

Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update

May 22, 2024

Policy Board Workshop



CONNECT CAPITOL REGION

Today

1. Background
2. Review of draft POCD
3. Discussion
4. Next Steps



Background



Regional POCD

State Statutes

- CGS 8-35a
- Prepare at least once every 10 years
- Procedural & notice requirements

CRCOG

- Bylaws:
 - Charge Regional Planning Commission (RPC) with “development and maintenance” of POCD
- RPC refers to Policy Board for Adoption

How We Use It

- Referrals
- Letters of support (grant applications)
- Our own grant applications
- CRCOG workplan

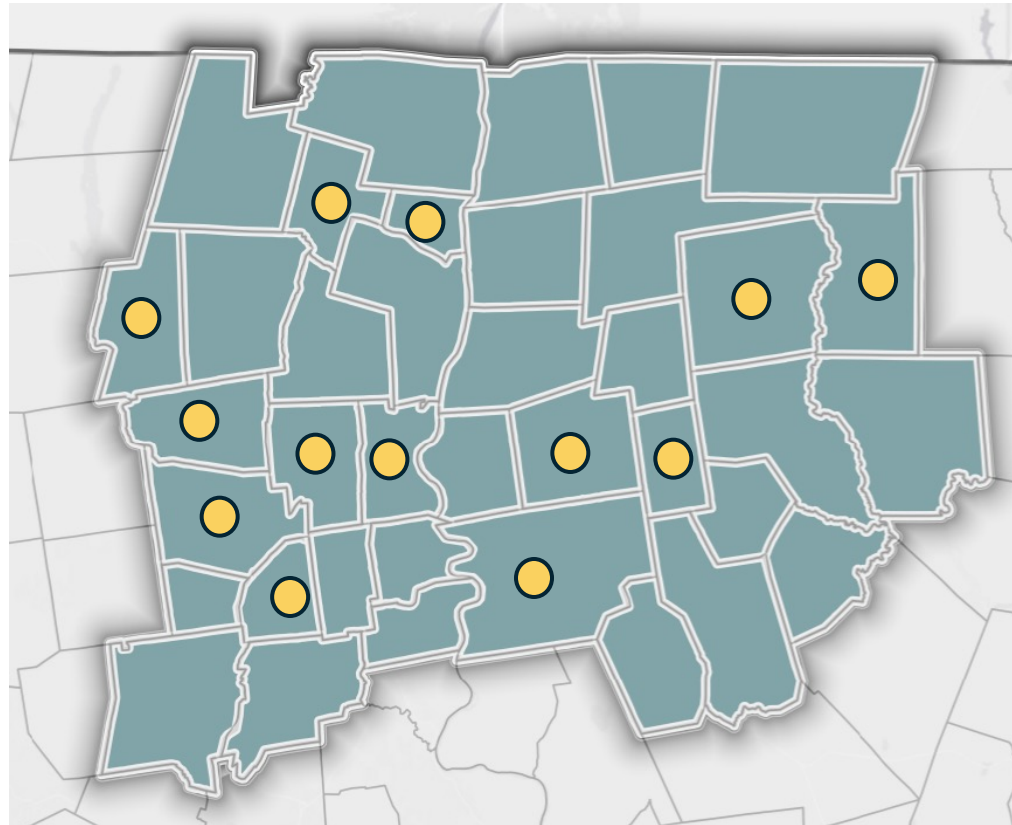
Technical Advisory Committee

Who

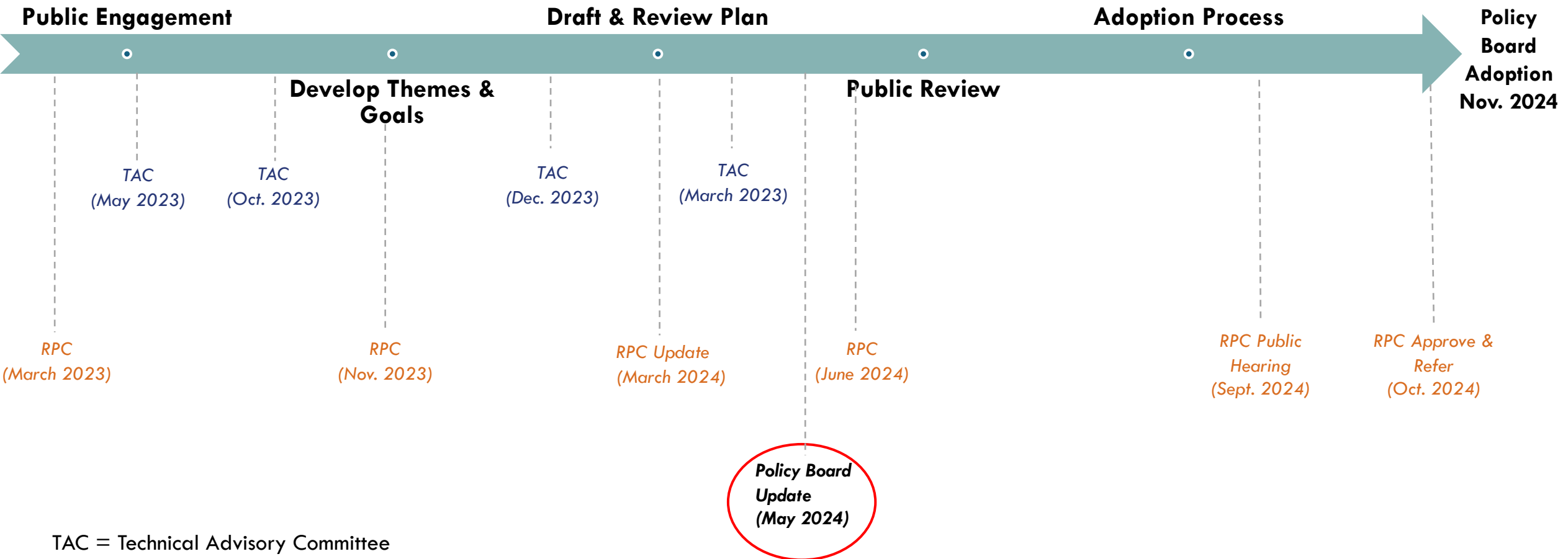
- 18 city / town planners
- Representing 13 municipalities

What

- Input and advice
- Review initial themes, goals, and strategies



Timeline



Public Engagement



Public Engagement

- Online Survey
- SWOT at Events
- Table Talk
- Technical Focus Groups
 - Housing
 - Environment
 - Governance
- Details in POCD Appendix



Public Engagement

Key Findings

- **Governance** improvements could strengthen our region.
- **Community** is a regional strength.
- People value **social places**, yet few social spaces exist.
- Residents seek more **things to do**.



- Most are satisfied with local **amenities** and want to live in areas with amenities.
- We've made progress with **public transportation**, but car reliance remains high.
- Many want **walkable, bicycle-friendly** neighborhoods.



- **Sustainability** innovations are important.
- Division over whether we have enough **housing diversity**, yet issue of **affordability** is acknowledged.
- People want to maintain the Region's high **quality of life**.



Draft 2024 POCD



Draft 2024 Capitol Region Plan of Conservation & Development

- A quick note – the “look” is under construction
 - Graphic design is underway!
 - Fonts, colors, headings, graphics, photographs, charts, etc.



Vision

“We all will work together to build communities of choice, opportunity, and belonging.”



Themes – POCD



Cultivate a Green & Resilient Future



Develop a Competitive & Inclusive Regional Economy



Reform Outdated “Steady Habits” in Our Institutions & Governance



Invest in Transportation Options for Every Journey



Expand & Diversify the Region’s Housing Stock

CRCOG Strategic Playbook Guiding Principles:

CRCOG can play a leadership role to improve quality of life across the region by:

- Using sound planning practice and data-based solutions to incorporate best practices.
- Embrace diversity and promote equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Apply a lens of sustainability – environmental, economic, and equity.
- Work together, recognizing that the success of individual municipalities depends on the success of our region.

