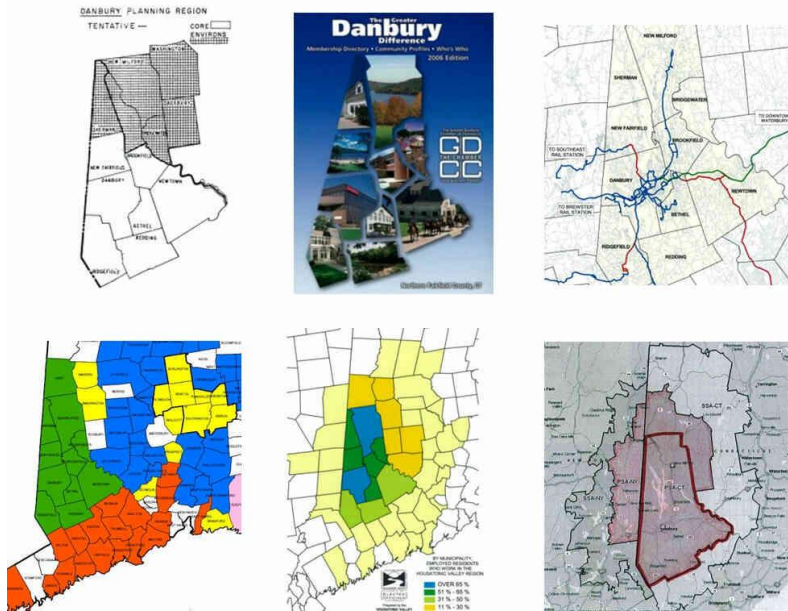




Greater Danbury's
HOUSATONIC VALLEY
COUNCIL OF ELECTED OFFICIALS
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BOUNDARY REVIEW FOR GREATER DANBURY REGION



APPROVED BY HVCEO ON 1/17/2013

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Greater Danbury as currently bounded

1. OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

1A: PURPOSE OF REPORT

In 2012 the General Assembly approved HB 6001, incorporating HB 5154 “An Act Concerning Planning Regions.” That legislation requires “an analysis of the boundaries of logical planning regions.” That is, the boundaries of Connecticut’s regional planning organizations. The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) is to complete the analysis by 1/1/2014.

The Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) is one of fourteen such regional planning organizations for which the boundary will be reexamined. This is a timely endeavor and HVCEO will cooperate.

As currently bounded the HVCEO area encompasses the City of Danbury and the nine nearby towns of Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield and Sherman.

In HVCEO’s view the purpose of the boundary study is to better determine the number of regional areas where measurable factors, common interests, and the potential for joint action across municipal boundaries is strong. It is clear to us that the goal of the legislation is to reduce the number of regions and then reinvigorate the survivors.

The 2012 Act encourages the regions to provide input to the state boundary study. A key purpose of this report is to serve as HVCEO’s initial input under the legislation’s consultation provision.

Note that report section titles two thru twelve repeat the wording of the legislatively required study criteria. We have placed regional information of relevance under each.

This report is not intended to be a substitute for the upcoming state analysis. We accept that statewide application of the legislative criteria in contrast to this regional application may yield differing perspectives.

Rather, this effort will serve as a base of information for evaluating the state study when it is released and will define areas of discussion.

Key options for the Danbury Area are:

1. REGIONAL BOUNDARY REMAINS VALID: *Should the current Greater Danbury regional unit continue into the future as is?*

2. REGIONAL DESIGNATION NO LONGER APPROPRIATE: *Should the Danbury regional unit in its entirety be consolidated with a nearby region?*

3. REGIONAL BOUNDARY SMALLER: *Should one or more of the current municipalities be removed from the Danbury region and assigned elsewhere? But note this option conflicts with the intent of the legislation which is to make regions larger, not smaller.*

4. REGIONAL BOUNDARY LARGER: *Should one or more municipalities outside of the current boundary be added to the current grouping?*

This report does not conclude with a definitive selection from the four options above. Our preference is to work with CT OPM such that the policy in the final state report is acceptable to both the region and the state.

1B: REGIONAL STRENGTH IN SUMMARY:

-- The Greater Danbury Region is well recognized as a distinct economic region of Connecticut. Economic boundary confirmation is provide by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, the conformance of the HVCEO and Greater Danbury Chamber boundaries, Danbury Fair Mall service area, major daily newspaper readership, and regional hospital service area.

-- As Greater Danbury is well north of the coastal concentration and at the west end of the state adjacent to the New York border, it has a “relative remoteness” within Connecticut’s urban pattern. This location within Connecticut has favored the development of distinct regional features and institutions here.

-- To identify the boundaries of a metropolitan area today we look for an aggregate geographic area inclusive not only of a well known city population, but also its suburban, exurban and rural surrounding populations, all of which are influenced by employment, transportation and commerce from the more well known urban city. Greater Danbury demonstrates this concentric ring development pattern coupled with intense city - suburban relationships.

-- Legislative boundary criteria will look for transportation features that exhibit significant regionalism. The data herein document these.

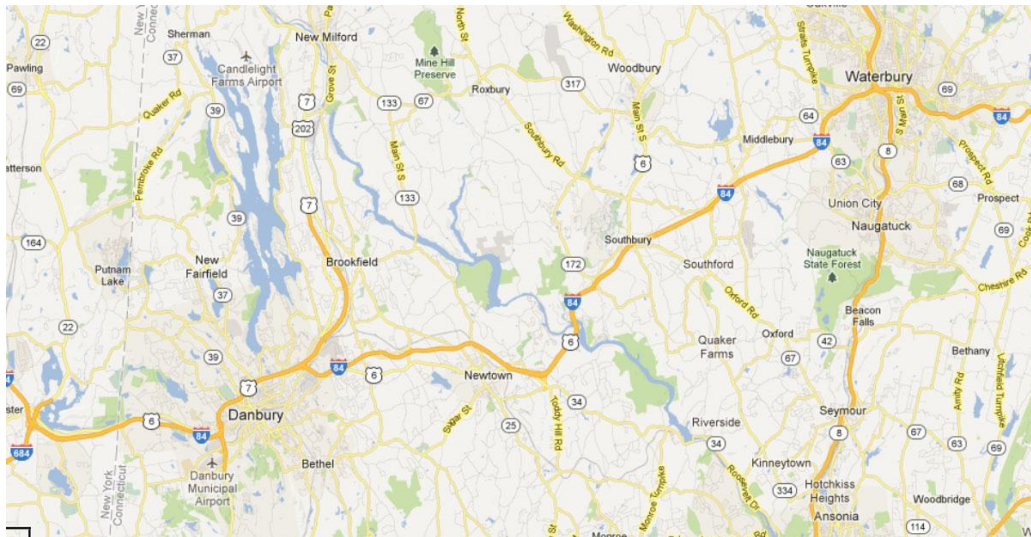
--- Legislative boundary criteria favor larger regions for continuation. Ranking the current regions by size, Greater Danbury has a “middling” rank. That rank will “fall” if regions below HVCEO in the hierarchy consolidate.

Any weakness in this middle position is tempered by the area’s self-contained regionalism as amply documented in this report.

That strength, coupled with Danbury’s relative remoteness within state geography, should qualify the City for continued consideration as the center of its own planning region.

1C. EASTERN BOUNDARY REVIEW:

Supporting the logic of continuing the regional boundary between Newtown and Southbury are patterns of daily newspaper readership, Danbury and Waterbury regional chamber service areas, and the equidistant drawing power of Danbury and Waterbury malls.



***I-84 crossing the Housatonic River
between Greater Danbury and Greater Waterbury***

In addition the Housatonic River is the boundary between HUD housing market areas, hospital service areas, CERC economic regions, and the cultural arts boundary.

And also as it concerns the view from Danbury to the east, there is reluctance to be merged with the economic competition. This was well

stated by Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton's 2011 comment on regional boundaries: "If merged with Waterbury and its surrounding communities, Danbury and the nine other participating towns would be swallowed up by larger communities with much different interests and priorities."

While we await data and perspective to be provided by the upcoming state boundary study, it appears from this initial analysis that the eastern Newtown segment of the HVCEO boundary retains its strength.

1D. SOUTHERN BOUNDARY REVIEW:

Greater Danbury's southern boundary is formed by the southern edges of the Towns of Ridgefield, Redding and Newtown, where they abut Wilton, Weston, Easton and Monroe. The boundary line formed is a little over nineteen miles long and runs from southwest to northeast. Note that this line parallels the orientation of the Long Island Sound coastline about twelve miles further south.

With Connecticut's urban coastal concentration adjacent, there are some undeniable cross-boundary influences here, attracting Ridgefield, Redding and Newtown to the south.

But we find many other forces tying Ridgefield, Redding and Newtown to their traditional Danbury oriented municipal partners. This mix of variables is summarized below:

REGION IS DIVIDED INTO TWO LABOR MARKET AREAS, ONE ORIENTED TO SOUTH: The geography of the Danbury Labor Market Area includes the City of Danbury but only the six surrounding central and northern towns. The other three, the southern tier of Ridgefield, Redding and Newtown, are included as part of the neighboring coastal oriented Bridgeport - Stamford Labor Market Area.

A labor market is defined as an economically integrated geographic area within which individuals can both reside and find employment within a reasonable distance. The labor market designation for these three towns is contradicted to some extent by the HUD housing market designation, grouping them with Danbury rather than to the south.

CENSUS JOURNEY TO WORK DATA DOCUMENT DRAW TO SOUTH: The percentage of municipal residents crossing the southern HVCEO boundary each day into the Southwestern Region for work increases as

you travel south thru Greater Danbury, from Sherman the least, to Redding the most.

However, Greater Danbury's 1980, 1990 and 2000 regional averages for percentage of commuters exiting the region to the South Western Region has not risen. And the component percentages for 1980, 1990 and 2000 for the three southern towns of interest reveal a relatively stable pattern thru time: Ridgefield 33/28/30, Redding 37/34/34 and Newtown 10/13/14.

TWO CENSUS URBANIZED AREAS, ONE ORIENTED TO SOUTH: The Danbury Urbanized Area is located in all or parts of nine of the ten regional municipalities, in all except rural Bridgewater. And a portion of another urbanized area enters the Housatonic Valley Planning Region, the northern fringe of the coastal Bridgeport-Stamford Urbanized Area. It is very pronounced in Ridgefield, much less so in Redding, then has a significant presence in Newtown.

