

February 28, 2023

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

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

Dear Ms. Bradley,

I am writing to convey the Capital Region Council of Governments' (CRCOG) support for Riverfront Recapture's Recreational Trails Program application to expand its security camera network and to utilize new technology imbedded in those cameras to enhance data collection related to park visitor counts. Count information assists Riverfront Recapture in its advocacy efforts and helps secure grant funding to continued expansion and improvement to this amazing regional asset.

Riverfront Recapture has participated in CRCOG's annual Bike/Ped Counts since we started the initiative in 2009. CRCOG's counts are part of a nationwide effort that aims to provide a consistent model of ongoing data collection for use by planners, governments, and bicycle and pedestrian professionals.

While the counts are an important data collection tool for CRCOG, we see our current framework as one that could be more efficient and consistent, and we stand to benefit from Riverfront Recapture piloting this new count technology. CRCOG has also recently begun considering supplementing or replacing our counts with technology. For context, the current bike/ped count we undertake at CRCOG relies heavily on staff time and recruiting volunteers to conduct manual counts. Our counts are also conducted on a rotating three-year basis – only one third of our locations are counted every year. The manual counting approach results in counts that are not done as frequently as best practices would suggest and data that can be inconsistent (for example, one location counted once every three years could be very susceptible to changes in weather temperature on the day it gets counted).

Riverfront's capacity to utilize new technology to efficiently collect consistent and accurate data related to bike and pedestrian use has the potential to serve as a vital tool in planning, funding, promoting, and maintaining trails throughout the state. CRCOG is eager to learn from Riverfront's pilot experience with this technology and our organizations are already committing to discuss methodology, technology, data, and lessons learned. We foresee this pilot as being a valuable part of our counting effort that could be replicated in other locations.

Riverfront Recapture is steward to one of our key regional assets, the Connecticut River and the surrounding park and trails. As such, it is no surprise that more than an estimated 17 million visitors have utilized the park since 2000. We are proud to support Riverfront Recapture's application and strongly urge the Recreational Trails program to fund this important project.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart  
Executive Director

CC: Martha Conneely, Riverfront Recapture  
CRCOG Policy Board & Transportation Committee  
R. Aloise, Director of Transportation Planning  
C. Radzins, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning