

MEMORANDUM

To: Policy Board
From: Matt Hart, Executive Director
CC: CRCOG Staff
Meeting Date: September 27, 2023
Subject: Staff Reports

Below please find a summary report from staff for the Board's information. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- I would like to welcome our new Policy Board members and CRCOG staff to today's meeting. For Policy Board members we have Jim Drum, Coventry Town Manager; David Porter, Marlborough Town Manager; and Matt Reed, Ellington Town Administrator. New members of CRCOG's team include Anaka Maher, Senior Transportation Planner; Chris Seeger, Transportation Planner; Heidi Samokar, Principal Planner; and Lindsay Drotman, Regional Planning Intern. Welcome all; we look forward to working with you!
- As we announced in a press release last month, we are very pleased that U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) recently designated CRCOG as the Economic Development District (EDD) for our region. Among other activities, EDDs coordinate the planning process to prepare our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). There are over 400 EDDs across the country that promote economic development planning and project implementation in urban, suburban, and rural regions. EDDs provide members with access to grant and loan funding opportunities, administrative and technical assistance, and data and technology resources. Obtaining this designation required many years of work, started by our predecessors, and carried to completion by Pauline Yoder, Maureen Goulet, and Kyle Shiel. We will elaborate on the importance of the EDD when we present the CEDS at today's meeting.
- Along with many of our local town managers and administrators I will attend the annual ICMA conference held this year in Austin, TX from September 30 – October 4. Along with Peter Souza, I am one of two CT representatives invited to a national conversation on the professional manager's role in leading change. I see that topic as highly relevant to CRCOG's strategic vision and look forward to sharing lessons learned with our Executive Committee and Policy Board. I am also planning to attend the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Annual Training Conference held this year in Cleveland, OH from November 7-10. The training at the NADO conference should help us with our work to establish the EDD and implement the CEDS.

- I am pleased to announce that CTDOT Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto will be our guest speaker at the October 25 Policy Board meeting. We will also have a presentation on the CTDOT's Greater Hartford Mobility Study (GHMS) at that meeting; the GHMS promises to be a transformative project for our region.
- It is getting to be that time of year when we call for volunteers to serve on CRCOG's *ad hoc* Legislative Committee charged with preparing CRCOG's Legislative Agenda for the upcoming session of the General Assembly. I will send out a call for volunteers following today's meeting. If you have any questions regarding the work of the committee, please reach out to me or East Windsor First Selectman Jason Bowsza, who has chaired the committee in recent years.
- Following the November 2023 municipal elections, we will need to appoint CRCOG's Officers for the Policy Board for a two-year term beginning in December 2023 – November 2025. Our current officers are New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart as Chair, West Hartford Mayor Shari Cantor as First Vice Chair, Ellington First Selectwoman Lori Spielman as Second Vice-Chair, East Windsor First Selectman Jason Bowsza as Secretary, and East Hartford Mayor Mike Walsh as Treasurer. I will consult with Mayor Stewart and next month we will recommend a small nominating committee to develop a proposed slate of officers.

BIL/IIJA UPDATE

- Upcoming Event:
 - **Electric Vehicle Charging Station Seminar**, in-person at 8:30AM on Wednesday, October 18, in CRCOG's 3rd Floor Board Room. The seminar will focus on how to plan, permit, build, and fund electric vehicle charging stations.
- Funding Opportunities Newsletter, **September Issue**. Archived issues are available **here**.
- Featured funding opportunities:
 - U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) **Thriving Communities Program** announced availability of up to \$22M for discretionary grants to fund Capacity Builder Teams to provide technical assistance, planning and other support to disadvantaged, rural, and tribal communities. Grant applications are due by November 28. Communities interested in receiving support from Capacity Builder Teams are invited to submit **Letters of Interest** by November 15.
 - U.S. DOT **Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants Program** announced availability of up

