

Regional Safety Action Plan

TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC SAFETY

WestCOG has been updating the 2021 Regional Transportation Safety Plan. The plan will identify the region’s high-risk network and develop recommendations to improve safety and reduce fatalities and serious injuries. Staff has developed a methodology for analyzing crash data, including the identification of high-risk locations and high-injury networks. Machine learning and predictive modeling are being used to identify potential crash locations and inform future safety improvements. Public engagement efforts are planned for Fall 2026 and will include a survey and outreach at events throughout the WestCOG region. Staff will also meet with municipalities, conduct site visits, and prepare presentations to support the development of the updated plan.

[*Regional Transportation Safety Plan*](#)

Regional Transit Study

TRANSPORTATION

USDOT awarded WestCOG a \$1 million grant under the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program to undertake a WestCOG regional study of public transportation services, which is now anticipated to begin in FY 2026. This study will cover services operated by CTtransit, HARTransit, and Norwalk

Transit District and is intended to create or enhance coordination between these and connecting systems. Schedules, fare policies and operational issues will be assessed, and connections to Metro-North Railroad services will also be examined. During FY 2026, staff met with the Federal Transit Administration and with CTDOT to address grant administration tasks, and completed preparations for conducting a consultant procurement process. This process will carry over into the first and second quarters of FY 2027.

Roundabout Study
TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC SAFETY

Roundabouts can improve safety and traffic operations when applied at suitable intersections, but screening potential locations requires consistent data and technical review. WestCOG is developing a regionwide assessment to identify and evaluate candidate intersections and coordinate findings with the Connecticut Department of Transportation. The study provides municipalities with a common analytical foundation for considering future roundabout projects. During FY2026, WestCOG initiated the study using Federal Highway Administration planning funds. The study is scheduled for completion in FY 2027.

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Award
TRANSPORTATION GRANTS

In December 2023, USDOT awarded WestCOG approximately \$3.9 million in federal funds through the SS4A program. The funding will be used to implement approximately 90 small-scale safety projects across the Region and include:

- Traffic Signal Retroreflective Backplates
- Installation of Dynamic Speed Feedback Signs
- Adding or Replacing Signage
- High Visibility Crosswalks
- Restriping Crosswalks
- Striping Edge Lines
- Adding or Restriping Pavement Marking

These projects were identified in the WestCOG Regional Transportation Safety Plan (RTSP), which was endorsed in June 2021. The purpose of the RTSP is to reduce fatalities and injuries by outlining effective safety measures to reduce potential future crashes.

The Grant Agreement for this project was executed in December 2025. WestCOG worked on procurement procedures, scope of consultant services and solicitation documents. Coordination with the 15 affected municipalities and CTDOT has been maintained. CTDOT updated the status of safety projects on state highways.

Sherman Center Connectivity Study
TRANSPORTATION

The Sherman Center Connectivity Study aims to develop a comprehensive transportation plan by identifying short and long-term strategies that will improve mobility, safety, and accessibility for all users navigating Sherman Center. The study will develop a concept plan that reflects community-centered priorities which may

include intersection upgrades and pedestrian/bicycle enhancements. The report will also include an implementation plan with project details, timelines, and potential funding sources. The Study kicked off in October 2025 with the Project Advisory Committee where the vision and goals were developed to guide the Study. WestCOG staff collected data for the existing conditions report and hosted a walk audit with Town representatives in November 2025. The first public meeting was held in January 2026 to introduce the study, share the data collected, and conduct a workshop to better understand connectivity, safety, and aesthetic needs of the community. WestCOG began drafting the existing conditions report that will be reviewed by the advisory committee in Fall 2026. The next step will be to identify opportunities for improvements and draft a concept plan of recommendations.

Traffic Calming and Complete Streets Best Practices Toolbox
COMPLETE TRANSPORTATION

Local roads and residential streets serve many functions beyond moving vehicles, including supporting pedestrian and bicycle travel, community connections, emergency response, and neighborhood character. WestCOG developed the Traffic Calming and Complete Streets Best Practices Toolbox to provide municipalities with practical guidance for improving safety and mobility on lower-speed local roads. The Toolbox identifies planning principles and design approaches that consider all roadway users, while also addressing factors such as environmental sustainability, construction and maintenance costs, land use, and utility needs.

