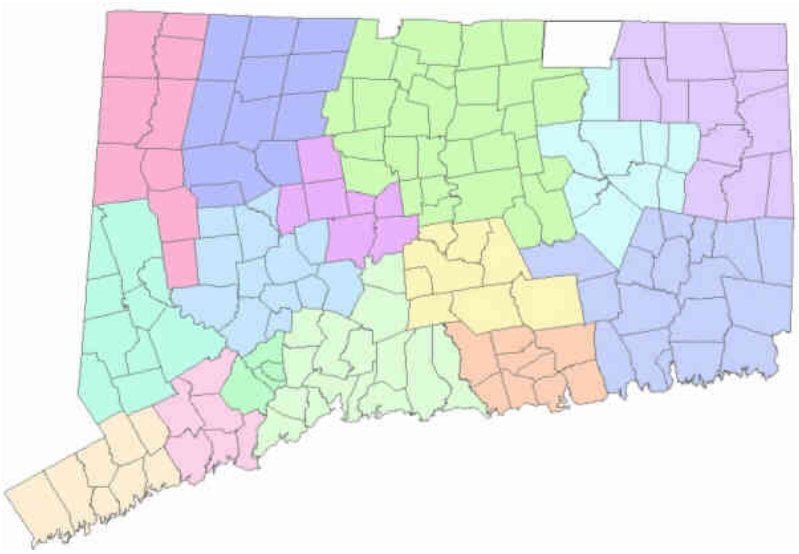
THE GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF CONNECTICUT'S REGIONAL PLANNING



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION
OF REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

ADOPTED MAY 13, 2010

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A: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT

Under Section 16a-4a of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) is responsible for the designation of boundaries for regional planning in the state. This state boundary setting responsibility extends back to the 1950s.

State Statute Section 16a-4c became law in 2008. It requires that by January 1, 2012 the CT Office of Policy and Management (CT OPM) complete an analysis of the boundaries for "logical planning regions" designated or redesignated under Section 16a-4a.

The boundaries of Connecticut's 15 regional planning organizations (RPOs), some operating for as long as 50 years, are to be reassessed. As part of the analysis CT OPM shall:

Develop criteria to evaluate the impact of urban centers on neighboring towns. Such criteria shall include, but not be limited to, criteria to (1) evaluate trends in economic development and the environment, including trends in housing patterns, employment levels, commuting patterns for the most common job classifications in the state, traffic patterns on major roadways, and local perceptions of social and historic ties.

And (2) establish a minimum size for logical planning areas that takes into consideration the number of municipalities, total population and the total square mileage.

This upcoming state study could contribute significantly to the evolution of regional planning in Connecticut. It is the intent of the 15 regional planning organizations (RPOs) that together comprise the membership of the Connecticut Association of Regional Planning Organizations (CARPO) to cooperate fully with the CT OPM boundary review and ensure its validity.

The primary purposes of this CARPO paper are to provide all involved in the upcoming OPM study with background information appropriate to this specialized topic. In particular:

--- A history of RPO boundary geography as a base for evaluating possible changes to that geography.

--- A review of state agency substate districting issues and how RPO boundaries become confused with these districts.

--- Input to the structure of the OPM study in the form of recommended data sets.

--- Prelude to CARPO recommendations.

RPO ORGANIZATIONAL FORMATS

Regional planning organizations in Connecticut are authorized to select from three varying statutorily authorized organizational formats. These are regional planning agencies (5), councils of elected officials (3), and councils of governments (7).

The acronym "RPO" is the acknowledged statewide identifier applicable to all three formats and all 15 organizations.

Regional planning agencies
organized under Chapter 127, Section 8-31:
--- Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
--- Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency
--- Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency
--- Midstate Regional Planning Agency
--- South Western Regional Planning Agency

Councils of elected officials
organized under Chapter 50, Section 4-124c:
--- Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
--- Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials
--- Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials

Councils of governments
organized under Chapter 50, Section 4-124i:
--- Capitol Region Council of Governments
--- Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
--- Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments
--- South Central Regional Council of Governments
--- Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
--- Valley Council of Governments
--- Windham Region Council of Governments

2007 PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

In 2007 the General Assembly's Program Review and Investigations Committee (PRIC) completed an assessment of Connecticut's 15 regional planning organizations. The upcoming CT OPM regional boundary review is in response to a recommendation within the PRIC report.

CARPO recommends that the 2007 PRIC Report serve as an important data resource for CT OPM during the upcoming regional boundary analysis.

According to the 2007 PRIC Report, 168 of Connecticut's 169 municipalities are dues paying members of their RPO, with membership voluntary under state statute. And the report found that few municipalities were disgruntled with their RPO boundary.

According to the Report, "Until 2007 no town had ever formally requested a move from one region to another. Indeed, until the recent assignment of Union to a specific planning region and the possible assignment of Stafford to another planning region, there have not been any changes in the boundaries of the logical regions since the 1970s."

Note that the discussion above refers to the change option allowed under CGS Section 16a-4b where OPM sets boundaries. Towns may also petition for inclusion in an adjacent RPO under CGS Section 8-32a.

Also note that in 2007 Ashford dropped its membership in the Windham Region Council of Governments and became a member of the adjacent Northeastern CT Council of Governments, across the CT OPM defined boundary. According to the 2007 PRIC report, "Ashford submitted a formal request for a boundary change to CT OPM, but the request is still pending."

OPM has since denied that request, yet Ashford successfully maintains its preferred regional affiliation with municipal neighbors to the east rather than to the west and south, an interesting precedent.

A statewide survey of municipal chief elected officials conducted by legislative staff as part of the 2007 Report documented 39.6% rating their RPO as excellent, 41.8% as good, 13.2% as fair and 5.5% as poor. These scores indicate work to be done, but overall a decent report card.

The validity of RPO boundaries did not appear to be a source of local irritation. Yet in the same survey, 93% of municipal chief elected officials agreed that RPO boundaries should be reevaluated periodically.

Connecticut's RPOs support this majority opinion and are ready to cooperate fully with CT OPM.

RECENT POLICY CONTEXT FOR BOUNDARY REVIEW

Discussion in recent years has speculated on policy directions that should be taken for the RPOs: How might they be revised or strengthened to better serve present and future needs?

For example, a Connecticut Conference of Municipalities policy of late 2009 stated that RPOs should be "provided with revenue raising and land use authority." That would be a dramatic change from their current largely advisory status.

But during many such discussions, questions of expanding regional functions are accompanied by this parallel concern: "Before enhancement of RPO functions, we should first reassess the validity of regional boundaries."

Concerning RPO boundaries, the late 2009 CCM policy statement advises drawing them such that Connecticut retains only 5 to 7 RPOs. This contrasts with Connecticut's private sector which organizes market activity into 12 regional chambers of commerce. Federal housing agencies document that there are no fewer than 12 distinct housing markets within the state.

The 2005-2010 CT Conservation and Development Policies Plan identified 21 "Regional Centers," in 2009 the General Assembly set 50 as the appropriate maximum number of regions to deliver probate services.

Clearly the question of "what is a region" has different answers depending upon the function to be regionalized.

A discussion of future RPO responsibilities is not the topic of this CARPO report. Rather, its purpose is to serve as a primer as to context and data needs for a valid boundary reevaluation process.

Yet links between RPO form and RPO function remain, for the geographic scope of RPOs will impact their future functionality for various purposes.

B. ORIGINS OF BOUNDARIES

Connecticut's regional structure can be seen on a satellite photo. But on the same photo no municipal boundary is evident.

CENTERS AND THEIR AREAS OF INFLUENCE

As a universal historic force in Connecticut and elsewhere, requirements for human settlement include needs greater than those met by a single locality.

Especially in the modern urban world, a single community has a strong interest in the activities of the geographic units that surround it. Today the United States is divided into subnational and substate units of common interest: counties, service districts, regions of all kinds. Further, we often use the term "metropolitan areas," which by definition include "relatively large population centers" coupled with "adjacent zones of influence."

According to the Census Bureau, "the metropolitan concept arose from the common observation that the physical extent of a large urban concentration often overflows the official limits of any single city."

This is certainly true in Connecticut, where most municipal boundaries were fixed in place by Revolutionary times. As a result many modern geographers have labeled Connecticut's larger cities, Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven, as "under bounded"; they were never expanded geographically as their adjacent tributary areas grew outwards.

To identify a metropolitan area today we look for an aggregate geographic area inclusive of not only a well known city population, but also its inner city, suburban, exurban and sometimes rural surrounding populations, all of which are influenced by employment, transportation, and commerce of the more well known urban city.

Metropolitan areas across the United States vary dramatically in terms of their total size. Some urban development at the center is a minimum requirement. A second

requirement is the presence of "descending rings of intensity" characterized by city center, city outskirts, inner suburb, outer suburb and semi-rural exurbs.

A cluster of outlying low density towns in Connecticut may have close ties, and may indeed be a distinct group by their common economy, culture and tradition, but without an urban core coupled with adjacent suburban characteristics, they may not call themselves a "metropolitan region." Rather, they constitute one of Connecticut's "rural regions."

Just this viewpoint on regional definition was established by the enabling act for the upcoming CT OPM RPO boundary study, now codified as State Statute Section 16a-4c. According to that statute, the criteria for conducting the analysis of RPO boundaries focuses on the degree of "impact of urban centers on neighboring towns."

The logic that follows is to define the outer edge of the impact area to be the "regional boundary."

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY REGIONALISM

In the United States by the 1920s and 1930s academic experts and promoters of progressive government were extolling the virtues of regional approaches to public issues. Railroads, trolley lines, and especially the automobile, had done much to convert land use and accompanying infrastructure patterns from local to regional.

In Connecticut during these early decades the approaches to regional planning included only voluntary regional planning associations with no official status, single purpose regional entities for water supply, and the development of regional plans by state agencies. Greater Hartford's Metropolitan District Commission was created in 1929.

The real birth of Connecticut's modern regionalism arrived in 1947 when the General Assembly passed the first regional planning enabling act.

As stated by the Program Review and Investigations Committee 2007's Report on RPOs, "the need to address certain public policy issues on a regional versus an individual town basis has been recognized in Connecticut since the 1940s when the state legislature authorized the creation of regional planning agencies."

Key within the intent of the 1947 state enabling legislation for regional planning was "to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the region."

At the core of that process was and remains "comprehensive planning." This is defined as simultaneous planning of distinct elements such as housing, economic development, transportation, land use, water and sewer services.

The New Haven Area was organized as the first RPO and stood alone as such for more than 10 years. The organizational process was conducted by the municipalities themselves. Some did not join, leaving holes in the regional pattern.

Then a catalyst to further RPO development was the havoc in the aftermath of the floods of 1955. The state reacted by preparing widely publicized comprehensive regional plans for the Naugatuck River, Farmington River and Quinebaug River Valleys.

But by 1959 the CT Development Commission was stating that, "The watersheds do not, in all cases, relate well to the metropolitan areas of the State, thus limiting 'logical' regional planning." As seen from an airplane, metropolitan regions with their core, suburbs and fringe had become dominant features within Connecticut's topography – the post World War II development boom.

Yet there was no regional comprehensive planning process in place to shape the regional decisions needed for the new physical forms appearing. The consensus of these times was that Connecticut should build the needed regional coordination structure.

LATE FIFTIES RPO BOUNDARY DEFINITIONS

While in the original 1947 legislation regional planning boundaries were to be formed solely on the basis of cooperative agreements between municipalities, self-selection so to speak, by 1957 the General Assembly took action to prevent emerging regional agencies from adding towns piecemeal. As noted, such state boundary guidance remains in place today as Section 16a-4a.