TWO ECONOMIC REGIONS IDENTIFIED BY CERC: CERC makes use of the current regional boundary. Greater Danbury is one of the state's ten economic regions, bordering CERC's "Southwest / Stamford / Bridgeport" economic region.

REGIONAL CHAMBER BOUNDARY: The Greater Danbury Chamber makes use of a service boundary identical to that of HVCEO.

READERSHIP OF DAILY NEWSPAPER: A CERC analysis demonstrates that readership orientations are well reflected by the current regional boundary. The Residents of Ridgefield, Redding and Newtown choose the Danbury News Times, not the coastal city regional papers.

CULTURAL SERVICES REGION: The Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut is the Danbury Area's regional culture and arts organization. Its geographic scope is the same as the ten town HVCEO area and does not cross the boundary line into the southwestern coastal area.

REGIONAL HOSPITAL SERVICES: The Western Connecticut Health Network service area makes use of the current southern regional boundary. However, the Network, which manages Danbury and New Milford hospitals, announced in April of 2012 that it had begun affiliation discussions with a third partner, Norwalk Hospital.

WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS AS BUFFER: From the perspective of Greater Danbury the “separators between Southern and Northern Fairfield County” are the low density water supply watersheds between these two areas.

Note that the 2008 Redding Plan of Conservation and Development views that Town’s water supply watersheds as “an extensive greenbelt which separates urban centers.”

STATE AGENCY DISTRICTS USE CURRENT BOUNDARY: There is considerable precedent here, going back to at least the 1993 OPM identification of ideal boundaries for uniform regional service delivery areas. The nineteen mile boundary described above was promoted then and in many later state agency districts, including DEMHS regions, regional workforce boards and CEDS plans.

In contrast, the eastern and northern boundaries for Greater Danbury do not coincide with state agency district boundaries. Rather, the Danbury, Waterbury, Torrington and Northwest areas are often grouped together in state agency districts.

ROUTE 7 CORRIDOR IN GRAVITY MODEL: The distance along Route 7 from I-95 in Norwalk to I-84 in Danbury is 21.56 miles. The halfway point is at the 10.78 mile marker. The regional boundary at the Northern Wilton – Southern Ridgefield Town Line is nearby at the 12.33 mile marker.

Given this approximate equidistance, the view of regions from abutting neighborhoods near the Ridgefield and Wilton border must appear quite similar. And overall the suburban development patterns in both towns have much in common.

Yet Wilton on its southern boundary abuts Norwalk, the state’s sixth largest city. And Ridgefield on its northern boundary abuts Danbury, the state’s seventh largest city. Also of interest, the nearest point in Ridgefield from the regional Danbury Fair Mall is 1.4 miles and Danbury sewer utilities extend into northern Ridgefield.

How then to regionally assign these two similar and lineal communities along the Route 7 corridor? Out of respect for their suburban land use compatibility, append Ridgefield to the southern region, or alternatively Wilton to the northern region?

The answer from the point of view of the “attracting city” gravity model is that the current regional boundary separating them makes sense.

RESOURCE RECOVERY DISTRICTS: The current regional boundary is in use. A practical question raised by HVCEO in 2010 asks what is the impact upon the regional resource recovery authority if the boundary upon which it is based is found by the state study to be deficient.

REGIONAL METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION: The current southern regional boundary is in use.

1E. NORTHERN BOUNDARY REVIEW:

This section begins with some early history on the state’s regional boundary formation process. We learn from it that determination of the northeast boundary was not as clear cut as for this region’s eastern and southern edges.

According to the 1959 state report entitled “Progress Towards Regional Planning in Connecticut”, the first tentative definition for a “Danbury Planning Region” grouped together twelve municipalities, two more than the ten in HVCEO today. The 1959 boundary followed the eastern and southern regional edges we are familiar with. But the current ten municipalities were amended with Roxbury and Washington adjacent to New Milford to the northeast.

Danbury with all adjacent towns and the addition of Newtown were termed the “core” in the landmark 1959 state report. Then New Milford with abutting Sherman, Bridgewater, Washington and Roxbury were termed the “environs.”

The report stated that “growth now commencing in the environs towns would appear to indicate that in the future there will be an increasing interrelationship with the southern part of the region.”



Initial 1959 view of Greater Danbury

Numerous data sets presented herein document that over the past fifty years this joining did indeed come to pass. Today the HVCEO Regional Plan identifies Danbury and New Milford as the region's two core communities.

The state's regional boundary designation for Sherman, New Milford and Bridgewater was still tentative as of 1968. HVCEO became operational that year anyway, with just the southern seven municipalities as initial members, just those from the 1959 "core."

Then in 1971 the state expanded the HVCEO regional boundary north to include Sherman, New Milford, Bridgewater. But not Washington and Roxbury, which were assigned to Northwest. As of this writing we have no historical record as to why the five towns in the initial Danbury Region "environs" were ultimately split by a regional boundary.

New Milford addressed this issue in its 1971 Plan of Development, noting the Town "now serves as the center of a subregion which includes Sherman, Kent, Washington, Bridgewater and Roxbury... Residents feel that New Milford serves as the shopping and employment center for the towns to the west, east and north."

The 1971 Plan continues, “Though New Milford is self sufficient in many areas and not wholly dependent on Danbury, the Town’s orientation toward the south is much stronger than toward the north.”

Examining the role of New Milford as a retail center the 1997 New Milford Town Plan stated that the Downtown New Milford Primary Retail Trade Area is defined to include all of New Milford then parts of adjacent Brookfield, Sherman, Kent, Washington, Roxbury and Bridgewater.

This relationship is further reflected in the 2009 HVCEO Regional Plan of Conservation and Development: “Retail and commuter patterns clearly document New Milford as a secondary regional economic center, having its own small suburbs, to a greater extent than towns of similar population size such as Newtown or Ridgefield.”

There is no evidence that the function of New Milford as a “central attractor” in its own “gravity model” has diminished over the years. New Milford’s size and central urban mass relative to adjacent very small towns sets up the attraction for employment, retailing, institutional services, etc.

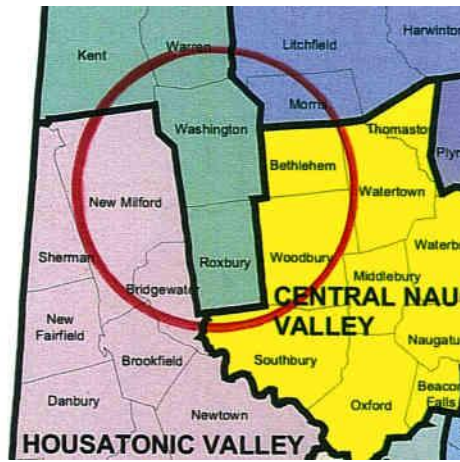
Consider these relative populations sizes for New Milford and abutting towns:

Warren: 1,461
Bridgewater: 1,727
Roxbury: 2,262
Kent: 2,979
Washington: 3,579
Sherman: 3,581
New Milford: 28,142

Then, according to the 2010 New Milford Plan of Conservation and Development, “New Milford provides many amenities to neighboring communities and the region. Some of these regional amenities include the New Milford Hospital, retail businesses, jobs and housing that is generally more affordable than in nearby communities...

At the same time, New Milford residents depend upon communities in the HVCEO Region, communities further south and New York State for jobs and rely upon a regional transportation network.”

From the perspective of this 2013 boundary review, Washington and Roxbury are in an adjacent planning region, yet cross boundary ties endure.

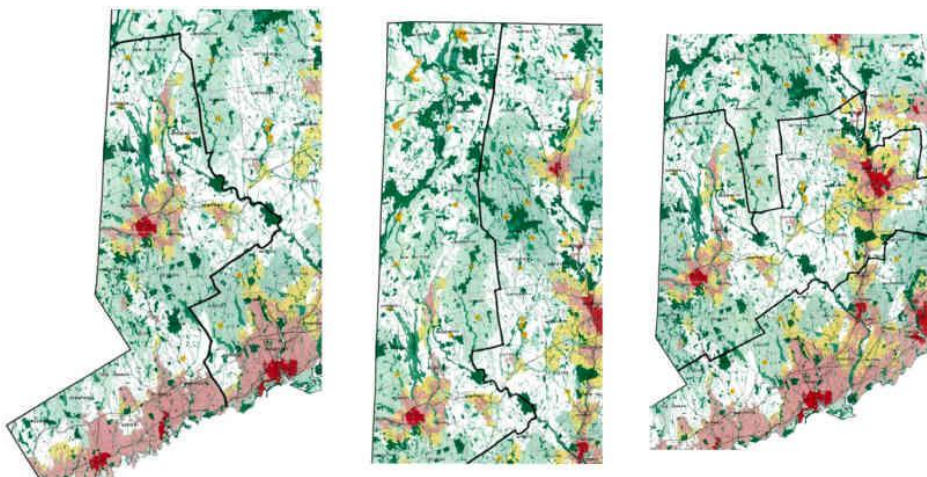


“Panhandle” configuration adjacent to HVCEO

The “panhandle” configuration by which these towns were attached to the Northwest Region has been criticized over the decades as awkward geography on Connecticut’s regional map. We will monitor the upcoming state boundary study for perspective on this issue.

1F. POTENTIAL CONSOLIDATIONS:

Another consideration is to envision what a revised boundary would look like if the current region were entirely consolidated with one of its neighbors. Some options are shown below:



Theoretical consolidations left to right with: south, north, then east

In each case the currently defined region loses its classic “concentric ring” metropolitan geography. It emerges “centerless” and with appended territory that does not have the strong intermunicipal ties documented herein.

The three potential mergers are all geographically awkward. They do not move regional boundaries in Western Connecticut towards the “logic” that the state boundary study is directed to promote.

2. “ECONOMIC REGIONS, INCLUDING REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS ESTABLISHED BY CHAPTER 588FF”

2A. REGIONS IDENTIFIED BY CERC

The Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc. (CERC) is a nonprofit corporation that provides objective research, marketing and economic development resources. The organization’s mission is to make Connecticut a more competitive business environment.

