

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 3, 2018
TO: CRCOG Policy Board and Alternates
FROM: Lyle Wray, Executive Director
SUBJECT: CRCOG Strategic Plan: Member Interest in Major Regional Projects

In December of 2017, CRCOG sent a survey to its members to review member interest in possible major regional projects. The survey asked questions in five areas along with sub-questions asking the importance of various factors under each potential project.

The major project areas with major areas of concern were:

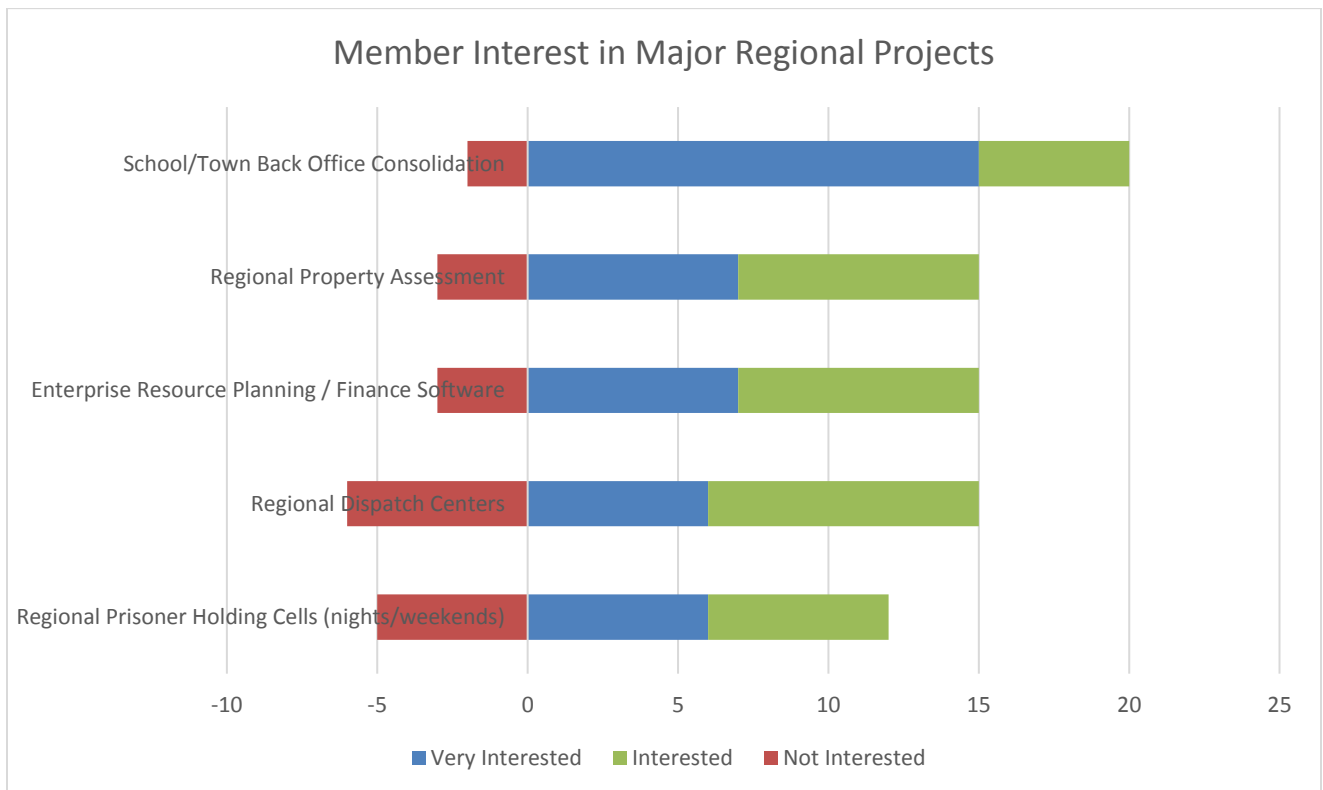
- Enterprise Resource Planning / Finance Software (ERP)
 - Individual Municipality Charts are separated and customized
 - Integrated with Existing Software
- School/Town Back Office Consolidation
- Regional Property Assessment
 - Approach fits town's revaluation schedule
 - Integration with existing systems
- Regional Dispatch Centers
 - Consolidation would include hold harmless for existing labor agreements
 - Individual municipal member costs would be pre-determined and municipalities can join when desired (such as when current equipment needed to be replaced etc.)
 - Regional Dispatch Center would be under regional control (not another municipality)
 - Availability 24 hours a day of specialty counselors, including suicide prevention, addiction and others
- Regional Prisoner Holding for Nights and Weekends) – related issue to regional dispatch
 - Regional center under regional control (not a municipal owned facility)
 - Central location (within 15 minute - 20 minute drive from municipality)

Member Participation

26 members responded to the survey (out of 38 cities and towns) with a mix of smaller and larger towns responding to the survey. Survey responses were received from 13 Town Manager or Administrators responding, 8 Chief Elected Officials, and 5 “Others” (usually town councilors). Survey responses varied widely in levels of interest. In some cases, such as school/town consolidation, some of our member towns have already consolidated the back office functions and this would not apply for them.