Seeking to document clusters of municipalities with the key ingredient of strong common interest, the CT Development Commission in the late 1950s conducted professional planning studies to identify and score the relative strength of intermunicipal ties.

The Commission stated in 1959 that it was seeking boundaries for municipal groupings to facilitate these key cooperative functions:

1) Join together to consider problems of regional significance.

2) Serve as a meeting ground for the solution of problems along town lines and recommend plans for intertown facilities.

3) Be a united voice for the region to present objectives and needs to state agencies.

4) Provide technical assistance on local planning problems to member municipalities.

Through the RPOs, municipalities in each of the differing geographies of the state were now to have the ability to develop a consensus on important issues facing their areas and to articulate those needs and concerns to each other and to state officials.

Research criteria were designed to identify urban centers and those towns exhibiting social, economic, cultural and physical orientation to such core areas. The upcoming CT OPM boundary review is to use a similar methodology.

Municipal orientation was rated by studies of data such as readership of major metropolitan newspapers, municipal commuting patterns, economic and social ties implied by the destination of local phone calls, and usage of centrally located hospitals.

The accent on proximate physical development density and pattern was highly evident in these late 1950s studies, with strong scoring for towns contiguous to an urban center. Points were added for "substantial, continuous urban development spread from the urban center across the boundary into an adjoining municipality."

Also, "whenever feasible, the regions to be defined would consist of those municipalities whose economic, social and cultural activities were oriented to the economy of an urban center."

The landmark study released in 1959 by the Connecticut Development Commission was entitled "Progress Toward Regional Planning in Connecticut."

The 1959 study documented "a number of homogeneous areas where common interests and problems across municipal boundaries could be anticipated… There should also be included those municipalities which have not as yet developed a clear and strong relationship to the urban center but where there appears to be indications that such a relationship will develop in the near future."

Aside from the urban center and suburban focus, "rural regions" also were to be defined. Studies of collections of outlying smaller towns showed that they had no clearly dominant urban center orientation. The upcoming CT OPM evaluation of RPO boundaries will determine the extent to which this is still the case for these more remote towns.

In 1959 the Capitol Regional Planning Agency (later reorganized as the Capitol Region Council of Governments) became the first region to be constituted under the boundary study structure of 1959. Capitol was followed by the Central Naugatuck Valley Regional

Planning Agency (later reorganized as the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley) in 1960.

Eleven of the other 12 regions were then established in the 1960's. The Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (now the Northwestern CT Council of Governments) was the last to form in 1972.

The RPO boundaries that emerged in the sixties were considered an achievement and a source of pride. So much so that the Connecticut Highway Department posted entry signs to each planning region on major highways, educating travelers as to which of the new regional planning areas they were entering.

Reviewing the old reports, we see that the regional research process was also structured to give strong weight to the views of municipalities themselves, not just to research data on town to town and town to city attractions.

Ultimately it was the municipal population that needed to feel their RPO assignment made sense if they were to participate in creative regional relationships, not just rely upon statistical analysis for the placement.

CARPO advises that the same need for local buy-in is true today, and that recognition of this need will go a long way in securing municipal support for proposed revisions to existing regional boundaries, if any are warranted.

COUNTY BOUNDARIES DEEMED ONLY MARGINALLY RELEVANT

In Connecticut the first substate districting had emerged by 1666, six of the current eight counties. The boundaries of the final two, Middlesex County and Tolland County, were finalized by 1785.

These historic boundaries remain in official use for defining judicial districts. And counties are generally familiar to Connecticut citizens today, frequently viewed on web and TV weather maps and elsewhere. Citizen identification is with town, but also "town and county."

However, these convenient substate units did not emerge as viable regional planning boundaries during the state study of the late fifties. It was clear by then to both researchers and the public that Connecticut's metropolitan development patterns quite decidedly did not follow early colonial boundaries.

The force of newer metro ties was found to be much stronger than that of the older county ties. The county lines were potentially useful for regional planning but did not

encompass the central city – surrounding suburb - metropolitan area structure of post World War II Connecticut.

The low correlation between county boundaries and RPO boundary criteria is evidenced by the comparison below:

-- Capitol RPO: 22 from Hartford County, 7 from Tolland County
-- Central CT RPO: 6 from Hartford County, 1 from Litchfield County
-- Central Naugatuck RPO: 9 from New Haven County, 4 from Litchfield County
-- Estuary RPO: 7 from Middlesex County, 2 from New London County
-- Greater Bridgeport RPO: 6 from Fairfield County

-- Housatonic Valley RPO: 8 from Fairfield County, 2 from Litchfield County
-- Litchfield Hills RPO: 10 from Litchfield County, 1 from Hartford County
-- Midstate RPO: 8 from Middlesex County
-- Northeastern RPO: 10 from Windham County, 1 from Tolland County
-- Northwestern RPO: 9 from Litchfield County

-- South Central RPO: 15 from New Haven County
-- Southeastern RPO: 18 from New London County
-- South Western RPO: 8 from Fairfield County
-- Valley RPO: 3 from New Haven County, 1 from Fairfield County
-- Windham RPO: 5 from Windham County, 4 from Tolland County, 1 from New London County
-- Undefined Municipality: 1 from Tolland County

A supporting influence was the fact that almost all county functions had been abolished in Connecticut by 1960.

In 1987 the University of Connecticut's Institute of Public Service completed a research paper entitled "Regional Planning in Connecticut" that commented on this early period. The ways in which formation for regional areas varied across the country was explained:

In seeking a solution to regional issues which were common to many urban and suburban areas of the United States, many regions resorted to the technique of extensive town annexation.

In such cases the government of the expanding urban complex took over surrounding unincorporated areas…. In Connecticut the entire area of the state is included within the 169 municipalities. Hence, there is no possibility of annexation of unincorporated areas around the metropolitan sectors.

Because Connecticut has never had effective county government and its towns and cities have a strong tradition of political home rule, metropolitan super government is politically unacceptable in the state.

The 169 units of local government may not represent the most efficient method of dealing with the problems of today's complex urban and suburban environments, but they are indicative of the historically close identification of individuals with their local government.

In Connecticut, state and local governments had to develop a system of area-wide planning which would address and recommend solutions for regional problems before they developed into crises and they had to do so within the existing climate of dedication to legislative and political home rule.

1961 RESEARCH EMERGES ON EASTERN SEABOARD MEGAREGION (MEGALOPOLIS)

There was an influential book published in 1961 entitled "Megalopolis: The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States" by geographer Jean Gottman. The term "BosWash" to describe this area would also soon come into use, defining "the megalopolis that will extend from Washington to Boston" along a narrow strip of the North Atlantic Coast.

An additional view on urban growth, cities and suburbs, etc. was suggested: that we should see ourselves in an economic, transportation and land use context that extends beyond the Connecticut State Line.

This perspective was not dealt with in any substantial way in the late 1959 RPO boundary study. The focus there extended to just out-of-state towns adjacent to the new Connecticut planning regions.

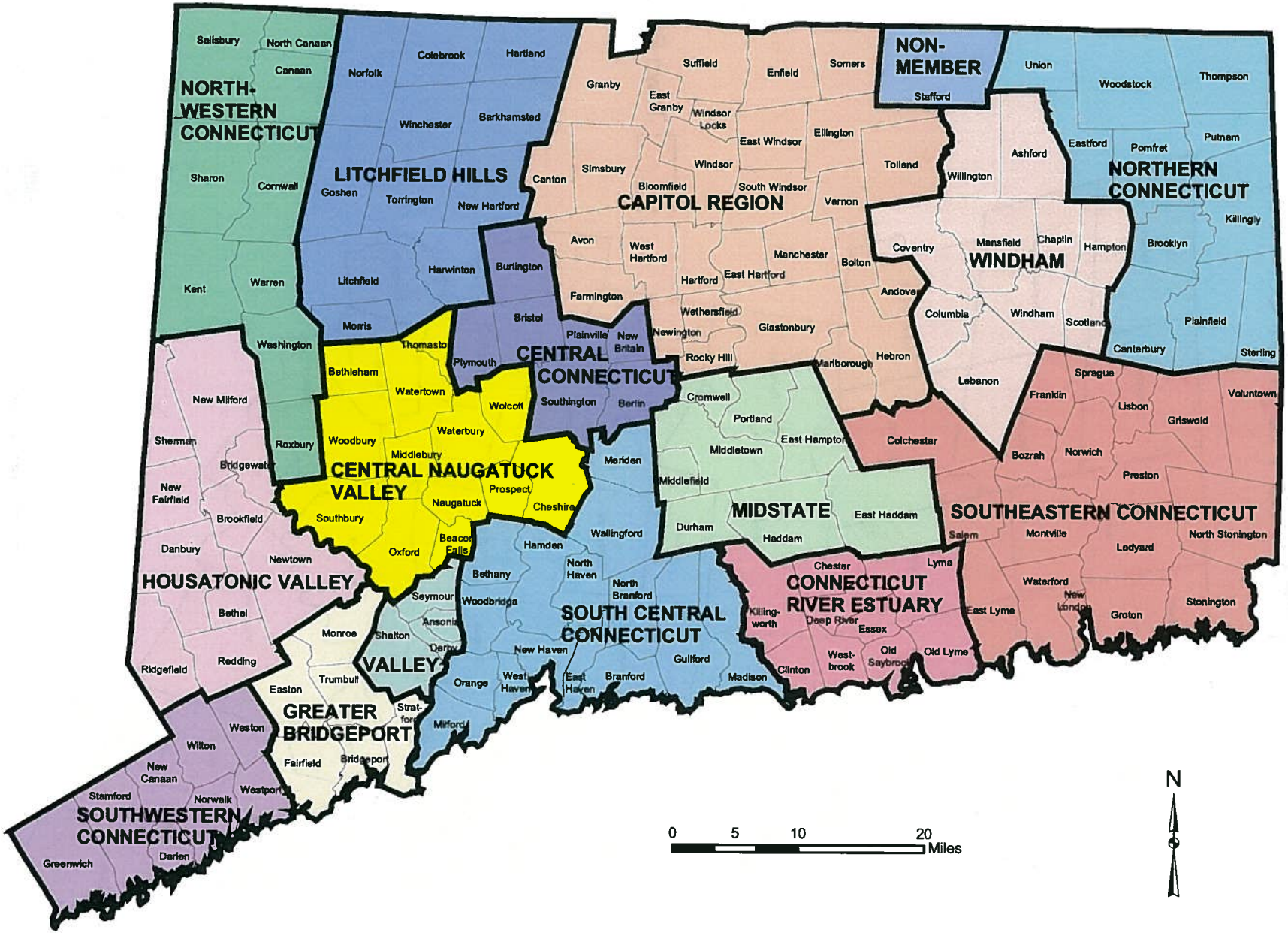
Taking this broader look now we see that to the east, the Boston Metro Area is by any standard large. Then moving towards Connecticut, the Greater Providence and Greater Worcester Areas are easily recognizable as of moderate size. Continuing west, Greater Springfield and Greater Hartford are again of moderate size.

However, in western Connecticut the uniform pattern is for all metropolitan areas to be relatively small in size. The cause of this is found to the southwest of Connecticut.

Under the influence of the adjacent massive New York Metropolitan Area, coupled with multi-corridor transportation arteries, no mid-sized metro comparable in size to Greater Hartford was ever able to form in western Connecticut. There was simply too much competition with the New York Metro for another midsized "central place" to take root.

Although the 1959 study did not look much beyond the state line, it was this multi-nucleated and repeating small urban area geography of western Connecticut that was accurately captured in the late fifties boundary set-up.