CERC marketing events view Connecticut as a composite of ten economic regions. Importantly for us, one of these is the Danbury Area:

1. *North Central / Hartford*
2. *Central / Bristol*
3. *South Central / New Haven*
4. *Waterbury / Naugatuck*
5. *Northwest / Torrington*
6. ***West / Danbury***
7. *Southwest / Stamford / Bridgeport*
8. *Middlesex*
9. *Southeast / New London / Norwich*
10. *Northeast / Windham*

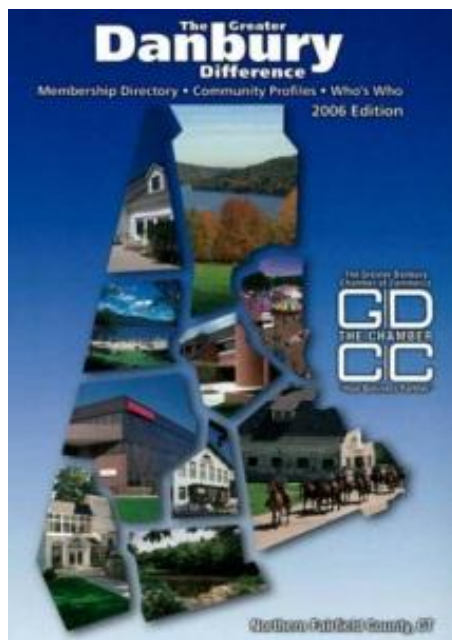
2B. REGIONAL CHAMBER BOUNDARY

Connecticut’s private sector has long organized itself into geographic regions of common business interests. Prominent among these are Connecticut’s twelve regional chambers of commerce.

The service areas of Connecticut’s regional chambers are of relevance to this analysis since 1) economic regions are acknowledged in the CT OPM study statute as markers of regionalism, and 2) regional chambers are

organized independently of governmental systems and therefore provide an objective input to governmental boundary thinking.

The business community in the HVCEO area is served by the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce. The Greater Danbury Chamber service area boundary is identical to the boundary of the HVCEO planning area.



***Greater Danbury Chamber promoting
the state defined HVCEO area***

In 2012 Greater Danbury Chamber President Stephen Bull stated that “our Chamber boundary has served the business community well and we have no plans for revising it.”

Greater Danbury Chamber marketing makes use of HVCEO statistics for the ten town area, as HVCEO regional totals serve efficiently as Chamber service area totals. That unity is attractive to the marketing industry.

Documentation of the superior attributes of the Great Danbury economic region are also relevant to boundary reevaluation in our case. The reason is, there is a natural reluctance in this area to mix in Greater Danbury’s favorable economic statistics with adjacent areas, as that would level them and obscure this area’s distinct advantages.

Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton, speaking in April 2011 on the potential for consolidation of HVCEO with another region, reflected this view: “As the

economic driver of the region, it is critical that Danbury maintain its economic viability and visibility.”

Connecticut is not known as a growth state yet Greater Danbury rightfully promotes itself as a growing region. Consider that the population total of the Chamber - HVCEO service area has continually increased its share of the state's population, this increase in share documented by every federal census since 1950.

Looking ahead, University of Connecticut State Data Center 2011 Population Projections indicate that this area will continue to increase its share of the statewide population total until the end of the projection period in 2030.

And note that a 2006 CERC analysis entitled “Relationship Between Urban 24 Population Change and Business Change” reviewed Connecticut's twenty four largest cities by correlating their employment and population growth for the period 1992 to 2005. Receiving the lowest scores were three large cities in the center of the state. The highest scores, outstanding in both population and business growth, were given to the City of Middletown and the City of Danbury.

Recently “a national econometric forecasting firm identified Danbury as a ‘metro high tech gorilla’, one of 25 throughout the nation,” according to the 2012 Chamber publication, “The Greater Danbury Difference.”

In addition the unemployment rate in the Greater Danbury Labor Market Area is consistently the lowest of all labor markets in the state. And the City of Danbury alone generates more than 10% of all sales tax revenue in Connecticut.

The regional economy then, has substantial favorable recognition. There is a competitive tendency to protect that favorable position by not “watering down” regional statistics.

2C. REGIONAL MALL SERVICE AREA

The location of Connecticut's regional shopping malls could not be a factor in the 1959 initial designation of Connecticut's planning regions as they did not yet exist. Up until about 1970 central business districts of cities were the traditional locations for dominant regional retail services.

In Connecticut as elsewhere this dominant retail function is now taken up by major shopping malls. These are often at a distance from the old city core but still positioned relatively central in each urban area.

The shopping mall for this region opened in Danbury in 1986. The Danbury Fair Mall, adjacent to I-84 on the City's west side, has no retail rival in or near the planning region. It was deliberately sited to serve the Greater Danbury area and also parts of adjacent New York State. The next megamall adjacent to I-84 is thirty miles to the east, in Waterbury.



Aerial view of Danbury Fair Mall, the largest enclosed mall in New England

The geography of regional mall service areas outlines regional retail markets. These are valid markers of Connecticut's more sizable regional economies.

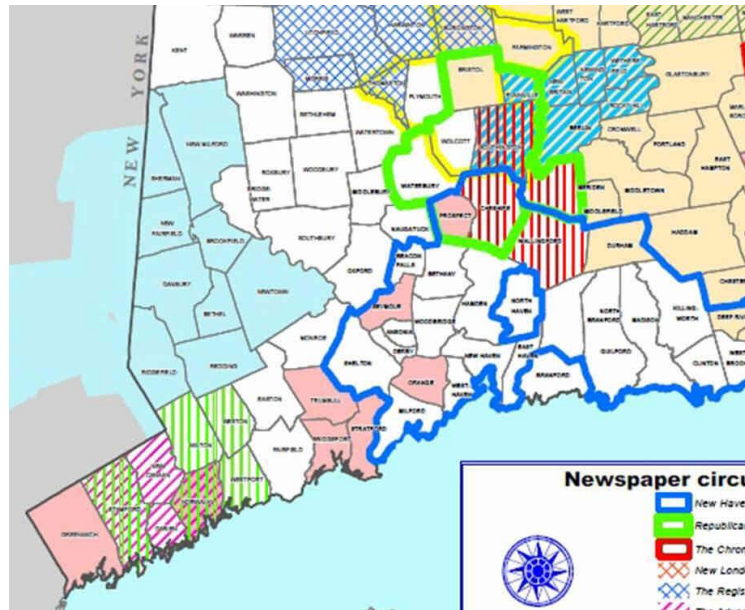
The Housatonic Valley Region, with a little help from adjacent New York State, successfully fuels this massive economic feature. It correlates well with the CERC and Danbury Chamber regions already discussed.

2D. READERSHIP OF REGIONAL NEWSPAPER

A communications and media revolution impacting print media is obviously in progress. It is now simple to digitally access any localized news organization from any location.

Yet many residents still pay for hard copy delivery. The directional orientation of those subscription patterns, even with their volume and compass direction partially obscured by broader Internet choice, remains an indicator of where the influence of a "regional community" may fade.

CERC has mapped regional daily newspaper readership statewide and has defined “primary market areas” for them on a town by town basis.



Excerpt from CERC map of newspaper circulation areas, Danbury News Times in light blue

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

Of interest to HVCEO are the CERC boundaries for the Danbury daily and the nearest major dailies based in Waterbury and Norwalk. The map indicates a high correlation between the current boundary of the Housatonic Valley Planning Region and the Danbury News Times circulation area.

The News Times is dominant in nine of the ten municipalities, the exception being Bridgewater where no newspaper is dominant. That is, 99.2% of this region’s population is in the primary market area of the Danbury daily. This variable nicely reinforces the CERC, Chamber and mall geographies discussed earlier.

The statewide CERC map reveals that many of the metropolitan daily newspapers have overlapping market areas. But the Danbury News Times has no overlap with any other paper.

This fact correlates well with Greater Danbury's relative geographic isolation within the state. That "relative remoteness" factor continues to surface in this research.

Further review of the newspaper data indicates that many towns in the state, mostly at a distance from regional centers, are unassigned to a specific primary market area. In addition to Bridgewater within the HVCEO boundary, such towns include most of those bordering this region; Kent, Washington, Roxbury, Southbury, Oxford, Monroe and Easton.

But that pattern tightens along Greater Danbury's southern edge, where another primary market area directly abuts that of the News Times. This is the customer base for The Norwalk Hour, dominant in the Region's remaining two border towns, Wilton and Weston.

2E. REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

In 2010 economic development districts were authorized in Connecticut in order to facilitate receipt of higher levels of project funding from the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The HVCEO area is not included within any of the economic development districts organized thus far and has made no choice as to such membership. The reason is that none of the municipalities within the HVCEO area, including the City of Danbury, qualify for federal EDA project funding.

EDA resources are targeted towards municipalities with high rates of unemployment. As noted above the Danbury Labor Market Area has the lowest unemployment rate in Connecticut.

3. "COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES (CEDS) DEVELOPED BY SUCH REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS"

In 2010 Connecticut Public Act 10-168 made the preparation of an EDA formatted regional economic development plan a prerequisite for State of Connecticut, not just federal EDA, economic development funding.

The acronym for these regional plans is CEDS, short for Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. As we do not qualify for the federal economic development funds, only after this state law was passed did the development of a CEDS become critical for the HVCEO area.

The HVCEO region is not proceeding with a “CEDS developed by such regional economic development district.” Rather, the region is proceeding with a CEDS by other than an economic development district. This strategy was authorized for Greater Danbury by CT DECD Commissioner Catherine Smith in her letter to the US EDA dated 11/22/2011.

The summary point for this analysis is that the boundary for the CEDS economic plan will be identical to the HVCEO planning and regional chamber business boundaries. It will also correlate nicely with the CERC and mall regions, just as it should.

4. “LABOR MARKET AREAS AND WORKFORCE INVESTMENT REGIONS”

4A. TWO LABOR MARKET AREAS

The Department of Labor divides Connecticut into nine labor market areas. A labor market area is defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as “an economically integrated geographic area within which individuals can reside and find employment within a reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing their place of residence.”

Most of Greater Danbury comprises one of the nine. The geography of the Danbury Labor Market Area includes the City of Danbury but only the six surrounding towns of Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, New Fairfield, New Milford and Sherman.

The other three towns, the region’s southern tier of Ridgefield, Redding and Newtown, are included as part of the adjacent coastal oriented Bridgeport - Stamford Labor Market Area.