Draft 2024 Capitol Region Plan of Conservation & Development

- Themes
 - Goals
 - Strategies
 - Actions

Example -

Theme: Expand and diversify the region's housing stock

GOAL: Increase affordable housing in the region.	
Strategy 1: Provide support to member municipalities to increase affordable units and administer affordable housing programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACTION: Develop guidance on inclusionary zoning percentages that address market variations in the region.• ACTION: Encourage municipalities to remove or reduce regulatory barriers to creating affordable housing.
Strategy 2: Seek regional approaches to producing affordable units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACTION: Develop a Regional Housing Strategy to conduct a deeper analysis of housing trends, needs and gaps in the region and to create tailored solutions and programs to help municipalities.
Strategy 3: Actively work to preserve affordability of units with expiring deed restrictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACTION: Identify those units at highest risk of converting to market rate units.

Cultivate a Green & Resilient Future



Key Considerations



Public outreach identified the environment, sustainability, and open space as key areas of interest...



Heightened importance of open space post-pandemic.



...and these topics resonate in our cities as well as our small towns and countryside.



Climate change impacts are tangible.



New mandates and regulations – opportunities for assistance and regional approaches.



Need for a sustainable regional food system to provide healthy, culturally relevant, and affordable food options for all people, regardless of income and location.

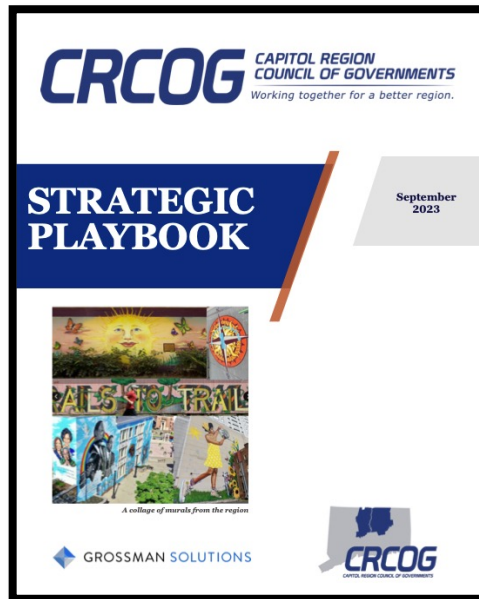
Cultivate a Green & Resilient Future

Goals

1. Protect our region's natural resources and landscapes and minimize impacts from development and human activity.
2. Cultivate spaces that connect people to nature and their community.
3. Reduce regional gas emissions and adapt to climate change.
4. Improve the resiliency the region.
5. Support a sustainable and equitable regional food system.



Cultivate a Green & Resilient Future



Regional Environmental Services

- ✓ Conduct a grant-funded stormwater management study to analyze the condition of existing infrastructure and to identify needed improvements and regional solutions, including the potential for stormwater authorities and utilities.
- ✓ Utilize the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan and Climate Pollution Reduction Grant to prepare climate action plans for the region and seek funds to implement key recommendations.

Develop a Competitive & Inclusive Regional Economy



Key Considerations



We are now an officially designated Economic Development District – an opportunity for proactive economic development work.



A strong region needs strong cities, competitive suburbs, and opportunities for economic development in rural areas.



Job growth has been stagnant – need to be proactive and capitalize on opportunities.



Importance of place-making and third places – especially if we want to retain/attract young adults.