If after 50 years some Connecticut metro areas seem "overly small," the above NYC related shaping force remains the cause. It is CARPO's recommendation that Connecticut should not now "create big regions" administratively for the sake of size if in reality there are no very large metropolitan centers, nor are any likely to emerge.



REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS IN CONNECTICUT

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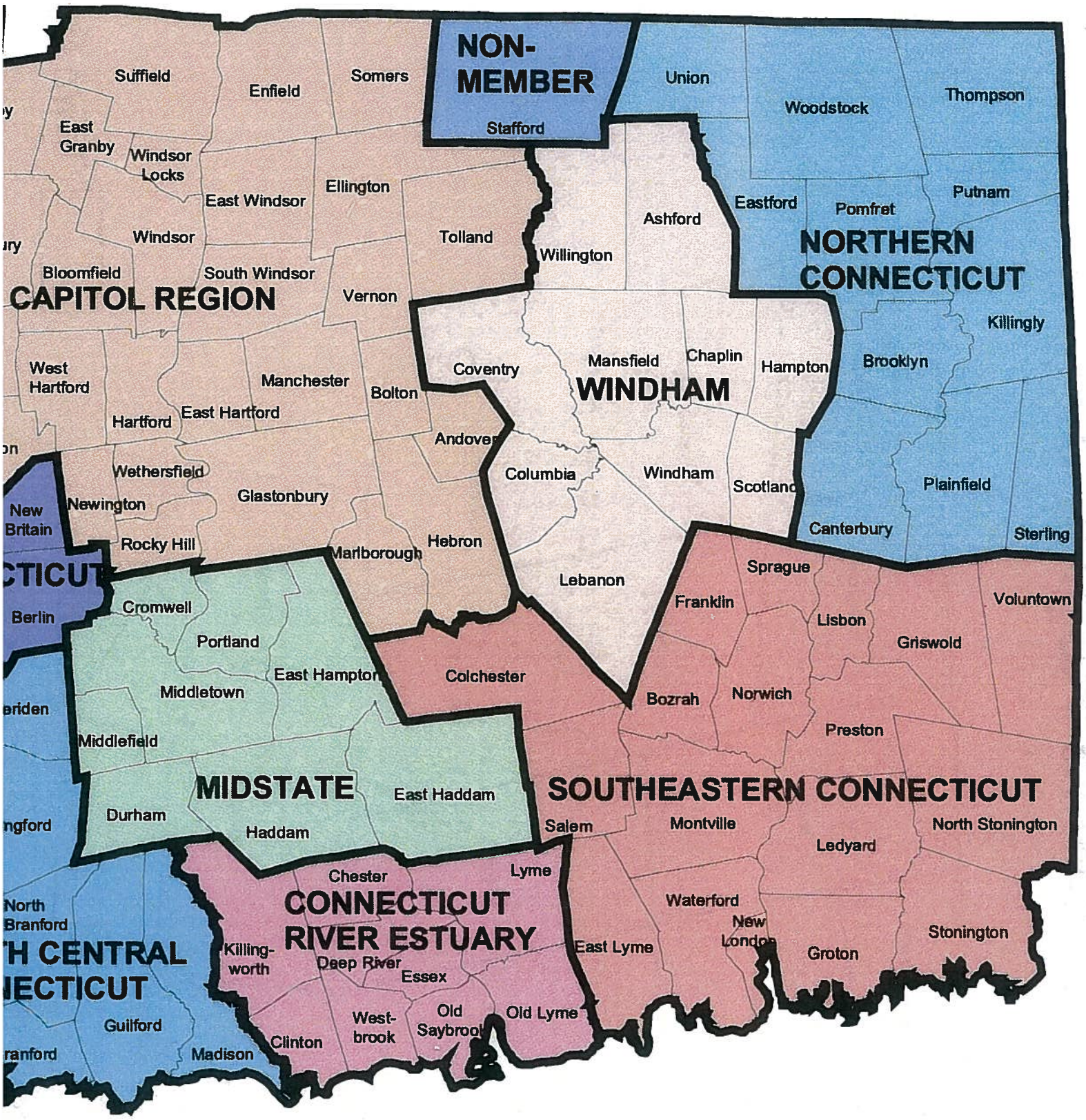
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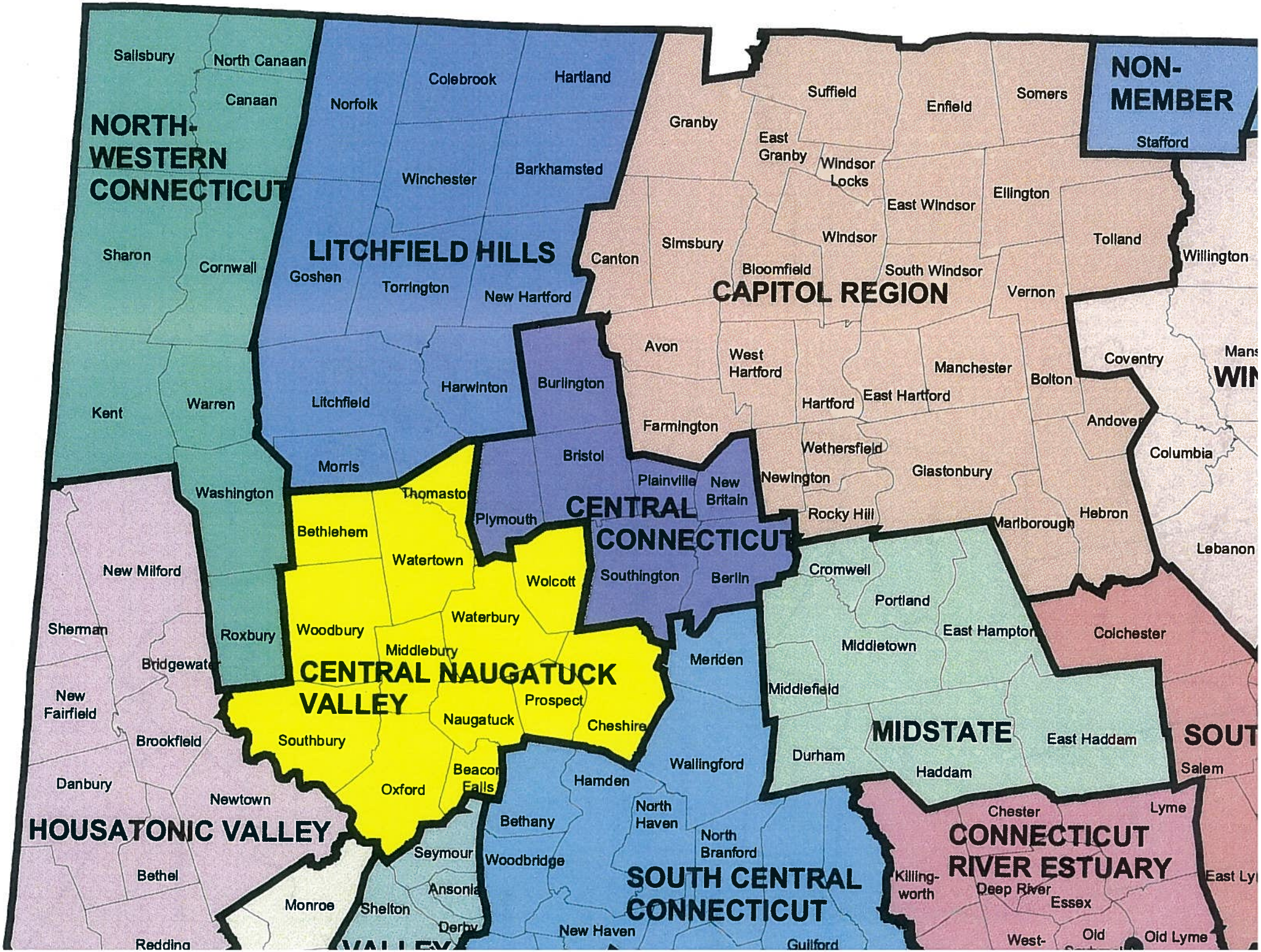
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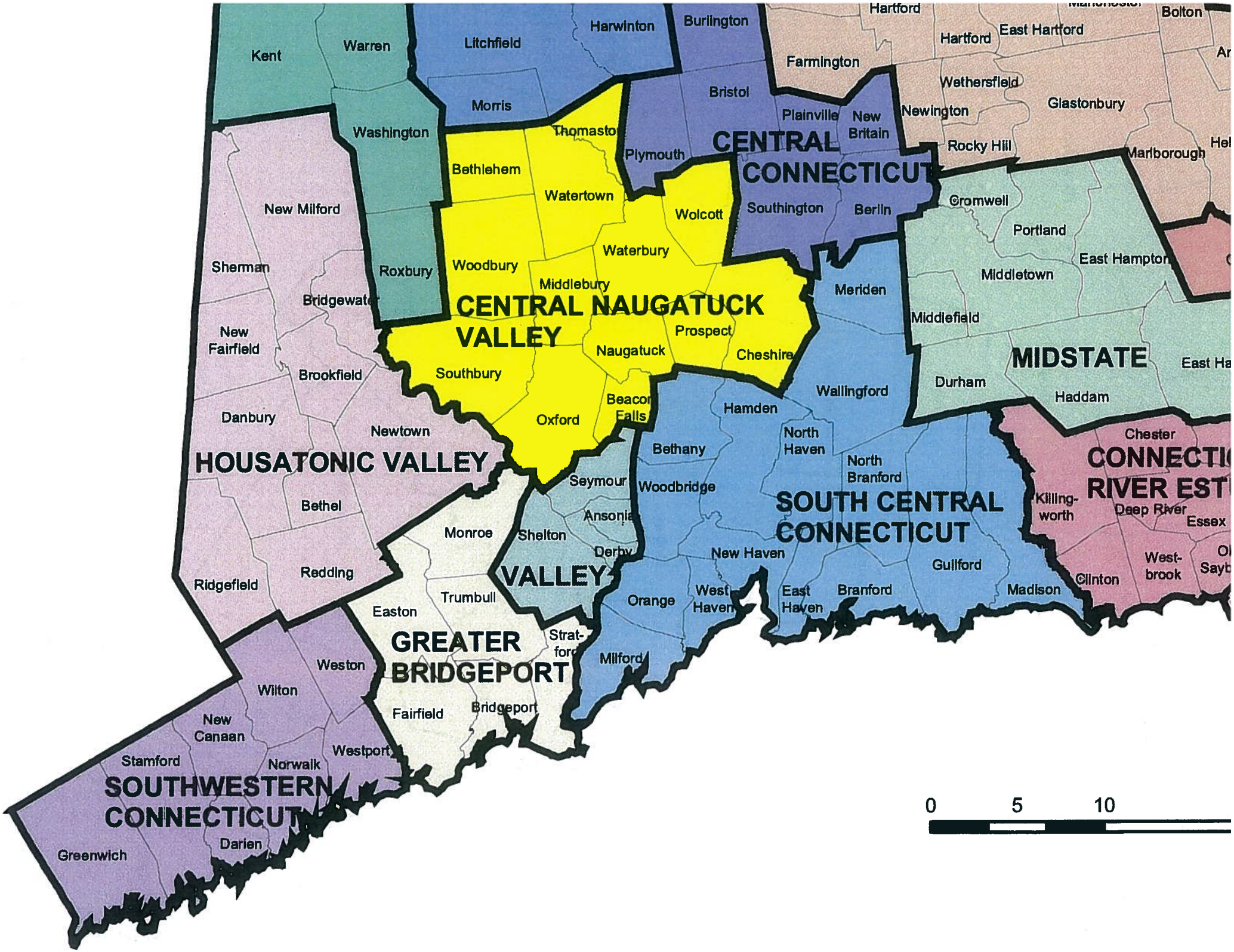
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C: RPO MILESTONES RELATED TO BOUNDARIES

There is no question that the regions have become a uniquely utilitarian means of fulfilling essential functions for municipalities large and small; acting as necessary planning and program links between and among federal, state and local governments in the absence of county governments which bind localities in other states.

