

REGIONAL MOBILITY STUDY

*Serving Aging and Disability
Communities*

South Central Regional Council of Governments

2025



SCR | South Central
COG | Regional Council
of Governments

Executive Summary

For all Connecticut residents, accessible transportation is critical to one’s ability to engage in essential economic, social, and civic activities. Enhancing transportation access is particularly critical for the increasing levels of senior citizens and individuals with disabilities in Connecticut’s South Central Region. Safe, dependable, and equitable transportation options are vital for accessing jobs, healthcare, education, and housing, as well as for participating in local communities. To ensure comprehensive and individualized transportation services that meet the needs of these disadvantaged populations, this report reviews and analyzes relevant demographic data in the region to identify the size and makeup of the communities this report aims to serve. Next, this report will analyze available transportation options in the region to prioritize accessible service and enhance communication and coordination. This study will then identify deficiencies in the regional network, leverage innovative technology to address challenges, and strengthen regional coordination to improve mobility options through actionable recommendations. This initiative involved extensive local public engagement through local events, community outreach, and extensive coordination with regional stakeholders to ensure that riders, providers, and transportation leadership were directly involved in the development of this study. The outcomes of this initiative include a broader range of transportation options available to the public, increasing the quality of life for the region’s residents and ensuring that a lack of transportation options does not restrict one’s ability to carry out their daily lives.

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Background

Background

Research proves there is a direct correlation between aging and the likelihood of developing disabilities. Health impairments and disabilities associated with this demographic contribute to the impaired person’s ability to drive and remain mobile, significantly impacting that individual’s quality of life without proper mobility-related services. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s 2024 Disability and Health Data System (DHDS) provides relevant data on older adults and individuals with disabilities, finding that older adults reported a higher disability prevalence (43.9% of people aged 65 years and older) compared to other age groups.¹

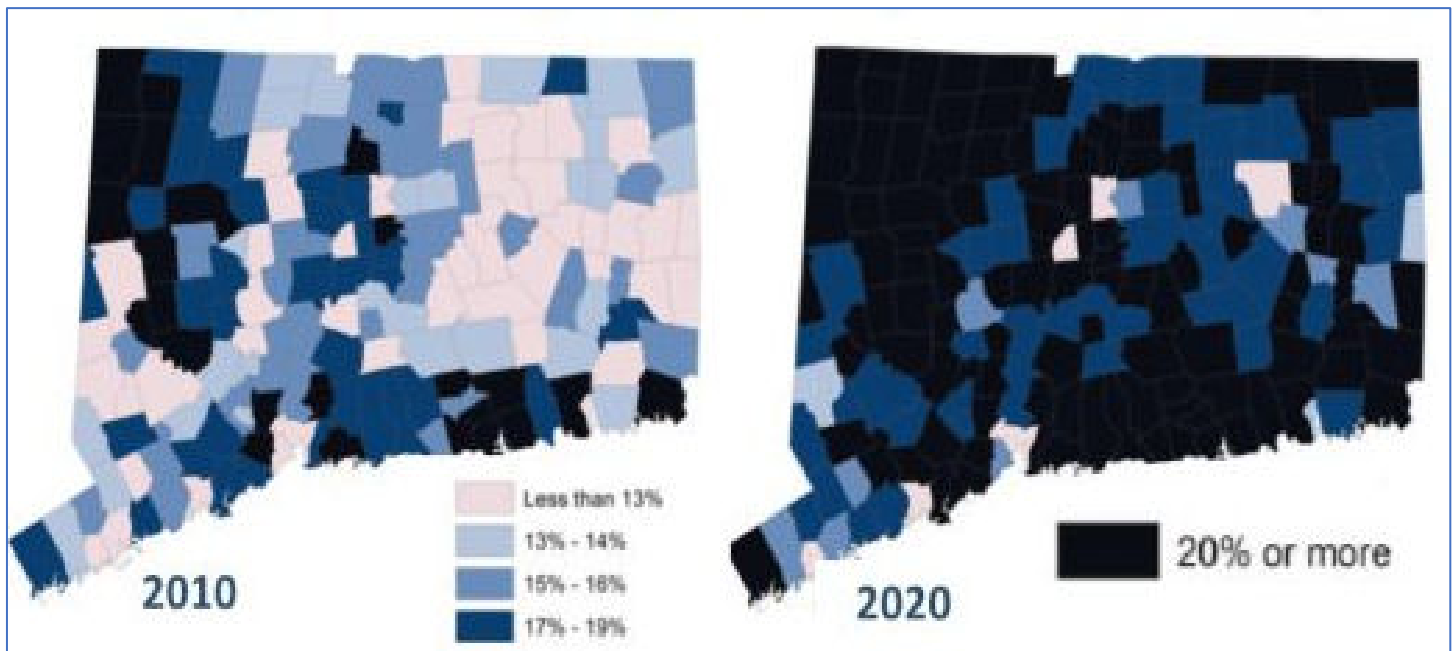


Figure 1: Percentage of 65+ Residents as proportion of Town Population¹

Many users require accommodation for wheelchairs and medical equipment, or they may struggle with navigating bus stairs, accessing low seats, or waiting at bus stops that lack amenities like seating, shelter, or disability accessibility. Regarding these challenges, the American Association of Retired Persons states, “To live independently and age successfully, older Americans must be able to maintain a mobile lifestyle.”² This is true for older adults, but also for individuals with a disability.

Inadequate mobility options prevent individuals from fully engaging in society by accessing medical care, working, and interacting socially with others. The absence of comprehensive, accessible, and equitable transportation options for older adults and those with disabilities leads to isolation, limiting their ability to interact with society. This has been proven to result in loneliness, depression, and a decline in overall physical and mental health. Older adults and those with disabilities are vulnerable demographics, requiring an increased frequency of medical-related trips and difficulty traveling to necessary appointments. **Figure 2** depicts relevant statistics ³

To quantify factors of disability and age, **Figure 3** depicts age ranges and the associated prevalence of disability. ⁴ This data demonstrates the pattern of older adults developing disabilities as they age.

A variety of individuals with unique needs and ability levels utilize mobility transportation options. Society tends to associate transportation options for individuals with disabilities with physical conditions, such as difficulty walking. However, there are many other categories of need that must be adequately addressed, including vision and auditory impairments, or people with cognitive disabilities.

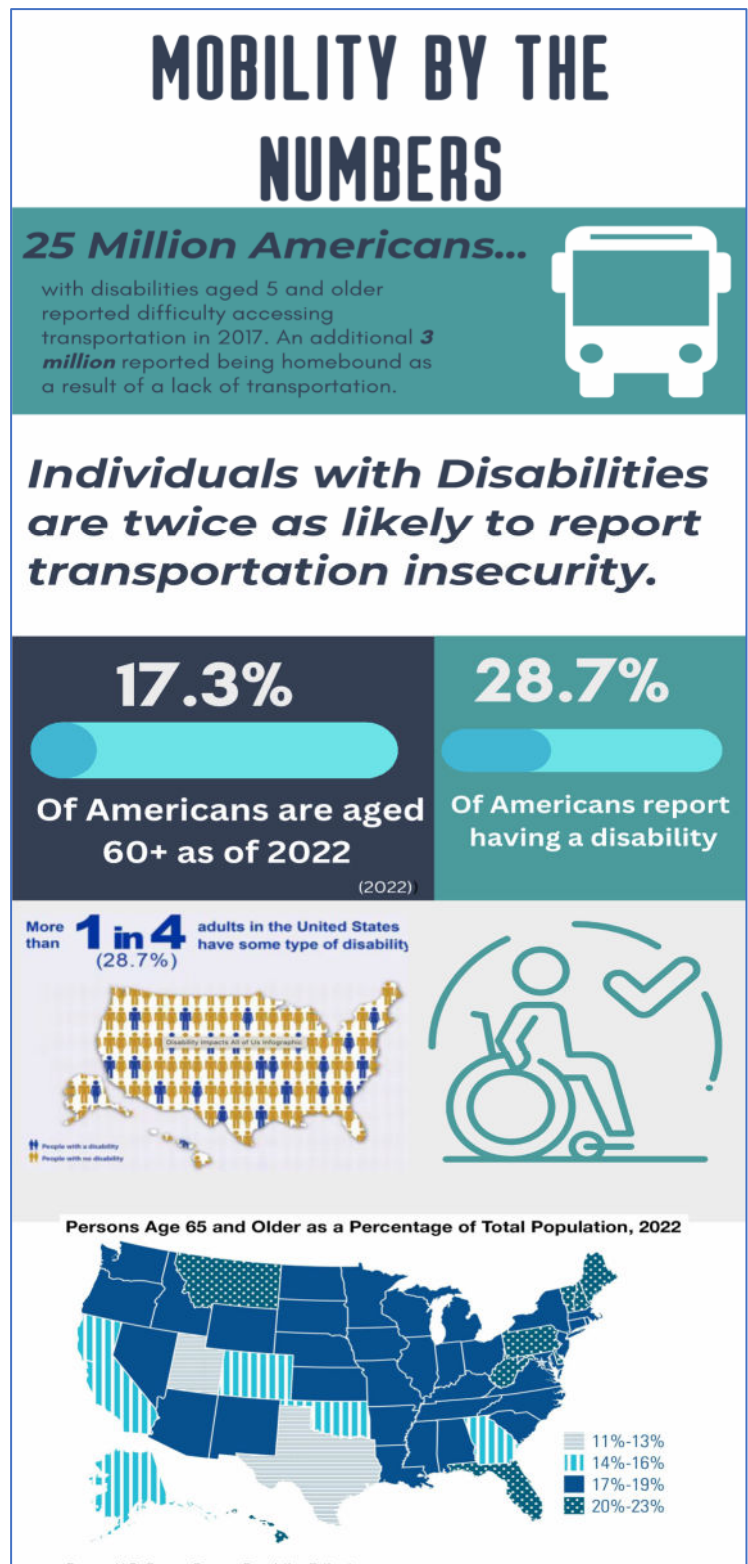


Figure 2: Mobility by the Numbers

This report will discuss strategies, initiatives, organizations, and recommendations to ensure adequate transportation options for all individuals, regardless of age or ability.

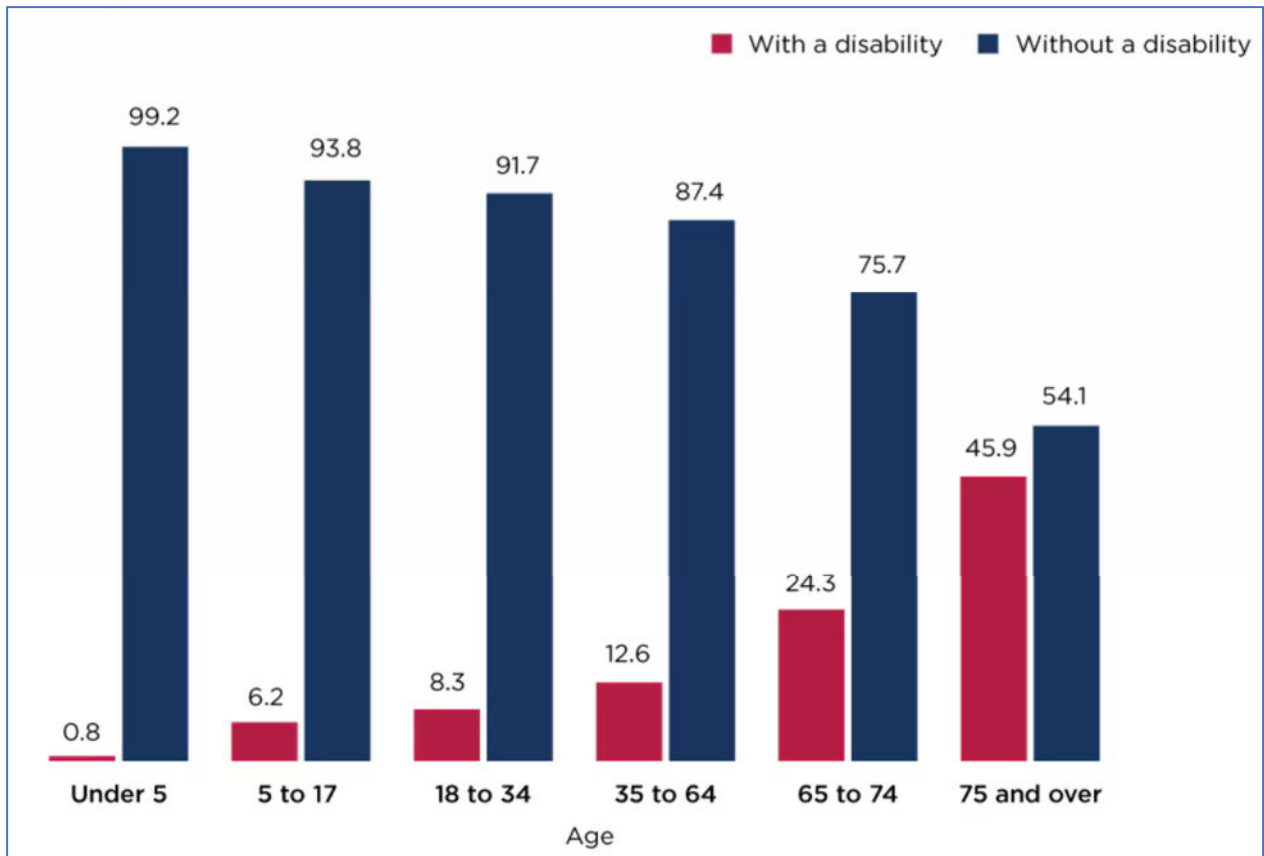


Figure 3: Age by Disability Status



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public Engagement

The SCRCOG Regional Mobility Study project team, in conjunction with key stakeholders within the region, underwent an extensive, dynamic, and equitable public outreach campaign designed to directly involve riders, providers, and transportation professionals in the study’s progress. Throughout this initiative, the project team attended multiple events to gather feedback from local communities.