Greater Danbury has long been a residence for commuters with work sites to the south in the Bridgeport - Stamford Labor Market Area. Very high housing costs along the coast have induced this north to south daily commuter pattern.

For perspective, Census 2000 journey to work statistics are available for daily commuter travel south from HVCEO communities to the South Western Planning Region (Norwalk, Stamford and their six suburbs), which is a portion of the Bridgeport-Stamford Labor Market Area.

The percentage of municipal residents crossing the HVCEO boundary traveling south each day into the Southwestern Region for work increases when moving from north to south in this region as follows:

5% Bridgewater
5% Sherman
7% New Milford

9% Brookfield
10% New Fairfield
10% Danbury
13% Regional Average

14% Newtown
17% Bethel
30% Ridgefield
34% Redding

Not surprisingly, the percentages rise as proximity to coastal employment opportunities increases. However, the regional average for commuters exiting the region for the coast is not rising. The average of 13% shown above for 2000 was the same in 1990 and 1980. Town totals for Ridgefield, Redding and Newtown are stable as well.

4B. NORTHWEST REGIONAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

As part of the federal Workforce Investment Act, Connecticut was divided into five regional workforce investment boards whose purpose is to coordinate workforce policy and programs. The boards assess regional employment and training needs and then address those needs.

The HVCEO bounded area is included entirely within the geography of the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board.

The 2012 edition of “The Greater Danbury Difference” states:

The Danbury Office of Economic Development works with a number of boards and commissions including CityCenter Danbury, The Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce and the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB).

The Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce assists businesses in obtaining training grants for incumbent workers and new employees through the NRWIB.

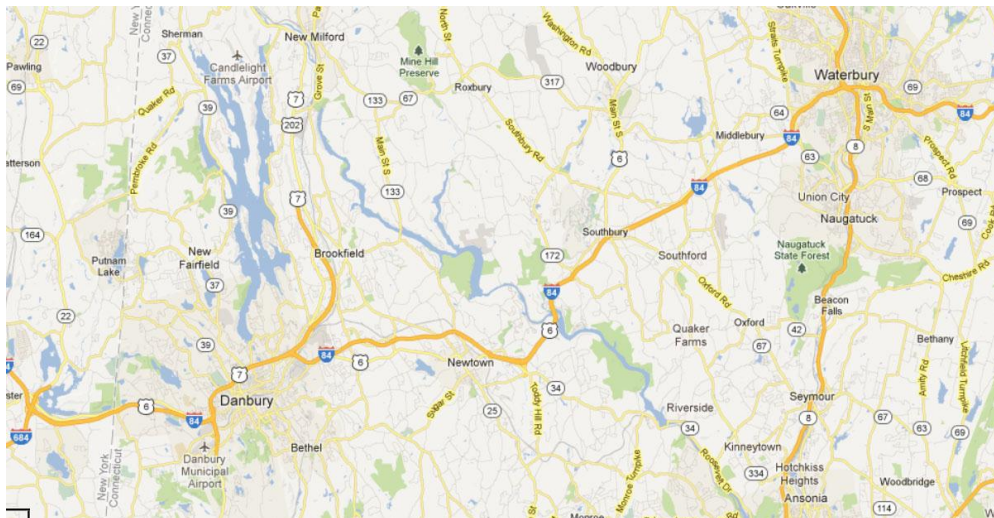
The perspective within the HVCEO area is that its workforce board does its job well.

Also note that in accordance with US EDA coordination requirements for CEDS preparation, three members of the newly created Western Connecticut Economic Development Alliance, preparing the Danbury Area CEDS, were selected from the membership of the NRWIB.

As the HVCEO area is not split by a workforce district boundary, we see little “shaping force” within the workforce service area that is relevant to assessment of the HVCEO boundary.

5. “NATURAL BOUNDARIES, INCLUDING WATERSHEDS, COASTLINES, ECOSYSTEMS AND HABITATS”

5A. HOUSATONIC RIVER ON EASTERN EDGE



***I-84 crossing the Housatonic River
between Greater Danbury and Greater Waterbury***

In the currently defined regional planning system the Housatonic River in eastern Newtown serves as the boundary between the Greater Waterbury Region, served by the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, and the Greater Danbury Region, served by the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials.

This water body is also the circa 1680 boundary between Fairfield County and New Haven County.

From the point of view of regional economies the Danbury Area daily newspaper extends its dominance easterly to the River but not into Southbury.

Then the Waterbury Regional Chamber service area reaches westward to include Southbury, while the Greater Danbury Chamber service area extends easterly to include Newtown – again the boundary established by the River. This boundary also separates CERC economic regions.

Consider also the drawing power of the major malls in Danbury and Waterbury. The travel distance on I-84 from the Newtown – Southbury Town Line westerly to the mall in Danbury is 15.2 miles. The travel distance easterly to the Waterbury mall is 14.3 miles. The Housatonic River is again at or close to a regional boundary between major mall catchment areas.

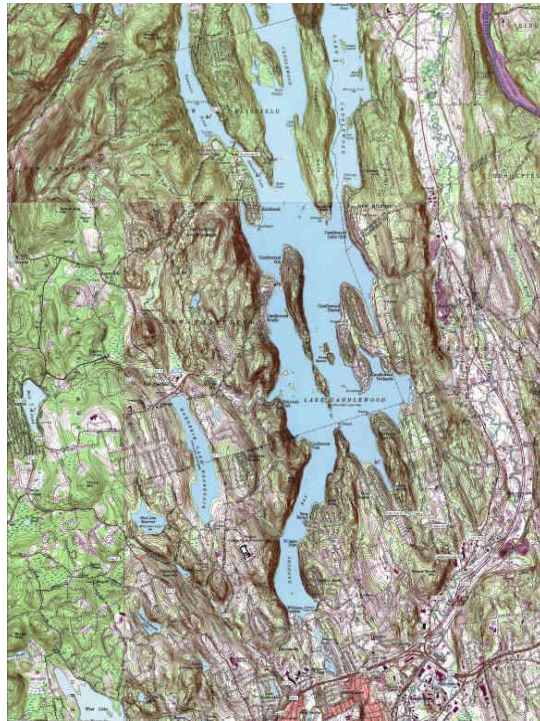
Continuing this pattern, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regional fair rent area for Greater Danbury includes Newtown. The HUD fair rent area for Greater Waterbury include Southbury. Also, the Danbury Area's regional cultural alliance includes Newtown but not Southbury.

A research article on hospital patient residence patterns in the July 29, 2012 Waterbury Republican provided some additional perspective on this boundary. Concerning communities that have been “the traditional battleground for the Waterbury hospitals... Southbury has been the dividing line between Danbury and Waterbury medical care.” Note also that the Danbury Hospital emergency room is primary for Newtown but not for Southbury.

It can be concluded from the above factors in aggregate that the Housatonic River between Southbury and Newtown remains valid as an appropriate edge for two of Connecticut's planning regions.

5B. CANDLEWOOD WATERSHED IN CENTER

Candlewood Lake is the largest water body in Connecticut, sixteen miles long. There are sufficient public issues involving recreational and environmental management of this privately owned hydrolake that the Candlewood Lake Authority (CLA) was created by HVCEO in 1972.



Candlewood Lake, the Largest water body in Connecticut

The CLA maintains a full time staff. Its municipally appointed board meets on a regular basis. But on occasion, hydrolake issues are the subject of HVCEO meetings rather than remaining solely within the purview of the CLA.

This occurs when the five municipal governments in the watershed, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford and Sherman, are most directly impacted, instances such as federal power facility relicensing, change of ownership, and formulation of shoreline plans affecting municipal operations and facilities. In 1999 HVCEO negotiated a conservation easement for Candlewood Lake at a cost of \$2 million.

The Lake is situated entirely within the Housatonic Valley Planning Region. It would be detrimental to the environmental and recreational management of this resource if the HVCEO area was newly defined by OPM such that this water body was sliced by a regional planning boundary.

5C. WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS TO SOUTH

From the perspective of Greater Danbury, the “separators between Southern and Northern Fairfield County” are the water supply watersheds between these two areas. For example the 2008 Redding Plan of Conservation and Development views the Town’s water supply watersheds as “an extensive greenbelt which separates urban centers.”



Water supply watersheds to south

- 1) Saugatuck River Watershed, 2) Wolf Pit Brook Watershed,
3) Aspetuck River Watershed, 4) Mill River Watershed

A parallel historic perception is that Southern Fairfield County consists of coastal municipalities and their adjacent tier of communities to the north, but not further inland to include third tier towns. The coastline, I-95, and the Merritt Parkway express this linear pattern for the South Western Region.

Greater Danbury has never been characterized as “coastal.” And the boundary function of water supply watershed features to Danbury’s south is tied to environmentally sensitive lands.

6. “RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN URBAN, SUBURBAN AND RURAL AREAS, INCLUDING CENTRAL CITIES AND AREAS OUTSIDE OF THE STATE”

6A. REGIONAL CENTERS

The map for Connecticut's 2005-2010 Conservation and Development Policies Plan included twenty one "Regional Centers." According to the 2005-2010 Plan these regional centers encompass "land areas containing traditional core area commercial, industrial, transportation, specialized institutional services, and facilities of intertown significance."

This high number of regional centers for a small state reflects the old and complex pattern of New England's early manufacturing. But no one would propose that the number of recognized planning regions be expanded to accommodate one around each of the twenty one regional centers.

One of the regional center designations is reserved for Danbury, Connecticut's seventh largest city. Looking back, the City of Danbury was the fifteenth most populous municipality in Connecticut in 1970. It was then the ninth largest in 1980, rising to eighth in 1990. Then in both 2000 and 2010 Danbury was seventh.