They are widely accepted mechanisms through which towns voluntarily join together in solving common problems... Regional agencies can play increasingly important roles in accomplishing certain goals more effectively and economically than any other existing means.

-- University of Connecticut Institute of Public Service Newsletter of Spring 1987

1960S – 1980 HUD SECTION 701 PLANNING

For many years the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) managed a "Section 701 Comprehensive Planning Assistance Program" authorized under the continuing 1954 Housing Act. This funding source provided two-thirds matching grants for planning by regions.

HUD certification of the RPO plan was mandated before federal grants could be received locally. Topical areas included sewage disposal, water supply and open space. The regional boundaries of the day were considered appropriate for HUD certification in Connecticut.

Much of what is today characterized as undesirable "sprawl development pattern" was built during this era. HUD and other federal agencies were very concerned that capital construction grants for the supporting municipal sewer mains be based upon regionally prepared projections and regionally developed growth policy maps.

Most of Connecticut's RPOs received 701 Program grants from HUD during this period. The result was the inclusion within many federal capital grant projects of valuable regional elements.

1966 – 1982 REGIONS REVIEW
FEDERAL GRANT APPLICATIONS

Between 1966 and 1982 the federal government made use of Connecticut's RPOs for review of federal grant applications submitted from area municipalities and state agencies affecting the region. The federal government decided early on that RPO regional geography was suitable for this new responsibility.

Studies by the federal government in the early sixties had identified lack of intergovernmental coordination as a major problem in the successful implementation of domestic policies. Program duplication, overlap, and geographic fragmentation were seen as inherent weaknesses of the federal categorical grant system.

This newly required regional review was managed through the federal Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-95. The corresponding RPO agenda item was commonly termed "Monthly A-95 Reviews."

At its peak, applicants for a total of 240 federal programs were subject to RPO scrutiny and comment as to duplication and regional inefficiency. Overall, many A-95 Reviews were judged by RPOs to be routine and easily approved. Some received comments attached to the review response. A few received negative reviews and in some cases the A-95 Review system was politically charged between municipalities.

This Connecticut RPO regional coordination activity came to a close when the A-95 Review system was terminated by the federal government in 1982.

1973 FEDERAL REQUIREMENT FOR
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The roots of today's Connecticut RPO regional transportation planning are found in the 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act. That Act established the requirement that a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive or "3C" transportation planning process be carried out in urbanized areas of over 50,000 population in order to be eligible to receive federal funding for transportation projects.

This federal requirement, for an "urbanized area" approach, was initially met without RPO involvement. Instead, the Connecticut Highway Department operated under memorandums of understanding directly with communities over 50,000 population in the urbanized areas.

But then the 1973 Federal-Aid Highway Act more fully regionalized and democratized the process. The Governor was now required to designate "Metropolitan Planning

Organizations" or MPOs to be responsible along with Conn DOT for carrying out a federally defined metropolitan transportation planning process.

Connecticut's urban RPOs were designated by the Governor and the U.S. DOT to receive planning and capital programming responsibility over federally funded transportation projects in their regions, a significant increase in their responsibilities.

The U.S. DOT needed substate districts appropriate for federal designation as MPOs. The federal goal was systems efficiency and economy via regional review and planning. Regional transportation planning was being required nationally to help insure the most productive use of scarce funds and the careful targeting of investments.

The motivation behind the federal emphasis on regionalism was that transportation systems, with their daily inter-municipal flows reflecting trip attractions within the area, were so obviously regional in nature.

Thus since 1974 RPOs evaluate every proposed transportation improvement in a regional context to insure efficiency and lowest cost.

Conn DOT fills out the state's regional transportation planning geography by grants to rural non-MPO RPO's such that all 15 RPOs participate in the regional transportation planning process. In Connecticut this federal program fits nicely with CT General Statute 8-35a directing each RPO to "promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of its area of operation."

But under federal rules the new MPOs could not be composed of non-elected appointees as found in the "regional planning agency" statutory format. Rather, the MPO voting board must be composed of "principal elected officials of general purpose local governments" as found in the "council of governments" or "council of elected officials" RPO formats.

This requirement for municipal CEO voting was a very important force in the evolution of Connecticut's RPOs, leading several regional planning agencies to convert to the council of governments or council of elected officials formats.

But some regional planning agencies retained the basic structure of municipal appointees on their boards, adding a second board of elected officials to meet the new federal requirement.

Basic to understanding current RPO operations and viability, is the reality that U.S DOT funding for MPO and rural transportation planning in Connecticut is today by far the dominant RPO funding source.

All RPOs have had at their financial core a combination of 1) local dues, 2) annual CT OPM State Grant-in-Aid (SGIA) for regional planning, and 3) an annual federal grant for transportation planning. Totaling these three financial mainstays, the percentage provided by the federal transportation planning grant has increased dramatically in recent years.

The federal DOT percentage of the three sources combined was 35% on average in 1989. That figure climbed to 47% by 1993. Then the percentage rose to the low to mid-60% range from 1995 to 1999 and the high 60% range between 2000 to 2003. The federal DOT percentage up until 2007 fluctuated between the high 60% and low 70% range.

Then the CT OPM State Grant-in-Aid, funded consistently since 1971, was dropped from the state budget after 2009. That action pushed the percentage of average RPO funding from federal DOT in FY2010 up to an estimated 78% of RPO total funding from these three sources.

As far as revision to RPO boundaries is concerned, CARPO recommends that the presence of a metropolitan area (or "micropolitan" area) transportation system weigh significantly in that evaluation.

1973-1982 CT-NJ-NY TRI-STATE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

As noted above, Connecticut's position on the nation's northeastern seaboard ensures much of the southwestern part of the state a position as part of the large New York Metropolitan Area. As a result, Connecticut's early MPOs there were only partially MPO-empowered, sharing MPO powers and responsibility with New York and New Jersey.

From 1973 to 1982 the six southwestern RPOs were included by the General Assembly as subunits with the Connecticut - Metro New York – Northeastern New Jersey "Tri-State Regional Planning Commission." These MPOs were SWRPA, HVCEO, GBRPA, VCOG, COGCNV and SCCCOG.

The federal transportation capital project programming power conferred by MPO status was shared among these 6 RPOs and the larger encompassing Tri-State Commission. The system worked efficiently for some years, with these RPOs serving as sub units within a larger tri-state MPO district.

In reality Connecticut's 6 "sub-MPO RPOs" retained much programming power except over their largest projects, which was reserved to the super-MPO meeting monthly at the World Trade Center in New York City.

While there were never any direct regional boundary disputes, the arrangement was terminated by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1982, with a return to Conn DOT and Connecticut RPOs full MPO and financial programming powers. This followed an interstate dispute over control of the A-95 review process, coupled with Tri-State's aggressive affordable housing plans for Connecticut suburbs.

Note that a coordinating metro transportation planning process with New York and New Jersey was revived in 2008 with a lesser area of the four closest RPOs participating: SWRPA, HVCEO, GBRPA and VCOG. This simpler coordination process for large transportation projects does not involve the sharing of MPO authority and is continuing successfully as of 2010.

1974 REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCILS

In 1974 Governor Ella Grasso selected the boundaries of the 15 planning regions to be the logical units for regional housing councils, voluntary groups which would address affordable housing issues. The chairman of each was a gubernatorial appointee.

Most RPOs provided meeting space and staff support for these groups into the 1980's when the state terminated the process.

1978 – 1982 DEP WATER QUALITY DATA AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In 1978 the CT Department of Environmental Protection made use of all RPOs for water resource based environmental planning. Simultaneously the RPOs were also designated for area wide water pollution control planning by the U.S. EPA.

These new duties were significant. Adequate funding was provided for additional RPO staff. This was to be a creative period of water resource mapping, precise enough to be of use in municipal zoning regulations and town plans. CT DEP provided the coordination for interregional mapping along RPO boundaries.

This work was the origin of the statewide environmental data base in use today, and the results are still reflected in aquifer protection, soil erosion and other municipal ordinances dating from that period.

The end of federal funding led to the termination of what was judged to be a successful DEP- RPO collaboration.

1983 REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Connecticut's 15 regional planning organizations were reassessed in 1983 by the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Development.

Their "Report to the General Assembly on the Future of Connecticut's Regional Planning Agencies" was dated January 5, 1983. The Committee concluded that:

While RPAs have their critics, and while some more than others may be limited by their member towns in their latitude of performance, there is no question that the regions have become uniquely utilitarian means of fulfilling essential functions for municipalities large and small; for acting as necessary planning and program links between and among federal, state and local governments; and, in the absence of county governments which bind localities in other states.

They are widely accepted mechanisms through which towns voluntarily join together in solving common problems... Regional agencies can play increasingly important roles in accomplishing certain goals more effectively and economically than any other existing means….

As federal resources dwindle, and our state and local governments are thrown increasingly on their own devices for satisfying needs, regional agencies can play increasingly important roles in accomplishing certain goals more effectively and economically than any other existing means.

There was no general RPO boundary reassessment as part of the 1983 legislative review process. However, several questions related to RPO geography were raised by the report for future consideration:

--- Should regional agencies be constituted as substate districts formally within state government structure?

--- Should smaller regions be "folded in" or consolidated with larger, neighboring ones, and should larger regions such as the Capitol Region be made smaller and "more manageable?"

--- Should regional agencies be redesignated as "metropolitan core" and "rural core" districts along lines of common interest?

1986 REGIONAL WATER UTILITY COORDINATING COMMITTEES (WUCC)

In 1986 the state government faced another regional geography dilemma when water supply planning was regionalized by state law. RPO boundaries were factored into the new WUCC boundaries and the new regional water utility coordinating committees had RPOs on their boards.

According to the CT Department of Public Health the seven WUCC regions in the state are to:

--- Provide for a coordinated approach to long-range water supply planning by addressing water quality and quantity issues from an areawide perspective.

--- Bring together public water system representatives and regional planning organizations to discuss long-range water supply issues and to develop a plan for dealing with those issues.

The boundaries of the water supply planning regions were not coterminous with those of the RPOs. The criteria used by the Department of Health to define the seven new areas were "similarity of water supply problems, such as proliferation of small water systems, groundwater contamination problems, and over allocated water resources."

These criteria are quite different from the city-suburban-rural spatial relationships that define RPOs.

Yet non-congruence with RPO boundaries was viewed as acceptable to RPO advocates at the time, since the presence of water supply problems was a "single issue" variable that, while requiring a "regional approach", imposed no critical geographic conflict with RPO municipal groupings. There was sufficient reason for boundary variance.

As of 2010 this regional water supply planning program remains in operation. Under state law RPOs are WUCC board members with voting powers. RPOs are also the sole representatives of municipalities, which do not have voting rights on a WUCC board unless they are a water purveyor.

The important lesson learned here is that not all substate districts need to follow RPO boundary lines. The "metropolitan" or "rural area" boundary defined for RPOs may not be the best boundary for a single purpose function such as water problem areas and related resources.

1988 REGIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

In the late 1980s the General Assembly sought to quantify affordable housing needs statewide. Legislation was passed to fund the 15 RPOs to calculate these municipal needs from their regional perspectives.

State agencies provided a uniform study methodology for the common numerical component of the evaluation. Upon completion, regional totals were added to create an estimate of statewide affordable housing needs for use by that era's statewide Blue Ribbon Commission on Housing.