During FY2026, WestCOG completed the Toolbox with support from Toole Design Group and input from a Project Advisory Committee composed of regional stakeholders. The project included preparation and review of a draft Toolbox, a December 2025 workshop for municipal staff, incorporation of committee feedback prior to final approval in February 2026, and published in March 2026.

[Traffic Calming and Complete Streets Best Practices Toolbox](#)

Transportation for Seniors and Persons With Disabilities
TRANSPORTATION GRANTS

The WestCOG Transportation Staff assists CTDOT in administering the FTA Section 5310 Program and CT Matching Grant Program (MGP 13b) programs at the regional level. Annually, the staff coordinates with its municipalities on intake, review and MPO prioritization of applications for these two Programs, which provide capital and/or operating funding. This work is conducted in accordance with CTDOT's Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Program (LOCHSTP). In FY 2026, both Programs were active; local applications were solicited, reviewed by staff and prioritized by the MPOs in the third and fourth quarters.

Transportation Advisory Committees

TRANSPORTATION

WestCOG actively participates in numerous transportation advisory committees, where members share insight and feedback on statewide planning efforts and local projects. This past year, WestCOG has supported:

- Active Transportation Steering Committee
- Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board
- Connecticut Association for Community Transportation
- Danbury I-84 Project Advisory Committee
- I-95 Stamford Planning and Environment Linkages Project Advisory Committee
- I-95 Greenwich Planning and Environmental Linkages Project Advisory Committee
- Merritt Parkway Advisory Committee
- Metropolitan Area Planning Forum
 - Multi-State Freight Working Group
 - Multi-State Resiliency Working Group
- Norwalk 7/15 Interchange Project Advisory Committee
- Safety Circuit Rider Advisory Committee
- Strategic Highway Safety Plan Steering Committee

Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

TRANSPORTATION

WestCOG's TAG comprises municipal planners, engineers, public works officials, transit district representatives, and COG staff. The TAG collaboratively reviews and evaluates proposals, making recommendations to WestCOG. Examples of recent TAG initiatives include prioritizations for federal and state funded project solicitations, TIP project amendments, transportation performance measures, ADA Transition Plans, TIP and regional efficiencies, transportation performance management, TIP amendments, and other important regional efforts.

Western CT Regional Trail Project

REGIONAL SERVICE TRANSPORTATION

In 2023, the United States Department of Transportation awarded \$4,528,000 for the Western Connecticut Regional Trail Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Project through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program covering 80 percent of the total project cost (\$5,660,000). The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection awarded \$566,000 in June 2024 through the Connecticut Recreational Trails Program covering 10 percent of the total project. The project will complete planning and engineering work for numerous sections of an approximately 55-mile multi-use trail between Norwalk, Wilton, Redding, Ridgefield, Danbury Brookfield, and New Milford. Once complete, this will connect the Norwalk River Valley Trail to the Still River Greenway, and the New Milford River Trail. An extension westward to the Maybrook Trail in New York State is also planned. WestCOG hired Stantec in December 2025 to complete the project and kicked off the project with the Project Advisory Committee in January 2026. The first phase of the project

analyzing and revising the original trail routing studies is well underway. Meetings with various stakeholders including each municipality and property owners have been held and will continue into next year. General public outreach also started this year. Trail design will start next year with an anticipated project completion in early 2028.



Figure 5 New Canaan Train Station



Figure 6 New Milford Roundabout

IV. Environmental Planning

Branchville-Georgetown Sewer Feasibility Study

REGIONAL SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL HOUSING ECONOMIC

The Towns of Redding and Ridgefield have periodically expressed the need for increased wastewater collection and treatment in the Branchville section of Ridgefield and the Georgetown section of Redding. One solution frequently mentioned was the feasibility of utilizing the Georgetown WPCF, currently operating well under capacity, to accommodate these needs. Therefore, WestCOG obtained a \$200,000 grant from the USEPA in 2022 to assist the communities in evaluating current wastewater conditions and to plan for increased utilization of the facility. The study started in FY 2025 and was extended through FY 2026 and again into the third quarter of FY 2027 to address technical issues with estimating wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) capacities, permitting, and projected municipal wastewater flows.

