

**To:** Policy Board  
Transportation Committee

**From:** Jennifer Carrier

**Date:** May 12, 2017

**Subject:** MOU on Transportation Planning & Funding in the Hartford Urbanized Area

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CRCOG has an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) related to transportation planning and funding within the Hartford Urbanized Area. The existing MOU is dated 2003 and does not reflect the larger CRCOG region or newer federal programs / initiatives. During CRCOG's last federal certification review the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) asked CRCOG to update the MOU. These agencies asked that the MOU be amended to reflect the reality of federal funding and ensure that public transit providers are included as cosigners. CTDOT is in the process of reviewing a Draft MOU prepared by CRCOG.

As a reminder, the Hartford Urbanized area spans four regional planning boundaries including CRCOG, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG), the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG), and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG). The specific Hartford Urbanized Area is defined by the 2010 census. A map identifying the Hartford Urbanized area is attached.

The draft MOU is also attached to this memorandum. CRCOG expects to work over the summer to finalize this draft and is looking for you to authorize CRCOG's Executive Director, Lyle Wray, and CRCOG's Policy Board Chairman, Chip Beckett, to act on behalf of CRCOG in executing and amending all items associated with the updated MOU.



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**Regarding**  
**Transportation Planning & Funding**  
**In the Hartford Urbanized Area**

**Section I. Purpose of MOU**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be established among the four Councils of Governments (COG) within the Hartford Urbanized Area, as well as the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), the Greater Hartford Transit District (GHTD), and Middletown Area Transit (MAT). The COGs include the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG), the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG), and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG). The purpose of this MOU is:

1. to define the method for distributing metropolitan planning funds received by the CTDOT from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for transportation planning within the Hartford Urbanized Area;
2. to define the method for distributing and administering FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) funds, Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside funds, FTA Section 5307 funds, and FTA Section 5310 funds earmarked for, or attributable to, the Hartford Urbanized Area;
3. to define the responsibilities of each COG for carrying out its own transportation planning program and for coordinating with the other COGs in the Hartford Urbanized Area; and
4. to define the responsibilities of the signatories for coordinating transit planning and transportation demand management activities.

**Section II. Distribution of Planning (PL) Funds among MPOs**

CRCOG, NVCOG, and RiverCOG are the designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) for their respective regions. As such they are entitled to a portion of planning funds from the FHWA (PL funds) and the FTA (Section 5303 funds) through a statewide process administered by CTDOT. The funds will continue to be distributed according to a method developed by CTDOT in cooperation with all the MPOs in Connecticut. The method is based primarily on the total population in each urban planning region (not just the urbanized area within the region). Each MPO receives a share of the planning funds generally proportionate to its share of the combined population of all the urban planning regions in the state. The shares are adjusted to ensure that the smallest urban regions receive a funding level that is at least equal to the minimum needed to carry out a basic urban transportation planning program.

NHCOG, as a rural region, receives a portion of Connecticut's State Planning and Research funds. Distribution of those funds are outside of the scope of this MOU.

**Section III. Distribution of STBGP (Attributable) Funds for Hartford UZA**

The COGs agree to distribute STBGP funds from FHWA in the manner described below. The STBGP funds attributable to the Hartford Urbanized Area will be divided among the four COGs based on population within the Census defined urbanized area. Each region will receive a share of the STBGP

funds proportionate to its share of the population within the urbanized area. Each year CTDOT will determine the amount of federal funding available to the Hartford Urbanized Area, and then calculate each region's share based on the proportionate share method described above. CTDOT will inform each region of the amount of funding provided to it.

CRCOG's population is greater than 50,000 within the Hartford UZA. As such, this primary MPO may use the Hartford attributable funds on eligible projects anywhere in its region.

NVCOG's and RiverCOG's Hartford UZA populations exceed 50,000, however, their boundaries also stretch into neighboring UZAs. For this reason, NVCOG and RiverCOG must use Hartford attributable funds on eligible projects only in those portions of their regions that lie within the Hartford UZA.

NHCOG has fewer than 50,000 people living within the Hartford UZA. Therefore, NHCOG must use the Hartford attributable funds on eligible projects only in that portion of its region that lies within the Hartford UZA. It should be noted that some flexibilities exist for allocating Hartford attributable funds in other UZA areas within a given COG, however COGs, CTDOT and FHWA will need to approve the transfer of the funding between UZAs.

STBGP funds will be collaboratively programmed between CTDOT and the COGs. At a minimum the consultation will occur during CTDOT's Capital Plan preparation and at four other coordination meetings held at key Fiscal Year (FY) milestones (e.g. start of a given FY, then 3, 6 and 9 months into the FY). In the event that Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) funds are not authorized for a given year, CTDOT will work to prioritize the advancement of projects with regional significance into the STBGP program. It is anticipated that CTDOT LOTICIP coordinators will assist with regional project advancement. Funding targets will be reflective of population within the Census defined urbanized area and collaboratively developed with the COGs.

