

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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North Main Street Road Diet and Safety Study Launches in West Hartford

Over the Next Six Months CRCOG to Help West Hartford Give Complete Streets a Closer Look

Hartford, Connecticut - The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is pleased to announce that a study has been launched on North Main Street Road Diet and Safety in West Hartford. The purpose of the West Hartford North Main Street Road Diet and Safety Study is to explore the potential of adding bicycle lanes and opportunities for improving safety on 1.8 miles of North Main Street from Bishops Corner to the West Hartford Town Center. To assist in conducting the study, CRCOG has contracted with the firm Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc.

A Road Diet is one of many tools used to create complete streets, or streets accessible to all users including bicyclists, pedestrians, cars and public transportation. Typically, road diets reconfigure four lane roads into three lane roads with one travel lane in each direction and a center left turn lane. The extra space gained from the "diet" is then used to accommodate bicyclists in their own right of way and improve pedestrian pathways. Road diets have been used widely across the country in many states.

On August 4, 2015, Governor Dannel Malloy spoke at a press conference in East Hartford announcing the first road diet in Connecticut to be constructed on Burnside Avenue (Route 44) in East Hartford. He spoke regarding the benefits of road diets stating that road diets, "cut down anywhere from 19 to 47 percent the number of accidents on roads." East Hartford Mayor Leclerc and CRCOG Board member stated at the press event that "Burnside Avenue will be repurposed for the safety and security of our residents."

The focus of the West Hartford Road Diet and Safety Study will be to improve safety and explore opportunities to improve conditions for bicycling and walking along North Main Street while ensuring safe and efficient vehicle flow. Various options will be developed and tested through a transparent and highly interactive community outreach approach that is informed by current transportation engineering and planning state of the practice. The FHI team brings strong technical and public involvement skills to the project. There is a proposed three-day public workshop to gather input. The study are begins on North Main Street spanning from Bishops Corner, at the intersection of Albany Avenue (Route 44), to the West Hartford Town Center, at the intersection of Farmington Avenue.

Town of West Hartford officials will participate as a part of the Technical Study Committee that also includes representatives of key stakeholder groups such as the West Hartford Bicycle

Advisory Committee, West Hartford Center and Bishop's Corner businesses, large North Main Street institutions and the surrounding residents.

State Senator Beth Bye, who represents the 5th district of West Hartford, Bloomfield, Burlington and Farmington, stated "Creating safer walking and biking connections between Bishop's Corner and West Hartford Center – two major centers of community activity and commerce in town – will lead to an enhanced quality of life in the North Main Street Corridor."

Stewart (Chip) Beckett, Chairman of CRCOG stated, "Providing the region's residents with a range of transportation options including biking and walking is essential for community vitality. As we work to attract young professionals to live and work here, we need to think about how they like to travel. Studies have shown that millennials prefer a more active way of getting around."

Todd Dumais, Town Planner in West Hartford states, "Studying the feasibility of a road diet or other complete streets improvements for North Main Street, a major arterial connector between two important commercial and neighborhood centers, is consistent with the guiding principles of the Town's recently adopted Complete Streets policy. Town staff looks forward to being actively engaged in the study process."

West Hartford residents and stakeholders, particularly those in the North Main Street area should stay tuned for public involvement opportunities in the coming months.

For more information, Contact CRCOG using the contact details below.

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About Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)—Working Together for a Better Region

CRCOG is established under the Connecticut General Statutes as a voluntary association of municipal governments serving the 38 Metro Hartford municipalities. Our members have collaborated for more than 30 years on a wide range of projects related to planning, transportation, service sharing, and cooperative procurement to benefit our towns individually and the region as a whole.