

To: Transportation Committee
From: Rob Aloise, CRCOG Principal Transportation Engineer
Jennifer Carrier, Director of Transportation Planning
Date: November 10, 2016
Subject: Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Selection Meeting

A Special CRCOG Transportation Committee meeting will take place from 9:00 a.m. to Noon on Friday, November 18, 2016 at **MIRA, 211 Murphy Road, Hartford, CT** to identify new projects to advance utilizing 2016-2020 federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside funding. As part our solicitation, CRCOG has received the following project proposals:

<u>Town/City</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Cost (Fed. Share)</u>
Ellington	Route 83 Corridor Sidewalks	\$ 1,920,000
Hartford	Hartford – Windsor Riverwalk Extension	\$ 1,237,200 *
Manchester	Charter Oak Greenway Shared Use Path	\$ 748,160
New Britain	New Britain’s Stanley Loop Trail (Phase 2)	\$ 853,600
Rocky Hill	Silas Deane Streetscape Improvements – Phase III	\$ 2,102,016

* \$3,341,360 if additional optional 1.7 miles are included

Per prior Transportation Committee Action, CRCOG will automatically select and resubmit the previously approved Rocky Hill, Silas Deane Streetscape Improvements – Phase III project that was selected as part of the 2012 Transportation Enhancement Program solicitation. The project will be resubmitted to CTDOT as the region’s first priority.

Additionally, CRCOG plans to select, approve, and submit to CTDOT up to three new TA Set-Aside projects to expend an estimated \$4.0 million (federal) of available funds. Each of the remaining four municipalities have been invited to provide a brief (10-15 minutes) presentation on their proposal followed by questions from committee members. After the presentations are finished, each Committee member will complete a Project Evaluation Form ranking the projects from first (best) to last. The evaluation forms will be collected, and each project’s “average” ranking will be calculated. The final ranking will be determined by placing the projects in rank order from the highest average ranking to the lowest average ranking. Per approved CRCOG guidelines it is suggested that the committee consider the following when ranking the projects:

- High number of potential users
- Safety Benefit
- Cultural, historic, and aesthetic enhancement
- Length of useful life
- Relationship to other projects/future projects
- Economic development benefit
- Regional/statewide significance
- Environmental benefit/minimization of impact
- Supports multi-modal travel

The attached **Summary of Solicitation Proposals** provides more details on each of the four new project proposals.

***CRCOG Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program
Summary of Solicitation Proposals
November 10, 2016***

The following summaries are meant to provide an overall description of the four new TA Set-Aside proposals that will compete for selection in this TA Set-Aside solicitation. Per Transportation Committee action, in addition to these proposals, the previously selected (2012 TE solicitation) Silas Deane Highway Streetscape Improvements Phase III project in Rocky Hill is to be automatically approved as the priority TA Set-Aside project in this solicitation.

Unlike prior solicitations, CTDOT is not allocating funding to regions, but rather only provided estimated TA Set-Aside funding breakdowns by urbanized areas (many of which stretch between multiple regions). However, if funding were to be allocated in a similar manner as in prior solicitations, staff calculates that CRCOG would expect to have been allocated at least \$5.5 million (federal) of 2016-2020 TA Set-Aside funding. Accounting for 2013-2015 carryover of approximately \$0.6 million (federal) it is estimated that approximately \$6.1 million (federal) is available. Therefore, the submission of projects of a similar total value, via the \$2.1 million (federal) Rocky Hill Project and three new projects totaling approximately \$4.0 million (federal), is suggested to maximize transportation investments while minimizing or eliminating the need for further carryover.

Note: CRCOG has made every effort to accurately summarize the primary components for each project. We have used sections of text from each proposal and expanded or removed information to be able to provide panel members with a brief overview of all projects.

Ellington: Route 83 Corridor Sidewalks

Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$1,920,000

The project proposes the design and construction of walk/bikeways along Route 83 in Ellington starting at the Vernon town-line and extending north for more than two miles to link to existing sidewalks on Route 286 (Main Street) and Ellington's town center.

The purpose of this project is to provide safe means of travel for non-vehicular traffic along Route 83 - Ellington's main commercial corridor. According to US Census Bureau, Ellington has experienced a growth rate of more than 20% since 2000. A significant portion of this growth has occurred within the Route 83 Corridor converting over 275 acres of vacant land to 84 new single family homes, 332 new multi-family units, and 100,000 square feet of commercial space. Route 83 carries significant amounts of traffic with average daily traffic volumes ranging between 12,000 to 15,000 within the proposed project area; and, Route 83 serves many pedestrian generators such as Ellington High School and Middle School, Big Y and McDonald's, Meadowview Plaza, Town House Garden Apartments and Autumn Chase, and Country Pure Foods, Inc. - one of Ellington's major employers.

Within the project area, minimal sidewalk infrastructure exists (less than 500 linear feet), and where infrastructure is present it is deteriorated, narrow and segmented; and, the project area is void of dedicated bike lanes. On October 27, 2016, Ellington officials met with representatives from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and AECOM, CTDOT's consultant, and conducted a Road Safety Audit of the proposed project area. AECOM will present a report within 6 to 8 weeks recommending immediate, intermediate, and long-term solutions that Ellington can incorporate in designing walk/bikeways for the proposed project area to make Route 83 safe for all modes of transportation.