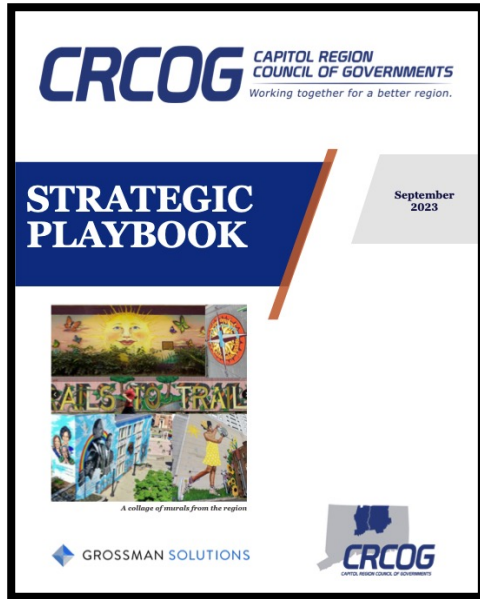
Develop a Competitive & Inclusive Regional Economy

Goals

1. Build regional economic development capacity and support.
2. Create a 24/7 Capital City.
3. Reimagine underutilized commercial districts as vibrant destinations.
4. Invest in the power of “fun,” placemaking, and third places.
5. Support economic development in the region’s rural communities.
6. Ensure growth occurs in areas with adequate utilities.
7. Ensure that our archeological and historic resources are preserved and celebrated.



Develop a Competitive & Inclusive Regional Economy



Economic Vitality

- ✓ Add resources to coordinate implementation of the CEDS and promote equity.
- ✓ Establish an implementation committee...to pursue priority CEDS goals.

Reform Outdated “Steady Habits” in Our Institutions & Governance



Key Considerations



CRCOG communities widely vary in abilities and resources to meet emerging challenges and state mandates.



CRCOG has had success with providing / facilitating shared services – opportunity to build.



Cities and towns have limited options to fund public services.



Public input revealed sense of disconnection and distrust of government.

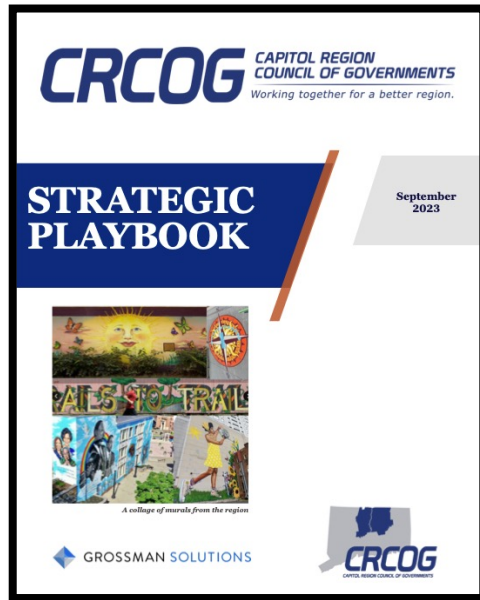
Reform Outdated “Steady Habits” in Our Institutions & Governance

Goals

1. Improve public service delivery through robust shared services and partnerships.
2. Create fiscally sustainable and equitable systems for funding public services.
3. Enhance the operational efficiency and effectiveness of local government operations.
4. Increase equitable community participation in local decision-making.



Reform Outdated “Steady Habits” in Our Institutions & Governance



Public Sector Workforce Development, Shared Services, and Direct Services

- ✓ Successfully implement the three Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP)-funded projects.
- ✓ Refine and build out CRCOG’s GIS & Data Center to serve our members and CRCOG staff.

Invest in Transportation Options for Every Journey



Key Considerations



Public input emphasized our residents want and need more transportation options.



Existing transportation system places burdens on us – greenhouse gases, equity issues, cost of car ownership, safety.



Recognition that our transportation system should support a stronger sense of place and identity.



Opportunities to rethink our streets, especially with funding now available.

