SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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SECOG Affordable Housing Goal Policy Committee

October 8th, 2026 Meeting Minutes

The SECOG Affordable Housing Goal Policy Committee met on Thursday, October 8th, 2026, to discuss the development of affordable housing allocation policies in response to the requirements of SS PA 25-1. The committee's primary objective is to provide guidance to SECOG staff in developing a transparent and logical method for apportioning regional housing goals among municipalities within the limitations and parameters set by SS PA 25-1.

- **Call to Order**
  - Helen Zincavage opened the meeting, noting that the agenda would cover wrapping up the proximity to jobs factor, introducing sewer infrastructure as a potential new allocation factor, and outlining the schedule for the November meeting.
- **Proximity to Jobs**
  - Background & Framework: Housing construction is encouraged near employment centers to reduce commute times, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and promote transit opportunities. Job access extends beyond town borders, and the analysis utilizes Census Bureau block-level jobs data paired with GIS processing from town boundary points. The regional average commute drive time is approximately 22 minutes.
  - Drive-Time Threshold Analysis: Dave Cook reviewed GIS drive sheds modeled at 10, 15, 20, and 25-minute intervals. Modeling at 25 minutes causes significant distortion and alters the ranking of towns; for instance, Colchester captures a large pocket of jobs in Hartford, disproportionately shifting its weighting. Staff noted that a 10-minute threshold is too narrow to focus on

job hubs, while 20 minutes closely mirrors historical regional commuting averages once interior town travel time is accounted for.

- Committee Discussion: Sandra Allyn-Gauthier pointed out that job counts do not reflect job quality or wage levels, noting that residents are often willing to travel further for higher-paying or specialized positions than for local service jobs. Cheryl Blanchard, Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, and Bob Carlson supported targeting a commute band between 15 and 20 minutes, balancing realistic commute behavior without overly broadening the shed into distant employment centers. Amanda Kennedy noted that data for Electric Boat indicates approximately half of its workforce resides within four or five immediately adjacent towns.
- Consensus & Next Steps: The committee reached consensus to split the difference between 15 and 20 minutes and set the drive-time distance threshold at 17.5 minutes. Dave Cook will run the revised GIS calculations at 17.5 minutes and distribute the comparative findings to the committee.

- **Sewer and Wastewater Infrastructure**
  - Statutory Context & Planning Premise: The core premise is that new housing should be prioritized where public sewer service exists or is planned. While sewer infrastructure is not explicitly enumerated in the governing statute as an allocation factor, the statute uses the phrasing "including these factors". The committee interprets this as "including but not limited to," providing legal flexibility to incorporate sewer capacity if sensible from a regional planning standpoint.
  - Consultant Update (David Murphy, Resilient Land and Water): Resilient Land and Water has been engaged to update the region's 2019 Regional Wastewater Plan, evaluate current capacity, assess 15-year projections, and determine where sewer limitations impede housing. Questionnaires were sent

to regional facility operators two weeks prior. Responses have been received from Jewett City, Montville, North Stonington, and Norwich, with follow-ups underway for Windham, New London, East Lyme, Waterford, Sprague, and Ledyard WPCA. The study will review local Plans of Conservation and Development (POCDs) without creating new enforceable maps that supersede local authority.

- Treatment Capacity vs. Pipe Infrastructure: The committee debated whether to evaluate sewer based solely on geographic sewer service area extents or remaining treatment capacity. Several systems face critical treatment limitations, including East Lyme, Mystic, Waterford/New London, and Sprague (where the treatment facility has not been upgraded in decades). David Murphy clarified that treatment plant capacity differs substantially from in-ground pipe collection capacity; pipe replacements or relining to remediate inflow and infiltration cost a few million dollars, whereas major treatment plant expansions (such as Norwich Public Utilities' recent upgrade) can reach $200 million.
- Municipal Case Studies Raised:
  Griswold: Underway with a major sewer and water infrastructure project along Route 164.
  North Stonington: Previous discussions regarding a tie-in to the Pawcatuck system in Stonington are currently cost-prohibitive (estimated around $30 million), and the Pawcatuck facility itself is nearing capacity amidst projected commercial and housing buildouts.
- Consensus: The committee agreed that sewer infrastructure should be included as an allocation factor. Final methodology will await David Murphy's completed study to account for verified capacity and differentiate systems

that are truly maxed out from those where planned upgrades can expand capacity.

- **Potable Water Supply**
  - Consideration: Staff inquired whether public water supply should be incorporated as an allocation factor alongside wastewater.
  - Discussion Points: Water limitations vary significantly across the region; some rural communities are constrained by bedrock aquifers, whereas others experience seasonal water supply strains (e.g., East Lyme). Regulatory hurdles were noted regarding private/packaged wastewater treatment systems under the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), which creates friction for multi-family developments of over 50 to 75 units that fall outside local health district jurisdiction (such as Uncas Health District). The 2018 Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP / "Wolf Report") is available for regional water data.
  - Staff Direction: Helen Zincavage recommended treating water supply not as a formula allocation factor but rather addressing site-specific water constraints within individual town housing growth plan chapters and site identification analyses. The committee took the topic under advisement to finalize at the next session.
- **Closeout and Upcoming Schedule**
  - Developable Land Inventory: Data collection from remaining towns is complete, and staff expects to finalize developable acreage numbers shortly.
  - Full COG Briefing: The executive committee recommended briefing the full Council of Governments (SECOG) board on progress to date and process milestones, which the committee endorsed.
  - State Housing Needs Assessment: The state Office of Policy and Management (OPM) is expected to release statewide and regional housing needs

assessments in November or early December. SECOG will need to evaluate the state's methodology and prepare its own regional needs assessment, particularly regarding major local drivers like Electric Boat's expansion.

- November Agenda Items: Status update on the sewer infrastructure capacity study. Final determination regarding public water supply as an allocation factor. Final review of the developable land inventory numbers. Formal action/statement closing out the determination of allocation factors. Initial presentation on state and regional needs assessment methodologies.

- **Adjournment**
  - Committee members expressed appreciation to staff for facilitating a thorough and structured process, noting that SECOG remains well ahead of peer regional councils. The meeting concluded with the next regular meeting scheduled for November.

Attendance

SECOG Representatives			**Staff**	
Bozrah	Glenn Pianka	-		
East Lyme	Dan Cunningham	-		
Griswold	Tina Falck	X		
Groton T.	John Burt	-	Jon Reiner/ Deb Jones	-
Lebanon	Kathleen Smith	-	Phil Chester	X
Ledyard	Fred Allyn	X	Liz Burdick	X
North Stonington	Bob Carlson	X	Susan Cullen	-
Norwich			Dan Daniska/ Deanna Rhodes	-
Preston	Sandra Allyn-Gauthier	X		
Salem			Manuel Medina	-
Sprague	Cheryl Blanchard	X		
Stonington Borough	Michael Schefers	-		
Waterford	Rob Brule	-		
SECOG			Amanda Kennedy	X
			Helen Zincavage	X
			David Cook	X
			Phylicia Adams	-