Bridge and Culvert Mapping

REGIONAL SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSPORTATION

Connecticut Public Act 25-33 requires municipalities to inventory and assess culverts and small bridges to improve understanding of local drainage infrastructure and strengthen resilience to flooding and extreme weather. WestCOG initiated a regional mapping program to help its 18 member municipalities meet these requirements through a consistent and efficient approach. The program combines field verification, photography, condition assessments, and geographic information system data management to produce a standardized regional inventory that will assist with infrastructure planning, asset management, stormwater management, maintenance prioritization, and long-term resilience efforts. During FY2026, WestCOG began coordinating with municipal public works departments, collecting existing infrastructure records, and conducting field mapping throughout the region. WestCOG will continue fieldwork for all municipalities to meet the 2028 deadline.

Building Energy Management Program

REGIONAL SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL

Municipalities manage diverse building portfolios but often lack dedicated capacity to benchmark energy use, identify improvements, and pursue incentives. WestCOG is developing a regional approach to energy management that could provide shared technical expertise, coordinate facility data, and help communities prioritize cost-effective projects. The proposed service is intended to reduce duplicated effort and make energy-management resources more accessible to municipalities of different sizes. During FY2026, a strategy was developed to use remaining CPRG funds to develop building energy data to serve as the foundation for this energy management program.

Climate Action Plan

COMPLETE ENVIRONMENTAL ENERGY HOUSING TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCE

Climate pollution and energy use cross municipal boundaries and require coordinated strategies that communities can adapt to local needs. WestCOG worked with MetroCOG to develop a shared planning framework, coordinate municipal and public input, and identify actions that could reduce emissions while positioning communities for future implementation funding. This regional approach provided consistent analysis and avoided duplicative planning by individual municipalities. During FY2026, the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, funded through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program, was completed. Completion gives participating communities a regional inventory and set of strategies that can inform local action and future funding applications.

[Climate Action Plan](#)

Noise Pollution Ordinance Inventory

COMPLETE ENVIRONMENTAL

WestCOG, in partnership with Sustainable CT and the 2025 Sustainable CT Fellows Cohort, developed the Connecticut Noise Ordinance Inventory to establish a statewide baseline of municipal noise regulations and identify opportunities for future planning and policy discussions. The inventory reviewed active noise ordinances in all 169 Connecticut municipalities and evaluated their alignment with the state noise control framework established under Connecticut General Statutes §22a-69.

During FY2026, WestCOG completed the initial report documenting the inventory methodology, findings, and observations. The assessment found that 78 municipalities had adopted formal noise ordinances and identified variations in how communities address noise limits, exemptions, definitions, measurement procedures, and enforcement. The inventory provides municipalities with a resource to evaluate existing practices and consider potential improvements to local noise management approaches.

Noise Pollution and Solar Farms Assessment

ENVIRONMENTAL

Large solar facilities can create noise concerns involving inverters, transformers, receptors, and state siting standards. WestCOG is conducting a regional assessment of Connecticut Siting Council dockets to identify how noise has been analyzed, what mitigation has been proposed, and how public concerns have been addressed. The project develops a shared evidence base that municipalities can use when evaluating proposals and participating in state proceedings. During FY2026, WestCOG designed the scope of the project to be initiated in FY2027.

Regional Waste Management

COMPLETE REGIONAL SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL

In 2021, WestCOG released a Regional Waste Management Feasibility Study prepared by Barton & Loguidice (B&L). This study

resulted in several recommendations for regional collaboration in the region. In 2024, WestCOG secured additional state grant funding through CTDEEP to further evaluate and implement one or more of these options for 5 of our 18 communities. These 5 communities (Darien, Stamford, New Canaan, Greenwich and Norwalk) currently operate waste independently and do not belong to a regional waste entity. This study was structured in two phases; Phase I updated waste data and resulted in one or more actionable recommendations for regional collaboration, while Phase II was intended to set the stage to implement them. Phase I was completed in October 2025. Per staff discussions with CT DEEP and the communities, it was decided to not proceed with Phase II but instead to pursue collaborative efforts, such as for Household Hazardous Waste collection which initiated in the fourth quarter of FY 2026.