The project team formed a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of transportation providers, mobility managers, representatives from local non-profit organizations, and municipal transportation leadership. Throughout the public outreach campaign, relevant data and perspectives were identified and directly included in this study’s progress. Ultimately, the success of the SCRCOG Regional Mobility Study has been heavily contingent on meticulous coordination between key stakeholders and the public. This chapter will review relevant stakeholder and public engagement efforts to date.

The project team prioritized accessibility by ensuring that the public and key stakeholders received adequate meeting notices. All meetings were accessible, held at flexible and convenient times, and accommodated virtual attendees. All project materials were

provided before any meeting or outreach event.

Efforts were made to ensure the public received equitable access to all aspects of the study's progress. The project team disseminated all project information using a variety of platforms and venues, using clear, non-technical language. In response to the growing Hispanic population in the South Central Region, essential project materials included Spanish translations.

Technical Advisory Committee

Throughout the study’s progress, the project team created and collaborated with its Technical Advisory Committee, which was established early in the study’s process. The study’s Technical Advisory Committee includes professionals from various backgrounds, including transit leadership, non-profit organization representatives, municipal transportation providers, and senior center leadership. Only three municipal representatives attended TAC meetings: Meriden, Wallingford, and East Haven.

TAC organizations include:

- Senior Services Coordinators
- Meriden Senior Center
- Greater New Haven Transit District
- Wallingford Senior Center
- The Kennedy Collective
- Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers
- East Haven Senior Center
- Easterseals

In addition to participation in the Technical Advisory Committee, detailed stakeholder interviews were conducted with each Technical Advisory Committee member, ensuring that each stakeholder’s robust perspectives and experiences were implemented into the study.



Figure 4: TAC Meeting

As a part of this project’s outreach efforts, the project team facilitated two separate Technical Advisory Committee meetings, one in September of 2024 and another in February of 2025. During these meetings, progress updates were provided, along with facilitated discussions on pertinent issues, including top concerns in the industry, barriers to accessible transportation, best practices, and potential recommendations for the sake of the report.

Mobility Survey

To understand the accessibility, affordability, and availability of regional

transportation services for aging and disability communities, the project team designed a Mobility survey at the start of the project. This survey targeted both riders and providers, inquiring into how frequently transportation services are utilized, which providers are commonly used, challenges in navigating transportation options, and ways to improve the overall transportation system to ensure that disadvantaged demographics find reliable, equitable, and cost-effective means of travel.

Outreach Events

Greater New Haven Transit District’s Riders Forum

Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) hosts quarterly “Riders Forums” to collect feedback from paratransit riders and to review relevant changes and updates to GNHTD’s operations. On July 17th and October 23rd, the Mobility Study’s project team attended these forums as guest speakers. The project team’s representatives shared essential details of the Mobility Study with riders, promoted and distributed Mobility surveys, and established a line of communication with the individuals who rely on GNHTD’s paratransit services.

ADA Anniversary Celebration

The Connecticut Department of Transportation, ADA Coalition of

Connecticut, City of New Britain, and other regional transportation organizations hosted a celebration marking the 34th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition to attending the event, efforts were made to distribute the Mobility survey and relevant study materials to attendees from various sectors of the transportation industry in Connecticut.

Wallingford Senior Center

On November 11th, 2024, the Mobility Study’s project team visited the Wallingford Senior Center as part of its public involvement campaign. Our team operated a booth in the atrium, distributing the study’s survey and project materials while discussing Transportation experiences with Senior Center members.



Figure 5: Wallingford Senior Center



Figure 6: Meriden Senior Center Visit



Existing Conditions

Existing Conditions

Demographic Overview

The state of Connecticut is home to a significant number of older adults and individuals with disabilities. According to the Healthy Aging data report in 2021, roughly 23% of Connecticut residents are 60 years or older, with the state ranked as the seventh oldest in the nation, measured by median age⁵. According to census data, Connecticut’s population of older adults has steadily grown over time, as documented in **Table 1**.

*Table 1: Connecticut's Population Projection
(Source: US Census Bureau)*

Year	All Ages	Age 60 +	% of Total Population
2015	3,593,301	761,438	21%
2020	3,604,603	816,459	23%
2030	3,633,994	872,876	24%
2040	3,654,015	826,624	23%

The South Central Region is comprised of 15 member municipalities: Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, and Woodbridge. **Table 2** illustrates the senior population in each SCRCOG member municipality, compared to its overall population estimate.

Research has identified an increased correlation between age and disability status. As individuals age, the likelihood of developing

a disability will increase. In 2022, 12.4% of the overall state population reported one or more disabilities in CT⁶. The American Community Survey identifies persons with disabilities based on six questions related to hearing disability, visual disability, cognitive disability, ambulatory disability, self-care disability, and independent living disability. **Table 3** illustrates disability prevalence in Connecticut by age group.

As Connecticut’s projected senior population grows, as well as that of its South Central region, we can anticipate a steady increase in disability prevalence. Therefore, it is imperative that the aging population, as well as persons with disabilities, have access to affordable and adequate mobility options throughout the region. **Figure 7** illustrates the population density of older adults in various census tracts throughout the South Central Region.

Table 2: SCRCOG Population and Age by Municipality (Source: US Census Bureau)

Municipality	Population Estimate (2023)	Percentage of Population over 65 years	Estimated number of Senior Residents
Bethany	5,271	18.2%	959
Branford	28,031	26.8%	7,512
East Haven	27,533	20.0%	5,507
Guilford	5,271	18.2%	5,011
Hamden	60,014	16.7%	10,022
Madison	17,498	24.1%	4,217
Meriden	60,111	15.7%	9,437
Milford	50,421	20.6%	10,387
New Haven	135,319	10.8%	14,615
North Branford	13,415	21.4%	2,871
North Haven	24,295	23.0%	5,588
Orange	14,322	22.3%	3,194
Wallingford	43,725	21.1%	9,226
West Haven	54,790	14.6%	7,999
Woodbridge	9,021	20.5%	1,849

Table 3: Disability Prevalence and Age Correlation in CT²

Age Range	Disability Prevalence
Persons of all ages	12.4%
Persons age 4 and under	0.4%
Persons age 5-15	6.8%
Persons age 16-20	8.7%
Persons age 21-64	9.6%
Persons age 65-74	20.3%
Persons age 75+	43.2%

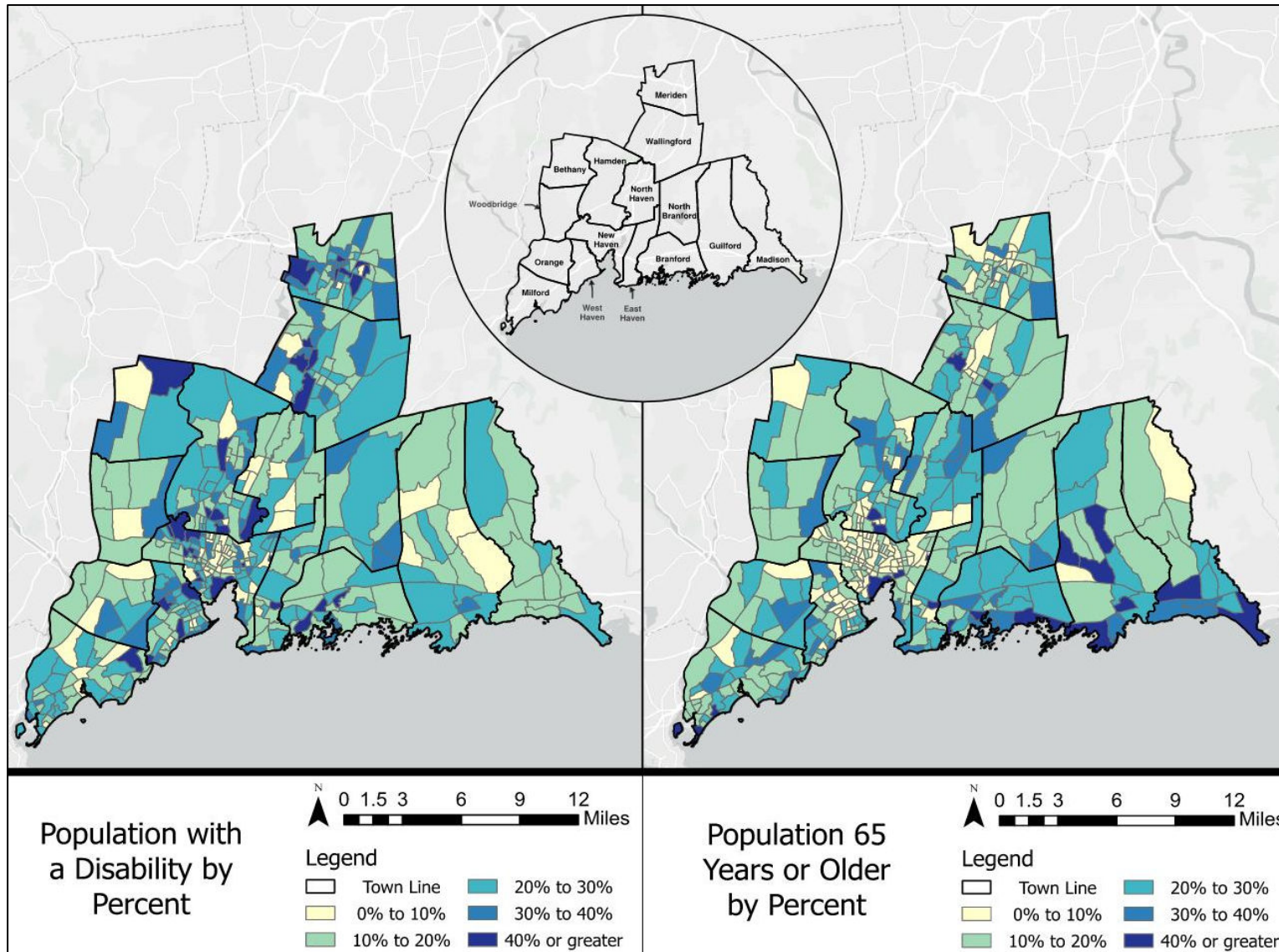


Figure 7: SCRCOG Population with Disability by Percent and Population age 65+ (Source US Census Bureau and American Community Survey)

Policies and Programs

CTDOT oversees several programs that play a critical role in serving the needs of individuals with disabilities and elderly individuals. These programs and policies are meant to provide opportunities that improve the overall quality of life in Connecticut.

Connecticut Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan⁷

This plan was developed in coordination with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), local transportation service providers, and regional planning organizations. The purpose of the plan is to evaluate existing services, identify gaps in service, and develop strategies to address any unmet needs. This plan was last updated in 2021 and included a transportation barriers survey 72% of respondents within the South-Central region reported that there are insufficient transportation options within their service area. Limited service (hours/days) and limited-service area were also top concerns for the region.

Connecticut's State Plan on Aging⁸

This is a three-year State Plan developed by Connecticut's State Unit on Aging (SUA). This was developed as part of the Older Americans Act (OAA), administered by the Federal Administration

for Community Living (ACL). In collaboration with Connecticut's five Area Agencies on Aging and many other key partners, this plan helps the growing population of older adults achieve an improved sense of well-being and maximum independence in ways they value, empowering and engaging them. In Connecticut, the SUA oversees several community-based (non-Medicaid) programs such as the Elderly Nutrition Program, the Statewide Respite Care Program, and the Senior Community Services Employment Program.

Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Federal Section 5310)⁹

Section 5310 was traditionally a capital funding program that financed senior center transportation programs. After a shift in guidelines, this program used funds for transportation operating costs. Of this funding, 55 percent is reserved for capital purchases, whereas 45 percent can be used for operational costs. In the South Central Region, these funds are primarily used to purchase senior center buses. Section 5310 is administered by CTDOT and supports transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in all areas of Connecticut. This program provides funding for both traditional capital investment and nontraditional investment beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services.

Demand Responsive Transportation for Elderly and People with Disabilities¹⁰

This program was established through Connecticut General Statutes 13b-38bb, and through this grant, \$5 million is available to municipalities annually. This is available for elderly and disabled demand-responsive transportation programs for persons aged sixty or older. Municipalities are required to apply to the state through a designated regional planning organization or transit district for funding allocations. The annual application process for this program begins in February each year and awards are made in the spring. This program provides a uniform funding source available to all municipalities in the state. The goal of this program is to provide new transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities where transportation services do not exist, expand transportation services to enhance access to the community in areas where transportation is already available, and encourage efficient use of resources through coordination. Funds associated with demand response transportation cannot be used to replace local dollars, contributing to the need to recertify annually. Four SCRCOG municipalities use these funds for local services and pool resources with Greater New Haven Transit District for its Encompass program.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)/Section 504 Transition Plan¹¹

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities. Beginning in 1991, the Connecticut Department of Transportation required that all municipalities or public entities with 50 or more employees create and maintain an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan. This plan must include a list of physical barriers that limit accessibility, methods to remove barriers and achieve accessibility, a schedule to complete the work, and names of official/s responsible for the plan's implementation. In 2024, CTDOT updated its ADA Transition Plan and several policies, directives, and inventories. CTDOT also pledges to make all reasonable modifications to policies and procedures to ensure that people with disabilities have equal opportunity to enjoy all its programs, services, and activities. Only three municipalities within SCRCOG have publicly accessible ADA Transition Plans: Woodbridge, Wallingford, and Madison. Woodbridge's ADA Transition Plan was last updated on January 15th, 2010. Wallingford's ADA Transition Plan was last updated on October 29th, 2024, and Madison's ADA Transition Plan was last updated on October 1st, 2022.