Since 1988 many RPOs have updated their regional housing plans and numerical estimates for use by municipal members.

With or without RPO staff assistance, planning for housing at the municipal level remains statutorily tied to RPO boundaries. This is due to CGS Section 8-23 requiring municipal plans to make provision for housing opportunities not only for residents of the municipality, but also for the regional population within the RPO boundary encompassing the municipality.

1993 CT HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES REGIONS

In 1993, in response to Special Act 92-22, OPM identified boundaries for six uniform regional service delivery areas to be used by the state's health and human services agencies. The new boundaries were then to be extended for use by all state agencies.

The primary motive for boundary coordination in 1993 was the plethora of federal agency single social service grant programs setting conflicting regional administrative boundary criteria. A report entitled "Strategy to Establish Uniform Regional Service Delivery Areas For All State Agencies" presented the CT OPM research conclusions.

Commenting upon the RPOs, the 1993 report stated that their boundaries "show natural affiliations of communities and suburbs to cities as well as reflect the ongoing work of communities to plan and work together." Further, "RPO boundaries in aggregate are also reflected in regions currently used by the Department of Economic Development for service delivery" (but note that RPO boundary coordination with state economic development planning is not so formalized today).

The report concluded that where a federal grant mandated administrative district must be larger than an RPO, that the new single purpose district should be composed exactly of multiples of RPOs, with no splitting of RPOs to be permitted.

Here we see a precedent for RPO boundaries to be the dominant factor in substate districting for other than metropolitan planning. In retrospect, the 1993 report was the "high watermark" for coordination of state agency subdistricts with metropolitan area geography. Had this recommendation been given teeth, much of today's confusion over regionalism could have been avoided.

As of 2010 the goal of not crossing RPO boundaries has not been achieved. There has been only limited authority for CT OPM to implement the conclusions of the 1993 report throughout state government.

Consider, for example, the State's eight "Service Delivery Areas" (SDA) within which employment and training planning and services are provided under the federal Job Training Partnership Act. The boundary correlation between such state districts and RPO boundary sets as of 2010 is significant, but not complete:

-- Capitol RPO: 100% in Hartford SDA
-- Central CT RPO: 100% in Mid-CT SDA
-- South Western RPO: 100% in Southwest SDA
-- Midstate RPO: 100% in Mid-CT SDA
-- Greater Bridgeport RPO: 100% in Southwest SDA

-- Housatonic Valley RPO: 100% in Danbury-Torrington SDA
-- Litchfield Hills RPO: 100% in Danbury-Torrington SDA
-- Northeastern RPO: 100% in Northeastern SDA
-- Valley RPO: 100% in Southwest SDA
-- Northwestern RPO: 100% in Danbury-Torrington SDA

-- Southeastern RPO: 94% in Southeast SDA
-- Central Naugatuck RPO: 92% in Waterbury SDA
-- South Central RPO: 86% in New Haven SDA
-- Windham RPO: 70% in Northeast SDA
-- Estuary RPO: 67% in Mid-CT SDA

More congruent boundary coordination is found within the CT Department of Social Services (CT DSS). That agency maintains three substate districts: western, northern and southern. The DSS Western Region sets as its eastern boundary the eastern edges of Litchfield Hills, Central Naugatuck and Greater Bridgeport RPOs, without variance.

Then the boundary between the Northern District and the Southern District follows borders of Central CT, Capitol, Windham and Northeastern RPOs, with just one exception; the Town of Lebanon is transferred from Windham RPO in the Northern Region to the Southern Region.

Thus the degree of statewide congruence between CT DSS districts and the 15 RPO boundaries is high.

Once updated RPO boundaries are in place, CARPO requests OPM to continue to factor RPO boundaries into state agency substate districting decisions.

1995 STATE PROPOSAL FOR RPO BLOCK GRANT

In 1995 Governor John Rowland's State of the State Address proposed a new "block grant" program with four components. One of the new block grants would be administered by Connecticut's RPOs.

The Governor proposed that human services within the regional areas of RPO operation be coordinated and then funded directly by RPO boards as new recipients of a block grant.

In lieu of direct grant distribution from state agencies to local social service entities, the new block grant via the RPO would be distributed amongst the towns regionally in a newly efficient and more transparent manner. The geography of the regions, their boundaries, etc., was not raised by any party as an impediment to the proposed regional program.

Adequate state funding for the additional RPO staffing needed was part of the proposal.

However, the proposal failed on political grounds. Due to state funding reductions of the era, in the first year of the new regional block grant the level of financial support was to be cut significantly. The funding cut to local agencies was to be quick and immediate; no lead time was allotted for regional economies to be achieved.

Municipal chief elected officials throughout the state saw the block grant and its funding cut as a method to shift responsibility for "delivering the bad news" of a significant funding cut from state officials to local officials.

As the state had no revised proposal and political calculation led elected officials at many RPOs to oppose the arrangement, the block grant idea was dropped by the state.

1999 REPORT OF THE CT REGIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

This landmark research, prepared by Michael Gallis & Associates of North Carolina and entitled "Connecticut Strategic Economic Framework", was presented vividly in a full color oversize magazine format. The report was widely distributed to public and private sector opinion makers by the Connecticut Regional Institute for the 21st Century. A map of Connecticut's RPO boundaries was included.

The Institute was a coalition of public, private and institutional leadership formed for understanding the economic activity and organizations in the state. Highlights of the findings relative to regions include:

1. This presentation identifies Connecticut's principal metropolitan economic regions and is a step toward positioning them based on the emerging global economic market rather than political geography. This positioning will be essential to our ability to affect our economic future.

2. The massive restructuring of the world's economic geography has resulted in the formation of new trading blocs and super regions and has caused the importance of metropolitan regions to increase dramatically.

Today, metropolitan regions function as the foundation units of economic activity and hubs in the global transportation and communications network

3. Connecticut's three principal economic regions are parts of larger multi-state metro regions.… The primarily rural northwest and northeast sections of Connecticut are part of a social, economic and transportation matrix that connect to one or more of the three principal economic regions.

--- The Coastal Corridor extends from Stamford through Bridgeport to New Haven, this economic region includes all or parts of five planning regions.

--- The I-91/Connecticut River Valley Corridor extends from New Haven through Hartford to Springfield and Amherst, this economic region includes all or parts of five planning regions.

--- The Southeast Corridor extends from New London through Groton and Mystic to Newport, this economic region includes all or parts of three planning regions.

--- Waterbury and Danbury and the Northeast and Northwest are connected to the three principal economic regions.

4. Unfortunately, metro regions are inherently fragmented, composed of a multitude of governmental jurisdictions, business and corporate entities and institutional bodies, each of which traditionally acts and operates as a separate and independent entity. The new competitive global context places new demands on the public, private and institutional sectors to be strategically involved in the new competition.

The Institute urges the governor, our legislative and local political leaders, our senators and representatives, and the private and institutional sectors to establish mechanisms for the state's three economic regions to develop more detailed strategies for meeting their collective economic challenges.

There are two mega-regional activities known to have been initiated since the 1999 report. These include 1) the creation of the Hartford-Springfield Economic Partnership and 2) as noted earlier, the 2008 agreement by the four southwestern RPOs to coordinate transportation planning with their counterparts in New York and New Jersey.

While this Institute report deals directly with the topic of regional boundaries, it is clear that the boundaries defined are for mega-regions, not for the smaller scale city-suburb metros that are the building blocks of such mega groupings. Nowhere in the 1999 report are the economic mega regions suggested as replacements for RPOs.

The mega-region view is increasingly important for public and private investment decisions. But it is ill suited for the local government coordination offered by RPOs at their regional meeting tables; each "new table" would need many score of seats and bi-state administration.

CARPO recommends that an appropriate model to follow in aligning local, RPO and mega-region economic development policy is that of the Conn DOT Transportation Investment Area approach of the Transportation Strategy Board, discussed below.

2001 TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT AREAS (TIA)

In 2001 five mega-regional "Transportation Investment Areas" (TIAs) were organized by state legislation. Their goal was to present prioritized mega-regional plans to the new statewide Connecticut Strategy Board.

According to the Strategy Board, TIA boundaries were "based on the Strategic Economic Framework published by the Connecticut Regional Institute for the 21st Century in 1999…

Within each TIA, the MPOs, RPOs, councils of governments, and other established regional organizations engaged in transportation planning will form a coalition to establish, review and implement the TIA's transportation plan…"

By design the bulk of the usual RPO transportation work was not included.

The emphasis within this larger boundary framework was not to be on traditional local or even RPO scale concerns. Rather, the focus was to be interregional needs such as expressway widening, new intercity bus lines, passenger rail improvements and overall, a focus on the coordination of larger transportation investments crossing RPO boundary lines.

The grouping of 15 RPO areas into 5 TIA areas was completed without boundary conflicts. Although some RPOs were included as members of more than one TIA, in no instance was the geographic area of an RPO split:

--- Coastal Transportation Investment Area: the entirety of South Western RPO, Greater Bridgeport RPO, Housatonic RPO, Valley RPO, Central Naugatuck RPO and South Central RPO.

--- I-84 Transportation Investment Area: the entirety of Housatonic RPO, Valley RPO, Central Naugatuck RPO, Central CT RPO, Capitol RPO, Litchfield Hills RPO and Northwestern RPO.

--- I-91 Transportation Investment Area: the entirety of South Central RPO, Estuary RPO, Midstate RPO, Central CT RPO and Capitol RPO.

--- I-395 Transportation Investment Area: the entirety of Southeastern RPO, Windham RPO and Northeastern RPO.

--- Southeast Corridor Transportation Investment Area: the entirety of Estuary RPO and Southeastern RPO.

State funding was provided to the 15 RPOs for two years to administer the TIA process.

CARPO recommends that similar creative arrangements be considered for future mega-regional planning, if needed.

2002 WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREAS

In 1992 the General Assembly established nine Regional Workforce Development Boards to coordinate regional workforce development policy and programs. "With a regional focus, the Boards assess regional employment and training needs and priorities, conduct planning for and coordinate programs that address those needs....

The boards, with the Connecticut Department of Labor, other state agencies and private organizations, form a statewide partnership to achieve comprehensive workforce development in the State."

In 2002 the nine were reduced to five. The degree of congruence with RPO metropolitan and rural boundaries is high:

Capital Workforce Partners: Capitol RPO 100%, Central CT RPO 100%.

Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board: Windham RPO 100%, Northeastern RPO 100%, Southeastern RPO 100%, Estuary RPO 22%.

Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board: Litchfield Hills RPO 100%, Northwestern RPO 100%, Housatonic RPO 100%, Central Naugatuck RPO 85%.

Greater New Haven Regional Workforce Development Board: South Central RPO 100%, Midstate RPO 100%, Estuary RPO 78%.

The Workplace, Inc. (Southwest Region): South Western RPO 100%, Greater Bridgeport RPO 100%, Valley RPO 100%, Central Naugatuck RPO 15%.

2005 CT DOH PUBLIC HEALTH BIOTERRORISM PREPAREDNESS REGIONS

In addition to its many other regulatory functions, as with septic systems, food inspections, etc., the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) has response duties during public health emergencies.

Starting in 2005 bioterrorism preparedness responsibilities were reorganized thru a series of regional plans. In this instance the "substate district" boundary model was less in play than the "group of municipalities working together" model, CT DPH gave strong weight to RPO boundaries for this particular regionalization.

For the purposes of regional bioterrorism emergency planning, RPO geography was streamlined from 15 to 10 regions. For a time all ten groups were meeting, but only three are active now, due to CT DPH having funneled its activity in this area into the new DEMHS regional planning process.