Summary of Survey Responses

The chart below shows the level of interest in each major area. Please note, in the cases where members were neutral or the area did not apply to them, those answers are not reflected in the chart.



Town/School Back Office Consolidation

Members were very interested in School/Town Back Office consolidation. Concerns in this area include the willingness of schools or Boards of Education to participate in consolidation as well as whether a town will realize savings.

Regional Property Assessment

Integration with existing systems was important or very important for 17 members and the fitting with the town’s revaluation schedule was important or very important for 12 members.

Comments for Regional Property Assessment included:

- “With pending retirements at the level of Assessor there may be more opportunities for a "circuit rider" type of position or inter-local agreements for between towns to provide certain assessing services/functions.”
- “It would be great to offload this entirely.”
- “This could be helpful.”
- “Very important.”
- “This is a service that is usually performed by individuals outside of the town. If it [is] an independent contractor, it is important to have better value with a large group seeking bids. Customer service to the individuals who were unhappy and concerned about the Tax assessment is something we should not compromise on.”
- “Absolutely!”

Enterprise Resource Planning / Finance Software (ERP)

Under ERP / Finance software, 17 members felt that integration with existing software was important or very important. 12 members felt that Individual Municipality Charts are separated and Customized was important or very important.

Comments under ERP, Finance Software included:

- “It is worth checking into.”
- “Not sure if would improve current software system but am interested in some common software across towns.”
- “Small town - would need to understand benefits from MUNIS”
- “It is better if integration can occur. If not, we need a turnkey suite of products that can be switched to over time as towns need upgrades.”
- “Needs to try to use the uniform chart of accounts developed or some rendition of it.”
- “Long overdue.”

Regional 911 Dispatch Centers

Regional Dispatch Centers had similar level of interest to ERP and Regional Assessment, but is counterbalanced by more towns that are not interested at all in this as a major regional project. (ERP/Regional Assessment had 3 respondents not interested, Regional Dispatch has 6 not interested). Staff believes this is an indication of potential opposition to regional dispatch as a potential area for pursuit. Members felt the following areas were of importance.

- Availability 24 hours a day of specialty counselors, including suicide prevention, addiction among others: 14
- Regional Dispatch Center would be under regional control (not another municipality):13

- Individual municipal member costs would be pre-determined and municipalities can join when desired (such as when current equipment expires, etc.):12
- Consolidation would include hold harmless for existing labor agreements:11

Comments under Regional Dispatch were as follows:

- “Perhaps 4 or 5 smaller sub-regional call centers would be more readily accepted versus what could be viewed as one 'mega-911 center’”
- “We took in East Hampton. We can take in other towns as well.”
- “This depends on the economic practicality.”
- “Need to address issue of "dark stations" in smaller communities.”
- “We use TN currently but support further consolidation.”
- “Would save significant money and resources”
- “We already have a regionalized dispatch service using TN (Tolland County Mutual Aid). By going this route instead of joining with Glastonbury/East Hampton, we reduced our annual operational cost by \$150K (est.) and startup cost of almost \$500K! We now pay \$12,850/year, locked in for 5 years - excellent service meeting all our needs!”
- “What is needed with this is a regional lock-up. Most of the towns utilize the dispatchers on the 3rd shift to oversee individuals in lockup as well. Without the dispatchers, the Town will still have to hire staff if the lockups are being used.”
- “Some municipalities are trustworthy for results, others are not. Regional avoids those problems, but more town to town mergers could be interim steps (goal of 10 services with 100K population served). Specialized counselors could be done now as a transfer if they were available regionally, and could be another step.”
- “The initial set-up should NOT involve existing union personnel in the individual municipalities.”
- “Currently a Resident State Trooper town and share 911 dispatch with Granby.”
- “Cannot imagine a situation where this would cost less or improve service by our current provider. We are in year 2 of a 5-year contract.”

Regional Prisoner Holding Cells

Regional Prisoner Holding Cells would go hand in hand with Regional Dispatch (as noted in one comment from Regional Dispatch), and has a lower level of interest than Regional Dispatch.

Comments included:

- “We were told the time lost with our police force going other places and doing the paperwork would cost too much time for current staffing. Is there voice recognition software that would allow remote dictation for filling out paperwork?”
- “We currently use troop K. That is regional.”
- “As a Resident Trooper Town we send prisoners to the troop”

- “Absolutely needed along with regionalized police department to get better coverage.”