Transportation Options

The South Central Region has an extensive network of transportation options for senior and disability communities. The services offered within the region include buses, rails and paratransit options. The services offered by these larger regional providers are supplemented by smaller providers, such as towns, organizations, and volunteer programs. In addition, there are also several human service agencies and organizations that have a vested interest in the transportation options that are available to their clients. Improved coordination and communication with these agencies would also improve transportation options for customers. Major mobility transportation providers in the South Central region are outlined and detailed below.

Regional Rail Services

The SCRCOG region is served by *CTRail*, Metro North, and Amtrak connecting many cities and towns in Connecticut with options for travel to New York, Massachusetts, and beyond.

CTRail operates two rail services. The Hartford Line operates along the I-91 corridor between New Haven, CT and Springfield, MA. The Shore Line East operates between New London and New Haven, CT, with select weekday through service to Stamford. Both lines connect with the New Haven Line at New Haven Union Station for travel to southwestern

Connecticut and Grand Central Terminal in New York City.

Metro-North operates the New Haven line, linking cities and towns from New Haven Union Station in New Haven to Grand Central Terminal in NYC. Amtrak offers Acela, Northeast Regional, and Vermonter services in Connecticut with service to 13 cities and towns in Connecticut and easy connections to other public transportation options. New Haven Union Station serves as the connecting point to Shore Line East, Amtrak Acela, and Amtrak Northeast Regional services.

Fare System

Both *CTRail* and Metro North offer reduced fares for Senior Citizens (65+), Persons with Disabilities, and Medicare Card Recipients. People who fulfill one of these criteria get 50% off the standard fare of a one-way ticket. Personal Care Attendants (PCA) with proper identification ride free when accompanying a passenger with a disability.

Accessibility

All trains and stations are handicapped accessible and equipped with level boarding, elevators, visual and audible messaging systems, and monitors displaying arrival times. Train personnel are also available to assist in boarding, but require a prior boarding assistance request.

Figure 8 documents the stations within the South Central Region.

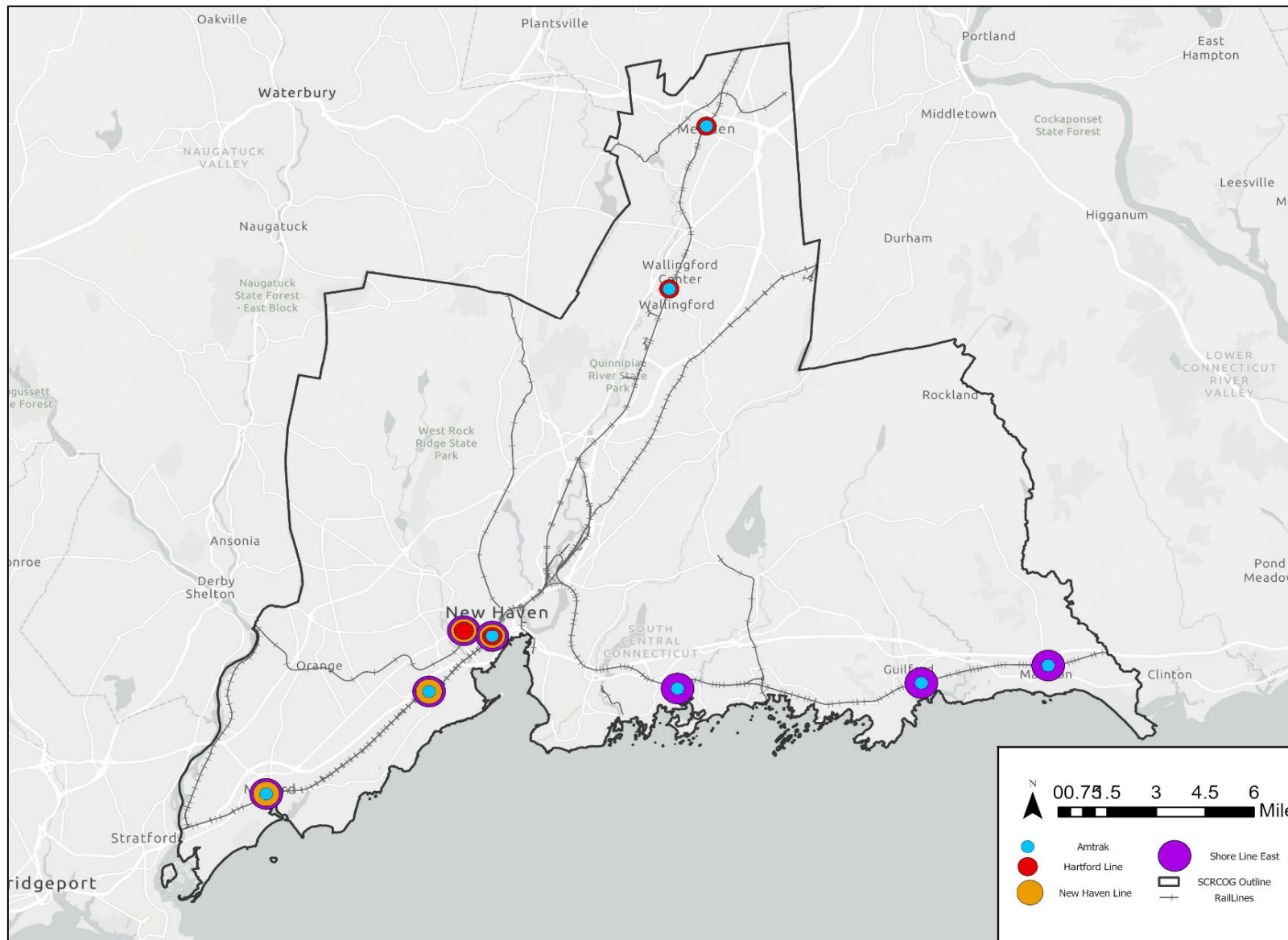


Figure 8: Train Stations within SCRCOG

Regional Bus Services

CTtransit is Connecticut’s state-owned bus service, operating both express and local routes, along with shuttle services.

Express Bus Routes

Three express bus routes serve the SCRCOG region: Meriden Express, Meriden-Waterbury Express, and New Haven-Hartford Express. All three routes operate on a weekday schedule between suburban Park & Ride lots and downtown Hartford.



Figure 9: CTtransit Bus

Local Bus Routes

Local bus services within SCRCOG are operated by CTtransit New Haven and CTtransit’s Meriden and Wallingford divisions. CTtransit New Haven operates over 22 local routes. Many routes operate 7 days a week, connecting with other state-owned or subsidized bus services in Meriden, Waterbury, Wallingford, Milford, and the lower Naugatuck Valley areas, as well as with the New Haven Line and Shore Line East rail services. Annually, CTtransit’s New Haven Division provides approximately eight million passenger trips, representing roughly 23% of all transit bus trips in Connecticut.¹² CTtransit serves a number of municipalities in Connecticut, including, New Haven, West Haven, Hamden, East

Haven, Branford, Woodbridge, North Haven, Guilford, and Milford.

CTtransit Meriden and Wallingford operate fixed route services in their respective areas through a contract with the Northeast Transportation Company, with four local routes. Connections are made in Wallingford and Meriden to New Haven, as well as in Meriden to Middletown Area Transit. Service in Meriden operates Monday through Friday, with Saturday service on some routes. The service in Wallingford operates on weekdays only.

Milford Transit District (MTD) also operates a fixed-route bus service that connects the Norwalk and Bridgeport transit districts.

Connection to Rail Services

Connector bus routes offer peak-hour weekday bus service connecting rail stations to central business areas. Buses are scheduled to meet the New Haven Line, Shore Line East, and Amtrak trains at the station.

Fare System

Senior Citizens (65+), persons with a qualifying disability, and Medicare Card Recipients can travel for a reduced fare at any time on CTtransit and all other bus systems operating under contract with the CTDOT.

Table 4: Reduced Fare Chart for CTtransit (2025, Source: CTtransit)

Bus Service	Two-Hour Pass (Single Fare)	All-Day Pass
Express Bus		
2 Zones	\$1.60	\$3.20
3 Zones	\$2.05	\$4.10
4 Zones	\$2.50	\$5.00
5 Zones	\$3.00	\$6.00
Local Bus	\$0.85	\$1.70

Accessibility

All buses have wheelchair lifts or ramps for people with disabilities to access. Buses are equipped to accommodate wheelchairs, 3-wheel scooters, and walkers. CTtransit buses also allow people with disabilities to travel with their service animal. **Figure 10** documents the bus services within SCRCOG.

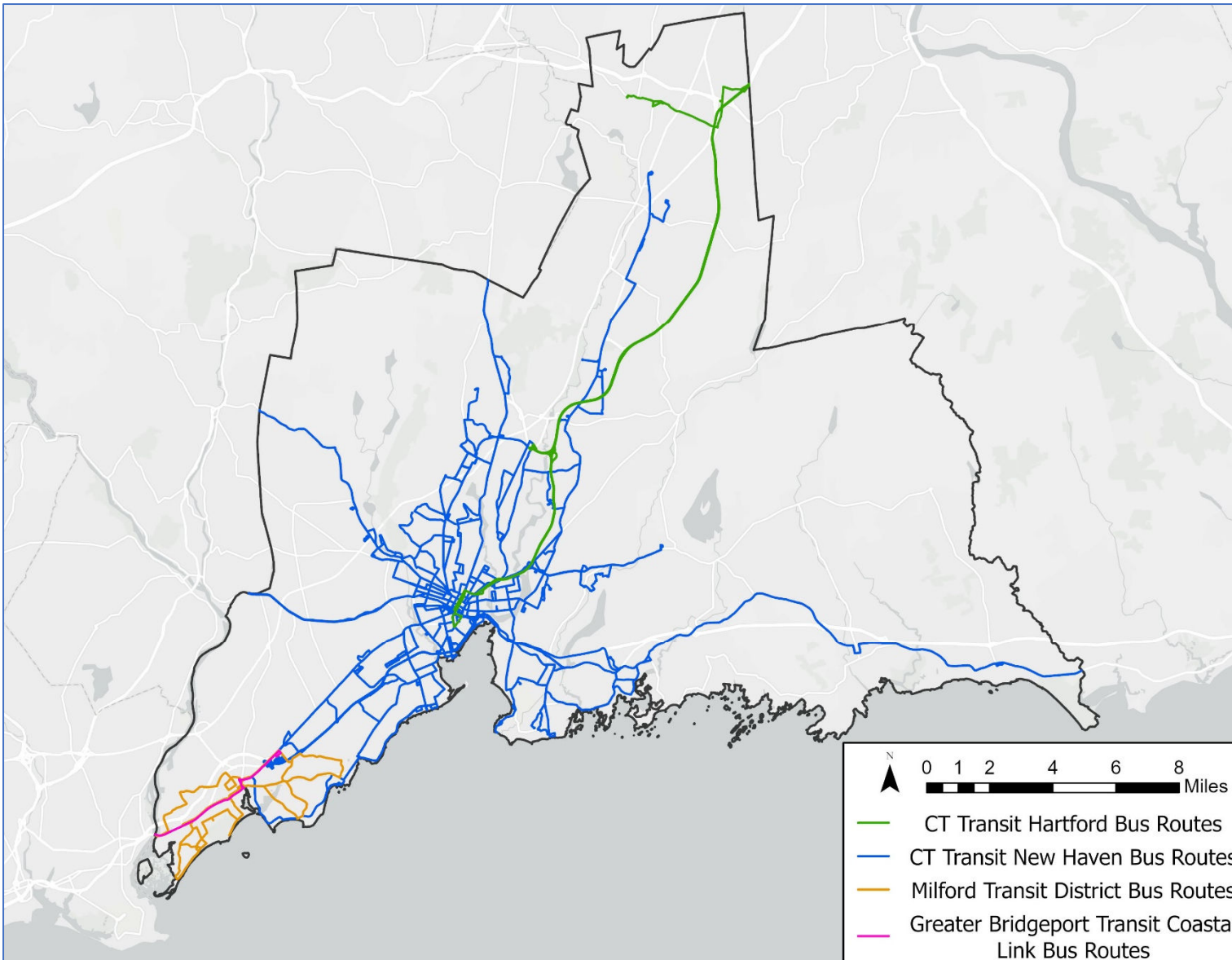


Figure 10: CTtransit Bus Routes within SCRCOG

Municipal Transportation Service

Local Senior Centers primarily provide transportation services in partnership with other human services departments. Senior centers serve as a gateway to the region’s aging network, connecting older adults to vital community services that can help them stay healthy and independent. **Figure 11** shows a map of the senior centers in the region. **Table** provides a summary of services offered through the senior centers in the region. Most of these services are free for the senior center residents. However, some senior centers have a yearly membership fee. This table does not include the periodic recreation and entertainment destinations offered by many senior centers to their members at a cost.

Town of Orange Senior Transportation¹³

The Town of Orange provides a transportation service for senior/disabled residents. Residents who are eligible can apply by contacting the Transportation Coordinator. This service runs Monday to Friday from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm. It provides services to Orange, Milford, West Haven, East Haven, New Haven, North Haven, Hamden, Derby, Shelton, and additional local areas. Advance notice is required to schedule a ride. Suggested donations are \$2.00 to Senior Center, \$4.00 within Orange and \$6.00 outside of Orange all round trips.

Dial-a-Ride¹⁴

Dial-A-Ride is a locally operated transportation service for older adults and individuals with disabilities. Hours of operation are typically limited to Monday through Friday during daytime hours. Each local Dial-A-Ride program established its own fee structure and scope of service, but all rides must be booked in advance.

The State of Connecticut’s Elderly and Disabled Municipal Dial-A-Ride Grant Program (13b-38bb) provides matching funds to municipalities for transportation of seniors and persons with disabilities. Funding is calculated based on the land area and population of those over age 60. If a town or city reduces its funding for senior or disabled transportation, the grant will be proportionally reduced.