While some RPOs were combined, no RPO boundary was crossed, as follows:

Health Region 1: Northwest RPO 100% and Litchfield Hills RPO 100%
Health Region 2: Central CT RPO 100% and Capitol RPO 100%
Health Region 3: Windham RPO 100% and Northeastern RPO 100%

Health Region 4: Housatonic MPO 100%
Health Region 5: South Western RPO 100%
Health Region 6: Greater Bridgeport RPO 100%

Health Region 7: Valley RPO 100% and Central Naugatuck RPO 100%
Health Region 8: South Central RPO 100%
Health Region 9: Estuary RPO 100% and Midstate RPO 100%
Health Region 10: Southeastern RPO 100%

For a time all 10 groups were meeting, but only three are active now, due to CT DOH having funneled its activity in this area into the DEMHS planning process.

2005 CT DEMHS EMERGENCY PLANNING DISTRICTS

In a manner similar to the CT Department of Transportation, the CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) has developed a strong alliance with regional planning organizations.

Consider that state agency's logic: the effectiveness of response to an emergency is closely tied to the time elapsed and distance traveled to reach the emergency; back up resources often are needed from other towns, and specialized equipment can be shared.

Encouraging cities and surrounding towns to cooperate for the betterment of emergency response is key to this Department's mission. In contrast, such an intermunicipal emphasis is not key to the mission of many other state agencies and rightly so.

Accordingly, DEMHS formed a close relationship with the 15 RPOs. The DEMHS Newsletter of November 2007 summarizes the Department's "Regional Collaboration Policy":

--- DEMHS has been stressing the need to think as a region in our collective efforts of dealing with emergencies and disasters. Experience has shown that working together both in preplanning and the execution of emergency plans at a regional level has been extremely beneficial to everyone involved.

The Implementation Plan acknowledges and reinforces that "bottom up" collaborative regional planning is inherently stronger than "top down" state-centric planning because response capabilities are predominantly municipal assets available through mutual aid.

--- The resources of any one town, or cluster of towns, will be quickly depleted. Requests for assistance must extend beyond familiar borders to more remote locations, and at this point, the response becomes regional.

Regional collaboration that assures effective response, preparedness, recovery, as well as ready access to region-wide resources is vital to Connecticut. It is also a national priority.

--- The regional planning organizations play a pivotal role in representing the interests of their constituent municipalities. Through their efforts, common interests of member towns and cities are represented at the multi-jurisdictional level, as well as to state funding agencies for supporting programs and services.

As for the boundaries of the new DEMHS regions, at first DEMHS considered use of the 15 RPO boundaries "as is" to serve as their own primary substate districts.

However, it became clear that the new planning regions would also need to serve as substate administrative districts. Placing state staff within 15 new offices to match metro

and rural RPO groupings was not vital for successful administrative activity and would be overly costly.

There was also federal pressure to create fewer than 15 emergency planning regions, since the federal government was dealing with much larger metros in other parts of the country.

An arrangement was devised whereby the RPOs would cooperate closely with the five new DEMHS substate planning districts. Five parallel Regional Emergency Planning Teams (REPTs) were established.

RPOs placed their representatives on the REPTs that coincided with their DEMHS regions. DEMHS staff provide briefings at RPO meetings. DEMHS funds RPOs annually for their emergency planning activities.

And at least in DEMHS Region 5, RPO jurisdictions serve as subregions for districtwide emergency planning, notification and response activities. This is due to the acknowledged unwieldy size of this 43 town DEMHS district, which lacks regional social and economic ties across its broad expanse.

As with their long-term relationship with CT DOT, the RPO – DEMHS relationship has as its core the goal of more efficient distribution of financial resources to improve public services. Each DEMHS subregion makes financial decisions as to local emergency equipment and services needs. Every grant must be seen in regional context to insure efficiency and lowest possible cost.

As of 2009 documentation of administrative coordination is evidenced by the agendas for the monthly meetings of the DEMHS 5 Regional Emergency Planning Team. At the very top is the DEMHS agency seal. Then at the bottom are the names of the five participating RPOs.

The agenda is structured such that areawide emergency topical subcommittees, called Regional Emergency Support Functions (RESFs) 1 through 15, give their reports, followed by each of the five RPOs providing subregional reports.

Unlike the TIA transportation planning arrangement described above where no RPO boundary was crossed by a new DOT substate district boundary, an attempt to avoid the cutting into any RPO area by DEMHS was not completely successful. The extent to which each of the 15 RPO areas remained wholly within one of the five DEMHS substate districts is as follows:

Midstate RPO 63%
Estuary RPO 78%
Central CT RPO 86%

Central Naugatuck RPO 92%
Capitol RPO 100%

Estuary RPO 100%
Greater Bridgeport RPO 100%
Housatonic RPO 100%
Litchfield Hills RPO 100%
Northeastern RPO 100%

Northwestern RPO 100%
South Central RPO 100%
Southeastern RPO 100%
Valley RPO 100%
Windham RPO 100%

Perspective on this boundary issue is provided by the 2007 Report on RPOs by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee; "DEMHS sought to match its lines with those of regions that were already established such as the RPOs. In the end, however, several towns were grouped with different towns, based on police and fire mutual aid agreements."

Yet the boundary arrangement has logic and CARPO considers the RPOs partnership with DEMHS an admirable model for future collaboration with other state agencies.

2007 ECONOMIC STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CONNECTICUT

A law passed in 2007 required the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to prepare an "economic strategic plan" for the state. The preparation phase requires consultation with the RPOs and also the "consideration of regional economic, community and housing development plans."

The resulting "vision for Connecticut" is to establish "clear and measurable goals and objectives for the state and regions." Relevant measures must establish whether goals are being met "at the state, regional, local and private sector level."

The regions established by DECD for this process can be reviewed for their relevance in evaluating RPO boundaries.

2010 FURTHER REGIONALIZATION OF MUNICIPAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

The statutory authorization in Connecticut to provide municipal public health services on a regional basis dates from 1963. As of June 2009, 104 cities and towns representing nearly half of the State's population have formed or joined one of 20 regional health districts.

According to the January 2010 report of the Governor's Council for Local Public Health Regionalization there were a combination of 80 local health departments and districts in Connecticut as of June 2009. "By September 1, 2010 the Council will recommend… an economy of scale via regionalism and larger districts for implementation by July 2011."

An examination of the map of the boundaries of the 20 regional health districts operating as of July 2009 reveals only minor correlation with RPO boundaries. While some regional health districts are entirely within one RPO, many cross RPO boundary lines.

Unlike the relationship between OPM and RPOs, no boundary structure is being provided by the CT Department of Public Health for the growing regional groupings. Rather, municipalities are allowed to reach out in any direction for regional partners.

The 2010 Governor's Council report advises only that "communities are allowed to cluster in ways that meet their needs and local relationships." Also that "historical relationships between and among towns that join the district are acknowledged and respected."

In hindsight it might have been better practice to encourage this search for multiple municipal partners to consider the metropolitan and non-metropolitan area boundaries for groups of towns and cities in RPOs.

Efficiency is not severely damaged by the absence of geographic standards for health department groupings for two reasons. First, RPO planning is primarily dependent upon metropolitan area geographic form and related social and economic ties. Health district operations have no such link. Second, health department services are statutorily standardized in all 169 municipalities, including such services as health education, maternal and child health, disease control, etc. In contrast, RPO planning activities vary widely from area to area.

In seeking partners for improved multi-town execution of these statutorily defined common services there is no compulsory reason to stay within the RPO-defined "regional metropolitan area" when expanding boundaries, except for ancillary activities such as health aspects of regional emergency planning and operations.

In contrast, the central mission of the RPO is to work for the betterment of an area that has as its primary definition a physical center, fringe and boundary. For health districts, efficiency of standardized services is not dependent upon such on-the-ground boundary logic.

2010 REGIONALIZATION OF
MUNICIPAL PROBATE COURTS

In 2009 Connecticut contained 117 probate courts serving 169 towns. That number was reduced by Public Act 09-114 which limits them to no fewer than 44 and no more than 50 districts.

As with health districts, the services provided are uniform statewide. They are clearly not dependent upon either urban, suburban or rural geography. Again RPO operations are a function of metropolitan area form while expanding probate districts are not so linked.

Outside of rural RPOs, the RPO boundary is specifically designed to be the areas for an ongoing city-suburban dialogue. Such policy dialogue is not critical for determining service delivery areas for either regional probate courts or regional health districts. Proximity is important; thus the high total of 50 courts allowed to facilitate short trips. Metro area policy setting is not involved.

2011 RPOS COOPERATE WITH
BOUNDARY EVALUATION PROCESS

--- RPOs will encourage their municipal members to cooperate with the upcoming OPM boundary research effort. An orderly public process to determine if any RPO boundary changes are warranted is encouraged.

But the upcoming CT OPM boundary analysis was authorized by the General Assembly before the current economic crisis began. CARPO will strongly resist any temptation to now "skimp" on quality and detail during this complex research effort.

The professional work must be conducted with sufficient resources to yield valid results persuasive to local governments.

--- All study participants should be cognizant of a common local perspective; municipalities see choice of planning region as their prerogative, not the state's. Their claim to a veto is that they are the governmental units expected to exert the most effort to "think regional."

--- If some OPM boundary changes are not accepted by a significant number of municipalities, CARPO may serve as coordinator of the disgruntled governments into a focused effort to seek appeal through legislation. The goal will be to respectfully balance the authority of appointed state officials with that of elected senators and representatives.

2012 STATE FUNDING FOR
ANY BOUNDARY REVISIONS

RPOs are very much "information agencies." A primary product of these agencies is the development of highly specialized information.

The RPO information base is quite unlike a client list, where data can be easily combined depending upon the geography needed. Rather, complex and specialized economic, transportation, social and environmental data sets are maintained to evaluate projects and funding priorities.

And the RPO's advanced electronic mapping systems portray multiple geographic variables extending out to regional boundaries.

The cost of retrofitting RPO data to reflect any OPM boundary revisions will be considerable. As it is state action that may revise boundaries, state funding for data base revisions will be demanded by the municipalities to avoid an unfunded mandate falling upon them.

CARPO requests that implementation of any boundary revisions be timed with availability of state funding for the corresponding reformatting of data and mapping to reflect revised regional geography.

2013 IMPROVE LINKAGE
WITH SUBSTATE DISTRICTS

--- Ultimately there is no single set of substate districts, including RPOs, that can best serve all state substate districting needs. RPOs are most effective with tasks when regional patterns of metropolitan and rural development are critical to the service efficiency to be achieved.

--- Different governmental services naturally have their best economy of scale at differing geographic levels. The flow of logic will be backwards if it is proposed that metropolitan and rural RPO boundaries be revised to achieve geographic congruence with the need for state agency administrative districts, a different animal.

--- There are numerous governmental districts dividing Connecticut into subsections, such as 5 tourism districts, 5 conservation districts, 11 state police districts, etc. Where topical areas are not strongly related to metropolitan and rural area geography, the case for realigning state agency districts with RPO boundaries is not always strong.

--- To promote much needed intergovernmental coordination, CARPO requests that boundary study recommendations call for renewed emphasis upon selected state agency subdistricting efforts to consider RPO boundaries rather than bisect them.

--- A model for coordinating RPOs with state agency substate districts is documented in the discussion on geographic boundary relationships developed between RPOs and the CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

2013-2015 CREATE NEW
ROLES FOR REVISED RPOS

--- Connecticut's RPOs were specifically designed to promote creativity, coordination and efficiency in government, and support good land use planning. They are poised to take on more responsibility.

