

challenges



Capitalizing on the Infrastructure Act

Context:

There is a federal program that offers funding for projects, including roads, bridges, mass transportation, and airports. The program is set to expire in the next 4-5 years, and there are currently grant cycles available.

Barriers:

Many towns and cities lack the expertise and the 20% match needed to apply for these grants, which are complex and competitive. There is also a perception that public transit is not for everybody.

Opportunities:

Public support would come for the 'right' project, so it is critically important to inform the public to generate interest. The program could have a significant lasting impact on the safety, economy, and perception of Connecticut.



Walkable Streets & Bike Lanes

Context:

There are 16 towns and 11 villages in NECOG, which are among the poorest in the state – covering 1300 miles of road. There is a spotty network of sidewalks that do not currently abide by ADA standards and haven't been updated in years.

Barriers:

The towns are very spread out and matching the 20% funding required is a challenge for the Northeast corner..

Opportunities:

There is a \$200,000 grant for Safe Streets available, the minimum amount focusing on Route 6. Funding is available for future project proposals over the next few years, with no financial limits if we can capitalize on it.



Last Mile Solutions

Context:

Microtransit and ride-sharing services are unattractive due to the low population density, poor public perception and the rural nature of the Northeast.

Barriers:

The challenge is that a certain volume of passengers is needed to make these services work efficiently. Additionally, it has been a challenge to find qualified bus drivers.

Opportunities:

With increased mobility there would be enhanced employment, economic and educational opportunities.



GPS on Buses

Context:

There is the possibility of using existing GPS technology on buses to provide updated information to riders about bus routes, times, and stops.

Barriers:

This would require agreement among transit districts, nonprofits and bus providers to initiate, build, and support.

Opportunities:

Using the information gathered through GPS and a fleet inventory, a single platform could serve as a broker for rides, allowing riders to be directed to the most efficient means of transportation to and from their destinations.



Cross-Border Initiatives

Context:

Connecticut is divided a million ways – most notably legislatively, economically and physically. There are 8 counties, 9 COGs, 6 regional educational service centers and 15 transit districts, which do not all interconnect and line up.

Barriers:

The state is home to some of the wealthiest and poorest pockets in the country and does not offer a structure for mutual collaboration and cross-border transportation.

Opportunities:

Connecting this part of the state to the rest of Connecticut and neighboring states will have a vast impact on the economy and mobility of residents.



Optimizing Rider Data

Context:

There is a lack of comprehensive data on rider demographics and the prospect of coordinating transit service with the needs of large employers is challenging.

Barriers:

Federal programming provides funding to fill gaps in transit service, but some organizations have underutilized the vehicles acquired through these means. Statistics utilized to assess funding do not necessarily equate to needs.

Opportunities:

There is a pronounced need for better connections between different transit systems to address low ridership and the challenges of providing frequent service without incurring undue costs. Through effective planning, data aggregation, and coordination many stakeholders might benefit.