Senior Transportation Services¹⁵

The mission of Senior Transportation Services, Inc. (STS) is to assist residents of Berlin, Meriden, New Britain, Plainville, Southington, and Wallingford, ages 50 and over, to live independently in their own homes. STS volunteer drivers use their own vehicles to provide curb-to-curb, safe, reliable, and economical medical transportation to out-of-town appointments, pharmacies, and care facilities to visit loved ones.

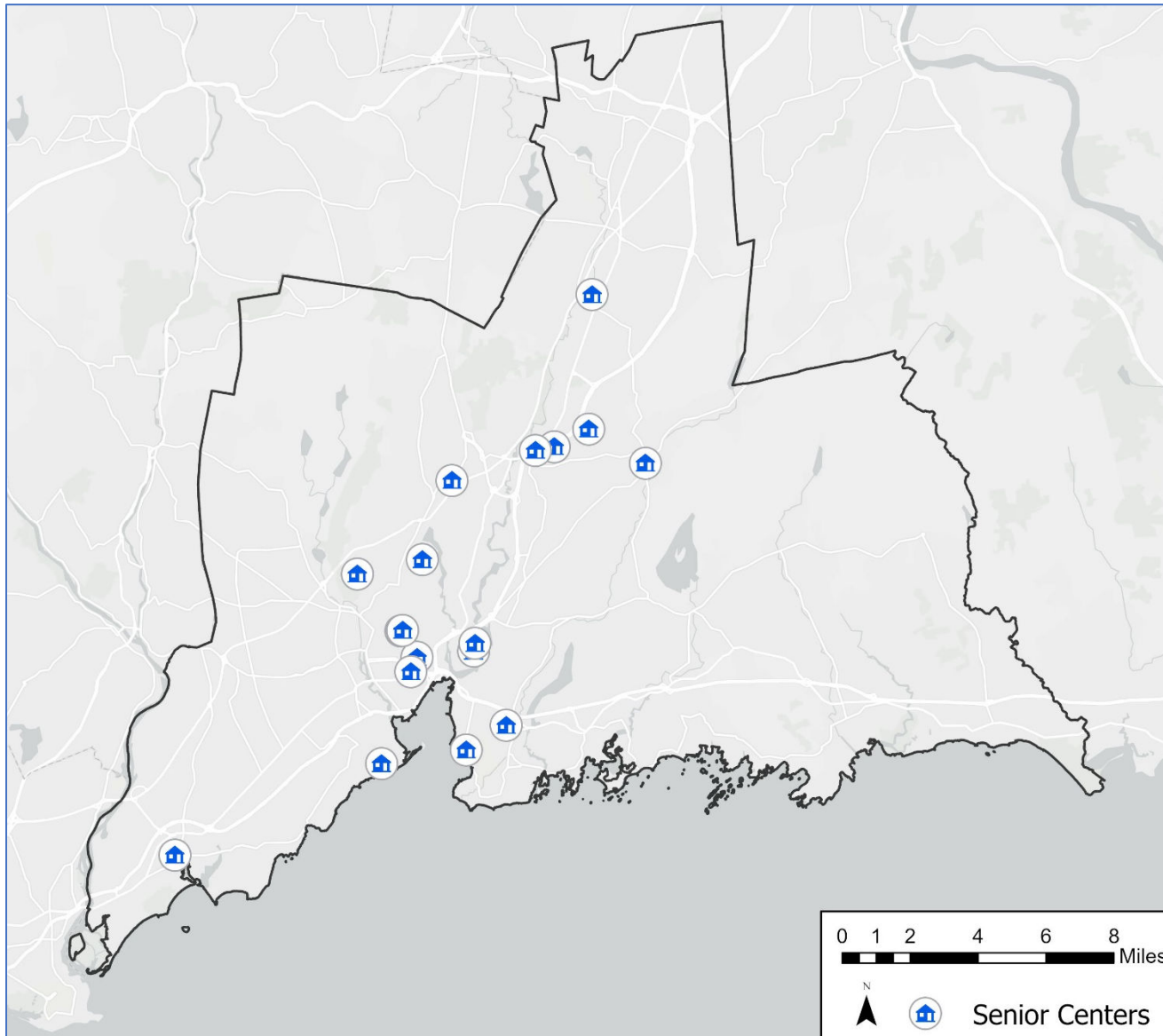






Figure 11: Senior Centers within SCRCOG

Table 5: Transportation Options through Senior Centers

Service Provider	Affiliated Organization	Eligibility	Common Destinations	Wheelchair Accessibility	Cost
Town of Bethany	Bethany Human Services	Residents Age 55+ and Disabled Residents		Yes	\$3.00 (per destination) or \$2 (one-way Trips)
Town of Branford	Canoe Brook Center	Residents Age 60+		No	Free
Town of East Haven	East Haven Senior Center	Residents Age 55+		Yes	Free
Town of Guilford	Guilford Seniors Center	Residents Age 55+ Disabled Residents Age 18+		Yes	Free
Town of Hamden	Miller Senior Center	Residents Age 60+		No	\$0.50 (one-way)
Town of Madison	Madison Senior Center	Residents Age 60+ Disabled Residents Age 18+		Yes	Free
City of Meriden	Meriden Senior Center	Residents Age 55+		Yes	Free
Town of Milford	Milford Senior Center	Residents Age 55+ Disabled Residents Age 18+		Yes	Free
City of New Haven	Atwater, Dixwell/Newhallville, Westville Senior Centers, East Shore	Residents Age 55+		Yes	Free
Town of North Branford	North Branford Senior Center	Residents Age 55+		No	Free
Town of North Haven	Joyce C. Budrow Senior Center	Residents Age 62+		Yes	Free
Town of Orange	Orange Senior Center	Residents Age 55+ and All Disabled Residents		Yes	\$2-6 (Variable)
Town of Wallingford	Wallingford Senior Center	Residents Age 60+		Yes	Free
Town of West Haven	West Haven Senior Center	Residents Age 55+		No	Free
Town of Woodbridge	Woodbridge Senior Center	Residents Age 60+ Disabled Residents Age 18+		Yes	Free

 To and from Senior Center  Grocery  Medical  General Errand

ADA Paratransit

Paratransit remains one of the most widely utilized means of transportation for older adults and persons with disabilities. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Connecticut regional transit districts offer paratransit transportation services for individuals who, because of their disability, are unable to utilize fixed route transportation services operated by CTtransit.

Designed to provide equal access to public transportation, ADA Paratransit fills notable gaps in the mobility options of older adults and persons with disabilities. Per the ADA, any person with a disability who is unable, because of physical or mental impairment, and without the assistance of another individual to board, ride, or disembark from any public bus, may be entitled to ADA Paratransit services. barriers such as distance, terrain, or weather do not qualify for eligibility alone. Service is not restricted by trip purpose, and hours of operation are the same as the public bus service in that area operates.

In the South Central Region of Connecticut, the Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD), Milford Transit District, and the Northeast Transportation Company

provide ADA Paratransit services¹⁶.

Eligibility is based on criteria regarding age and ADA disability status, including the inability to travel on fixed route stops, access route drop off/pick up locations, and navigate the bus system.¹⁷ The application process involves an online application, functionality assessment, environmental review, and an in-person interview. Once approved, an identification card will be sent in the mail within 21 days.

Greater New Haven Transit District

Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) provides ADA Paratransit services to municipalities in the Greater New Haven area within a 3/4th mile radius of CTtransit's fixed route bus service. For GNHTD to provide a trip, its origin and destination must begin and end within the existing service area. GNHTD service extends to the following municipalities: New Haven, West Haven, East Haven, North Haven, Branford, Cheshire, Wallingford, Shelton, Derby, Ansonia, Milford, Orange, Hamden, Bethany, North Branford, and Madison. **Table 6** depicts GNHTD ridership between 2019 and 2024.

Table 6: GNHTD Ridership Summary

Fiscal Year	Total Trips
FY 2024	189,028
FY 2023	206,709
FY 2022	183,299
FY 2021	157,303
FY 2020	181,751
FY 2019	216,042

*Free bus fares ran from 4/1/22 to 3/31/23

Milford Transit District

Milford Transit District (MTD) is a prominent transportation provider in the South Central region that provides reliable public transportation to its residents through the operation of three distinct service routes. Two routes this agency provides operate Monday through Saturday, whereas one route operates exclusively Monday-Friday. Inclusivity and available to seniors with a valid ID and proof of eligibility. Despite its small service range, Milford Transit District strives to ensure that local residents have access to comprehensive and reliable transportation.

accessibility remain a high priority for MTD, utilizing wheelchair ramps in all transit vehicles while providing door-to-door service for persons with disabilities and for older adults aged 60 or older. To utilize this transportation service, rides must be scheduled in advance. Ridership fares can be bought in person at MTD’s main office, online, or directly on the bus.

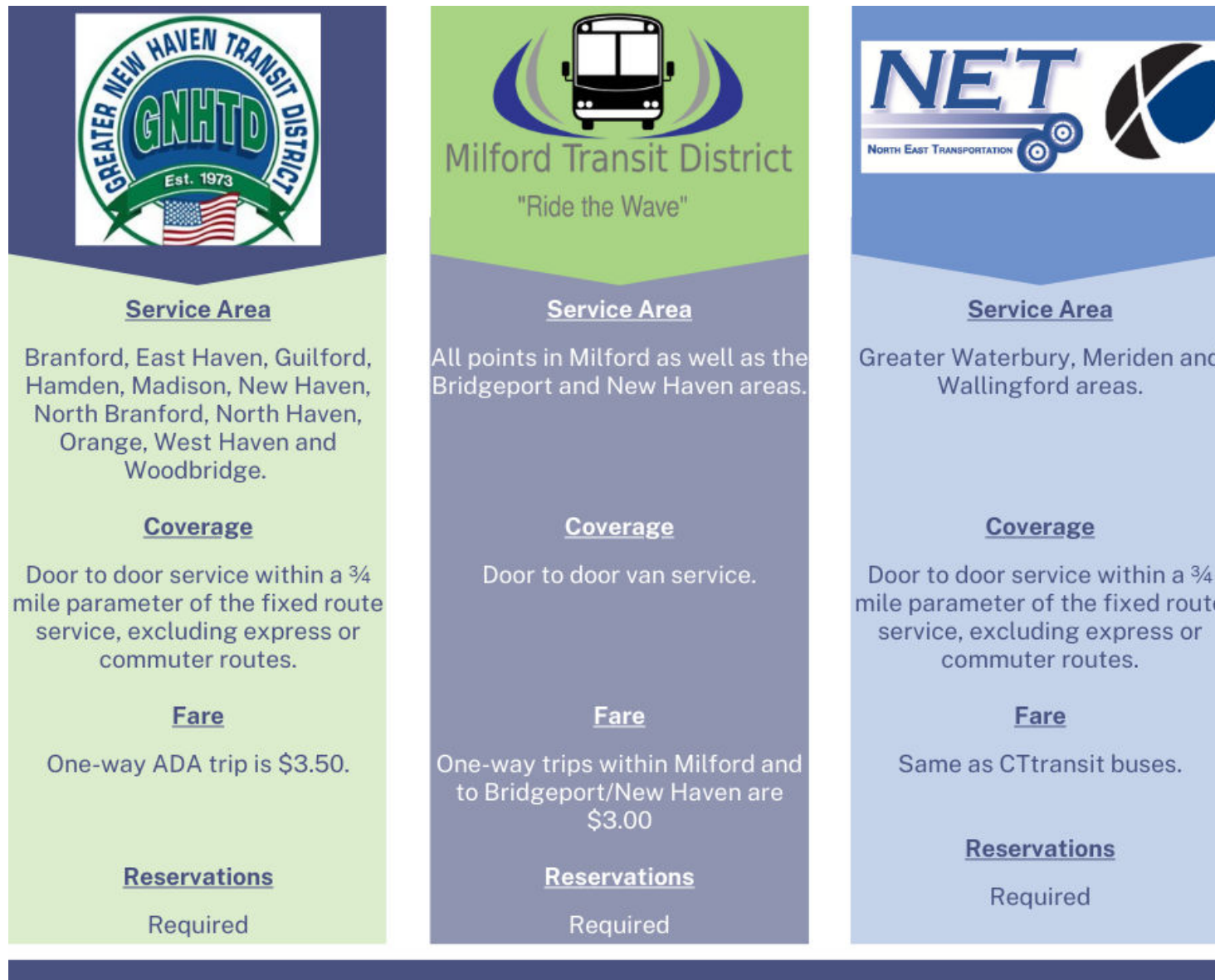


Figure 12: ADA Paratransit Services within SCRCOG

Human Services Agencies

Human Services agencies play a crucial role in addressing the needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities, with transportation routinely identified as a significant need. These agencies, which can be publicly or privately funded, include medical, educational, and workforce development organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life for the populations they serve.

Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut¹⁸

The Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut provides a variety of extensive services and funding programs for aging adults across the region, designed to increase opportunities for seniors' independence in their local communities for as long as possible. The Agency serves 20 municipalities in the Greater New Haven area and includes all 15 of SCRCOG's member municipalities. In the South Central Region, there are thousands of older Americans who rely on the Agency on Aging's chaperone program, which provides chaperones for seniors at medical appointments, including "door-to-door" assistance and travel companionship.

Kennedy Collective¹⁹

The Kennedy Collective is a non-profit rehabilitation agency that provides various services to people with disabilities, seniors, and veterans. Through this agency, a Travel Training program is offered to

senior citizens and people with disabilities other than blindness. The trainer travels along with the individual when he/she uses the transit system and will continue to accompany him/her on trips until he/she reaches a skill and confidence level that enables him/her to ride without assistance. There is no charge associated with Travel Training except for the bus or train fare.