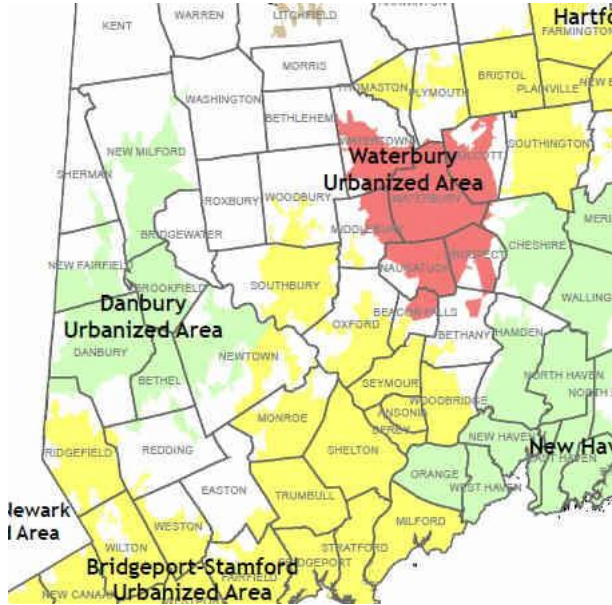
None of the municipal plans of conservation and development in the HVCEO area question that Danbury is the center of the planning region; it has one third of the region's population and one half of the employment. The central function for Danbury seems obvious to the residents here.

6B. CENSUS URBANIZED AREAS

The metropolitan urban area concept arose from the geographer's observation that the physical extent of a large urban concentration often overflows the official boundary of a central city.

The Census Bureau's urban areas represent densely developed territory and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses.

The criteria for defining an urban area in the 2010 Census is 50,000 or more in population. Urban clusters are defined as areas with more than 2,500 but less than 50,000.



**2010 Census defined
urbanized areas in Western CT**

There are nine Urbanized Areas in Connecticut, including one for Danbury and environs, followed by eight urban clusters. Both are listed below:

NINE 2010 URBAN AREAS

- Bridgeport – Stamford*
- Danbury**
- Hartford*
- New Haven*
- New York – Newark (part of)*
- Norwich – New London*
- Springfield (part of)*
- Waterbury*
- Worcester (part of)*

EIGHT 2010 URBAN CLUSTERS

- Colchester*
- Danielson*
- Lake Pocotopaug*
- Stafford Springs*
- Storrs*
- Torrington*
- Willimantic*
- Winsted*

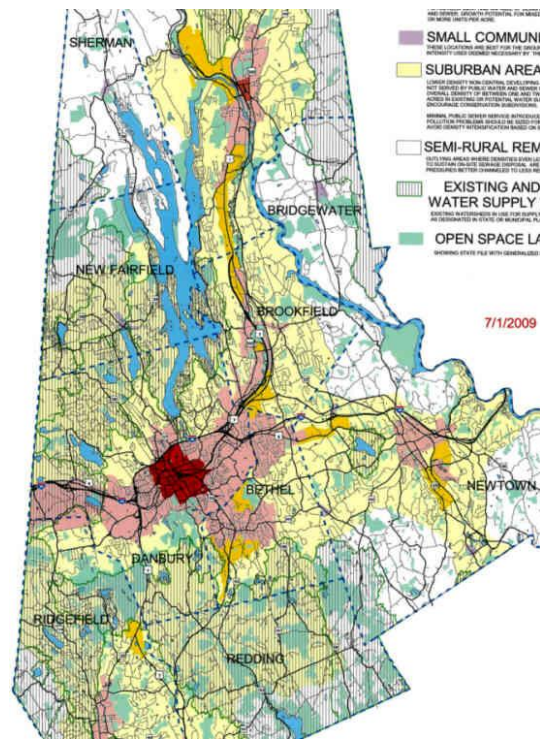
However, a portion of another urbanized area enters the Housatonic Valley Planning Region. This is the northern fringe of the coastal Bridgeport-Stamford Urbanized Area.

The Danbury Urbanized Area is located in all or parts of nine of the ten regional municipalities. Bridgewater the exception.

The Bridgeport-Stamford Urbanized Area extends northerly into the southern tier of the Region. It is very pronounced in Ridgefield, much less so in Redding, then includes a significant portion of Newtown.

6C. REGIONAL PLAN PREPARED UNDER CGS 8-35A

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



Excerpt from 2009 Regional Plan Policy Map

The point to be made is that the 2009 Regional Conservation and Development Plan for the Housatonic Valley Region reflects just such “concentric ring” metropolitan area structure.

And OPM has certified the 2009 HVCEO Regional Plan Map, excerpt above, as consistent with the State Plan.

6D. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER URBAN PATTERNS

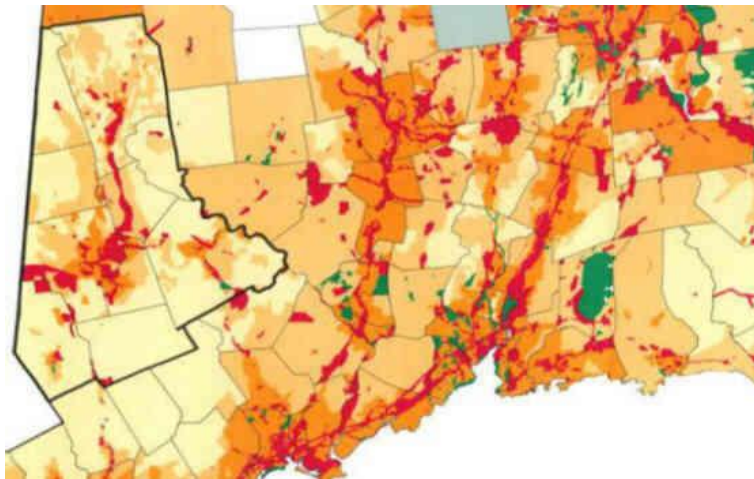
A practical perspective on this region's relative geographic isolation can be obtained from a review of statewide service delivery by the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

DMV maintains seven full service "hub office" locations in Connecticut. These are necessarily widely dispersed, and are located in Bridgeport, Danbury, Hamden, Norwalk, Waterbury, Wethersfield and Willimantic.

More limited DMV locations are then found in six "limited service offices." In addition there are five "photo license centers" and smaller offices.

The nearest of these eleven secondary centers are in Milford, Derby and Cheshire. The DMV also directs residents to "AAA License Renewal Locations", the nearest of which to Danbury is Waterbury.

This locational pattern is an example of a state agency maximizing access to the public with as few offices as necessary to render adequate service. Greater Danbury is well served by the Danbury DMV office.



HVCEO as "relatively remote" within governmental service geography, areas zoned for business in red

The point of outlining DMV service geography is that as Danbury is well north of the coastal concentration and adjacent to the New York State border, it has both relative remoteness and sufficient size that it qualifies for the highest service designation in the DMV system. This geographic position and state service delivery level is one marker of a separate region.

6E. RELATIONSHIP TO NEW YORK STATE

The legislatively defined CT OPM study criteria includes a review of relationships to areas outside of the state. For Greater Danbury, this is adjacent New York State to the west.

While it is not clear to HVCEO how such relationships could affect the shape of Greater Danbury, the information below is provided for use by CT OPM.

CENSUS URBANIZED AREA: The City of Danbury abuts the New York State Line. In adjacent New York State, portions of the Towns of Southeast and Patterson are defined by the Census Bureau as part of the New York State portion of the Danbury Urbanized Area.

REGIONAL MALL: The trade area of the Danbury Fair Mall includes all of the Housatonic Valley Planning Region and the eastern half of New York State's Putnam County and some of northern Westchester County.

A 2009 survey of license plates at the mall parking lot indicated that twenty nine percent of the vehicles in the sampling area had plates issued by New York State, a quick confirmation of this retail giant's interstate draw.

NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION: As already noted a CERC study of the market areas for major daily newspapers identified a high correlation between the boundary of the Housatonic Valley Planning Region and the Danbury News Times readership area.

According to CERC the Danbury News Times is also the dominant daily paper to the west of Danbury, in seven nearby towns in adjacent New York State.

These are Pawling and Patterson west of Sherman, Southeast and Carmel west of Danbury, and then Somers, North Salem and Lewisboro west of Ridgefield. Overall, this is extensive penetration by a Connecticut newspaper into an adjacent state.

6F. DRAW OF CENTRAL CITY IN GRAVITY MODEL

Social scientists make use of a modified version of Newton's Law of Gravity to predict the movement of people, information, and commodities

between areas. Their “gravity model” takes into account the population size of two places and their distance.

The theory is that larger places attract people and commodities from smaller places and the closer together the greater the attraction. The model incorporates these features and predicts drawing power.

For example, total trips from relatively small Bethel to immediately adjacent and much larger Danbury would be expected to be high. CT DOT trip forecasting models document just such attraction.

As currently drawn the regional boundary ties Danbury to all of its abutting suburbs. From the perspective of such a drawing power model, there would need to be compelling logic for the state study to propose separating Danbury from its adjacent suburbs.

Also note that to a lesser extent than Danbury, New Milford’s population and developed land mass applies gravity to its neighbors. This is particularly true for adjacent very small towns.

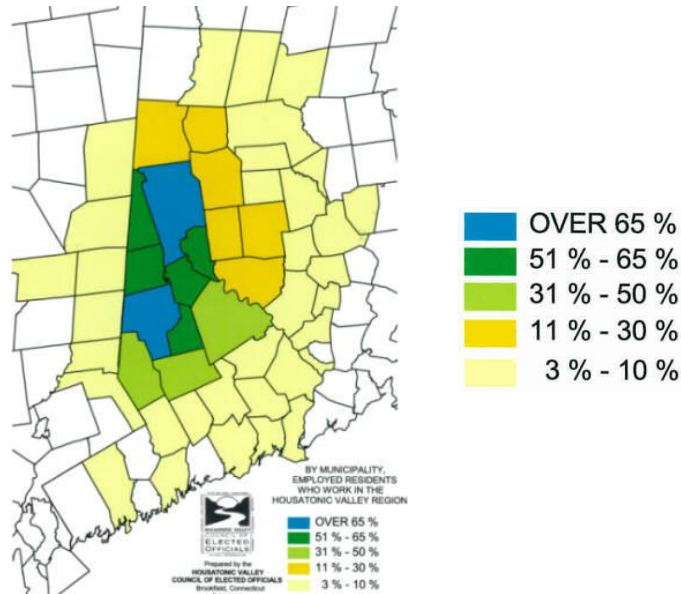
7. “CENSUS AND OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION”

7A. CENSUS JOURNEY TO WORK DATA

Demographics are statistical indicators of the characteristics of the population. Such data is used widely in social analysis, formulation of public policy and business marketing.

While sources of demographic data are varied, much use is made of U.S. Census information. As a rule of thumb Census defined daily work trips represent about 25% of total daily trips.