- to \$50M for Stage 1 Planning and Prototyping Grants. Applications are due by October 10.
- Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) **Urban and Community Forestry Planning Grant Program** announced availability of \$150,000 in funding to support municipalities and non-profit organizations with efforts to inventory, plan, manage, and monitor urban and community forests. Grant applications are due October 24.
 - **Round 2 of the U.S. DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)** - This year CRCOG assisted several municipalities with submitting applications for funding through the Safe Streets and Roads for All federal grant. Below is a summary of recent applications:
 - **Hartford** – Planning & Demonstration Grant for supplemental planning and demonstration activities to:
 - Develop a Strategic Plan to implement priority projects identified in existing transportation plans and initiatives.
 - Conduct a Sidewalk Inventory and Assessment of existing conditions to inform the City’s ADA 504-transition plan to build a safer, more connected pedestrian network.
 - Implement an Automated Traffic Enforcement Pilot Program to address reckless driver behavior.
 - **Newington** – Planning & Demonstration Grant for a Corridor Study along Cedar Street (Route 175) from the Berlin Turnpike (Route 15) to Fenn Road.
 - **Southington** – Implementation Grant to construct safety improvements along West Street (Route 229), as recommended in the Corridor Study that was completed in Summer 2022.
 - **West Hartford** – Planning & Demonstration Grant to implement an automated speed enforcement pilot program, building upon safety planning work being performed by the Town’s Vision Zero Task Force.
 - **Wethersfield & Rocky Hill** – Planning & Demonstration Grant to conduct a Corridor Study of the portion of Silas Deane Highway (Route 99) from Hartford/Wethersfield Town Line to Parsonage St. in Rocky Hill.
 - US DOT FHWA **PROTECT** – Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation. CRCOG and three other councils of governments (COGs) in northern Connecticut collaborated on an application for a discretionary grant. If awarded, funds will be used to develop a multijurisdictional Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP) for the inland, non-coastal municipalities represented by each COG. The plan will assess and determine the vulnerability and risks to local/municipal transportation infrastructure from major natural events.

Projects referenced in a regional RIP may be eligible for reduced local match requirements for future funding opportunities.

- CRCOG is seeking to learn more about **priority projects in your municipality** so we may assist with connecting projects with available federal funding opportunities. This [memorandum](#), which was distributed to the Transportation Committee at its April 24 meeting, provides more information about this Project Screening effort.
- CRCOG staff continue to collaborate with representatives from multiple federal and state agencies and departments, including CTBILT, USDOT, FHWA, CTDOT, CTDEEP, and DEMHS to review funding opportunities and/or coordinate efforts.
- Visit CRCOG's [BIL/IIJA webpage](#) for information about federal programs and general information, including:
 - Information about registering with SAM.gov and obtaining a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) necessary for applying for Federal assistance.
 - U.S. DOT announced the Key Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) and anticipated timelines for FY2023. A [Memorandum](#) summarizing the discretionary grant programs that may be most applicable to CRCOG is available for your review. The provided list is not exhaustive, and content is subject to change as more information is provided about each program.
 - U.S. DOT Application Checklist for FY2023 funding opportunities – a [pdf of the Application Checklist](#), and link to [U.S. DOT's webpage](#), is provided in the General Information section of the BIL Webpage.
- BIL/IIJA Programs CRCOG is tracking:
 - **Bridge Investment Program** – Round 2 anticipated Summer 2023. CRCOG Staff have prepared [three static maps](#) and a [interactive online map](#) depicting bridges listed on the National Bridge Inventory that are rated in poor or fair condition, which may be eligible for funding.

Please contact [Elizabeth Sanderson](#) with questions or to discuss these items further.

ADMINISTRATION AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES

- CRCOG continues its **CRCOGWhat, CRCOGWho, CRCOGWhy** social media campaign to target the public and bring awareness to what we do and why it matters to our region. The campaign highlights who, what, and why we do all of the impactful things we do to enhance our region.
- CRCOG staff members continue in a leadership role to enhance cyber security in DEMHS Region 3. CRCOG hosts bimonthly meetings of the Region 3 Cyber Security Task force.