#### **Section IV. Solicitation of Projects for the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program**

The four COGs agree to assist CTDOT with soliciting projects for the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program. Each COG will solicit projects from their member municipalities through a competitive process in accordance with CTDOT guidance.

#### **Section V. Distribution of FTA 5307 Funds for Hartford UZA**

The parties agree to distribute Section 5307 funds from the FTA in the manner described below. The FTA Section 5307 funds attributable to the Hartford Urbanized Area will be pooled with all other Section 5307 funds in Connecticut and administered as a statewide program by CTDOT, following procedures specified in FTA Circular 9030.1E (as amended). The annual 5307 program will be adopted by the MPOs into their respective TIPs.

This continues the procedure previously agreed to by COGs and transit operators throughout the state. It recognizes the inefficiency of trying to program large and infrequent capital purchases when individual regions are limited to small annual appropriations for their respective regions and/or urbanized areas. An example of this is the difficulty of programming funds for replacement of buses when the buses have a minimum 12-year life cycle and appropriated funds are typically available only for 4 years.

The parties also agree to establish a procedure for periodically reviewing Section 5307 expenditures to ensure that individual UZAs receive their fair share.

#### **Section VI. Coordination and Administration of FTA 5310 Funds for Hartford UZA**

The four COGs agree that the administration of the Section 5310 program will be the responsibility of CTDOT who will coordinate with the COGs. In future years the COGs will meet with CTDOT and collaboratively understand administration functions and options.

## **Section VII. Basic Responsibilities of Each MPO**

Each of the three MPOs will conduct each of the following basic transportation planning activities:

1. develop its own Unified Planning Work Program to address the major transportation issues in their Region and identify the planning tasks to address those issues;
2. develop its own Regional Transportation Plan;
3. develop its own Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
4. adhere to all required Planning Regulations as outlined in 23 CFR part 450 and in 49 CFR part 613; and
5. cooperatively develop and implement a Congestion Management Process for the Hartford Urbanized Area.

As a non-MPO COG, NHCOG is not required to develop the above, but may wish to do so to better coordinate transportation planning activities.

## **Section VIII. Coordination among COGs**

It is the goal of the four COGs to conduct their transportation programs in a manner that ensures their plans and programs are mutually supportive of major projects, programs, and policies to improve the transportation system in the Hartford Urbanized Area.

Coordination of Planning Activities. The three MPOs in the Hartford UZA (CRCOG, NVCOG, and RiverCOG) agree to coordinate their regional transportation plans, transportation improvement programs (TIPs), and annual work programs. The coordination efforts will include the exchange and review of annual work programs, regional transportation plans, and TIPs. Staff of the three MPOs will meet at least annually to review each other's planning programs and to identify projects or programs of mutual interest or potential conflict. NHCOG will be included in all correspondence and invited to annual meetings, but it is not critical that they attend annual meetings.

Coordination of STBGP Programs. The four COGs in the Hartford UZA agree to coordinate their STBGP programs. Staff of the COGs included within the Hartford UZA will meet as needed, but at least once annually, to coordinate STBGP programs and recommend temporary transfers of attributable funds between regions if needed. If temporary transfers are recommended, the recommendations will be brought to each affected COG board for endorsement.

The COGs share the goal that each region fully program its available funds in the year of appropriation. However, they recognize that in any given year a region might not be able to program projects whose cumulative cost exactly equals the total annual funds available. They will also recognize that regions with small annual appropriations of STBGP funds may not be able to fully obligate their share annually and these funds would carry over to the next fiscal year and may be available for future use.

## **Section IX. Coordination of Transit and TDM Planning**

It is the goal of the parties to this MOU to conduct their planning activities in a manner that supports multiple modes of transportation throughout the Hartford Urbanized Area.

Coordination of the Locally Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (LOCHSTP). In support of the FTA 5310 program, the parties to this MOU agree to coordinate on

developing and maintaining the LOCHSTP for the UZA. As the designated recipient of funds under the 5310 program, CTDOT will continue to take the lead role in ensuring that locally coordinated plans throughout the state are developed in a consistent fashion. The four COGS in the UZA will work with CTDOT to update and maintain the plan.

Coordination of Transit Planning Activities. The parties agree to participate, as needed, in CT *transit's* Bus Service Review Committee. The parties will assist with demographic data evaluation and municipal coordination. The parties also agree to cooperate on initiatives that seek to maintain and improve security and safety of transit facilities within the UZA.

Coordination of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies. The parties agree to work collaboratively to develop TDM strategies and work toward implementing them. CTDOT will take a lead role in developing and implementing TDM strategies that seek to incentivize, and inform the public of, alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. The COGs and transit operators will assist CTDOT with evaluating such strategies and, where appropriate, implementing them.

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Chip Beckett  
CRCOG Policy Board Chairman

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NHCOG chairperson

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NVCOG chairperson

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Date

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RiverCOG chairperson

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Date

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Vicki L. Shotland  
Executive Director, GHTD

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Date

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Andy Chiaravallo  
Administrator, MAT

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Date

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James P. Redeker  
Commissioner, CTDOT

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Date