The latest year for which Census work trip data is available is 2000. One aspect of the work trip pattern, within each town the percentage of resident’s work trips ending within the Housatonic Valley Planning Region, is depicted on the map below:



Map indicating employed residents, by municipality, who have their work site in the Housatonic Valley Region

7B. CULTURAL SERVICES REGION

How does the population of the Greater Danbury Area organize itself for cultural activity, promotion and development? These aspects of demographic organization provide yet another view of how human activity relates to geography.

The Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut is the Danbury Area's regional culture and arts organization. Its geographic scope is the same as that for the ten town HVCEO – Chamber area.

7C. REGIONAL HOSPITAL SERVICE AREA

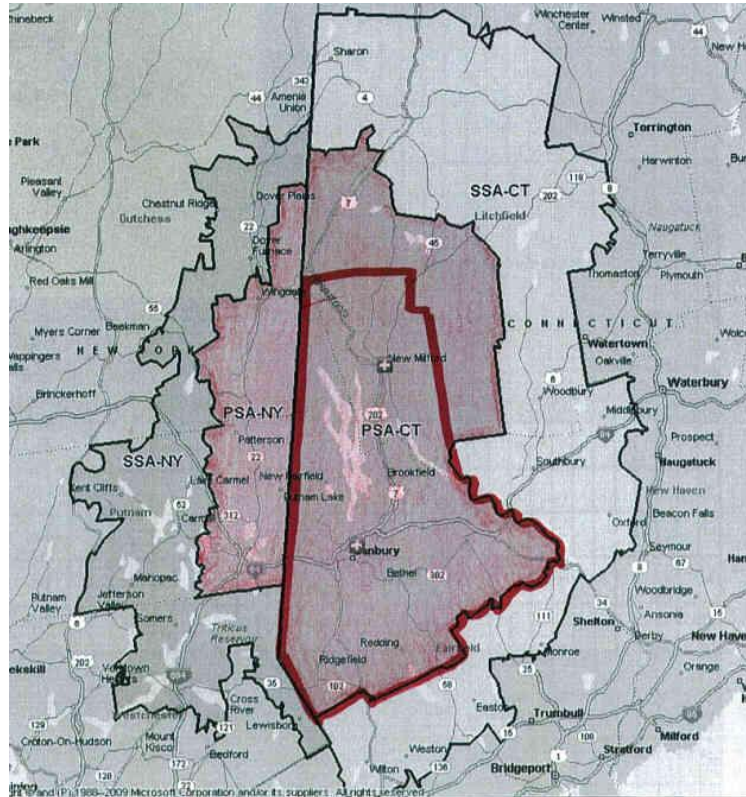
Statistics as to utilization of major urban hospitals by municipality of residence can be of value in plotting regional boundaries. Such massive public medical facilities logically develop in or near larger regional centers to serve those centers and their surrounding communities.

These service areas provide another marker of inherent regional boundaries. The service area must fade out with distance, as predicted by the previously referenced gravity model, where the service areas of other major hospitals begin to exert their own drawing power.

If a boundary transition occurs prior to reaching the edge of the HVCEO region, that is an indication our area shares “regional hospital service” with

another planning region. We would thus be categorized as a “split region” on this variable.

HVCEO obtained the 2012 definitions for Danbury Hospital and New Milford Hospital “service areas.” Note that these two hospitals merged in 2010 under the auspices of the Western CT Health Network. The map of the combined service areas is shown below:



Western CT Health Network Primary Service Area (PSA) in pink, HVCEO boundary added in as a red line, Secondary Service Areas (SSA) also shown

The Western CT Health Network (WCHN) documents that the Danbury – New Milford “primary service area” includes all of the HVCEO area. It then extends across our regional boundary into the Northwestern CT Council of Governments area and also into adjacent New York State.

Included from the Northwest Region are the towns of Kent, Warren, Washington and Roxbury. From adjacent New York State included are the Putnam County towns of Southeast and Patterson and from Dutchess County Pawling and part of Dover.

The primary service area does not extend east into the Waterbury Area or south into the Stamford – Norwalk Area. However, note also that the Network announced in April of 2012 that it had begun affiliation discussions with Norwalk Hospital to the south.

For another perspective on hospital service areas, note that in recent decades many urban hospitals have expanded into surgical and treatment specialties that attract patrons from well beyond their traditional surrounding regions. That well documented trend leaves their emergency room draw area, by definition a time sensitive service with little geographic choice, as an indicator to be examined.

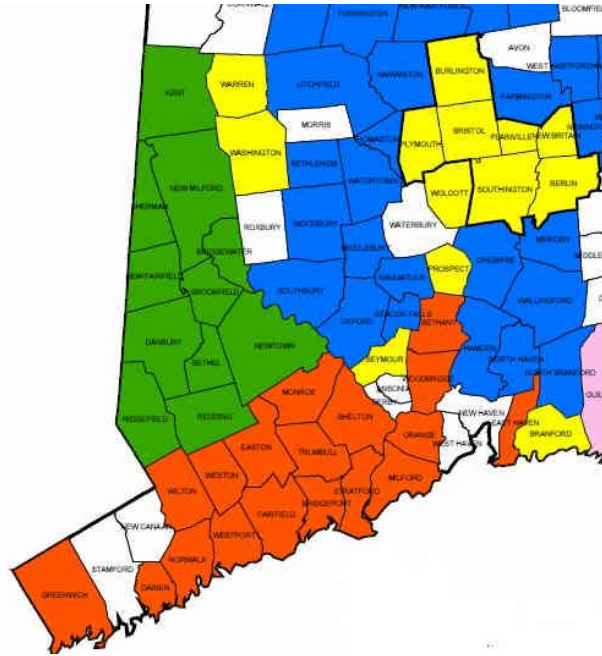
From this more limited emergency service perspective note that in the 2012 WCHN “Medical Control Plan for EMS Provider Medical Oversight” all ten HVCEO municipalities are within the emergency room oversight area, along with Roxbury, Warren and Washington.

7D. RESOURCES RECOVERY AUTHORITY

The Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority (HRRA) is a governmental waste management and recycling entity serving eleven municipalities in western Connecticut. These are the ten within HVCEO with the addition of Kent to the north.

HRRA’s authority derives from CGS 7-273aa - 7-273oo. Created by HVCEO in 1986, since that time HRRA has been housed in the HVCEO office for efficiency of operations. The two organizations share overhead costs and administrative staff.

The combination of the ten HVCEO communities plus Kent has proven viable for achieving economies of scale with solid waste disposal. This cooperation is a marker of successful regionalism.



***Solid waste disposal regions
in Western CT, HRA in green***

Map courtesy of CCRPA

8. “POLITICAL BOUNDARIES, INCLUDING MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES AND CONGRESSIONAL, SENATE AND ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS”

Other than for municipal boundaries, the extent of these districts are to a high degree determined by minimal total population state or federally required, comparative number of affiliated voters by party, as well as by the residences of incumbents and challengers.

These boundaries change after each decennial census and appear to lack any specific value as indicators for designing regional governmental planning and service districts. We will await the state study’s view of this factor.

9. “TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS, CONNECTIVITY AND BOUNDARIES, INCLUDING THE BOUNDARIES OF METROPOLITAN PLANNING AGENCIES”

9A. DEFINING MAJOR CORRIDORS

GENERAL: The link between transportation corridors and regional boundaries is significant. Transportation corridors are the skeletal foundation for regional development patterns.

For the Housatonic Valley Region, these determinants are Interstate 84 from east to west and U.S Route 7 from north to south. A major corridor of the next order of traffic magnitude is CT Route 25 from Bridgeport to Newtown.

The City of Danbury is at the crossroads of the two primary corridors, I-84 and Route 7. Danbury is also a north to south and east to west rail freight and bus transit crossroads.

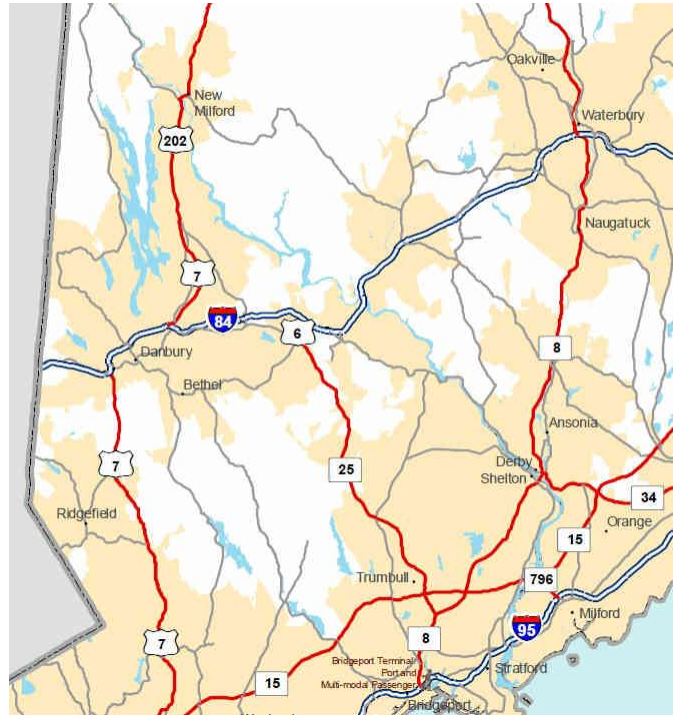
NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM ROUTES: The Federal Highway Administration classifies all roadways by their importance in moving thru traffic over long distances. At the bottom of the scale are local roads.

Moving up the hierarchy roadways become more important for commerce and commuting. Rising classifications include minor and then major collector roads, followed by minor and then major arterial highways.

Capping the federal classification system are “National Highway Routes” (NHS), consisting of all interstates and a selection of important interregional state roadways. In our area, as one would expect, the federal NHS includes Routes 7, 25 and I-84.

Development intensity maps readily confirm that the “metropolitan form” of Greater Danbury evolved in close association with the current NHS routes and their historic antecedents.

Routes 7 and I-84 overlap east to west in Danbury for about four miles. The CT DOT 2010 average daily traffic volume on that segment is 125,000, a high volume by any state or federal standard.



***National Highway System Routes:
Interstate 84 and in red Routes 7 and 25***

ROUTE 7 INVESTMENTS: The speed and capacity of corridors has much to do with the economics and intensity of development patterns. For decades HVCEO regional policy has been to upgrade capacity on the two lane Route 7 to four lanes in most areas.

