

Agenda Item Summary

To: Policy Board; Transportation Committee

From: Cara Radzins, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning

CC: Matt Hart, Executive Director; Rob Aloise, Director of Transportation Planning

Meeting Date: April 26, 2023 (Transportation Committee: April 24, 2023)

Subject: Adoption of the 2023-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Background: CRCOG has prepared a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the years 2023-2050. The draft MTP is available at <https://www.crcog.org/mtp>. The MTP is primarily a systems level plan that provides general policy guidance, defining the Region's greatest needs, identifying which problems are the Region's highest priorities, and recommending how the Region should spend its limited capital funds. A presentation on the draft of this Plan was given by Mr. Rob Aloise to the Policy Board in February 2023. The draft was also available for a public comment period from February 23 to March 26, 2023. Attached is a log of comments received from the public as well as a log of comments received from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Each comment includes a response from CRCOG Staff, including, where applicable, what changes will be made to the Draft MTP to address the comment. Following endorsement, CRCOG Staff will incorporate the changes identified in the comment logs. There is a possibility that additional comments will be received from CTDOT, FHWA, and/or FTA, but it is anticipated that such comments would be minor and predominately procedural in nature.

Benefit to Member Towns/CRCOG: The MTP identifies the transportation priorities for the Region between now and 2050, serves as the basis for future transportation planning efforts, and identifies how the multi-modal transportation system will be managed and operated to meet the region's economic, transportation, development, and sustainability goals while remaining fiscally constrained.

Financial/Operational Impact: Development of an MTP is a requirement of CRCOG's role as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Endorsement is required to maintain our receipt of federal transportation funding.

Project Schedule: This MTP covers a period of 2023-2050. The next MTP will be due in four years and will cover the period of 2027-2055.

Recommendation: CRCOG Staff recommends approval. The Transportation Committee will provide a recommendation at their meeting on April 24, 2023.

Attachments:

- Public Comments and CRCOG Responses
- CTDOT/Federal Comments and CRCOG Responses
- Resolution: Adoption of the 2023-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Public Comments and Responses

Name	Organization	Comment	Response
Maureen Goulet	Resident of Manchester	Thank you and the rest of the CROG staff for your work on this plan. I would like to make sure that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan includes planning to expand the CTfastrak East of the River.	Chapter 2 (Transit and Rail System) does include the following recommendation: "Advance the second phase of CTfastrak expansion east of Hartford."
Emma Petersen	Town of Manchester	The CTfastrak Expansion Study and Hartford Comprehensive Service Analysis make several references to the benefits and justifications for expanding CTfastrak East into Manchester. Please consider explicitly including a reference to Manchester in this section by including a phrase like "to Downtown Manchester, through central Manchester, along _____ street in Manchester" in the following sentence. "Phase 2 would create BRT service along Silver Lane and/ or Burnside Avenue in East Hartford with limited stop service, branded vehicles, onboard Wi-Fi, enhanced shelters, real-time bus arrival information, intersection, and roadway treatments to speed up service, and off-board fare payment."	The completed and approved studies that are referenced do not include expansion of CTfastrak all the way into Downtown Manchester. As such, we are not in a position to add that specific recommendation within the MTP at this time. However, CROG Staff will coordinate with representatives from Manchester, CTDOT, and CTtransit related to the Town's interest in this potential service expansion.
Emma Petersen	Town of Manchester	In support of these recommendations, I am attaching a brief selection from the chapter on Transportation in Manchester's draft update to its Plan of Conservation and Development. You will find public feedback and several maps that support Manchester's importance in the radial network as well as a desire for increased frequency and connections that could be made with crosstown connections. I would also like to make a specific reference to recommendation #7. The Hartford CSA document refers to a service design of route 86 that travels primarily along Hale Road, Sheldon Road, Broad Street, and Center Street in Manchester. (See attached for referenced material) This route design would provide a critical crosstown connection between Manchester and South Windsor as promoted earlier in the draft plan, provide service to a Manchester corridor that is anticipating transformational developments, and service the area's major grocery stores as key destinations in a census tract with a median household income that is roughly 90% of Manchester's AMI and about 75% of Hartford County.	Thank you for sharing this information. CROG does remain committed to its support of the recommendations from the Hartford CSA, including the routing recommendations in Manchester.
Emma Petersen	Town of Manchester	Trails: I've always felt there has been a disconnect on inter-town trail build out and maintenance. The state and CROG have been supportive of completing connections (especially the ECG) but the support ends with the completion of construction. The long-term viability of greenways and trails lies with ongoing maintenance and the current approach is to leave that to the local municipality. This results in a disparate approach and level of service with respect to maintenance and user experience. Each town is left to decide the level of resources to put toward maintenance. From a sustainability and equity perspective, I believe CROG should support a more regional or even statewide approach to ongoing maintenance.	CROG will have an opportunity to consider adding a component to assess regional maintenance opportunities in an upcoming on/off-road regional trail and complete streets prioritization study, which is anticipated to be initiated in late 2023. Once finalized, the recommendations from that study will be incorporated into future versions of the MTP.
Emma Petersen	Town of Manchester	The image of the Bradley Roadway Plan is illegible.	Thank you for bringing this to our attention. This image will be corrected so that it shows more clearly.
Emma Petersen	Town of Manchester	The section on Truck traffic just touches on the growing issue of insufficient truck facilities. The recommendations focus on 30,000-foot level solutions but there needs to be some effort put into the more local issues that trucks have on municipalities and provide recommendations on how to solve some of the 'overnight' on-street and illegal truck parking issues.	More local solutions will be considered in an upcoming Warehousing Land Use and Traffic Impact Study, which is anticipated for initiation in late 2023. Once finalized, the recommendations from that study will be incorporated into future versions of the MTP.
Emma Petersen	Town of Manchester	The title of recommendations #1 and #6 make it seem as though the content is very similar, but it is not.	In Chapter 6 (Freight Transport System), Recommendation 1 "Explore Developing and Improving Parkand Rest Stop Facilities in the Region" will be changed to "Support CTDOT's Statewide Truck Parking Study," and Recommendation 6 will remain as "Explote Improving Parking and Rest Stop Facilities in the Region."