Another resource offered by the Kennedy Collective is "Public Transit 101" presentations with a focus on persons with disabilities and seniors, as well as the regional public transportation services. The presentations include discussions on fares and how to pay for them, service options, how to find and read the train/bus schedules, etc.

Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Greater New Haven²⁰

The Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Greater New Haven provides a wide range of services to older adults and disabled persons, prioritizing safety and independence. The most popular service provided is the "Rides+" (previously known as the Transportation Plus Program). Through this program, volunteer non-emergency medical rides are provided to eligible clients. These individualized rides feature "door to door" service where individuals are picked up from their residences, met at the door, and taken to appointments. This service is free of cost

and only available to ambulatory patients over 60. This organization has also partnered with the Agency on Aging through a supplemented program called, “Trusted Rides” in which a chaperone will meet with the client before the driver arrives and ride throughout the trip.

Easterseals²¹

Easterseals is a non-profit organization that helps bridge the gap between readily available resources and the needs of people with disabilities and their caregivers by helping them locate transportation services, promoting independence and empowerment. This organization’s Meriden location provides driver ability assessments and solutions for people with temporary or permanent disabilities. Using their four-vehicle fleet with adaptive equipment, customers can test out available market devices to meet their specific mobility needs.

Mary Wade²²

The Mary Wade Transportation program offers a fleet of ADA accessible vans to meet the mobility needs of older adults in the Greater New Haven area. In addition to its door-to-door service, all drivers are fully licensed and trained in medical emergencies. Mary Wade’s transportation program runs Monday through Friday for residents aged 60 and older in New Haven, East Haven, West Haven, North Haven, and Hamden. This

mobility option is free of charge but collects voluntary donations to support the program.

Private Services

Within the South Central Region, several private transportation providers offer mobility services to older adults and those with disabilities. While these services come at a higher price than public providers, the cost is offset by convenience, as rides can be arranged in a shorter time span or, in some cases, immediately. These technology-based private services can potentially increase efficiency, security, and communication between riders, drivers, and transit administration by expediting the dispatching process and providing accurate vehicle locations.

XtraMile²³

River Valley Transit’s “XtraMile” app is a ride-sharing service that runs in select locations within Connecticut. Within the South-Central region, this application-based pilot program is available within Madison and Guilford. If requested, they provide shuttle buses that are equipped with wheelchair lifts and drivers are trained in helping people with disabilities. The service is available from Monday through Friday from 6am to 7pm and from 7:30am to 6pm on Saturday. The cost for this service is \$1.75 a ride. Funding for XtraMile is not guaranteed in the region.

M7²⁴

M7 is Connecticut’s largest, full-service transportation company that provides traditional taxicab and handicap-accessible transport services throughout the Greater New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford, and New London areas. The non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) service provided by M7 is intended for people who need assistance getting to and from medical appointments. Various services are offered, including door-to-door, door-through-door, and person-to-person. GNHTD has partnered with M7 to expand transportation options in Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Hamden, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, and Woodbridge. The program Encompass is a low-cost, user-friendly option with few service restrictions²⁵. The cost is \$5.00 for the first 8 miles and \$2.90 for each additional mile.

Encompass

Greater New Haven Transit District (GNHTD) has launched its “Encompass” program, providing reliable transportation services for municipalities in the South Central region. Formally known as “Regional Rides,” Encompass operates within 10 towns, 7 days a week. The Encompass program charges \$5 for the first 8 miles, and \$2.90 for any distance after. GNHTD has shared that most of its customers live within the initial distance and are rarely charged the additional distance fee. Unlike ADA Paratransit, Encompass offers the option to schedule a ride whenever needed

without having to call days in advance. However, Encompass only provides trips that begin and end in the service area, as destinations beyond this range would not be accepted. Currently, the Encompass program is available in Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Hamden, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, and Woodbridge. Encompass operates through funding provided by Great New Haven Transit District through member dues and 13bb-38bb funds.



Figure 13: Encompass Service Range

To access this transportation service, riders must live in the following cities/towns:

- Bethany
- Branford
- East Haven
- Hamden
- New Haven
- North Branford
- North Haven
- Orange

- Wallingford
- West Haven
- Woodbridge

Other Ridesharing Services

Popular ride-hailing service providers such as Uber and Lyft have begun providing ADA accessible services. Uber has recently released “Uber WAV,” or “wheelchair-accessible vehicle” and Lyft has released “Wheelchair” as a ride option²⁶. Uber WAV allows for immediate ride requests using the Uber mobile application,

rather than days before, like other providers. Every Uber WAV driver completes a certification course to help the rider enter and exit vehicles and allow ADA service animals in their vehicles. Uber WAV is available in the Greater New Haven area.

Safety Analysis

Between 2019 and 2023, SCRCOG’s elderly community (defined as those aged 65 or older) were involved in a total of 15,217 crashes. The number of crashes were the highest in 2019, dropping in 2020 due to COVID-19. Following 2020, there has been a consistent rise in crashes until 2023.

The crash data used in this chapter includes at least one person (driver/pedestrian/bicyclist/injured passenger) aged 65 years or older. The crash data was collected from the University of Connecticut’s Crash Data Repository (CTCDR) website for 2019 – 2023²⁷. CTCDR data is based on the information from the crash report recorded by the law enforcement officer. This chapter provides an overview of key information gathered through the analysis of this crash data.

Crashes by Municipalities

Among the 15 municipalities within SCRCOG, Orange had the highest number of crashes per 10k senior population, followed by New Haven, North Haven, and West Haven. The crash rates for these municipalities cross the average crash rate for SCRCOG, which is 1547 crashes per 10k senior population.

Crashes by Levels of Injury

Of the 15,217 total crashes that occurred between 2019 and 2023, 63 were fatalities (0.4%), 225 had suspected serious injuries (1.5%), 1,403 had suspected minor

injuries (9.2%), and 2,547 had possible injuries (16.7%). The remaining 10,979 crashes had no apparent injuries (72.1%).

Crashes by Types

The most common crash type was a rear-end crash, accounting for about 38% of all crashes, followed by angle crashes (28%), and same direction sideswipe crashes (17%). These crashes are often associated with intersections with higher volumes of left turns and heavy traffic, as well as closely spaced access driveways. Large and high-volume intersections can be particularly challenging for senior populations to navigate.

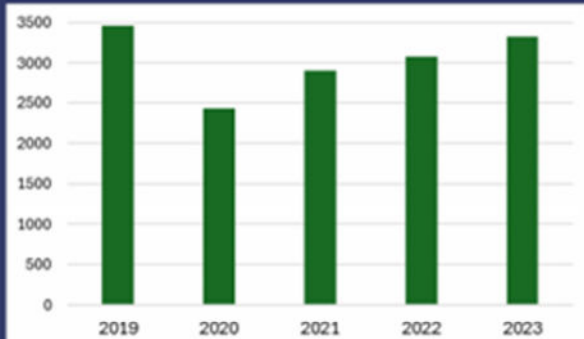
Crashes by Light Condition

The light condition seemed to have very little correlation with crashes. 82% of crashes happened in daylight hours. This could be due to senior citizens often avoiding travelling during nighttime.

Figure 14 documents the senior person crash trends in South Central CT. **Figure 15** illustrates the crash density of all crash types and **Figure 16** illustrates the fatal and serious injury crashes with respect to the census tracts with senior population.

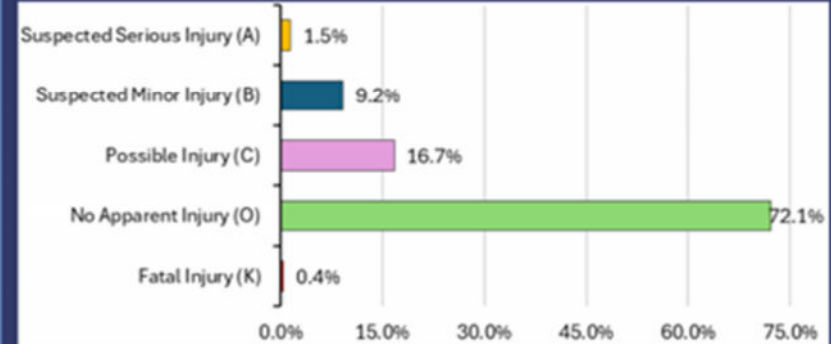
CRASHES INVOLVING SENIOR PERSONS IN SCRCOG (2019 - 2023)

Crashes by Year



16%
of the total crashes in SCRCOG involves senior persons.

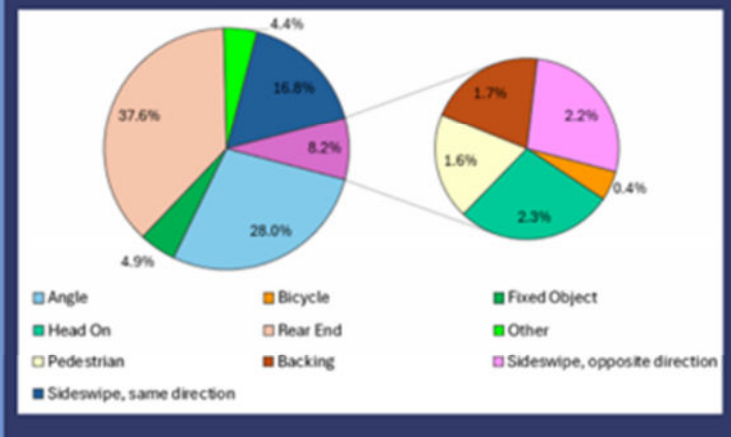
Crashes by Level of Injury



Crashes by Municipalities



Crashes by Types



*Senior Person is defined as anyone age 65 years or older.