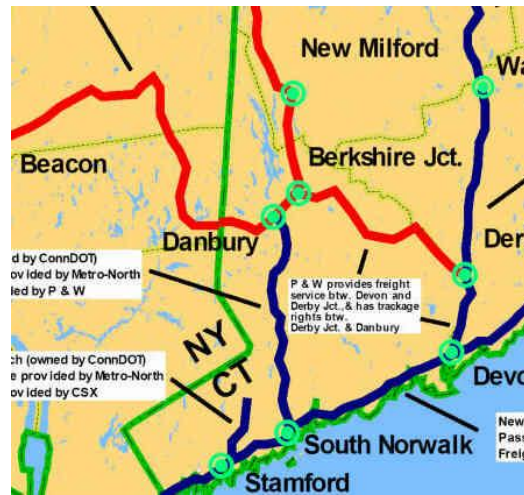
By 2010 and at a cost of over \$180 million, that plan was realized for Route 7 via a combination of expressway extension and widening from two to four lanes.

One impact is that these investments “bring New Milford closer” in travel time to Danbury. According to the Greater Danbury Chamber’s 2012 report “The Greater Danbury Difference,” recent Route 7 capacity improvements are “pulling the New Milford sub-market more into the influence of the I-84 corridor.”

A similar process of Route 7 widening lowered travel time from Ridgefield Center to Danbury.

9B. RAIL CROSSROADS

Danbury is a rail junction and the Danbury Area has active passenger and rail freight service. The “crossroads” layout for rail lines, relating to regional form, is shown on the accompanying graphic.

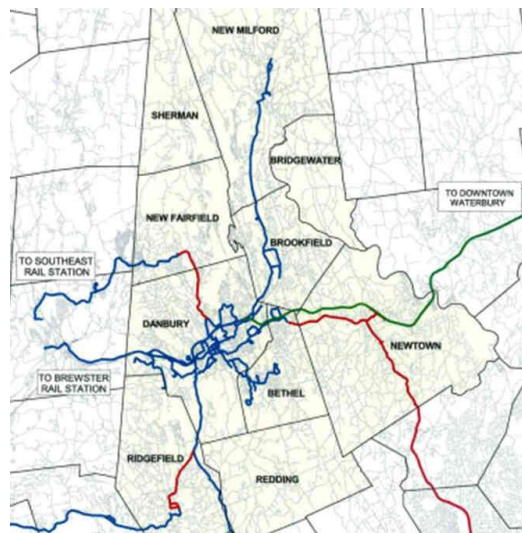


Junction of rail lines in Danbury

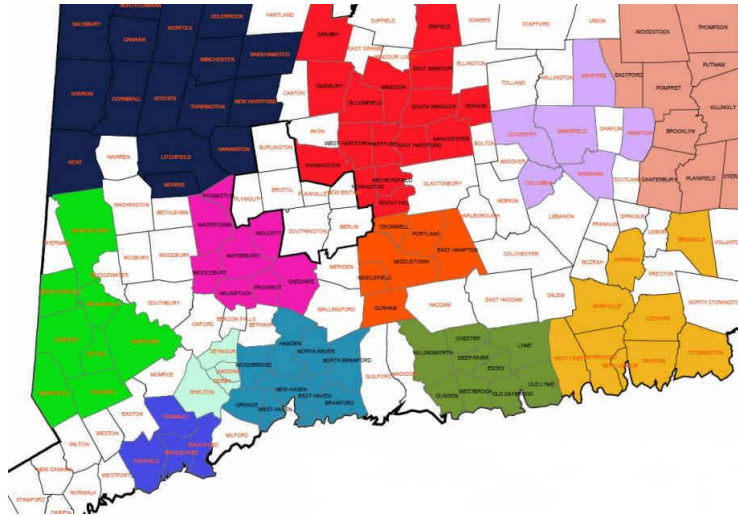
9C. REGIONAL PUBLIC BUS SERVICE

The geographic extent of regional public bus service is a useful measure of regionalism and extent of regional area. The reason is we can assume that budget pressure on transit service expansion limits intermunicipal routes to those that have the most extensive intertown travel.

The Housatonic Valley Region’s public bus system, with regional radials centered on Danbury, is shown below:



Bus transit corridors radiating from Danbury



**Regional transit districts in CT, with
Greater Danbury's HART in light green**

Map courtesy of CCRPA

Organized under Section 103(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the eight municipal members of the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) are Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding and Ridgefield. That is, the full Housatonic Valley Region except for its two smallest towns Bridgewater and Sherman.

As the state boundary study proceeds the shape of the service area for multi-town transit districts should be considered as a variable revealing the presence of regional identity and relationships.

9D. METROPOLITAN PLANNING AGENCIES

We assume the term “metropolitan planning agencies” as used in the study statute refers to the federal U.S. DOT designations of “metropolitan planning organizations” (MPOs).

In the mid seventies Connecticut’s urban regions were designated as MPOs by the Governor and the U.S. DOT. They thereafter exercised partial planning and capital programming responsibility over federally funded transportation projects in their areas, a significant increase in responsibility.

The national Association of MPOs lists eight in Connecticut:

- *Capital Region Council of Governments - Hartford*

- *Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency - Bristol*
- *Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley - Waterbury*

- *Greater Bridgeport Regional Council (with Valley Council of Governments)*
- ***Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials - Brookfield***
- *South Central Regional Council of Governments- North Haven*

- *South Western Regional Planning Agency- Stamford*
- *Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments - Norwich*

The presence of a federal MPO designation is a national indicator of an intensive intermunicipal trip making pattern. Regional input to the management of that travel is the purpose of the designation.

The MPO designation indicates significant regionalism and should weigh as such within the OPM boundary evaluation.

10. “CURRENT FEDERAL, STATE AND MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY REGIONS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, REGIONS ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY, HEALTH, TRANSPORTATION OR HUMAN SERVICES”

10A. FEDERAL SERVICE DELIVERY REGIONS

Most federal regions include the entire state of Connecticut as a subunit without further subdivision. We will defer to the state staff for definitive detailing on this criteria.

While most federal agencies do not subdivide Connecticut, valuable exceptions include regional housing market designations from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and urbanized area designations from the U.S. Census Bureau. Both have been utilized herein.

10B. STATE SERVICE DELIVERY REGIONS

CT HUMAN SERVICE REGIONS: By legislative act in 1993, 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 growing number of federal agency single social service grant programs, many 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 conclusions.

OPM concluded that where a federal grant mandated administrative district must be larger than a regional planning organization, the new single purpose district should be composed of multiples of regional planning organizations, with no splitting of regions.

This policy has been only partially implemented since 1993 but the concept remains admirable.

HVCEO can best assist state agencies with their tasks if our area is not split by state agency district boundaries. Not all state agencies need a regional focus; we can jointly determine where regionalism will contribute to the efficiency of state agency service delivery.

CT DESPP SUBSTATE DISTRICT: In 2005 the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP today, the DEMHS subsection of DESPP then) developed a strong alliance with HVCEO and the other regional planning organizations.

That state agency had an underlying logic for adding a regional approach: the effectiveness of response to an emergency is closely tied to the time elapsed and distance traveled to reach the emergency. Yet back up resources elsewhere in the district are often needed and expensive specialized equipment can be shared between regions.

An arrangement was devised in 2005 whereby HVCEO participates with DESPP Region 5, the Danbury Area serving as a subregion for districtwide emergency planning, notification and response activities.

But an attempt to avoid the cutting of any regional planning organizational boundary by DEMHS in 2005 was not completely successful. The extent to which each of the then 15, today 14, regional planning areas remained whole within one of the five DEMHS substate districts is as follows:

Lower CT River 59%
Central CT 86%
Central Naugatuck 92%
Capital 100%
Greater Bridgeport 100%

Housatonic% 100%
Litchfield Hills 100%
Northeastern 100%
Northwestern 100%
South Central 100%

Southeastern 100%
South Western 100%
Valley 100%
Windham 100%

Perspective on DEMHS District - RPO boundary coordination was provided by the 2007 Report on regional planning organizations 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 regional planning organizations. In the end, however, several towns were grouped with different towns, based on police and fire mutual aid agreements.”

HVCEO member municipalities have done well with this model of state agency district – multiple metropolitan area coordination. The two regional emergency mutual aid agreements maintained by the ten HVCEO members work in harmony with District 5 objectives.

10C. MULTI-TOWN DISTRICTS

The inventory is as follows:

- *New Fairfield, Sherman, New Milford, Bridgewater and Brookfield cross the regional boundary to cooperate with Roxbury on animal management.*
- *Redding and Easton jointly maintain a regional school district.*
- *The Newtown Health District also serves Roxbury.*
- *The Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority includes Kent.*
- *Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington jointly maintain a regional school district.*
- *The Candlewood Lake Authority is composed of five municipalities from this region: Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford and Sherman.*

- The Lake Lillinonah Authority is composed of Bridgewater, Brookfield, New Milford and Newtown from this region with Roxbury and Southbury from two other regions.

- The Lake Zoar Authority is composed of Newtown from this region with Monroe, Oxford and Southbury from two other regions.

We will defer to the state staff in updating the 2000 statewide inventory of multi-town districts. As of this writing it does not appear that the cooperative ventures cited above have impacts of a magnitude to alone reshape the regional boundary.

11. “THE CURRENT CAPACITY OF EACH REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION TO DELIVER DIVERSE STATE AND LOCAL SERVICES”

11A. CAPACITY TO DELIVER STATE SERVICES

CURRENT DELIVERY OF STATE SERVICES WITH REGIONAL FOCUS: Readers of this report should be aware that there has been concern over this factor in regional boundary analysis. The complaint is that the research process to determine just what services the state is interested in directing towards regional planning organizations should be determined before boundary changes, not after.

The question has been raised: How can we determine if our planning region can deliver “necessary regional services” without first defining what the necessary services are? Unless the upcoming state study provides significant clarification it appears that the staging of these determinations is out of sequence.

It is fair to say that some state agencies may, or may not, improve their service delivery with RPO involvement newly included. This decision has already been made by some state agencies. There are fine examples of productive state agency partnerships with regional planning organizations.

HVCEO and the others maintain mutually advantageous relationships with the CT Department of Transportation, the DEMHS section of the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, and the CEDS planning unit within the CT Department of Economic and Community Development.