Emma Petersen	Town of Manchester	Please consider referencing the content of "Electric Mobility for All - A Feasibility Study of Electric Transportation Options for Low- to Moderate-Income Residents in Connecticut". The vehicle electrification case study is very interesting and illustrates an example of where notions of road charging and EV infrastructure are heading in the future. However, there are now concrete recommendations available through this feasibility study and the product of collaboration between CTDOT and Eversource. Link to Report: https://rmi.org/insight/electric-mobility-options-for-residents-in-connecticut/	Thank you for sharing this information. The study and its recommendations will be used as a support document when CROG conducts its Regional Electric Vehicle Study in the future.
Emma Petersen	Town of Manchester	Buckland Hills would no doubt play an important role in Fastrak East as a transit hub. Please consider strengthening the language in the short-term recommendation highlighted on this page to recognize the importance of implementing changes.	Recommendation 20 on page 02.18 will be updated to "Support the implementation of improvements to make the Buckland Hills Park and Ride a transit hub. Such improvements would support future enhancements to transit service, including the potential expansion of CTfastrak service."
SB Chatterjee		CROG should support Brainard Airport staying open for the long term.	This falls outside the scope of the MTP, as our focus within this document is predominately surface transportation that serves the airports in our region. Please share your comments regarding operations at Bainard Airport with the City of Hartford and/or the Connecticut Airport Authority. Additionally, you may find the Hartford Brainard Airport Property Study project website helpful: https://hartfordbrainardairportstudy2023.com
Casey Moran		One omission I noticed is the proposed North Hartford station, would be great have that incorporated into the planning document. Would really help transform the north-end by providing increased mobility and access to jobs and catalyze investment in the area	The potential for such a station is being investigated as part of CTDOT's Greater Hartford Mobility Study. CROG will continue to monitor the analysis related to the additional of an additional rail station in North Hartford.
Casey Moran		In addition to transit access (great idea to through run fastraks) to the airport, can we get a safe bike route that ties into the upcoming trail improvements	We will consider this in our upcoming on/off-road regional trail and complete streets prioritization study, which is anticipated for initiation in late 2023. Once finalized, the recommendations from that study will be incorporated into future versions of the MTP.
Casey Moran		Emerging technologies talks a lot about electric vehicles (cars) but should also include a discussion about electric bikes and the rebate program	We have added some discussion about e-bikes and the upcoming Connecticut rebate program on page 07.9.