--- RPO management skills are amply demonstrated by their on-going project coordination and financial programming roles within CT DOT and CT DEMHS. RPOs can serve additional state agencies in a similar manner.

--- RPOs should be considered for all regionalized state assigned functions where geographic efficiency, project design and management are enhanced by coordination of communities with a common interest.

D. DATA FOR UPCOMING EVALUATION

Data aside, a region cannot be supported by statistics but by its members. They have to feel comfortable with each other to make it work.

I tend to view too large regions as too many second and third cousins who we hardly know. A region with the "right" size has your brothers, sisters, first cousins who you really know, share commonalities with and can largely work together, with some grey area at the edges of the Thanksgiving Table.

-- Long time regionalist Dr. Floyd Lapp

CT OPM staff is empowered to determine the appropriateness of various data sets for use in the upcoming boundary study. However it is important for CARPO to suggest data to be included because the RPOs are the most experienced agencies in the use of these variables.

In CARPO's view, the upcoming study will require in depth professional work with no less attention to detail than that undertaken for the original boundary study of 50 years ago. State staff time set aside for outreach and consultation with municipalities must also be sufficient.

A legislative qualification upon this effort is that it shall be conducted "within available appropriations." Yet this boundary study effort will require a significant financial commitment for personnel and data analysis. Are appropriations sufficient?

In 1959 the General Assembly voted $65,000 for the first study to define RPOs. Factored for inflation that would be at least $400,000 today.

The parameters of the RPO boundary study are defined by CT General Statute 16a-4c. The critical directive is for OPM to evaluate the impact of urban centers on neighboring towns. The CARPO assumption is that the "geographic remainder" beyond the urban-suburban area will constitute the rural regions.

To initiate this process then, the urban centers must first be identified. The 2005-2010 Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan Location Guide Map adopted by the General Assembly displays 21 "Regional Centers."

From the perspective of consistency with OPM's existing policies, these are the most likely candidates to serve as the initial "urban centers" cited in 16a-4c. (Note that the state plan map was interpreted to infer that where such areas are bisected by a major water body they are still considered to be contiguous and thus register as only one unit and not two of the 21 counted).

According to the State Plan each such regional center encompasses "land areas containing traditional core area commercial, industrial, transportation, specialized institutional services, and facilities of intertown significance."

While the more general term "urban area" used in the statute may legitimately extend geographically beyond the more narrowly defined "regional center," an urban area not containing one of OPM's 21 regional centers is a much less likely candidate to be deemed the center of an RPO.

The 21 CT OPM-defined regional centers are located within RPO boundaries as follows:

1. Capitol RPO 6 Regional Centers
2. Central CT RPO 2 Regional Centers
3. Southeastern RPO 2 Regional Centers
4. South Western RPO 2 Regional Centers
5. Midstate RPO 1 Regional Center

6. Central Naugatuck RPO 1 Regional Center
7. Greater Bridgeport RPO 1 Regional Center
8. Housatonic Valley RPO 1 Regional Center
9. Litchfield Hills RPO 1 Regional Center
10. Northeastern RPO 1 Regional Center

11. South Central RPO 1 Regional Center
12. Valley RPO 1 Regional Center
13. Windham RPO 1 Regional Center
14. Estuary RPO 0 Regional Centers
15. Northwestern RPO 0 Regional Centers
Total: 21 Regional Centers

CARPO recommends that a second data set to utilize in the determination of urban centers will be the post 2010 geographic designations defined by the Census Bureau. A key map set will be census "urbanized areas". While useful these maps are largely derived from journey to work commuter data, the limitations of which will be discussed below.

The minimum criteria are cited by statute and are reviewed in sequence below. The precise data sets needed to assess these criteria are not specified by the statute. CARPO recommendations for such data sets:

1. EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF URBAN CENTERS ON NEIGHBORING TOWNS BY REVIEWING TRENDS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There are numerous data sets that can provide perspective on "trends in economic development." CARPO is seeking those data sets that express economic development in terms of geographic relationships.

It is relevant to our purposes that in December of 2007 the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) reached agreement to work more closely with the "Connecticut Metropolitan Regional Chambers Alliance." That group is composed of eight major chambers of commerce in the state.

Staffs are to meet to compare legislative agendas, develop marketing strategies, and discuss issues and challenges in each region. The eight regional chambers cooperating in this agreement are:

Bridgeport Regional Business Council
Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut
Business Council of Fairfield County

Metro Hartford Alliance
Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce
Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce
Waterbury Regional Chamber

Major chambers not included in this 2007 CT DECD agreement were:

Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce
Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce
North Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce
Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce

These regional economic groups should be contacted to determine what they consider to be the extent of their geographic membership area. These geographies are expressions of private enterprise built around markets; their boundaries meet the needs of regional economies and not governmental programs.

The residential, commercial and industrial realtor associations that are subsets of these groups are particularly oriented to viewing their sales markets as regional. We have often been told that investors seek to "buy into an area", not necessarily into a single municipality within it.

Weight should be given to the geographic scope of this private sector regionalization as a factor in assessing broader metro and rural area regional boundaries. Many of the groups have a long history of marketing their multi-town areas of the state, many built around a traditional core city. Many compete. Some may surmise, correctly, that blurring of their identities stifles their competitive advantage.

Plans by OPM to merge two regional chamber areas, each with its own "regional capital city", may be viewed as a detriment to the marketing of the business in the area now "losing out."

Making what the private sector experiences as a regional economy a subset of another may even be opposed legislatively.

Note also under this variable that a law passed in 2007 required CT DECD to prepare an economic strategic plan for the state. DECD is to establish "clear and measurable goals and objectives for the state and regions." As noted earlier the regions established by DECD for this process can be reviewed for their relevance in reevaluating RPO boundaries.

Commuter patterns are also relevant to this variable.

Circulation area for major daily newspapers was considered to be an indicator of regionalism in the 1959 report. This is still true today, but with qualifications. A communications revolution has obviously occurred. It is now possible to read local news on line from any location and for almost any region.

Yet many citizens continue to pay to receive hard copy regional newspapers. The most relevance for this study effort will be to assist in the identification of the geographic "edge" of where one region ends and another begins. That is, determine where daily circulation declines with increasing distance from the central urban area, that decline offset in favor of increasing circulation by another hard copy newspaper.

Fortunately the Connecticut Economic Resource Center has available a current map of the "primary market areas" for newspapers in the state. That map can be examined along with the accompanying CERC analysis.

Included are the market areas for the New Haven Register, Republican American, The Chronicle, New London Day, The Regional Citizen, The Advocate, Journal – Inquirer, Meriden Record Journal, New Britain Herald, The Hour, Bristol Press, Connecticut Post, Norwich Bulletin, News Times and the Hartford Courant.

In addition if the gathering of hard data for this type of newspaper readership analysis is problematic, the question can be posed to municipal leaders and their experience recorded.

Destinations of phone calls to and from and to nearby municipalities was an important boundary test variable in 1959. But as with newspapers, calling patterns are a much less reliable indicator of geographic regionalism in the information age. The value of calling patterns and exchange area maps will need to be determined.

As in 1959, the service areas of major hospitals may still be considered. These facilities have always sought to locate in or near regional centers. However, many have developed surgery and treatment specialties in recent years and now attract patrons from beyond their traditional areas. The valid regional indicator today would be the geographic draw of the emergency room alone, not the various medical specialties.

The location of Connecticut's regional shopping malls could not be a factor in 1959. But today they are indicators of distinct regional retail markets.

Also note that a series of "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies" (CEDS) have been prepared in Connecticut, each with a regional focus. Their primary goal is to access federal funding thru the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

While EDA provided no boundary guidance in advance for each CEDS, the current municipal groupings can be fairly examined for evidence of inherent regionalism.

2. EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF URBAN CENTERS ON NEIGHBORING TOWNS BY REVIEWING TRENDS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

As for global warming and energy conservation, a key action strategy is to reduce lengthy interregional commuter travel. This is to be accomplished by a "Smart Growth" emphasis on better matching of affordable housing opportunities and employment locations. Such "sustainability" may at last achieve political popularity as the atmosphere deteriorates.

From this perspective, drawing regional boundaries based on their "expanding commuter sheds", as was recommended in 1959, is now counter-productive environmentally.

As recommended by the State Plan the jobs-housing balance needs to be struck in the urban centers and close in suburbs, not miles distant in the "green fields."

It should also be noted that some regions may have within their collective identity a distinctive river, topographic or other natural feature that in part groups municipal populations with a regional identity. Identifiers such as river, estuary, valley and hills are already in use.

What other environmental features are to be evaluated here remains to be determined.

3. EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF URBAN CENTERS ON NEIGHBORING TOWNS BY REVIEWING TRENDS IN HOUSING PATTERNS

An effort should be made to assess the relative distinctiveness of Connecticut's many regional housing markets. Fortunately, an objective indicator is available from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

That agency calculates income limits for access to subsidized housing. For this purpose it is necessary to group municipalities into their distinct housing markets. Income limits are then set for each "HUD Metro Fair Market Rent Area" in Connecticut, defined geographically are these 12 groupings of municipalities:

1. Hartford – West Hartford - East Hartford HMFA (51 municipalities): Andover, Avon, Berlin, Bloomfield, Bolton, Bristol, Burlington, Canton, Chester, Columbia, Coventry, Cromwell, Durham, East Granby, East Haddam, East Hampton, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby and Haddam.

Also Hartford, Hartland, Hebron, Manchester, Mansfield, Marlborough, Middlefield, Middletown, New Britain, Newington, Plainville, Portland, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, Southington, South Windsor, Stafford, Suffield, Tolland, Union, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Willington, Windsor and Windsor Locks.

2. Non-Metropolitan County- Litchfield (26 municipalities): Barkhamsted, Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Canaan, Colebrook, Cornwall, Goshen, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, New Hartford, New Milford, Norfolk, North Canaan, Plymouth, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Thomaston, Torrington, Warren, Washington, Watertown, Winchester and Woodbury.

3. Norwich – New London HMFA (19 municipalities): Bozrah, East Lyme, Franklin, Griswold, Groton, Ledyard, Lisbon, Lyme, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Preston, Salem, Sprague, Stonington, Voluntown and Waterford.

4. New Haven – Meriden HMFA (15 municipalities): Bethany, Branford, Cheshire, East Haven. Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven and Woodbridge.

5. Non - Metropolitan County - Windham (15 municipalities): Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Windham and Woodstock.

6. Danbury HMFA (8 municipalities): Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield and Sherman.

7. Stamford – Norwalk HMFA (8 municipalities): Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport and Wilton.

8. Bridgeport HMFA (7 municipalities): Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Shelton, Stratford and Trumbull.

9. Southern Middlesex County HMFA (6 municipalities): Clinton, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Old Saybrook and Westbrook.

10. Milford – Ansonia – Seymour HMFA (6 municipalities): Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Milford, Oxford and Seymour.

11. Waterbury HMFA (6 municipalities): Middlebury, Naugatuck, Prospect, Southbury, Waterbury and Wolcott.

12. Colchester – Lebanon HMFA (2 municipalities): Colchester and Lebanon.

A disadvantage of the above housing data is that market areas are apparently split in some cases by county, earlier determined as not a valid boundary criteria for RPO definition.

4. EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF URBAN CENTERS ON NEIGHBORING TOWNS BY REVIEWING TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT LEVELS

Do Connecticut's urban locations retain the same centrality as they did in 1959 in terms of employment location? Given decades of "urban flight", suburban development and sprawl, this is not likely, as the draw of nearby suburbs as the location of job sites for urban residents has increased during these decades.

