

To: Executive Committee

From: Matt Hart, Executive Director

Date: January 18, 2023

CC: P. Yoder

Subject: Status Report on First Year Goals & Initiatives

Below please find a brief update on my first-year goals & initiatives. I would appreciate any feedback from the Executive Committee.

- Continue efforts to get to know the organization and key stakeholders, and to promote public awareness of CRCOG and its services. Regularly meet with policy board members, local legislative bodies, municipal staff, and other partners. Experiment with ways to engage with members of policy board. Utilize digital and social media to raise awareness of CRCOG's brand. Participate in meetings and training opportunities provided by the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), the International City Management Association (ICMA), the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), and the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO). *[Regularly meeting with member towns, legislators, and other key stakeholders. Making presentations to town councils and boards of selectmen. With assistance from Aaliyah Miller, initiated regular blog post for CRCOG newsletter. Remain active with ICMA and will attend first NARC conference next week.]*
- Establish dedicated positions and other resources to assist member towns and the COG with preparing competitive applications for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding. Submit applications for SS4A and other opportunities as they become available. *[Added two dedicated staff to assist with BIL and other grant opportunities. CRCOG staff wrote successful RAISE grant application (\$16.4M) to construct portion of Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Plainville with connection to New Britain CTfastrak station and helped coordinate submission of two applications (\$22.5M) under Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program. Gearing up now for second year of SS4A and other programs.]*
- Develop a set of strategic priorities for the next 2-5 years. Retain a skilled facilitator to work with staff, board, and other stakeholders to update vision and mission, and to identify a set of strategic priorities and related action steps. *[Following competitive selection process, recommending that Policy Board appropriate approximately \$26,000 to retain the firm of Grossman Associates to facilitate strategic planning process.]*

- Support CTDOT's efforts to build and replace infrastructure along the Hartford Line, including double-tracking, bridge replacement, quiet zones, and station construction. Collaborate with COGs in Massachusetts to promote passenger rail service from Springfield to Worcester to Boston. [*Maintain regular dialogue and coordination with CTDOT and colleagues at Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Franklin County Council of Governments. Issued support letters for CTDOT and MASSDOT applications for federal funding. Added evaluation of P3 opportunities for Flatbush Station to TOD demonstration project.*]
- Work with Legislative Committee and organizations such as CCM and COST to develop forward-thinking Legislative Program for FY2023. [*Assisted Legislative Committee with preparation of 2023 Agenda. Meeting with key legislators now. Scheduled virtual CRCOG legislative update for Feb. 2, 2023.*]
- Engage project steering committee and complete phase 1 and make substantial progress on completing phase 2 of waste management project. [*Consultant team and steering committee completed first phase of project. Second phase near completion.*]
- Help lead effort to update comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS); continue to pursue designation as Economic Development District (EDD) from federal Economic Development Administration (EDA). [*Project team making good progress with assistance from Camoin Associates. Project on schedule and on budget. Team will present draft strategy later this spring.*]
- Utilizing regional performance incentive program (RPIP) and other means, explore opportunities to expand CRCOG's shared services portfolio. [*OPM has awarded CRCOG with three grants to establish regional programs for animal control, assessment, and code enforcement/building inspection. Next steps include meetings with participating towns and preparing job descriptions for key positions.*]
- Collaborate with Capitol Workforce Partners, UConn School of Public Policy, and others to convene summit on state of local government workforce, leading to a long-term strategy and action steps. [*In collaboration with UConn, CWP, and National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), convened well-attended Nov. 4, 2022 summit on state of public sector workforce in CT. Facilitating work a task force coming out of the summit. Participated in DAS task force to identify options to create apprenticeship program for building code officials. Staff looking at options to apply for federal funds for workforce development.*]

- Lead and inspire high-performing staff team. Initiate diversity, equity, inclusion plus belonging (DEI+B) journey with the CRCOG staff. Critically assess CRCOG's organizational structure and implement any changes to better enable the team to meet key goals and objectives. [*Conducted series of DEI+B conversations with CRCOG staff. Reorganizing Planning Department into two entities – a Department of Transportation Planning and a Department of Regional Planning & Development in order to best needs of our members. Conducted classification and compensation study to ensure pay equity and competitiveness. Over the course of the year, hired talented additions to CRCOG team to fill key positions.*]
- Building on annual audit, develop system of periodic financial reporting to Policy Board. Work with Chief Operating Officer and other staff to develop responsible proposed budget for FY2023-24. [*Staff has developed and implemented quarterly financial report for Executive Committee and Policy Board. Starting preparation of operating budget.*]
- Critically review office space needs and present recommended lease option to Executive Committee. [*Retained broker (CBRE) and reviewed number of options for office space in Hartford. Will present recommendation to Executive Committee this month. Policy Board action to follow.*]
- Support other key projects and initiatives across the organization (e.g., East Coast Greenway, website upgrade, classification study). [*CRCOG staff making good progress on variety of projects, including East Coast Greenway gap study and website upgrade. Policy Board recently approved classifications and compensation study.*]