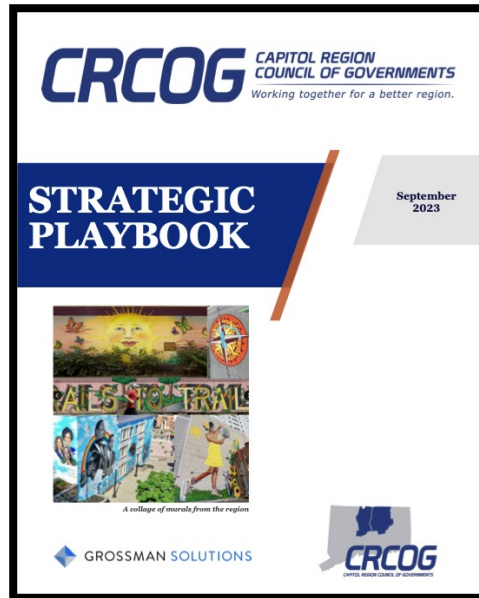
Invest in Transportation Options for Every Journey

Goals

1. Align transportation investments with land use, housing, and other development and place-making goals.
2. Expand transportation options for all users and purposes.
3. Address the burdens and costs of transportation.



Invest in Transportation Options for Every Journey



Coordinated Approach to Road Safety, Complete Streets, and Multi-use Trail Projects

- ✓ Incorporate a Vision Zero approach into the Regional Transportation Safety Plan update.
- ✓ Take on new initiatives such as the Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Priority Network Plan, offering bike/ped count and walk audit as additional services.
- ✓ Continue to participate in the development and implementation of the Greater Hartford Mobility Study.

Expand & Diversify the Region's Housing Stock



Key Considerations



Region (and all of CT) lags in housing production.



Frequent public comments on lack of affordable ownership opportunities and rent.



Greater recognition and acknowledgement of how historic land use decisions impacted minority communities.



Opportunities to increase housing supply in ways that respect and complement the variety of community types found in our region.



CTRail and Ctfastrak offer opportunities to connect housing and transit.

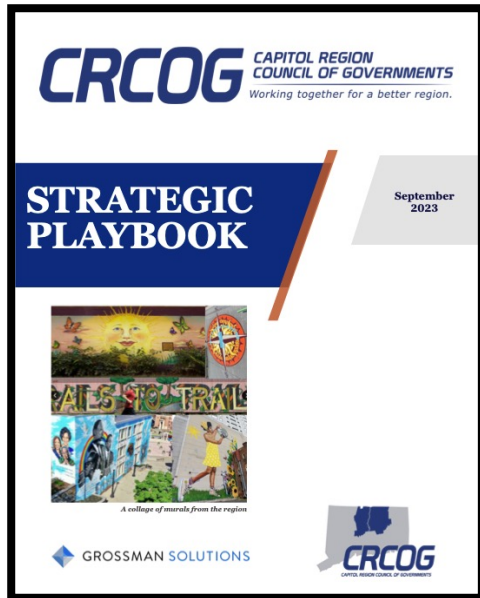
Expand & Diversify the Region's Housing Stock

Goals

1. Preserve the region's housing stock.
2. Diversify the region's housing stock.
3. Increase affordable housing in the region.
4. Build housing adjacent to transit.
5. Provide the region's vulnerable populations with a safe place to live.



Expand & Diversify the Region's Housing Stock



Regional Housing Strategy

- ✓ Develop a comprehensive housing strategy for our region in partnership with housing-based organizations and other stakeholders.
- ✓ Develop a housing toolkit, including model regulations and policies, based on recommendations outlined in the strategy.

Regional Policy Map

What

Suitable Development Areas

Areas of regional significance

Areas served by water and / or sewer with a quarter mile buffer (darker areas have both)