[Regional Waste Management Study](#)

Stormwater and MS4 Technical Services

REGIONAL SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC SAFETY

In FY2026, WestCOG began coordinating with COGs across CT to develop services to assist municipalities in meeting standards that will be outlined in the upcoming MS4 permit update. The COGs have been developing educational materials, report templates, Data Collections solutions for integration into municipal operations. The new permit is expected to be released in FY2027 and the COGs plan to be ready to support municipalities when it does.

Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping

REGIONAL SERVICE ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC SAFETY

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit compliance requires communities to understand and document drainage infrastructure, but field mapping is labor-intensive and benefits from specialized equipment and geographic information system capacity. WestCOG provides a shared mapping service, deploys trained field staff, processes collected information, and delivers standardized municipal datasets that can support permit responsibilities and infrastructure management. During FY2026, the service reached approximately 60 percent completion across its current assignments. WestCOG processed Wilton’s information, brought Bridgewater close to completion, and tracked work in Sherman and Weston as part of the participating group. Field mapping and data processing will continue, and WestCOG may solicit additional municipal assignments where shared staff capacity can address unmet mapping needs.

Tree Canopy Study

ENVIRONMENTAL

Tree canopy supports stormwater management, moderates extreme heat, improves air quality, provides habitat, and contributes to neighborhood and community character. WestCOG is updating its previous regional Tree Canopy Study to provide municipalities with current, consistent information on the location and extent of tree canopy across Western Connecticut. Conducting the analysis regionally allows canopy conditions to be evaluated across

municipal boundaries using a common methodology and gives communities a shared dataset for land-use planning, conservation, infrastructure management, and local forestry initiatives. During FY2026, WestCOG began processing updated aerial imagery and developing a detailed regional land-cover classification to distinguish tree canopy from buildings, impervious surfaces, low vegetation, water, and other features. WestCOG is also coordinating an Urban Forestry Seminar to inform the study and connect municipal officials with forestry practitioners and peers. The seminar will address common issues such as tree inventories, maintenance, storm response, staffing, planning practices, and public communication.

Water Supply & Treatment Study

ENVIRONMENTAL HOUSING

Water and wastewater infrastructure can strongly influence where housing development and redevelopment are practical, but system conditions vary across utility service areas and municipal boundaries. WestCOG is conducting a Water Supply & Wastewater Infrastructure Assessment to support the Regional Housing Growth Plan required by Connecticut Special Session Public Act 25-1. WestCOG will coordinate with municipalities, public water utilities, sewer authorities, and other providers to compile consistent regional information on service areas, treatment capacity, reported flows, distribution and conveyance systems, pump stations, known limitations, planned improvements, and areas dependent on wells or septic systems. During FY2026, WestCOG developed the project scope and began coordinating the collection of available utility plans, geographic data, and infrastructure information.



Figure 7 Frog in Greenwich

VII. Data, Mapping, and Tech

Data Collection Program

REGIONAL SERVICE TECHNOLOGY DATA

WestCOG performs several data collection services using trained staff, software, and hardware to generate data sets for studies, municipal requests, and reporting requirements. Summaries of the various services are outlined below:

Annual Data Collection Campaign coordinates requests across departments and communities, organizes incoming records, and integrates them into consistent regional file structures. A single coordinated campaign reduces repeated requests to municipal staff and creates a dependable schedule for updating shared information. Datasets include parcel boundaries, property data, open space, trails, fees, transit resources.

Traffic Cameras. installs temporary traffic cameras that collect up to 50 hours of traffic video for an intersection. Data outputs include turning counts for pedestrians, bicycles, cars and heavy vehicles. This data is used in a wide range of analyses, including level of service (LOS), pedestrian and cyclist, intersection signal timing and capacity, traffic control type and signal coordination.