Figure 14: Senior Person Crash Trends within SCRCOG

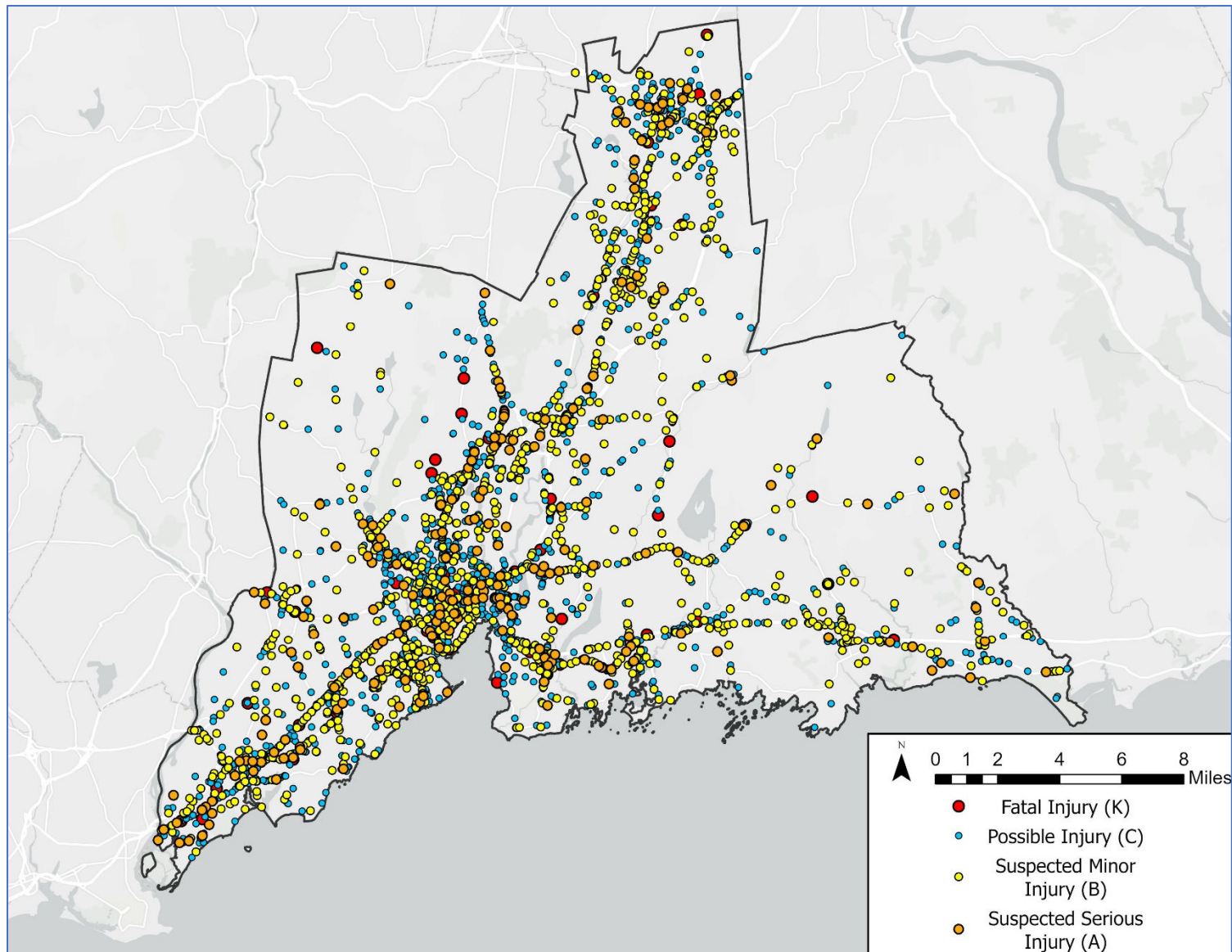


Figure 15: Senior Person Crashes, 2019-2023

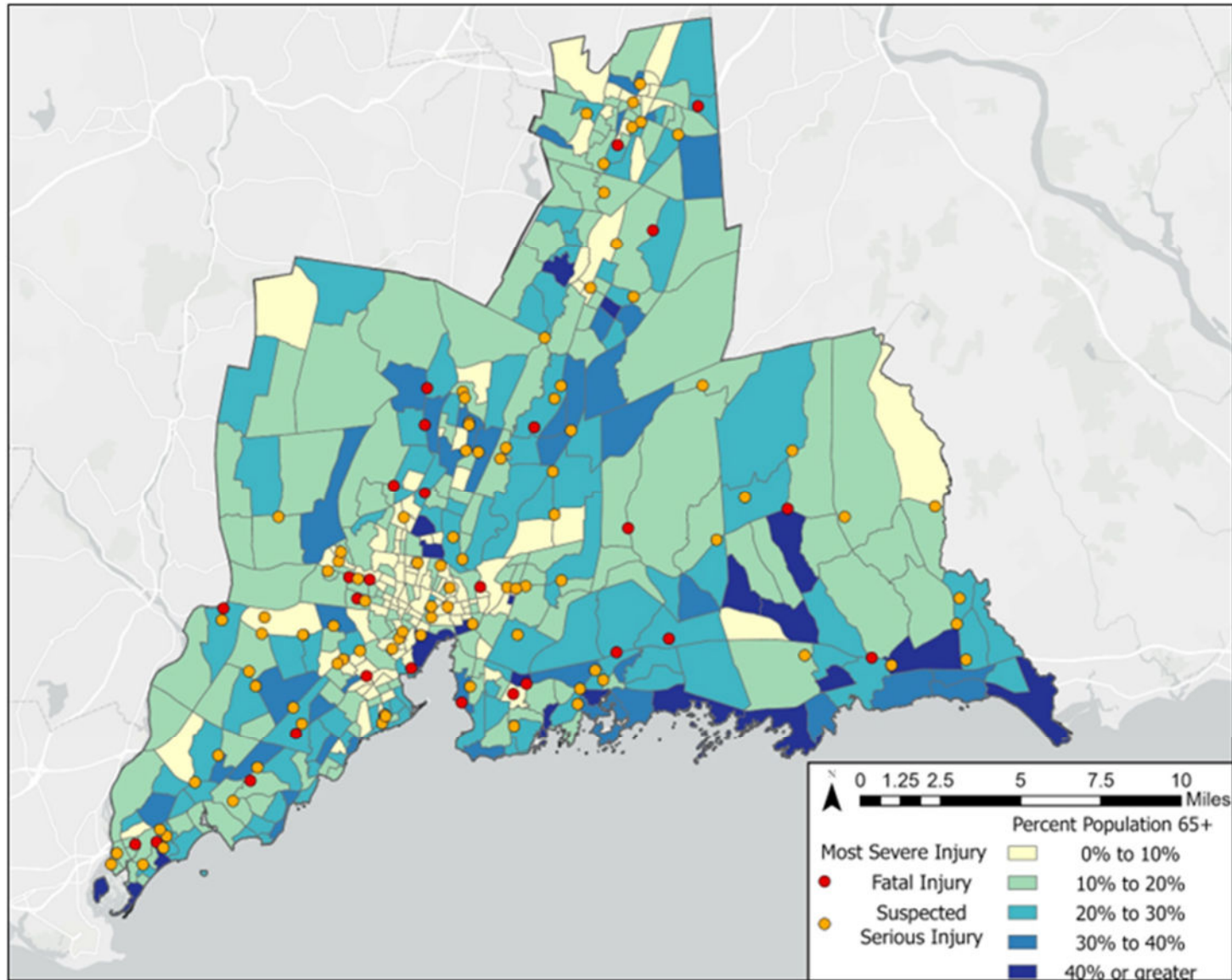


Figure 16: Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes involving Senior Persons, 2019-2023

Diagnosis of Fatal Crashes

Out of 63 fatal crashes involving seniors, 18 occurred in New Haven, even though only 11% of New Haven’s total population is estimated to be 65 years or older. Hamden experienced 8 fatalities with about 17% of Hamden’s total population assumed to be senior citizens.

In 2019, there were a total of 10 fatal crashes within the South Central Region followed by 13 fatal crashes in 2020. Despite the overall travel limitations and heightened restrictions for seniors and vulnerable adults, fatalities involving seniors increased in 2020 and continued to increase to 17 fatalities in 2021. In 2022, the number of fatal crashes decreased to 15 and further decreased to 8 in 2023.

Figure 17 provides the annual breakdown of fatal crashes. About 33% of these fatal crashes happened at or near an intersection and the rest happened on roadway segments. All fatalities except one occurred in urban areas.

Figure 18 shows the summary of the crashes by crash type. Pedestrian and bicycle-related fatalities comprised 40% of the fatal crashes, followed by angle crashes (16%) and fixed object crashes (14%). Even though pedestrian and bicycle crashes only make up 2% of total crashes in the South Central Region, the consequences involving pedestrians and bicyclists were more severe than motor vehicle crashes.

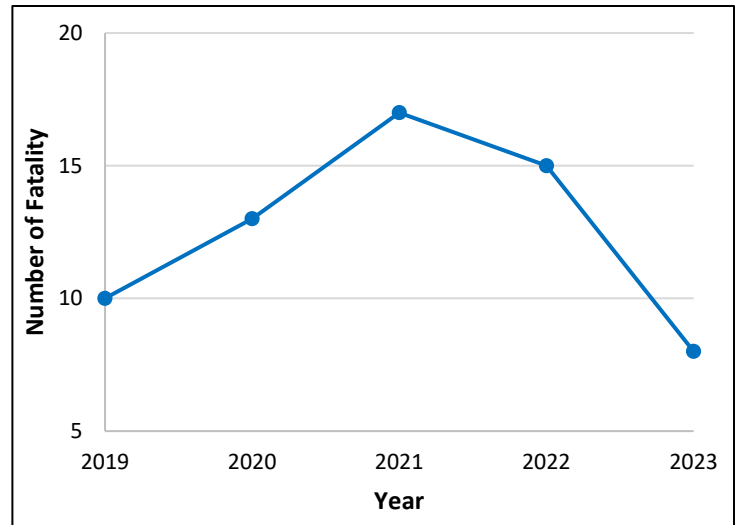


Figure 17: Fatal Crashes by Year

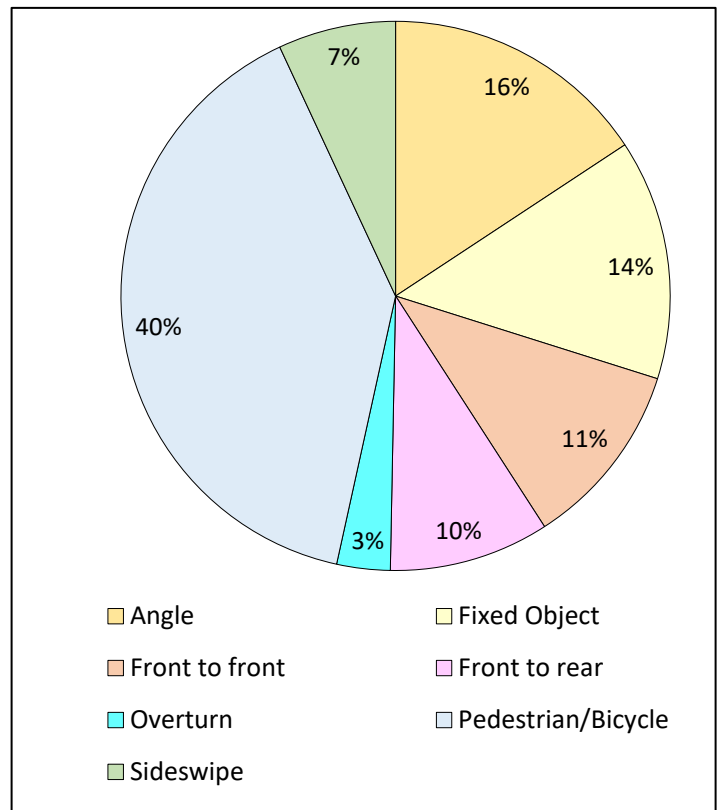


Figure 18: Fatal Crashes by Crash Types

Fatal Motorized Vehicle Crashes

Further investigation into the fatal crashes revealed that fatalities involving senior drivers or passengers had two major contributing factors: aggressive driving and roadway departure. 52% of the fatalities involved aggressive driving and 45% involved roadway departure.

The Connecticut Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)²⁸ defines aggressive driver crashes based on the “speeding related” field in the crash report marked as “racing,” “exceeding speed limit,” or “too fast for condition” in addition to “driver action” field marked as “following too closely” or “reckless driving.” Roadway Departure crash is defined based on the “first harmful event” field in the crash report being marked as rollover, immersion, hitting a fixed object, parked vehicle, or a barrier, or “manner of collision” field

marked as head on or sideswipe opposite direction.

Figure 19 shows the contributing factors for these crashes. Wrong way driving was one of the top factors (28%). In most cases, the drivers crossed the double yellow center lines and collided with vehicles travelling in the opposite direction. This action is often a consequence of aggressive driving. Running stop signs or red lights, which contribute to about 12% of the fatalities, is another indicator of aggressive driving.

Another prominent contributing factor was drivers losing control and hitting a roadside object, barrier, median, or another vehicle. This is often associated with roadway departure crashes and/or aggressive driving.

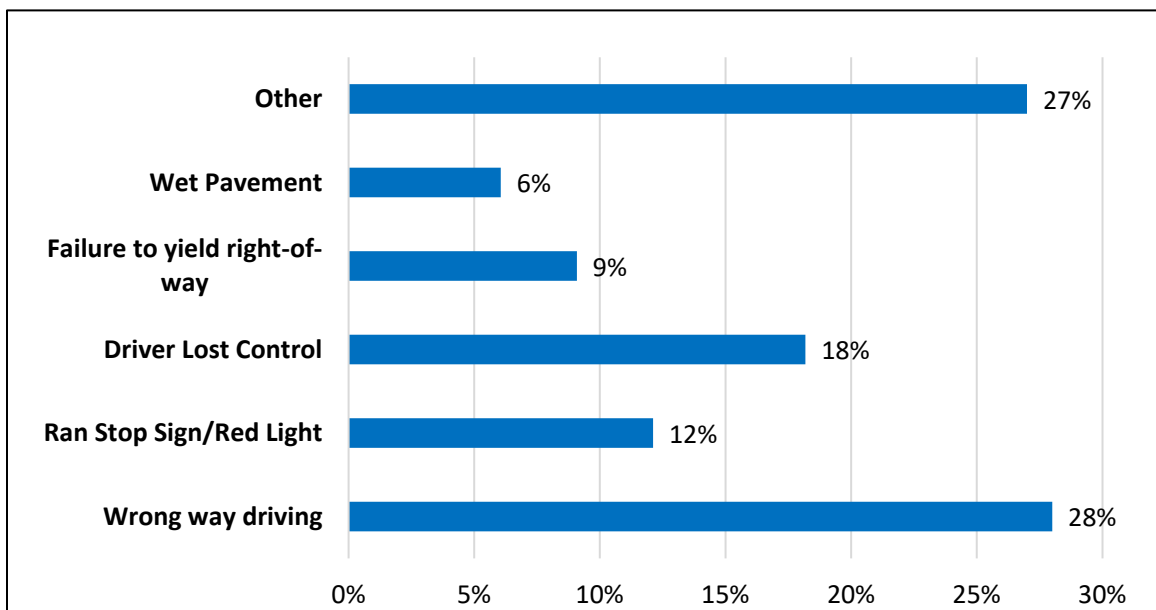


Figure 19: Contributing Factors Behind Fatalities Involving Motor Vehicles

Fatal Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes

For the fatalities involving pedestrians and bicyclists, 13% involved commercial motor vehicle and 9% involved weather or wet roads. 55% of these crashes in dark but lighted conditions and 32% happened in daylight conditions.

Figure 20 shows the contributing factors for pedestrian and bicyclist related fatalities. In some instances, the pedestrians or bicyclists were not on the roadway. But in most cases, pedestrian-related fatalities occurred when pedestrians were crossing where a crosswalk was not present. In 22% cases, there were no crosswalks nearby. In 17% of cases, there was a crosswalk within 250 ft, yet the pedestrian still chose not to use it. In 13% of cases, the nearby crosswalk was between 250 ft and 500 ft away. This points to the fact that pedestrian safety is a combination of underlying infrastructure and behavioral issues.