Transit stops with a half-mile buffer

Hartford Line & CTfastrak with a half-mile buffer

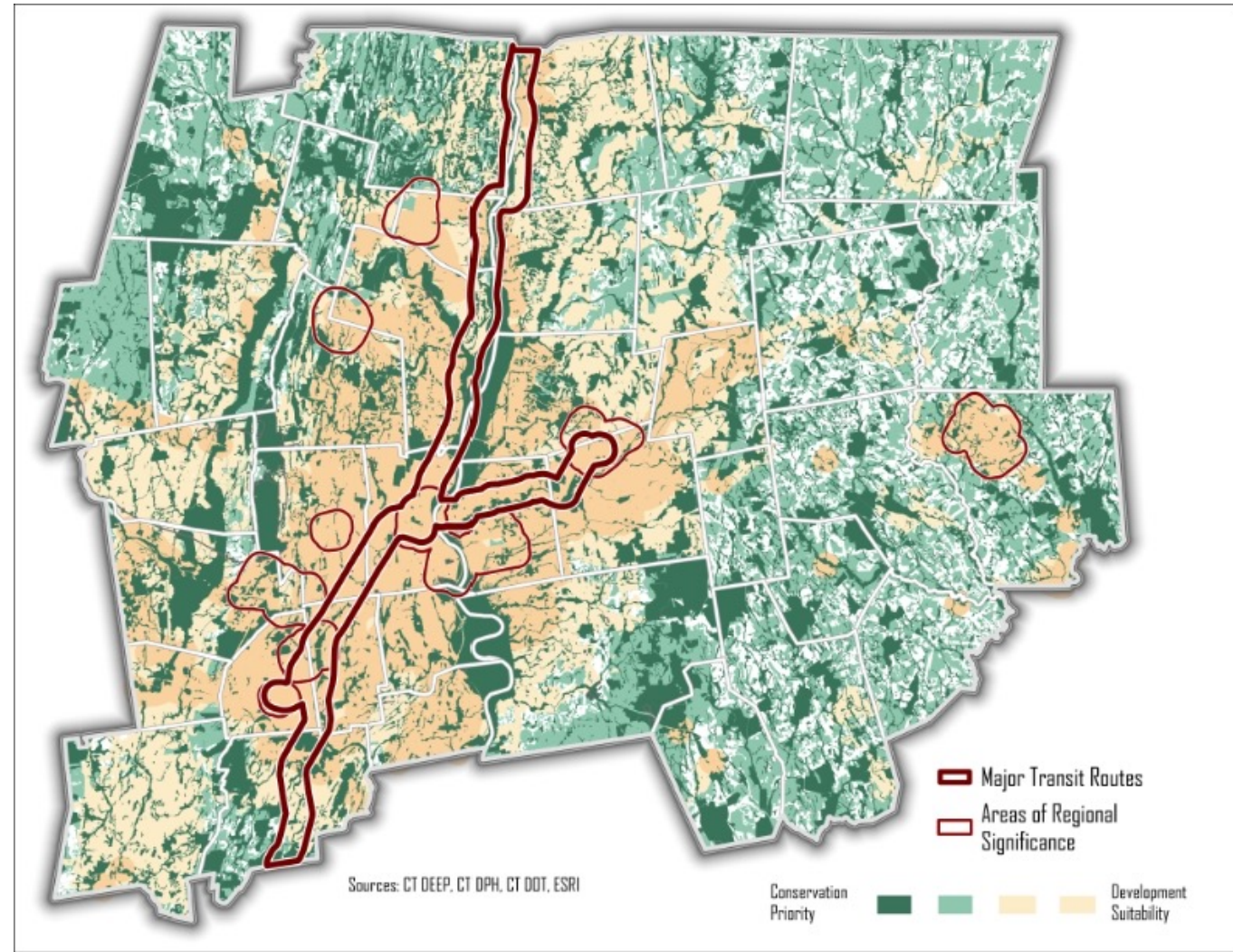
Priority Conservation Areas

High

- 100 year floodplain
- Wetlands and water bodies
- Preserved open space

Medium

- Steep slopes (greater than 15 percent)
- Habitat (NDDDB and Critical Habitat)
- Aquifer Protection Areas





Using the POCD

1. City/town grant applications
2. Support / backup for initiatives in your community
3. Referrals
4. Consistency of your local POCD with regional POCD

Next Steps



Next Steps



May 22: Initial Presentation to Policy Board



June 21: Review updated draft with RPC



July: Post on-line mid-month for public review



September 19: Public Hearing

RPC approval either September 19 or at special meeting in October



November: Policy Board approval



Post-Adoption: Implementation Plan, Annual Progress Reports

Your Feedback:

- Today
- Email hsamokar@crcog.org by May 31
- During 65 public comment period (mid-July to September)