Radar Counters. WestCOG deploys radar counters to collect bidirectional volume, speed, and vehicle classification for up to four, mid-block lanes. This program provides cost savings for member municipalities through equipment sharing and by using trained WestCOG staff to conduct analyses. WestCOG conducted 266 hours of turning movement counts this year that were used in project design and safety analysis for the municipalities in the region.

Infrared Trail Counters. WestCOG has three trail counting infrared devices and a processing application. Staff have been providing on-going assistance at the Fairfield Hills Trail in Newtown since February 2020 and at three locations along the Norwalk River Valley Trail in Norwalk since October 2024. Assistance includes data collection and analysis for use in future applications for funding and studies that would improve the heavily used trail. The trail counters can be requested for specific studies by municipalities.

Speed and Volume Radar Devices. WestCOG has two speed and volume radar devices and a processing application. Staff collected and processed data at two locations this year for safety analyses.

Lot Counts. WestCOG also continued conducting quarterly utilization counts for commuter park-and-ride and rail station parking lots across the region. This data was made available to the public through an interactive web application which is regularly updated with new data.

Drone Imagery. WestCOG has FAA certified drone pilots on staff as well as drone equipment for the use of imagery collection missions. Drone flights are scheduled per request from municipal partners or to provide supportive imagery for grants applications and ongoing initiatives.

Data & Technology Technical Services

REGIONAL SERVICE TECHNOLOGY DATA

Data, Mapping, & Technology Services provides WestCOG’s member municipalities with shared technical expertise in data management, geographic information systems, web mapping, cybersecurity, and municipal technology. These needs increasingly overlap: reliable data supports effective mapping and online services, while secure and well-designed technology is necessary to manage and share that information. WestCOG develops and maintains regional datasets and public-facing mapping tools, provides technical support and analysis, and works with municipal staff to identify practical solutions to local technology and information needs.

During FY2026, WestCOG continued to maintain and improve regional planning datasets, web-based mapping resources, and internal technology systems. Staff supported municipal and regional projects involving parcels, zoning, infrastructure, environmental conditions, transportation, housing, and other planning information. WestCOG also advanced cybersecurity improvements and consulted with municipalities about opportunities to strengthen technology systems, improve access to information, and address needs that may benefit from shared services or coordinated procurement. Going forward, WestCOG will continue meeting with municipalities to identify common challenges, evaluate potential solutions, and determine where regional expertise, shared platforms, or collaborative implementation can improve services and reduce duplicated effort.

[Data Downloads Site](#)

[Data, Mapping, and Technology Services Website](#)

Parcel CAMA Improvement

REGIONAL SERVICE LAND USE DATA

Accurate parcel geometry and Computer-Aided Mass Appraisal (CAMA) records support land-use planning, emergency response, infrastructure analysis, and public access to property information. Because municipal assessing systems use different formats and update schedules, WestCOG coordinates the improvement and standardization of these datasets across the region. The project provides participating municipalities with more current, better-matched property records and strengthens a shared data foundation that can be used by local officials, regional planners, and the public.

The project remained on track and reached approximately 66 percent completion. Work continued under American Rescue Plan Act funding, with the project period running through December 31, 2026. WestCOG advanced municipal data improvement and identified completion of Redding’s work as the next immediate milestone. Final delivery will be coordinated with the next annual collection of municipal property records so that corrected parcel and assessment information can be incorporated into the regional dataset. This work is included in the regional project portfolio so that progress, responsibilities, and next actions can be tracked

consistently and communicated to member municipalities and funding partners.