The missions of all three of these state agencies benefit from substate regional input shaping their localized service delivery.

HVCEO is open to further development of these relationships and to considering additional state partners.

FUTURE DELIVERY OF STATE SERVICES WITH REGIONAL FOCUS: To organize this dialogue, state agencies could be as plotted along a continuum. The end points are those departments that will not benefit at all from regionalizing their services, to those at the other end that will greatly benefit.

Consider the DMV office hierarchy and distribution discussed earlier. Such a department would not achieve more efficient service delivery with either policy input from, or contractual service delivered by, HVCEO.

This seems obvious, once you think about it. The DMV is not a state agency service type that would naturally look to what a regional council has to offer. By their nature, *DMV licensing and safety standards are not inclusive of regional variations.*

At the other end of the continuum is CT DOT. It has a vigorous regional policy component that has operated in close cooperation with regional planning organizations for decades.

Unlike DMV services, transportation investments are uniquely designed to address local and regional needs. This is especially true with roadway capacity investments, with their multiple physical, social and economic effects upon large segments of a metropolitan area.

The position of a state agency on the continuum then is defined by the degree to which the agency varies its statewide standards to incorporate regional conditions and thereby improve service delivery.

The logical policy is for the state to point regional planning organization involvement away from state service delivery that has no or minimal regional impacts. Instead, favor involvement with state agencies that do have such impacts.

FUTURE DELIVERY OF STATE SERVICES WITHOUT REGIONAL FOCUS: When would it make sense for current state services to be newly

segmented geographically such that HVCEO is in some ways assists with service delivery? This important question is just emerging for discussion.

As of this writing we do not see advantages stemming from the regionalization of state services that up to now have been directed from one central state administration.

Consider the parallel: relocating some state agency service delivery “down to the regional level” reverses economies of scale just as would returning already regionalized services “back to the municipalities.”

It could be said that relocating administration of a state agency service, with no obvious need for regional policy input, from the state to the regional level reduces state agency staff needs. Maybe - but there would be considerable additional work to maintain equal administrative quality between all the new regional offices.

We note that this topic is in its very early stages of development and much discussion remains.

Looking forward, HVCEO is receptive to partnering with state agencies or other creative arrangements where state service design, management and delivery are enhanced by working within a regional framework.

11B. CAPACITY TO DELIVER MUNICIPAL SERVICES

SERVICES PREVIOUSLY REGIONALIZED: The region has succeeded in delivering municipal services with regional administration.

Seven of the HVCEO municipalities are part of a septage management disposal agreement administered by Danbury and HVCEO staff. And all ten municipalities are part of a resource recovery disposal system administered by the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority (HRRA).

Both of the above regional waste disposal systems are as authorized by municipal ordinances. So, if the region were to contemplate adding another major regional service, successful precedents are in place.

The municipalities also annually fund three regional lake authorities and the regional transit district. So “multi-town efforts” are not unusual in the area’s local budgeting and political processes.

The HVCEO staff also provides on-going guidance to municipal staffs in the areas of video conferencing systems and geographic information systems.

SERVICES PROPOSED FOR REGIONALIZATION: To make use of newly available state grants for service regionalization, the following initiatives are being pursued:

1) Emergency Pet Sheltering in Bridgewater, Brookfield, New Fairfield, New Milford, Roxbury and Sherman. *This application is being coordinated with the six municipalities signatory to a Regional Animal Control Services Agreement.*

HVCEO has applied for funding to study short term pet sheltering options during an emergency when their owners are themselves in shelters or unable to care for their pets. The study phase will produce documentation for a capital grant application to follow.

2) Functional Needs Emergency Sheltering. *This application is being coordinated with the Housatonic Valley Region Public Health Emergency Planning Committee. Funds from CT OPM are being sought to identify regionalized procedures for sheltering special needs populations during emergencies.*

This sector of the population is serviced now, but partially and inefficiently. Due to the aging of the population it is also growing rapidly. As above, a study phase will produce all needed materials for a capital grant application for upgrading of municipal emergency shelter services.

3) Permanent Collection Centers for Household Hazardous Waste. *This application was is being coordinated with the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority. The study project will determine how to upgrade to more efficient household hazardous waste disposal methods and increase the amounts of waste collected. Again and as above, the study phase is the prelude to a capital grant application.*

4) Regional Washing Facilities for Public Works Vehicles. *This application is coordinated with the Association of Public Works Professionals for the Housatonic Valley. This study will define the components of capital and operating costs for upgrading vehicle washing in ten municipalities to reduce costs and to meet environmental standards.*

SERVICES UTILIZING HVCEO COMMUNICATIONS: A significant portion of the HVCEO service to municipal members is in the form of providing on-going regionalized communications:

HVCEO IN LEAD ROLE:

*--- **Annual meeting with Area Legislators**, breakfast in December to advocate for municipal and regional needs prior to legislative session.*

*--- **Housatonic Valley Region Public Health Emergency Planning Committee**, health directors meet monthly at office, staff participates and provides fiduciary services.*

*--- **HVCEO Emergency Management Directors Planning Group**, quarterly rotating between emergency operations centers.*

--- **Finance and Human Resource Directors Annual Luncheon**, to network and review consultant's report comparing bargaining unit agreements.

--- **HVCEO Tick Illness Prevention Task Force**, meets every other month at office, staff provides administrative support.

--- **Planning and Zoning Department Staff**, annual discussion session and periodic meetings with state planning staff.

--- **Annual Sexual Harassment Prevention Training**, provided each June for newly hired municipal supervisory staff.

HVCEO IN PARTICIPATORY ROLE:

--- **Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority**, HVCEO provides office space and minor administrative support.

--- **Western CT Economic Development Alliance**, staff has board membership, provides financial and administrative support, meets every other month at Danbury Chamber. HVCEO hosts organization's web site.

--- **Association of Public Works Professionals for the Housatonic Valley**, staff assists meetings held every other month rotating between municipalities, administered by the Danbury Public Works Department.

--- **Capitol Region Purchasing Council**, seven of this region's ten municipalities are members of the CRPC.

--- **Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance**, staff maintains this organization's check book.

--- **Ives Trail and Greenway Association, Inc.**, HVCEO hosts web site.

12. "SUCH ANALYSIS SHALL ALSO ESTABLISH A MINIMUM SIZE FOR LOGICAL PLANNING AREAS THAT TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES, TOTAL POPULATION, TOTAL SQUARE MILEAGE AND WHETHER THE PROPOSED PLANNING REGION WILL HAVE THE CAPACITY TO SUCCESSFULLY DELIVER NECESSARY REGIONAL SERVICES"

12A. CAPACITY TO DELIVER SERVICES

In addition to what has been stated above as to precedents with regional service delivery, HVCEO's internal financial and management skills are state of the art. Annual audits document that the organization has no weaknesses in financial management.

All municipal members pay their annual dues in a timely manner. In the forty five year history of the organization, no municipality has ever withdrawn from membership or failed to pay dues.

12B. POLICY AS TO MINIMUM SIZE

According to the boundary study statute, formulation of a state policy towards “minimum size” for regions is needed. This policy is to take into consideration the number of municipalities, total population and total square mileage.

A start to viewing the rank of HVCEO within a size hierarchy is to prepare a statistical weighting of the required three primary factors; number of municipalities, total 2010 population, and total square mileage.

Calculate each region’s “percentage of the state total” for each of the three variables. The three percentages for each region are then added together and divided by three. It is this final averaged figure for each region that is then placed in a single ranked column, highest scores at the top.

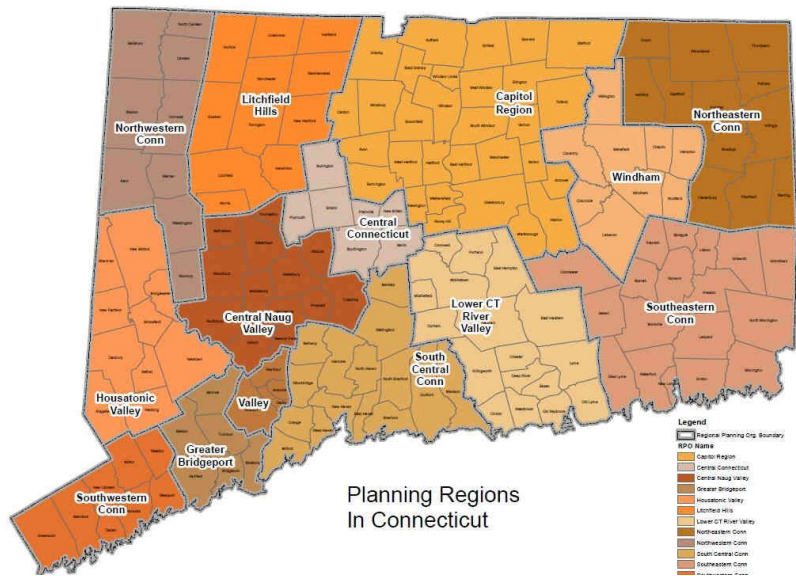
The fourteen regions can then be listed in “rank order” as the “minimum size” policy backdrop for non-mathematical application of modifying perspectives from the other criteria.

The percentages from the methodology described above are shown below. They represent each region’s share of the state total for the three required variables:

- 1. 18.58 *Capitol*
- 2. 10.86 *South Central*
- 3. 9.68 *Southeastern*
- 4. 8.01 *Lower CT River*
- 5. 7.36 *Central Naugatuck*

- 6. 6.48 *South Western*
- 7. **6.31 *Housatonic Valley***
- 8. 5.76 *Northeastern*
- 9. 5.73 *Litchfield Hills*
- 10. 5.13 *Greater Bridgeport*

- 11. 5.03 *Windham*
- 12. 4.68 *Central CT*
- 13. 4.39 *Northwestern*
- 14. 2.00 *Valley*
- 100.00 *Total State*



In the minimum size analysis above HVCEO ranks as seventh of the fourteen. This is a “middling” rank. That rank will “fall” if regions beneath HVCEO in the hierarchy consolidate.

Any weakness in this middle position is tempered by the area's demonstration of self-contained regionalism as amply documented in this report.

That strength, coupled with Danbury's relative remoteness within state geography, should qualify the City for continued consideration as the center of its own planning region.

