

October 10, 2019

Mr. Mark Rolfe, P.E.
Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer
Connecticut Department of Transportation, Bureau of Engineering and Construction
2800 Berlin Turnpike
PO Box 317546
Newington, CT 06131-7546

Re: CRCOG Staff Comments on CTDOT Draft 5-year Capital Plan (2020-2024)

Dear Mr. Rolfe,

We appreciate the Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) coordination of the Draft 5-year Capital Plan (2020-2024) for preliminary review by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). We are pleased to see that the major projects within the draft Capital Plan are consistent with CRCOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan. However, we are very concerned that 20-25% of the program identified in the Plan may be determined to be unaffordable once the program is constrained to available revenue. Cutting projects that are identified to be funded under P.A. 15-1, Sec. 232-233 would result in the loss of critical projects in the Capitol Region, including but not limited to preliminary engineering for the I-84 Hartford Project, track and station improvements on the *CTrail* Hartford Line, and multiple trail projects. Alternative funding approaches would be necessary to address the growing needs associated with the region's and state's transportation needs and aging infrastructure.

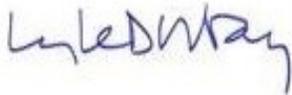
Provided below are CRCOG's staff-level comments on the Draft 5-year Capital Plan. We will share these comments with our municipalities and look forward to meeting with CTDOT staff to coordinate further at our annual STBG Coordination Meeting on November 7, 2019.

- In the event of funding shortages, CRCOG offers the following comments:
 - Prior to the cutting of any projects in our region, CRCOG would like to meet with CTDOT to discuss project prioritization and potential mitigation measures. There is a need to have a strong contingency plan in place as it relates to the major investments that may be in jeopardy in the Metro Hartford area due to funding limitations.
 - As it relates to rail stations along the Hartford Line, there may be an opportunity to explore alternative funding options and/or project sizes. CRCOG will be meeting with the potentially impacted municipalities on October 30, 2019 and will supply additional comments to CTDOT on the subject of rail stations following that meeting.
 - If the LOTCIP program is not funded at the anticipated levels, CRCOG would expect a reallocation of STBG-Urban funds to offset such a loss.
 - There also remains significant uncertainty regarding long-term transportation funding. As such, there may be a need to revisit priorities and take a wholistic look at a longer-term approach to transportation revenues and expenditures.

- As we strive to implement a Performance Based Planning and Programming approach towards transportation capital investments, projects entering the TIP and STIP (via the 5-year Capital Plan) will need to aim to achieve performance targets. CRCOG remains interested in working with CTDOT to evaluate methodologies that further link investments to performance and to develop an appropriate project prioritization process. As we move forward, it will be important to determine how best to utilize performance measures as a means of justification for project selection.
- CRCOG is interested in improving coordination with CTDOT as it relates to transit projects. We are available to strategize with CTDOT to understand transit needs and priorities within the Capital Plan, as we feel that our Comprehensive Transit Service Analysis includes several recommendations that merit inclusion within the Capital Plan, including the implementation of Transit Priority Corridors and the extension of local bus service into Southington.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns. We look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,



Lyle D. Wray
Executive Director

cc: Thomas Maziarz, CTDOT Bureau Chief of Policy and Planning
Richard Andreski, CTDOT Bureau Chief of Public Transportation
Maribeth Wojenski, CTDOT Transportation Assistant Planning Director
Grayson Wright, CTDOT Transportation Planner 2
Marcia Leclerc, CRCOG Policy Board Chair
Jonathan Colman, CRCOG Transportation Committee Chair
Robert Aloise, CRCOG Director of Transportation Planning