Hartford: Hartford – Windsor Riverwalk Extension

*Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$1,237,200
(with additional 1.7 miles: \$3,341,360)*

The proposed project involves the construction of a paved 12 foot wide multi-use path along the Connecticut River in the City of Hartford & the Town of Windsor. The path will extend from the current northern terminus of the Hartford Riverwalk at the Greater Hartford Jaycees Boathouse northerly for a length of 1.3 miles. The path will be located primarily at the toe of the flood control dike. If funding allows, there is an option to construct an additional 1.7 miles of trail connecting to the Windsor Riverwalk and Keney Park. The proposal stems from visions included in the Riverfront Masterplan which was developed in partnership with Riverfront Recapture and approved by both the City of Hartford and Town of East Hartford in 1982.

Along Hartford's riverfront there are only a handful of formal public access points to the Connecticut River – the Greater Hartford Jaycees Boathouse to the north, Mortensen Riverfront Plaza downtown, and Charter Oak Landing to the south among them. Connecting these formal access points are a series of riverside trails known collectively as the Riverwalk. Since the founding of Riverfront Recapture in 1981, a primary goal has been the completion of a system of trails linking Hartford to Windsor to the north, Wethersfield to the south, and East Hartford to the east. Progress has been made in facilitating access in part by constructing a Riverwalk that trail extends from the Greater Hartford Jaycees Boathouse on the north to Charter Oak Landing on the south, however no new trails have been built either northward or southward to connect the existing Riverwalk trail to regional networks or to facilitate access by people who live and work in adjacent neighborhoods.

The Hartford-Windsor Riverwalk Extension will have a significant positive impact on underserved neighborhoods in the area. Of course, the Extension will create opportunities for downtown employees going for a run, bike, or walk during the lunch hour, as well as for regional commuters. But it will also create opportunities for those living in the immediately adjacent neighborhood, generally known as the North End and in 2015 designated as a federal Promise Zone – an economically distressed area where there are significant needs and opportunities for transformation. Providing residents of the Promise Zone access to a well-designed multi-use path immediately adjacent to their neighborhood will result in positive health benefits and improve their quality of life.

**Manchester: Charter Oak Greenway Shared Use Path
Hartford Road and Bidwell Street**

Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$748,160

The project consists of the construction of approximately 2,700 linear feet of 10' wide bituminous concrete shared use path on the east side of Bidwell Street and the south side of Hartford Road. The project will begin at the existing terminus of the paved, off-road path at the Bidwell Street entrance to Manchester Community College and extend approximately 2,700 linear feet along Bidwell Street and Hartford Road to connect to beginning of the off-road path adjacent to 672 Hartford Road.

The Charter Oak Greenway, part of the 3,000 mile East Coast Greenway, is a regional recreational shared use trail that extends from the west end of Riverfront Recapture in Hartford to Porter Street in Manchester. Upon completion of the two remaining segments (both funded), the trail will provide a critical link between the Hop River Trail and Hartford. The subject project would complete the only remaining off-road gap in the 10.5 mile paved section between Simmons St. in East Hartford and the Bolton Notch.

Manchester has a long history of public support for the development of recreational trails and greenways. After extensive public outreach and input, the Town's "2020 Plan: 2012 Plan of Conservation and Development" renews the charge by specifying the desire to "improve overall walkability" and "completed and connect trails and multi-use paths". In addition, CRCOG's regional multi-use trail plan includes this gap closing project. The project also has the support of the East Coast Greenway Alliance (see letter dated 11/3/2016 and included in the project application).

New Britain: New Britain's Stanley Loop Trail (Phase 2) *Fed. Share Cost Estimate: \$853,600*

The project involves the 2nd Phase of the Stanley Loop Trail which is programmed to be constructed in sections of Stanley Quarter and AW Stanley Parks. Both parks are located in the northeastern portion of the City, in close proximity to Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), the West Farms Mall retail corridor, and CTfastrak.

The Stanley Loop Trail was first identified in New Britain's City-wide Traffic Calming and Bicycle Connectivity Plan which was completed in 2013, and is one of the few remaining components of this plan that has not been completed. The proposed project involves construction of approximately 1.6 miles of 12' wide (10' paved, 2' stone dust) multi-use trail that will begin in Stanley Quarter Park near an existing skate park. The trail has a northern limit adjacent to the Holmes Elementary School across the street from the first phase of the Stanley Loop Trail which is currently in design and scheduled to be constructed in 2017. The first phase of the project is funded through a CT DEEP Recreational Trails Grant and State of CT Local Capital Improvement funds.

This project will serve the large urban population of New Britain and its surrounding communities. New Britain is a densely developed city classified by Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management as an economically distressed and environmental justice community. The city is home to several ethnic communities, and it has struggled economically since the decline of manufacturing industries. Completing the second phase of the Stanley Loop Trail fills many purposes and needs both regionally and locally. This trail involves the second and final phase of a project that will complete a primarily off road trail network for pedestrians and bicycles in the northeastern portion of the city that will provide critical linkages to transit, job centers, educational facilities, and recreational facilities.

The purpose and need for this project is also based on the health, wellness and recreational opportunities the Stanley Loop Trail will provide. The completion of the Stanley Loops Trail fits into an economic strategy that realizes the economic benefits on things such as job creation and increased property values for the properties in close proximity to trails.