- CRCOG GIS staff are continuing to develop a Regional Data Portal, incorporating and providing interactive mapping, data downloads and project visualization to the public. Please email GIS@crcog.org for more information.
- CRCOG staff served on the **CT Aerial Acquisition Committee**. Orthoimagery and lidar data was captured in April of 2023 and the committee is evaluating pilot data before processing of the data continues. Data delivery is expected by the end of the 2023 calendar year.
- The Capitol Region Purchasing Council (CRPC) has issued bids for the following:
 - **Asphalt Pavement Crack Sealing, Ladder and Hose Testing Services, Sand.** These bids will close on September 20, 2023.
 - The **CRPC Annual Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, October 24th** at the Glastonbury Riverfront Community Center, from 9am-12noon. Event announcement and registration will be emailed next week.
- CRCOG is rebidding for ezIQC General Contracting and Road and Bridge Contracting Services this fall. A mandatory pre-bid meeting will be held on September 27. Bids will be DUE ON October 26, 2023 @ 10AM!
- The **Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA)** has resumed regular meetings, elected an Executive Committee and Officers, and is working to implement organizational and programmatic recommendations outlined in the waste management study, with staff assistance provided by CRCOG. The last meeting of the Full CCSWA Membership was held on September 18.
- On August 28, CRCOG submitted a Response to CTDEEP's Request for Additional Information for CTDEEP grant funds to support a regional waste authority (RWA). CTDEEP plans to announce funding awards in the coming months.
- The Human Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) reconvened in June of 2023 and has been meeting regularly to discuss human services issues impacting our region. On August 31, 2023, CRCOG co-hosted a HSCC round-table meeting with United Way of Central and Northeastern CT and our region's leaders of health, human, and social services. The HSCC also met on September 19 and discussed food systems/food insecurity. We encourage all of our members to appoint a municipal representative to the HSCC.
- Effective July 1, 2023, CRCOG executed a new Master Agreement with OpenGov for continuation of online permitting programs and services through Side Letter Agreements with participating municipal members.

- CRCOG continues to expand its IT Shared Services Cooperative Purchasing programs, including fiber/broadband and VOIP services.
- CRCOG executed the grant award from HUD for the **\$2 million low-moderate income crumbling foundations remediation grant** and is working with CFSIC and the consultant to implement the program.
- CRCOG continues to meet with member towns to move forward with the **RPIP Grants** for Shared Building Official, Shared Assessment, and Shared Animal Control. CRCOG will be advertising for a candidate to serve as a **full-time Building Official** to staff this program. We are also looking for municipalities to participate in the Shared Assessment program and with other towns to discuss ACO Shared Services.
- The Finance Department continues audit work with CLA and implementing new grants received by CRCOG.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- The **Transportation Committee, acting on behalf of the Policy Board**, approved the following items at its meetings on June 26 and July 24: TIP Amendments, Approval of Updated Regional Transportation Safety Plan, Authorizing Resolution: Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program, Approval of Department of Housing and Urban Development Consultant, and Acceptance of the 2023-2024 Regional Services Grant.
- The **Transportation Committee** met on September 18. Staff updated the Committee on the following: CRCOG SS4A Grant Award and Vision Zero Task Form, IIJA/BIL Update, Enfield Traffic Impact Study Update, ActiveCT Vision Zero Webinar, Executive Order 44: Complete Streets Controlling Design Criteria, CTfastrak/Hartford Line Corridor Advisory Committee, and UConn CLEAR Webinar: A New Stormwater Quality Manual for CT. Following an in-depth review and discussion at the Cost Review Sub-Committee meeting, the Transportation Committee endorsed the 2024 LOTCIP Project Selection Policy with minor revisions. The Committee also recommended the following items for Policy Board approval: TIP Amendments, Endorsement of TOD Roles, Visioning, Viability, and Tools Analysis, and Authorizing Resolution for FHWA Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant.
- CRCOG's **Unified Planning Work Program for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025** went into effect on July 1. RFQs for two new regional studies are anticipated for release

in Fall/Winter 2023: **Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Priority Network Plan** and **Regional Warehousing Land Use and Traffic Study**.