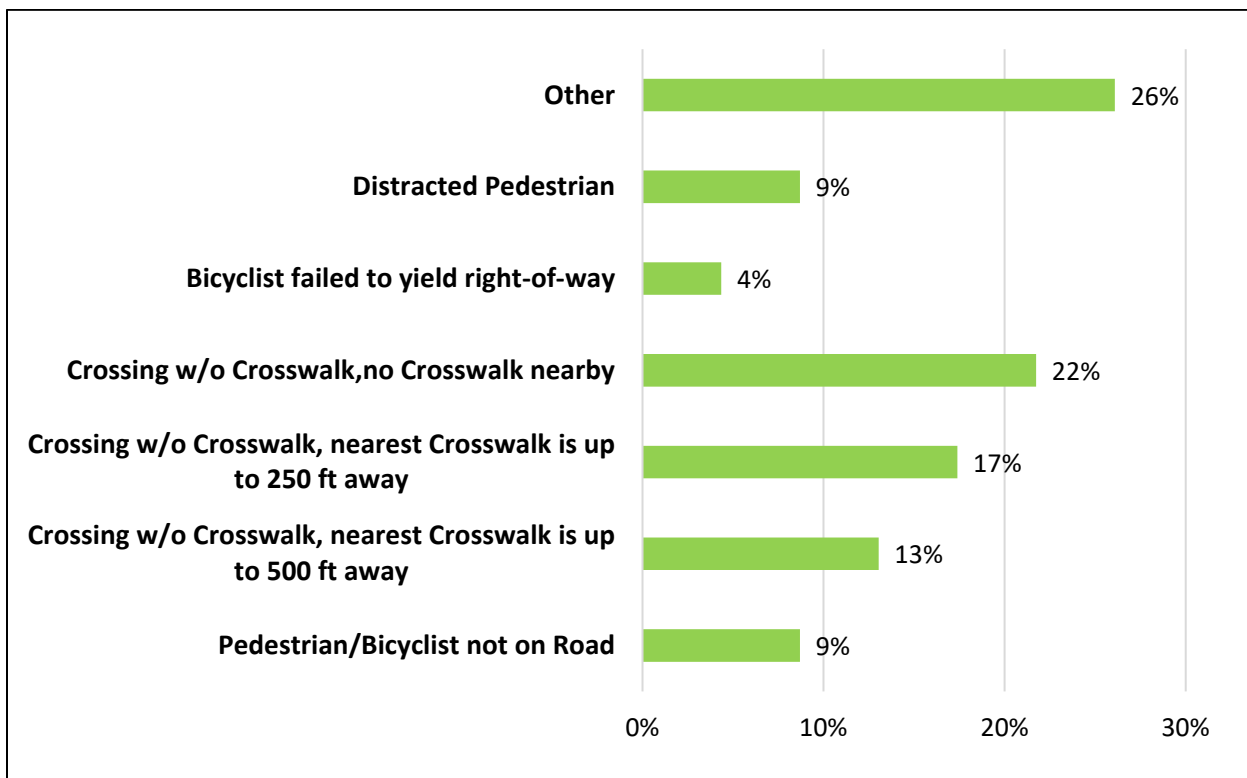


Figure 20: Contributing Factors behind Fatalities Involving Pedestrians/Bicyclists



Gaps and Barriers

Gaps in Senior and ADA Mobility

Despite the commendable intentions of providers and the presence of municipal transportation programs, public transportation, ADA Paratransit, and private transportation providers, notable gaps in service can be identified within the transportation network commonly used by aging and disabled communities. These gaps affect all service providers and riders and tend to overlap from one provider to another. Through details review of existing services, policies and initiatives and based on stakeholder’s feedback, the following gaps were identified for the SCRCOG region that is significantly impacting the mobility options for senior and disabled population.

Service Coverage

Regional bus services operate through a fixed route system where transit buses adhere to established schedules and destinations. *CTtransit’s* New Haven Division, the most utilized division in the region, operates a fixed-route transportation network with hours extending from 6:05 AM to 12:55 AM. Commonly, municipal transportation is only available for destinations within the geographic boundaries of the town or city. Occasionally, nearby cities are included in the service area but neither *CTtransit* nor the municipal services can provide long distance trips.

Advance Reservation Requirements

Requiring passengers to book rides in advance restricts the spontaneity and flexibility that define the essence of on-demand systems. Due to the shortage of vehicles and operators, most service providers (other than *CTtransit* Fixed Route services) require advance reservation. This practice can be especially limiting for those who rely on these services for their daily transportation needs, as it curtails their ability to make last-minute plans, accommodate unexpected changes, or address urgent commitments.

Delays and Schedule Unpredictability

Transit buses may experience delays due to traffic, road closures, and maintenance issues. Schedule unpredictability causes concerns for riders who rely on punctuality. These traffic delays impact the ability to reach a rider’s intended destination, such as a doctor’s appointment, on time. This is the most common rationale for most seniors or disable persons to either drive or ask for ride from family members.

Transit Experience

There is a need for education and information in a variety of formats (including signage) so that older adults and persons with disabilities can learn how to use public transit and its accessible features. Likewise, there is a need to ensure

drivers, dispatchers, other transit personnel, and the general riding public are sensitive to passenger needs. This is true for both senior passengers and passengers with physical or mental disabilities.

Strict Pick Up Time

The individuals who rely on paratransit or other mobility service options often display varying physical and cognitive disabilities, impacting their capability to adhere to the instructions for pick up time and location. While waiting for an on-demand service, riders must be ready within a set window of time, often just five minutes. If the scheduled pick-up time is missed, ADA Paratransit buses must continue to the next stop.

Accessibility

ADA Paratransit is a curb-to-curb service, meaning the driver cannot assist riders as they move from their home to the bus, except assisting riders as they board the bus. This results in significant accessibility issues for those whose condition hinders their ability to travel from home to the bus stop.

Accessibility to and from bus stops and transfer centers (elevators, sidewalks, curb cuts, curb ramps, crosswalks) is a major gap affecting the target population. Specific concerns include lack of sidewalks, particularly in suburban or rural areas; sidewalks that are in poor condition; lack of proper lighting; lack of adequate signage etc.

- CTtransit does not provide on-demand rides, door-to-door service, or curb-to-curb service in its operations.
- CTrail requires 24 hours of advance notice if a passenger with mobility devices need boarding assistance.
- CTtransit divisions offer paratransit/mobility service within a three-quarter mile radius of the fixed routes served by CTtransit.
- Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers accept ride bookings every weekday from 8:30 AM to 4 PM.
- Mary Wade Transportation offer services between 8 AM and 4 PM during weekdays and 9 AM to 2 PM on weekends.
- All GNTHD approved rides must also be requested by 5:00 pm the day before. Meriden Senior Center requires the riders to make a reservation by 12:30 PM of the day before ride.
- GNHTD’s Encompass program charges \$ 5 for the first 8 miles traveled and \$2.90 dollars for each additional travel.
- M7 charges \$3.60 for each mile traveled.

Public Information about Transportation Services

Sometimes the issue or gap is not a lack of service, but a lack of information about services that already exist. Problem areas included lack of information at bus stops, lack of transit information in languages other than English, unclear information about fares, transfer policies, and routes, and lack of well-publicized information about local shuttle services.

Affordability

While CTtransit bus fares remain low, the affordability of fares can limit access to transportation for low-income individuals and families. Providers like M7, Encompass, Uber WAV, and Lyft Wheelchair prioritize convenience and availability, resulting in ridership costs that may not be affordable to some individuals in this study’s target demographic. Private providers may be ideal for short trips, but for longer trips, the ride cost may become unaffordable.

Barriers in Senior and ADA Mobility

Interviews with municipal transportation leadership have identified some common barriers that hinder bridging the gaps in the transportation services. The cost of providing the services and lack of available funding is often the biggest challenge. Based on the findings of this project, the following barriers were

identified for the senior and ADA mobility services in the SCRCOG region.

Lack of available destinations, trip types, and hours of service

Due to a fixed municipal budget, most senior centers must make careful decisions on how to allocate limited funding. As a result of this dilemma, municipal transportation providers cannot afford to provide services that meet the needs of all riders. Budget constraints require the senior center transportation providers to select predetermined destinations on a fixed weekly/hourly schedule, rather than an on-demand system. Many providers have noted that they are unable to provide medical transportation outside the boundaries of the municipality.

Driver shortage, retention and Liability

Multiple stakeholder interviews confirmed that driver retention is a significant challenge for municipal transportation providers in the region. Limited supply of drivers results in a decrease in the frequency of available trips. To compensate for fewer buses on the roads, service destinations and the frequency of trips are commonly reduced to adjust to the adverse outcomes of driver shortage. Additionally, there are few organizations responsible for training drivers, ensuring their certification and professional competency.

Schedule adherence

Stakeholders identified that if a senior is late to their pickup, it results in two adverse outcomes. The first is that if a senior misses their pickup time, it easily disrupts the bus’s daily fixed schedule, causing logistical concerns. The second outcome of missing a scheduled pick up is that the bus will have to continue without the rider, leaving them at their appointment or destination. Despite their understanding of the diminishing physical capabilities of their riders, they are often forced to focus on their overall service compared to individuals need.

Standardization of Senior Centers

Stakeholder interviews confirmed that municipal transportation providers would strongly benefit from sharing their best practices with other senior centers.

Policies

In Connecticut there are no special testing requirements or restrictions specific to older drivers. But drivers aged 65 or older can request a two-year driver's license renewal, though the two-year renewal period isn't mandatory (CGS § 14-41a). Regardless of driver’s age, state law authorizes the DMV commissioner to issue licenses with any limitation he/she deems advisable. The law also allows certain medical professionals to report to DMV the name, age, and address of anyone they find

to have health problems that will significantly affect his or her ability to drive safely. The reporting is not mandatory.

Mindset Around Driving

There is no defined age at which people are no longer safe drivers, and many older adults are fully functioning physically and mentally and can drive safely and are able to use public transit. Chronic conditions and disabilities, irrespective of age, can certainly impact that skill. In the USA, relying solely on personal vehicle is both a culture and a perceived form of independence. That is why voluntarily choosing not to drive anymore is often associated with a negative connotation. This remains the dominant barrier for the older population to accept that they can no longer drive safely and seek alternative transportation options.

Technology

Older adults may lack the skills or comfort necessary to use smartphones, online booking systems, or other digital tools commonly used in modern transportation. In recent years, tech-enabled transportation solutions like ride-hailing services Uber and Lyft have become ubiquitous. To use ride-hailing services, the riders need to own a smartphone, know how to download apps, and insert credit card information. The complexity of digital interfaces can be overwhelming for some older adults, and it is more difficult for someone with physical or mental disability.

Funding

Lack of funding for senior center transportation in Connecticut is a significant issue, affecting many towns and impacting the ability of senior centers to provide vital services. Recent changes in federal funding allocations have further complicated the picture. Many towns lack adequate funding for senior center transportation, particularly dial-a-ride services, which are crucial for seniors and people with disabilities.

While some funding is available through programs like Section 5310 (which focuses on enhancing mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities) and the Older Americans Act (OAA), the overall funding landscape is insufficient to meet the needs of all senior centers in Connecticut. The lack of adequate funding for senior center transportation) poses a significant challenge to ensure equitable access to essential services for older adults and individuals with disabilities in Connecticut.



Recommendations

Recommendations

Ensuring accessible and reliable transportation for older adults and individuals with disabilities is a growing health and social equity concern. As mobility needs diversify, it is critical to examine how current transportation systems meet the needs of these communities. This report has explored key challenges faced by older adults and people with disabilities when navigating transportation systems. It presents a set of targeted recommendations aimed at improving accessibility, safety, and independence. These recommendations originate from comprehensive data analysis, stakeholder input, and identified best practices, offering a roadmap for more inclusive and equitable transportation services in South Central Connecticut. These recommendations address specific challenges identified in the report’s “Gaps and Barriers” chapter and have been categorized into short-term and long-term initiatives and suggestions.

Short Term

Support the Families of Aging Drivers

This recommendation supports the aging population and their families in the decision to give up keys and stop driving through the direction of multiple online resources such as AARP, AAA, and the South Central Connecticut Agency on Aging. Stopping driving often results in fear of losing autonomy and independence. While Connecticut does not have a specific age limit for driving, the Department of Motor Vehicles has the authority to restrict or suspend a driver’s license, regardless of age, if it believes the driver cannot operate a vehicle safely due to medical or health concerns. The Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner can also require a driver to take a driving test or submit medical documentation to assess the ability to drive safely. The American Association of Retired People (AARP) encourages loved ones to drive with the senior to evaluate their competency, suggest a driver safety class, involve physicians in this process, and explore

other transportation options available in the region. This report’s appendix includes a variety of resources for the families of older drivers.

Ensure That all Municipalities in the Region Have Completed ADA Transition Plans

Research conducted through the report has identified multiple municipalities within the South Central Region that do not have completed ADA Transition plans. These plans outline how municipalities ensure accessibility in their facilities and programs, as mandated by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Ensuring the completion of these plans will help guarantee equal access to transportation and other areas of life.

Eliminate Technological Barriers

Transportation for the elderly and disabled communities involves various technological mediums, whether websites or mobile applications. The significance of accessibility in mobility technology should

be emphasized, especially for those with limited technological proficiency. Solutions include simplifying the features of apps and websites and including larger text and auditory features for disabled users who may have a visual or auditory impairment. Furthermore, utilizing smartphones' "extended access" features has the potential to boost accessibility further. This can be easily set up in the device's system settings. To further improve access to transportation technology for this study's demographics, this report encourages regional senior centers to organize and run technology workshops where seniors can learn how to use mobile phones, mobile applications, and websites related to transportation.

Maintain Existing Services for Seniors and Disabled People

Many older adults and individuals with disabilities live on fixed incomes, so continuing discounted fares or even free rides can significantly improve accessibility. This recommendation suggests continuing the usage of easy-to-use fare systems, such as contactless payment options, to ensure that the cost of transportation is equitable and easy to use. Maintaining the current transportation network and its related infrastructure is essential to meeting regional demand. This recommendation also emphasizes the importance of maintaining the existing service routes to ensure that service range and frequency and essential infrastructure (vehicles, buses, bus stops, maintenance facilities, etc.) are adequately maintained.

Gather Feedback from Riders

The Greater New Haven Transit District provides quarterly "Riders Forums" to involve riders and transportation clients in decision-making processes regarding the provider's services and organizational makeup. Extending this opportunity for feedback could help other organizations identify deficiencies in their transportation network to be improved in the future, benefiting both riders and providers.

Accessible Personal Vehicles

Several actions can improve the accessibility of personal vehicles for older adults and individuals with disabilities. Examples include assist bars (devices used by riders as they enter and exit the vehicle), swivel seats (which rotate the vehicle's seats for easy access), and turn seats (used to improve mobility for those with physical disabilities requiring a wheelchair.) These assistive devices have the potential to drastically improve accessibility in a senior's car or that of a caregiver or family member. These accommodations range in price from 10 dollars for an assist bar to 10,000 dollars for a turny seat, enabling wheelchair users to use personal vehicles. In addition to these options, less expensive features can also improve accessibility such as keyless entry, higher seats, hands free navigation assistance, and electronic parking assistance such as back up cameras.