Areas of significant "reverse commuting" may be relevant to document for this study, as "commute in to the city" is increasingly being balanced by the trend of reverse commute.

The central business district of the 1959 urban area was a dominant location for retail and service employment. This function is now taken up by major shopping malls, often at a distance from the old city core, but most often still in the urban area.

5. EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF URBAN CENTERS ON NEIGHBORING TOWNS BY REVIEWING TRENDS IN COMMUTING PATTERNS

Commuting patterns are a valid indicator of intermunicipal ties. Yet a trend throughout the state in recent decades has been increased dispersal of journey to work patterns. This is not just from suburb to city but in all directions for almost all towns.

Typically the rank order of the top three out of town work destinations for a suburb may be in the same rank order in 2010 as they were in 1990. But the percentages of total workers commuting to the three top locations has declined.

This drop is balanced by the addition of multiple additional major work destinations added to the list. That is, journey to work patterns are generally dispersing.

Problematically, after many years of sprawl development a resident's commute may be a considerable distance. He or she deliberately located far from the job site to the often smaller and less developed municipality of choice. Loyalty to their selected "residential region" may be stronger than to the "workday region." This will affect residents perception of "what is my planning region." Reversing this trend is in the interest of climate sustainability.

For an accurate assessment of how to weigh this variable, town by town review and discussions with local officials may be necessary.

And for perspective, journey to work trips are only about 25% of total daily trips made. The spatial direction of the other three quarters of travel activity, not well documented in census statistics, needs discussion with local officials.

Conn DOT computed trip generation data, total trips for all purposes from municipality to municipality, may be available to assist this analysis. And the input to the model of new journey to work data should be available from the American Community Survey.

On a related note, the geographic extent of regional transit districts are a useful measure of regionalism and regional area. We can assume that budget pressure on transit keeps intermunicipal routes limited to those most representative of the most extensive intertown trip making.

And reviewing regional bus services from their administrative perspective, the boundary of a multi-town transit district should be considered as a variable pointing to the presence of a regional identity and relationships.

6. EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF URBAN CENTERS ON NEIGHBORING TOWNS BY REVIEWING TRENDS IN TRAFFIC PATTERNS ON MAJOR ROADWAYS

CARPO recommends that documentation of the presence of a multi-modal metropolitan transportation system weigh significantly in this factor.

A supplemental criterion would be to seek local opinion as to what extent the municipality views its welfare as tied to traffic access and traffic congestion solutions across its municipal boundary in an adjacent or nearby community. This may not be a quantifiable variable.

Established patterns of regional transit services could also be considered within this variable.

The study should evaluate the attracting influence of proposed major highway construction, also the impact of major busways on off-road alignments.

7. EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF URBAN CENTERS ON NEIGHBORING TOWNS BY REVIEWING LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL AND HISTORIC TIES

Variables such as phone service areas, hospital usage and newspaper readership may play roles in this evaluation.

CARPO's experience is that periodic displeasure with Connecticut's relatively high number of RPO areas is consistently "top down" in this state. It is not experienced as an impediment by the municipalities themselves as they cooperate on regional initiatives.

There may be significant sentiment that the municipal RPO placement is "not broken and does not need a fix" and that OPM should "leave well enough alone." Such resistance to change is likely linked to the statutory criteria "local perceptions of social and historic ties."

Since the townspeople think they have good relations and common interests with "Smithbury" to the west and less so with growing and dynamic "Metro Jonesford" to the east, local opinion may be all the "proof" needed despite OPM data.

CARPO suggests that if CT OPM advises change to historic intertown relationships that it expend the time resources and offer extensive data to make a convincing case. An option is to present early draft reconfiguration options to RPO staffs in order to obtain feedback before full public review.

8. EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF URBAN CENTERS ON NEIGHBORING TOWNS BY ESTABLISHING A MINIMUM SIZE FOR LOGICAL PLANNING AREAS

According to the statute this task must take into consideration the number of municipalities, total population and total square mileage. This factor is perhaps the most encompassing in the statute, with the inherent power to override and contradict other criteria.

Consider the hypothetical plight of two existing and adjacent RPOs if newly combined to form a new and larger regional unit just to achieve the new minimum square mileage.

Once the boards are combined, meetings would certainly be civil. Municipal chief elected officials across the state have much in common, and issues concerning state agencies and other statewide concerns would be discussed.

But the common agenda could stop there. Planning for rapid emergency response, water, sewer, transit and traffic systems would all revert to concerns tied to "the home sub-region."

The new larger group would share concern for the upgrade of the interstate highway common to both areas, a proposed passenger rail line also. But that commonality would not be enough to cement the new sense of common regionalism that the state mandates they develop.

The two regional chambers of commerce in the new regional expanse, free of the force of the boundary change, would remain tied to the reality of market forces – they serve their buyers who continue to look at two regions and do not sense one.

In response, the "new big RPO" agenda could be creatively structured with a part A and a part B for separate discussions of "subregional concerns." But the supposedly improved region would be essentially dysfunctional. On balance, some small savings would accrue due to support staff efficiencies and combined office overhead. But what would be lost….

Before mandating any such new combinations, the CT OPM study should determine conclusively that what were formerly thought of as two small metropolitan areas no longer retain the fundamentals of separate and distinct regions they did in 1959.

As for recommending a "minimum number" of municipalities per planning region, this variable has its own complications. A policy giving significant weight to "avoid the designation of very small RPOs" may better serve the goals of regionalism than the setting of an actual minimum number of municipal participants.

Another concern with minimum number is the potential conflict with degree of regional attraction as measured by other study indicators.

Say the minimum were set at 15. Twelve suburbs with a long-standing orientation to their central city would then need to appeal to two more municipalities to reach the minimum. But if those two were somewhat more oriented towards a city in another direction, and successfully fought inclusion legislatively, regional planning by the original 13 would be in difficulty.

As for setting regional size based upon minimum square mileage, a key concern is that Connecticut's municipalities vary so widely in total area. New Milford (63.7 square miles) could contain the combined land areas of Bolton, Essex, Rocky Hill, West Haven and Windsor Locks (60.7 square miles).

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Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) in Connecticut

Description | Meetings | Members

Description

Under Section 16a-4a of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) is responsible for the designation and redesignation of logical planning regions within the state. Accordingly, OPM has designated fifteen such planning regions . A map (PDF Format, 374 KB) showing these regions is available A list of municipalities (MS Excel)within each region along with individual town population estimates for the year 2007 from the Connecticut Department of Public Health is also available.

Through local ordinance, the municipalities within each of these planning regions have voluntarily created one of the three types of Regional Planning Organization allowed under Connecticut statute (a Regional Council of Elected Officials, a Regional Council of Governments, or a Regional Planning Agency) to carry out a variety of regional planning and other activities on their behalf.

Regional Planning Organizations

Capitol Region Council of Governments
241 Main Street, 4th Floor
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-5310
Telephone: (860) 522-2217
Fax: (860) 724-1274
E-Mail: lwray@crcog.org
Website: http://www.crcog.org
Executive Director: Lyle Wray

Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
225 North Main Street
Suite 304
Bristol, Connecticut 06010-4993
Telephone: (860) 589-7820 or (860) 224-9888
Fax: (860) 589-6950
TDD: (860) 589-6950
E-Mail: director@ccrpa.org
Website: www.ccrpa.org
Executive Director: Carl J. Stephani

Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency
455 Boston Post Road
P.O. Box 778
Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475
Telephone: (860) 388-3497

Fax: (860) 395-1404
E-Mail: linda@crerpa.org
Website: www.crerpa.org
Executive Director: Linda Krause

Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley
60 North Main Street - Third Floor
Waterbury, Connecticut 06702-1403
Telephone: (203) 757-0535
Fax: (203) 756-7688
E-Mail: pdorpalen@cogcnv.org
Website: www.cogcnv.org
Executive Director: Peter Dorpalen

Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency
Bridgeport Transportation Center
525 Water Street
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604-4902
Telephone: (203) 366-5405
Fax: (203) 366-8437
E-Mail: mnielsen@gbrpa.org
Website: www.gbrpa.org
Executive Director: Mark Nielsen

Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials
Old Town Hall
162 Whisconier Road
Brookfield, Connecticut 06804
Telephone: (203) 775-6256
Fax: (203) 740-9167
E-Mail: jchew@hvceo.org
Website: http://www.hvceo.org
Executive Director: Jonathan Chew

Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials
42 North Street
P.O. Box 187
Goshen, Connecticut 06756
Telephone: (860) 491-9884
Fax: (860) 491-3729
E-Mail: lhceo1@snet.net
Planning Director: Richard Lynn

Midstate Regional Planning Agency
100 Dekoven Drive
P.O. Box 139
Middletown, Connecticut 06457
Telephone: (860) 347-7214
Fax: (860) 347-6109
E-Mail: geoffcolegrove@snet.net
Website: http://www.midstaterpa.org
Executive Director: Geoffrey L. Colegrove

Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
125 Putnam Pike (Route 12)
P.O. Box 759
Dayville, Connecticut 06241-0759
Telephone: (860) 774-1253
Fax: (860) 779-2056
E-Mail: john.filchak@neccog.com
Executive Director: John Filchak

Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments
17 Sackett Hill Road
Warren, Connecticut 06754
Telephone: (860) 868-7341
Fax: (860) 868-1195
E-Mail: nwccog1@snet.net
Executive Director: Dan McGuinness

South Central Regional Council of Governments
127 Washington Avenue, 4th Floor West
North Haven, Connecticut 06473 - 1715
Telephone: (203) 234-7555
Fax: (203) 234-9850
E-Mail: camento@scrcog.org
Website: www.scrcog.org
Executive Director: Carl Amento

Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments
5 Connecticut Avenue
Norwich, Connecticut 06360-4592
Telephone: (860) 889-2324
Fax: (860) 889-1222
E-Mail: jbutler@seccog.org
Website: www.seccog.org
Executive Director: James S. Butler

South Western Regional Planning Agency
888 Washington Boulevard - 3rd Floor
Stamford, Connecticut 06901
Telephone: (203) 316-5190
Fax: (203) 316-4995
E-Mail: lapp@swrpa.org
Website: www.swrpa.org
Executive Director: Dr. Floyd Lapp, FAICP

Valley Council of Governments
Derby Train Station
12 Main Street
Derby, Connecticut 06418
Telephone: (203) 735-8688
Fax: (203) 735-8680
E-Mail: rdunne@valleycog.org
Website: www.valleycog.org
Executive Director: Richard T. Dunne

Windham Region Council of Governments
700 Main Street
Willimantic, Connecticut 06226-2604
Telephone: (860) 456-2221
Fax: (860) 456-5659
E-Mail: director@wincog.org
Website: http://www.wincog.org
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CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS (CARPO)

www.hvceo.org/carpo.php

--- CARPO is the coordinating group for regional planning issues within Connecticut. It promotes the concept of regional planning in cooperation with local units of government and the state.

--- CARPO speaks as a representative body with regard to policies of concern to regional planning.

--- The organization provides a vehicle for liaison with state agencies and reviews legislation affecting regional planning.

--- Officers elected 10/8/2009 ---
Chairman: Mark Paquette of WINCOG
Vice Chairman: Jonathan Chew of HVCEO
Treasurer: Geoff Colegrove of MRPA
Secretary: Mark Nielsen of GBRPA

--- Resource documents available:

--- THE GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF CONNECTICUT'S REGIONAL PLANNING (updated to May 13, 2010)

--- LIST OF REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

--- MAP OF REGIONAL PLANNING BOUNDARIES

--- 2007 REPORT ON RPOS BY THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

--- STATE FUNDING FOR RPOS

--- CARPO BYLAWS

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