Regional Map Viewer

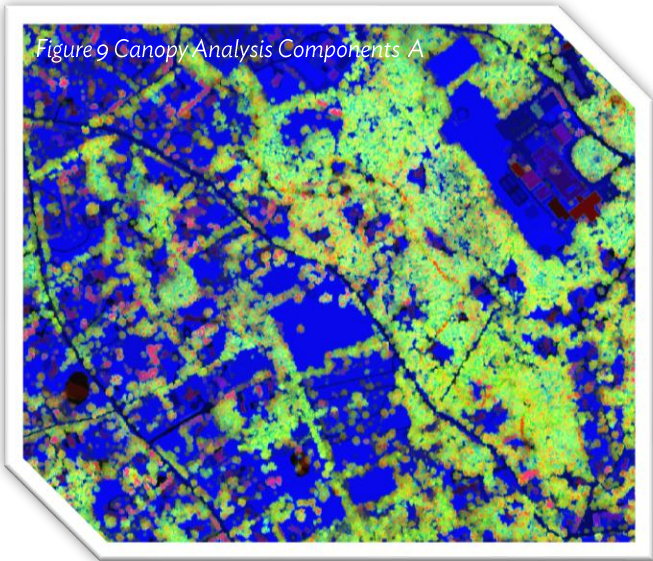
REGIONAL SERVICE DATA

Residents and municipal officials need convenient access to property and planning information that crosses departmental and jurisdictional boundaries. WestCOG develops and maintains an online regional map viewer combining parcels with zoning, wetlands, flood zones, impervious cover, buildings, tree canopy, imagery, and other reference layers. The service can supplement or substitute for a municipal viewer and provides a consistent public mapping resource across the region. Continued annual updates keep the viewer useful as municipal source data and regional planning needs change. WestCOG collects and processes parcel data which feeds into the map viewer annually. The collection and distribution of this data to the state is required under [PA 18-175](#).

[WestCOG's Regional Viewer](#)



Figure 8 Field Data Collection Equipment



VIII. Recommendations for Legislative Action

In WestCOG’s view, the following recommendations would advance service sharing and deliver cost savings.

Clarify liability protections for councils of governments providing regional services.

Connecticut has established broad authority for municipalities to voluntarily collaborate through councils of governments and other intermunicipal arrangements. However, uncertainty regarding the availability of comparable governmental immunity and liability protections when a council of governments performs services on behalf of municipalities can create a significant barrier to regionalization.

When municipalities evaluate whether to participate in a regional service arrangement, municipal counsel will appropriately assess potential changes in liability exposure. If a municipality could face greater liability risk simply because a service is delivered collaboratively rather than directly by the municipality, that risk can become a substantial disincentive to regional cooperation. The General Assembly should clarify that councils of governments and their personnel, when performing governmental functions on behalf of participating municipalities pursuant to statutory authority or intermunicipal agreement, receive appropriate liability protections comparable to those available when municipalities perform those same functions directly.

Create a statewide municipal public notice portal modeled on existing state digital platforms.

Connecticut has successfully developed centralized electronic platforms to improve access to government information and streamline public processes, including CTSource for state procurement opportunities and CTJobs for state employment opportunities. A similar statewide municipal public notice portal could provide residents, businesses, and public agencies with a centralized, searchable location for municipal legal notices and other public notices.

Such a platform would enhance transparency and public access while supporting voluntary regional collaboration. Many municipal actions increasingly involve multiple jurisdictions, and a statewide notice portal would allow residents to more easily identify activities occurring across municipal boundaries. The portal could also reduce administrative burdens by providing a standardized mechanism for municipalities and regional councils of governments to submit and manage notices, while preserving existing statutory notice requirements and local decision-making authority.

IX. Expenditure of Regional Services Grant funds

WestCOG utilizes its Regional Services Grant (RSG) funds in accordance with its approved RSG Spending Plan. State fiscal year 2026 (FY2026) expenditures are summarized in table 1. WestCOG is on track to conduct its RSG Spending Plan for state fiscal year 2027 (FY2027) in the respective fiscal year, assuming no interruptions to funding or process.

Table 1 State FY 2026 Expenditures by Project

Task	Expenditure
Municipal Technical Support	\$108,718.77
Regional Services	\$686,007.40
Comprehensive Planning	\$104,970.85
Housing	\$142,583.09
Stormwater and Flood Mitigation	\$200,000.00
TOTAL	\$1,242,280.11

Figure 11 Downtown Newtown