Public Awareness Campaign

The report suggests the formation of a public awareness campaign to promote mobility options in the region and to

emphasize the significance of ensuring transportation for seniors and disability communities. Issues could involve paratransit and human services transportation, the needs of rural areas, transportation technology, and how to utilize the wide array of transportation options available in the region. This campaign could align with the national “Older Driver Safety Awareness Week (ODSAW) of the American Occupational Therapy Association. This Public Awareness Campaign would allow riders and their families to decide which transportation option suits their needs best. This campaign would offer resources and support for family members or caregivers who assist older adults with their transportation while ensuring that families know the services and programs they are eligible for. This recommendation would also involve coordination with AARP, the ADA Coalition of Connecticut, and the Agency on Aging to provide comprehensive resources.

Long Term

Encourage Non-Profit Funding

This recommendation encourages funding for transportation non-profits like the Interfaith Volunteer Care Givers of Greater New Haven (IVCG) to maintain and expand their operations. IVCG, as well as other transportation-based non-profits, rely on scarce and inconsistent funding. Stakeholder interviews have confirmed that decreased funding frequently impacts the number of accepted trips, among other adverse outcomes. IVCG operates on a

funding budget of only 27 thousand dollars, split between three drivers for partial reinforcements. This study’s research has identified that increased funding would significantly improve the operations of transportation non-profits, impacting seniors and disabled individuals in the region.

Interorganizational Collaboration/Share Best Practices

This report recommends establishing partnerships with various providers to combine resources, ideas, and strategies and to implement successful methods of supporting aging and disability communities. Multiple stakeholders proposed a Mobility Council of South Central CT to meet quarterly to discuss ongoing trends, best practices, challenges, and solutions to improve the operational success of all members. The majority of the Mobility Study’s Technical Advisory Committee expressed interest in creating such an organization.

Collaborate with Medical Providers

This recommendation encourages the creation of partnerships between transportation providers and regional healthcare providers. Given that older adults and disabled people may require frequent medical care, integrating public and private transportation programs with regional healthcare providers, such as Yale New Haven Healthcare and Hartford Healthcare, would greatly benefit these disadvantaged demographics.

Maintain Existing Services in the Region

Maintaining the current transportation network and its related infrastructure is essential to meeting regional demand. This recommendation emphasizes the importance of maintaining the existing service routes to ensure that service range and frequency and essential infrastructure (vehicles, buses, bus stops, maintenance facilities, etc.) are adequately maintained.

Enhance and Expand Fixed Route Operations and Facilities

Accessibility to the fixed route is critical to accessing CTtransit and paratransit services. Enhancing bus stops, pavement, sidewalks, etc., around bus stops improves the ability to utilize fixed-route transportation. An increase in the number of transit/paratransit buses results in increased efficiency and expanded routes in areas without the presence of a comprehensive fixed-route bus service.

Provide Systematic Reviews of Existing Bus Routes and Conditions of Bus Stops

This recommendation suggests frequent examination of potential service expansion and route modification, as well as existing condition reporting for bus stops and related infrastructure. These reviews would be conducted on a regular basis to suggest new ways to increase system efficiency.

Create a Centralized and Frequently Updated Mobility Dashboard

Access to adequate data to make informed decisions about mobility is a major challenge. States like Massachusetts²⁹, New York³⁰ and Virginia³¹ has developed mobility dashboards where they summarize information such as transit ridership, travel time, transit coverage etc. This report recommends that Connecticut develops a similar dashboard for the state. It is also possible to develop it just for a region such as SCRCOG. The Mobility Dashboard will compile and visualize data from various sources, serving as a resource to developing long-term solutions to mobility issues.

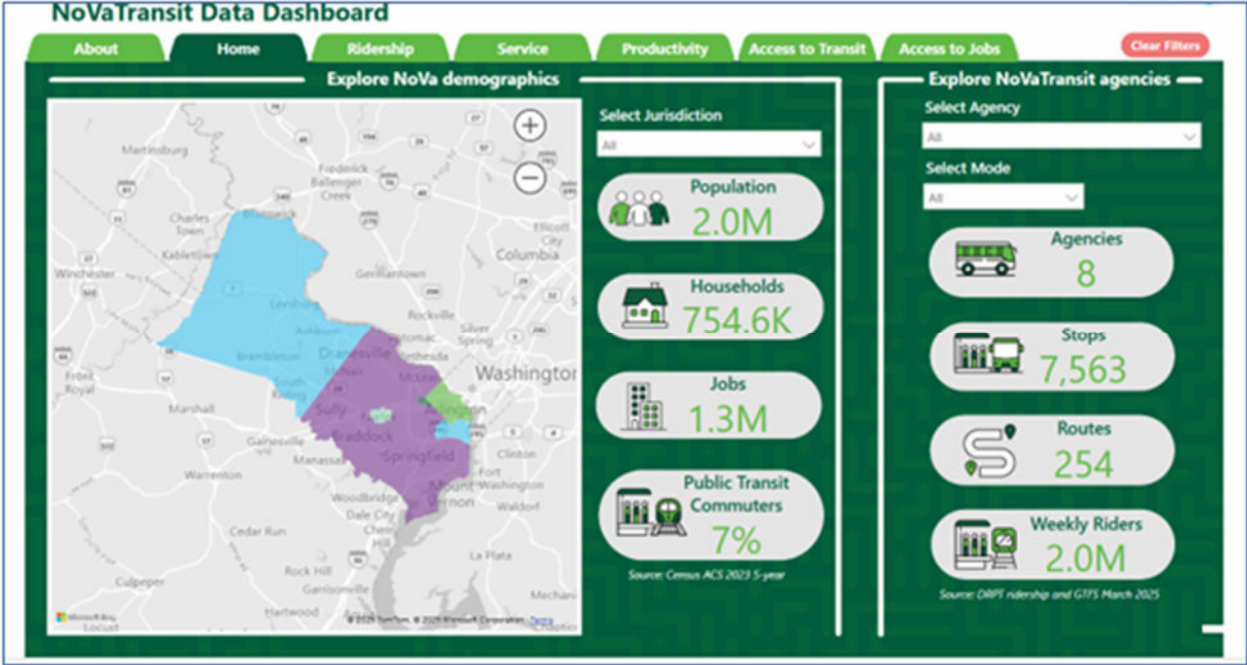


Figure 21: Mobility Dashboard Example- Northern Virginia

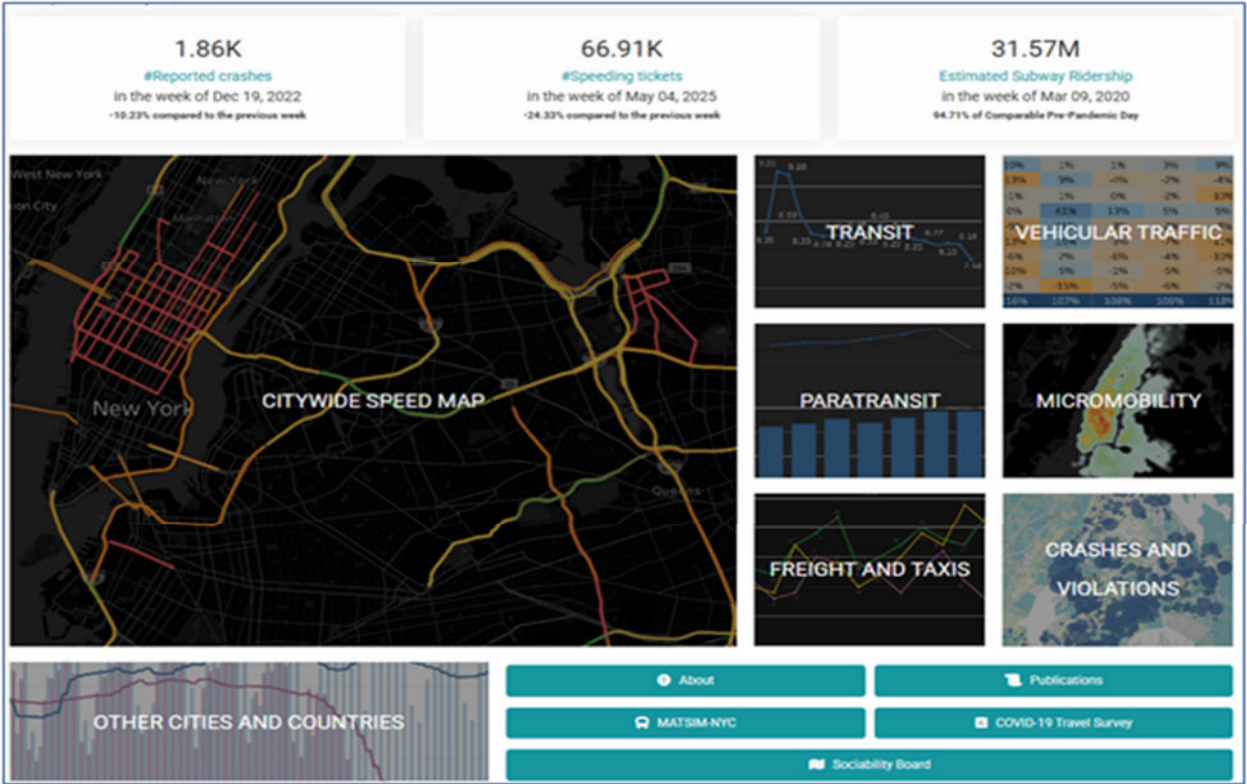


Figure 22: Mobility Dashboard Example- New York City

Expand the presence of door-to-door transit service

Many transportation providers feature “door-to-door” service, where the driver of a designated aid meets riders at their door and assists them as they board the vehicle. This service significantly improves accessibility, particularly for those who are unable to board a bus independently. This report recognizes the significance of door-to-door service and encourages transportation providers to implement this best practice into their operations.

Revising DMV Driving Policy

In Connecticut, there are no mandatory testing requirements or

restrictions for senior drivers when they renew their licenses. Yet, the Department of Motor Vehicles, in accordance with Connecticut General Statute 14-41a, does allow a two-year license renewal instead of the standard six-to-eight-year renewal period for individuals over the age of 65. Existing policy enables medical professionals to inform the DMV of any physical or mental impairments that impact an individual’s ability to drive safely.³² This report recommends that senior drivers require clearance from the DMV every two years for concern with vision, reaction time, and other abilities that influence driving safety, before renewing a driver’s license.



Conclusion

Conclusion

In conclusion, ensuring accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation options for older adults and individuals with disabilities is essential for promoting independence, social inclusion, and overall quality of life. This study highlights the integral role that public and private transportation services play in meeting the unique mobility needs of these demographics. Given the strengths and weaknesses of various transportation providers and the diverse mobility needs of seniors and disability communities, riders must decide which transportation services accommodate their circumstances in terms of price, availability, accessibility, service range, and schedule. With a vast array of services available in South Central Connecticut, this study's target demographics are currently met with various transportation services that have continued to evolve. By addressing the existing conditions of the transportation network, identifying gaps and barriers, and providing data-driven, comprehensive, and actionable recommendations, this report will serve as a guide in improving the transit options available in South Central Connecticut over time. Through coordination and collaboration with public and private transportation providers, non-profits, municipal transportation providers, transit administration, and the riders themselves, mobility for aging and disability communities can be improved to meet the needs of all.

References

- ¹ [CDC State Profile](#)
- ² [AARP Research Insights on Livable Communities](#)
- ³ [ACL: Older Americans](#)
- [NADTC: Travel Patterns of American Adults with Disabilities](#)
- ⁴ [Census: Disability Status by Age Group](#)
- ⁵ [Connecticut Healthy Aging Data](#)
- ⁶ [CT Disability Statistics](#)
- ⁷ [Connecticut Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan](#)
- ⁸ [Connecticut's State Plan on Aging](#)
- ⁹ [Section 5310 Program](#)
- ¹⁰ [Management Plan for State Matching Grant Program](#)
- ¹¹ [CT ADDA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan](#)
- ¹³ [New Haven Rapid Transit System](#)
- ¹³ [Town of Orange Transportation](#)
- ¹⁴ [Dial a Ride: My Place CT](#)
- ¹⁵ [Senior Transportation Services](#)
- ¹⁶ [Paratransit Services](#)
- ¹⁷ [ADA Paratransit Application Form](#)
- ¹⁸ [Agency on Aging Transportation Services](#)
- ¹⁹ [Kennedy Collective Transportation Services](#)
- ²⁰ [Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of New Haven](#)
- ²¹ [Easterseals Transportation Options](#)
- ²² [Mary Wade Transportation](#)
- ²³ [XtraMile Madison and Guilford](#)
- ²⁴ [M7 Taxi Company](#)
- ²⁵ [Encompass New Haven](#)
- ²⁶ [Uber WAV](#)
- ²⁷ [UCONN CT Crash Data Repository](#)
- ²⁸ [Connecticut SHSP](#)
- ²⁸ [CT DMV License Renewal](#)
- ²⁸ [MassDOT Mobility Dashboard](#)
- ²⁸ [New York City Mobility Dashboard](#)
- ²⁸ [Northern Virginia Mobility Dashboard](#)

Appendix: Resources for Consideration

- [South Central CT Agency on Aging](#)
- [AARP Older Drivers](#)
- [AARP How to Care for a Loved One with Mobility Issues](#)
- [Greater New Haven Transit District](#)
- [Easterseals](#)
- [Interfaith Volunteer Care Givers](#)
- [The Kennedy Collective](#)
- [USAging Transportation](#)
- [AARP Low Cost Transportation](#)
- [AARP Free and Low-Cost Transportation](#)
- [NADTC Best Practices](#)
- [AAA Senior Driver Safety and Mobility](#)
- [CTDOT Human Services Transportation Programs](#)
- [AARP Driver Safety](#)
- [AOTA Driving and Community Mobility](#)
- [ADED Driver Rehabilitation](#)
- [National Institute on Aging: Safe Driving for Older Adults](#)