CTDOT and Federal Agency Comments and Responses

Comment	Response
Confirm MPOs consulted with State and local agencies for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation in developing the MTPs	CRCOG reached out to solicit input and provide review opportunities to all CRCOG municipalities, and to various State agencies for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation, including: DEEP, DEMHS, OPM, CTDOT, DECD, and DESPP
Confirm that TMA Certification Review findings, especially corrective actions, were incorporated into the plans	Although the region's MTP was not specifically addressed in the summary section of the February 1, 2022 Hartford TMA Certification Review Report, guidance was provided in section 4.4, Metropolitan Transportation Plan stating that " <i>Recommendations related to the MTP are included in Freight Planning and Performance Management sections.</i> " Additionally, some MTP recommendations were cited in the Financial Planning. The Freight Planning, Performance Management, and Financial Planning sections of the MTP were updated accordingly.
Confirm that MPOs are revisiting and updating regional TAM and PTASP performance targets as appropriate with each TIP/MTP update	Chapter 8 contains the most recent regional measures of performance (baseline or results) and the most recent regional TAM performance targets, which have been updated since the prior 2019 MTP. Appendix B also contains prior TAM performance targets. Chapter 8 contains the most recent regional measures of performance (baseline or results) and the most recent regional PTASP performance targets. This is the first round of required PTASP measures and therefore there are no prior performance targets to be included in Appendix B.
Confirm what the transit financial estimates include and how that compares to typical revenues and expenditures; plans should be explaining what the numbers they provide represent	Aggregated anticipated statewide Transit capital funding over the next 5 years, per the CTDOT 5 year capital plan, is explained on page 10.2 and shown in figure 10.1 as exceeding \$4B (or exceeding \$800M/year). This level of capital investment far exceeds the approximately \$250M/year of currently available FTA funding, necessitating a significant state funding share. Future available federal plus state funding through 2050 was estimated by CTDOT by assuming and inflating a \$500M of annual funding (which would require a state share approximating the level of available Federal FTA funds), further explanation of this will be included in Appendix D. Of the resulting \$17B statewide, \$2.9B of capital funding is expected for the CRCOG region, determined as explained on page 10.10. The matching \$2.9B of expected major regional capital expenditures are summarized in Figure 10.5. Operations and Maintenance budgeting, of which a significant portion is required for Transit Operations, is discussed on Page 10.11
We encourage MPOs to review the Environmental Justice Resources summary document provided to CTDOT in December 2022 to continue to enhance benefits and burdens analyses and equity in transportation planning documents	CRCOG reviewed this document during the preparation of the MTP.

<p>Clarity should be given on population and employment data sources other than 'CTDOT'. Also, it is also not clear in the text for population as two numbers are provided and both are implied to be state sources.</p>	<p>On page 01.4, "over 970,000" will be changed to "approximately 970,000".</p> <p>On page 01.14 under "Key Demographic Assumptions for the Capitol Region's MTP", the first paragraph will be replaced with the following: "Employment and population forecasts for CROG have been provided by the CTDOT Travel Demand and Air Quality Modeling Unit, which developed them using several data sources including the Connecticut Department of Public Health for population as well as the Connecticut Department of Labor and the US Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program for jobs. These forecasts reveal a region that has been relatively flat in terms of population and jobs growth. However, while the average annual population growth rate is only projected to be approximately 0.3% through 2050, changes in the composition of the population are expected to be significant, requiring considerations when planning the region's transportation future."</p> <p>For Figures 01.10 and 01.11, the source will be updated to "CTDOT Travel Demand and Air Quality Modeling Unit Forecasts (last updated in January 2023)."</p>
<p>The system performance report should include baseline performance data, not just targets.</p>	<p>In Chapter 8 of the MTP, Statewide Targets, which have been adopted by CROG as its own targets, are given in addition to statewide and CROG Performance Measures that describe current progress. From our understanding of past Federal Guidance on performance measures, a <i>performance measure in general</i> is a quantifiable description of current system performance computed in accordance with federal guidance (such as CFR 23 490 Subparts A-H) and a performance target is set based off either past measures of performance or consulting them and must be in the same "scale" or "format". For example, a LOTTR target must be interpretable in the same manner as an LOTTR measure. <i>Thus, current baseline performance is described by current CROG and statewide performance measures</i>, which are then compared with the statewide targets. Targets from 2018 MTP are available for reference in Appendix B.</p>
<p>Revenue and cost estimates must use inflation rates to reflect year of expenditure dollars based on reasonable financial principles and information, cooperatively developed – this is not clear and should be improved.</p>	<p>Additional detailed information regarding revenue estimates and inflation rates will be added to Appendix D and a reference to Appendix D will be provided in the Chapter 10 (Financial Plan) text. In general, Highway and Transit Revenues were estimated and inflated by CTDOT by inflating and aggregating estimated current Highway Revenues of \$1.8B and Transit Revenues of \$500M by 1.5% per year through 2050. CROG applied recent 4 year CPI increases atop the previously inflated cost estimates that appeared in 2019 MTP.</p>

RESOLUTION

ADOPTION OF THE 2023-2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) has prepared a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the years 2023 through 2050; and

WHEREAS, the MTP is primarily a systems level plan that provides general policy guidance, defining the Region's greatest needs, identifying which problems are the Region's highest priorities, and recommending how the Region should spend its limited capital funds; and

WHEREAS, the MTP also incorporates the recommendations of many special studies previously undertaken and endorsed by CRCOG; and

WHEREAS, residents and stakeholders were afforded opportunities to comment on the draft MTP by mail, email, and phone as well as through public meetings; and

WHEREAS, the 30-day public comment period (February 23 to March 26, 2023) was consistent with CRCOG's Public Participation Plan and its Title VI Program; and

WHEREAS, the draft MTP was reviewed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and

WHEREAS, comments received from the public, CTDOT, and Federal agencies have been shared with the Policy Board and will be addressed in the final MTP; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Capitol Region Council of Governments adopts the 2023-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan with the understanding that minor additional edits may be needed to address additional comments from CTDOT and/or Federal agencies.

CERTIFICATE

I certify the above is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Policy Board at its meeting held on April 26, 2023.

BY: _____ DATE: _____

Jason Bowsza, Secretary