- CRCOG staff expects to distribute a solicitation for **Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)** no later than December 2023. The solicitation will include \$42 million in funding, and applications are anticipated to be due in February 2024. Additional details to follow when the solicitation is released.
- Staff continues to advance the following **studies**: Capitol Region Roundabout Screening; Routes 190 and 220 Traffic Impact Study, Enfield; Farmington Area Connectivity Study; Route 20 Corridor Study, Windsor Locks; East Coast Greenway Gap Closure Study; and Route 44 Corridor Study, Canton.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- CRCOG has begun work on the FY 20 **State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)**. This program includes funds for training and exercise, contractual support, and sustainment and maintenance of regional equipment. There are set asides for the Hartford Bomb Squad, Capitol Region HAZMAT team, and Metropolitan Medical Response System.
- CRCOG staff was asked to serve on the hiring panel for the new DEMHS Region 3 Coordinator. At the recommendation of the panel, DEMHS appointed Josh Cingranelli who began his new position on September 1st. We look forward to working with Josh and plan to invite him to a future Policy Board meeting to introduce himself to you.
- Last week CRCOG provided a 5-day combined Incident Command System (ICS) 300 and 400 class for the Hartford Fire Department. We have a regional ICS 300 class scheduled for October and a 400 class planned for November.
- This summer, CRCOG once again assisted in organizing Camp Courant's Law Enforcement Day for 750 campers from the City of Hartford. Almost every police department in the Capitol Region participated. The campers enjoyed seeing multiple units from Hartford including the Bomb Squad, Marine Unit and Traffic Team; East Hartford's Crime Scene vehicle; various regional SWAT teams; K-9 teams galore; and drone units. They also had rides on Windsor and Farmington's ATV's and then enjoyed a cookout with Police Chiefs and Command Staff. CRCOG is proud to support Camp Courant fulfill its wonderful mission of providing Hartford children with a meaningful and fun summer experience. Our public safety staff truly enjoys the partnership and community engagement.
- CRCOG's Public Safety team conducted a **Tabletop Exercise (TTX)** based upon an anthrax scenario in June. All 14 local public health departments/districts in our region

participated. Our next Points of Dispensing TTX will be held this Friday at the Bloomfield Senior Center.

- We continue to wind down the CAPTAIN Mobile Data Communications System.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- RP&D hired a new **Principal Planner**, Heidi Samokar, who started August 28.
- The RP&D department hosted one summer intern and two Sustainable CT Fellows over the course of the summer. And recently began hosting a new UConn School of Public Policy intern for the duration of the school year.
- As part of our partnership with CT Department of Public Health (DPH) on “**Active CT**,” we are nearing the end of our Year 5 project. We continue to close out projects in the following communities: Torrington, Groton, Windham, and New Britain (where we will install a "quick build" project on Arch Street September 27 and 28).

Additionally, as part of this grant we continue to partner with BWCT to conduct a statewide survey on complete streets and create a repository of all complete streets plans and policies, bike/ped plans, and/or vision zero plans and policies. To date, we have collected over 30 plans/policies and received responses from over 750+ residents. We also hosted a Vision Zero webinar on September 19 with approximately 50 people in attendance.

This grant period ends September 29. While we applied in partnership with DPH for another 5 years of funding, we were informed that CT did not get selected for this round.

- Staff continues conversations with member towns to pilot small scooter share programs this upcoming season including New Britain and Mansfield most recently. The agreement between CTDOT and Superpedestrian to allow CTDOT to access Mobility Data Specifications (MDS) data and to enable them to create a platform for sharing the data appears to be on hold due to organizational changes within CTDOT.
- Staff has initiated the update of the region’s **2024 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD)** and are holding weekly internal meetings.
 - An **online survey has been finalized** and is available on the POCD webpage. The survey will close September 30. Over 400 responses have been received.
 - Staff have been attending community events over the summer to inform the POCD update. We estimate a reach of approximately 450+ people at 10 events.
 - Hosting a housing focus group/forum on September 26.
 - Held Advisory Committee kickoff meeting on May 23.

- Staff completed our work with Sustainable CT and four CRCOG communities for the **affordable housing implementation pathways pilot project** available to Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) communities. We have utilized this project to create an affordable housing toolkit document.
- CRCOG, as the lead agency for the Hartford MSA, executed the agreement to administer the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program**. The project budget and workplan has been approved by EPA and CRCOG staff has released an RFP for consultant services to conduct the work with responses due October 5. Staff convened a productive first meeting of the CPRG Technical Advisory Committee on August 30.
- CIRCA has presented to our various boards and commissions regarding its work on the **Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation and Climate Action Plan** update as well as **Resilient 2.0**, which are being done concurrently. CIRCA has successfully met with 37 of our 38 communities. We are planning a project workshop for October.
- CRCOG held a **Brownfields** Steering Committee meeting on August 16 and staff are preparing to apply for a new assessment grant opportunity.
- Our project team completed the draft of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and held a public meeting on July 27. We will request Policy Board endorsement of the plan at your meeting on September 27.
- We continued our municipal outreach meetings this quarter with informative sessions with the Bloomfield and Plainville staff teams.