

February 24, 2023

Kimberly Bradley, Trails & Greenways Program Coordinator  
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

**Re: DEEP Connecticut Recreational Trails Program 2023 Grant Application**

Dear Ms. Bradley:

I am writing to convey the Capitol Region Council of Governments' (CRCOG) support for the Keney Park Connectivity Project, which proposes to connect existing trails in Keney Park to the Connecticut River.

As one of the largest public parks in all New England with nearly 700 acres of land, Keney Park is a regional treasure with a rich history. The proposed connected system of trails would provide safe and equitable access to healthy recreation, especially for North Hartford area residents and for visitors. The City's vision for this multi-use trail includes a solution for the park's gateway entrance at Windsor Avenue that is ADA-accessible and would prioritize pedestrians over vehicular traffic. The proposed project would also connect to the adjacent community of Windsor and link to the new riverfront park proposed by Riverfront Recapture. This connection to the new Riverfront Recapture park would unlock access to the Connecticut River and provide additional opportunities for healthy recreation, community events, socialization, and housing.

While the basic infrastructure exists, the current environment is not welcoming or safe for pedestrians. The proposed project would upgrade existing infrastructure in a way that better accommodates all users, makes the experience safer and more welcoming, and provides a high-quality experience for the surrounding Hartford neighborhoods that currently experience some of the lowest health outcomes in our State and region. This connection would provide free, attractive access to outdoor recreation for a community that has been historically and systematically disconnected from nature.

Interstate 91 and parallel railroad corridor currently present large physical and psychological barriers between these two regional assets. CRCOG is excited about the City's vision to connect Keney Park to the Connecticut River and supports its application to address these challenges and capitalize on this amazing opportunity.

The proposed project aligns with regional policies and planning documents, including our Regional Plan of Conservation & Development and our Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The Capitol Region Council of Governments urges the Department to approve this application based on its merits. I am happy to address any questions you may have regarding our letter of support.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart  
Executive Director

CC: Owen Deutsch, City of Hartford  
CRCOG Policy Board & Transportation Committee  
R. Aloise, Director of Transportation Planning  
C. Radzins, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning