

MEMORANDUM

To: Policy Board
From: Matt Hart, Executive Director
CC: CRCOG Staff
Meeting Date: November 15, 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

- On behalf of the CRCOG team, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the new members of the Policy Board and to congratulate those who were re-elected. We appreciate your service to CRCOG and your communities and look forward to working with you over the course of the new term. We are planning an orientation for new members and will be reaching out to schedule the session soon.
- As I reported at the last meeting, Bloomfield representative Jon Colman is chairing a nominating committee to prepare a slate of Policy Board Officers and Executive Committee members for the 2023-25 term. The Nominating Committee will work to develop a slate that is representative of the larger CRCOG region. We expect that you will be able to vote on that slate at the December 20th meeting.
- I would like to thank all those that have volunteered to serve on CRCOG's Legislative Committee tasked with developing a proposed Legislative Agenda for the full Policy Board's endorsement in January. East Windsor First Selectman Jason Bowzsa will chair the committee as he has in recent years. The Legislative Committee will meet on November 21 (9-11am), December 6 (9-11am), and December 21 (1-3pm).
- Congratulations to the CRCOG communities of Berlin, Canton, East Granby, Manchester, New Britain, and South Windsor for receiving grant awards under the state-funded Community Connectivity Grant Program! These projects are designed to improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. We appreciate the state's investment to improve safety and connectivity!
- Last week I attended the National Association of Development Organization's (NADO) Annual Training Conference, held this year in Cleveland, OH. NADO has a strong working relationship with the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) and many of the sessions were focused on the work of Economic Development Districts (EDD). We received our EDD designation back in August and are looking forward to using that structure to help fund key economic development initiatives in our region.

BIL/IIJA UPDATE

- Congratulations to the towns of Newington and West Hartford for receiving grant awards under the U.S. DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program! U.S. DOT anticipates announcing additional awardees in December.
- The U.S. Department of Treasury (Treasury) released a Final Interim Rule expanding eligible uses for unallocated Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF, a.k.a. ARPA Funds). A summary memorandum of the 2023 Interim Final Rule is available [here](#).
- Funding Opportunities Newsletter, [November 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 Bridge Investment Program** – Round 2 was announced for Large Bridges. CRCOG Staff have prepared [three static maps](#) and an [interactive online map](#) depicting bridges listed on the National Bridge Inventory that are rated in poor or fair condition to assist municipalities with identifying projects that may be eligible for funding.
 - U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) **Building Resilient Infrastructure And Communities (BRIC) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) programs**. Nearly \$2 billion is available this year for qualified projects. Collaboration with the State of CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) is required in advance of application deadlines.
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) **Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program (CPRGP)**– Implementation. Over \$4 billion available nationally for projects cited in Climate Action Plans. Visit [CRCOG's CPRGP webpage](#) for more information.
- Rural communities may be interested in reviewing the following lists of key funding opportunities:
 - [U.S. DOT Funding Opportunities for Rural Projects](#)
 - [National Center for Rural Road Safety Key Funding Opportunities](#)

- If you missed the [Electric Vehicle Charging Station Seminar](#) that was held on October 18 at CRCOG, then please view [presentation slides](#) or listen to an audio recording [here](#), under the “BIL Workshop Series” section.
- 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:
 - U.S. DOT **Bridge Investment Program** – CRCOG will track announcements related to smaller bridge and planning grants.
 - U.S. DOT **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)** – Round 3 expected to be announced soon.
 - U.S. DOT **Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)** – the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) anticipates issuing a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) soon.
 - EPA **Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR)** and **Recycling Education Outreach (REO) Grant Programs** - Round 2 anticipated soon for these programs focused on improving waste management in communities.
- 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 for the public to bring awareness to what we do and why it matters to our region. The campaign highlights the who, what, and why of all of the impactful things we do to enhance our region. In 2024, we will launch a video series on our YouTube channel and a paid campaign to promote the video on our social media channels. Since we've started the campaign, we have seen an increase in our followers across all channels. As of 10/31 our numbers are:
 - Facebook: 256 followers, an **increase of 55%**
 - LinkedIn: 854 followers, **an increase of 38%**
 - X, formally known as Twitter: 329 followers, **an increase of 3.8%**
- The Capitol Region Purchasing Council (CRPC) will be issuing the GASOLINE BID on November 21st. **GASOLINE IS A NO PIGGYBACK BID, please submit quantities to Kim ASAP!**
- The CRPC collected quantities for the following bids (due November 17th):
 - Stormwater Monitoring Services
 - Catch Basin Cleaning & Disposal Services
 - Portable Toilets
- CRCOG is rebidding ezIQC General Contracting for the Northeast Region. A prebid meeting will be held on November 27, 2023. **Bids are DUE on December 12, 2023, at 10am.**
- CRCOG staff members continue in a leadership role to enhance cyber security in DEMHS Region 3. The Region 3 Cyber Security Task force met most recently on October 12.
- CRCOG Staff attended the 2023 Cyber Nutmeg Conference. This training conference included cyber security professionals from all levels of government and was held at the CCSU campus.
- The **Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA)** recently appointed a Finance Committee which met on November 13 to review the CCSWA FY 2024/2025 Budget. CRCOG, under CCSWA's direction, is drafting proposed amendments to the bylaws and concurrent ordinance for legal, Executive Committee, and full CSSWA Membership review. Proposed amendments will be presented for discussion/review at the CCSWA Annual Meeting on December 18, 2023.
- In response to CTDEEP's Request for Additional Information (RAFI) regarding the Regional Waste Authority (RWA) Grant, CRCOG met several times with CTDEEP and

COG applicants to discuss grant and funding options before CTDEEP makes its final awards.

- The Human Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) met virtually on October 19 to discuss food systems and food insecurity in our region. The next meeting of the HSCC will be held virtually on Tuesday, December 19 and will focus on homelessness and rising contributing factors. All CRCOG municipal members are encouraged to appoint a human services municipal representative to the HSCC and should contact rnichols@crcog.org to submit future meeting topics or questions.
- CRCOG's Municipal Services staff attended COST's Key Issues Seminar on October 19 as an Exhibitor and provided information on the Capital Region Purchasing Council (CRPC) and regional shared service programs and services available to members.
- On October 25, Matt Hart was a presenter at the Environmental Business Council's 10th Annual Connecticut Solid Waste Management Conference. Matt's presentation was titled "Leveraging a Regional Waste Authority in your Region." Robyn Nichols served as a panelist.
- CRCOG continues to participate in CTDEEP's Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC), the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM), and other CTDEEP Working Groups to represent CRCOG and to provide our members with information on programmatic, service, and funding opportunities related to waste management and diversion in CT (e.g., food waste/composting, EPR, Bottle Bill, textile recycling, and more).
- CRCOG GIS staff is continuing to develop our Regional Data Portal, which incorporates interactive mapping, data downloads, and project visualization for 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 continuing to process the data. Data delivery is expected by mid 2024.
- CRCOG continues to expand its IT Shared Services Cooperative Purchasing programs, services, and enhancements, including online permitting (ICC-CDS (Municipality)/OpenGov), fiber/broadband (Sertex), and VOIP (IP Genie) services. Municipalities can leverage time, efficiency, and pricing through a Side Letter to CRCOG Master Agreement. Any municipality interested in participating in these programs should contact rnichols@crcog.org. Ongoing projects include Avon and Plainville fiber/broadband projects with Sertex.

- CRCOG’s Municipal Services team is updating the CRCOG website, including the following pages: IT Shared Services, Waste Management and Diversion, and Human Services Coordinating Council. CRCOG will also be including a standalone page dedicated to CCSWA.
- CRCOG continues to work with the consultant and the Crumbling Foundations Solutions Indemnity Company (CFSIC) to implement the community funded HUD **\$2 million low-moderate income crumbling foundations remediation grant**. The expected launch date is December 15, 2023.
- CRCOG continues to meet with members interested in the Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP). CRCOG has met several times with the towns of Andover, Columbia, and Hebron to discuss regional animal control services and is finalizing an MOU between the parties. CRCOG continues to seek qualified candidates for a full-time Building Official. Any municipality interested in the shared regional RPIP grants should contact pyoder@crcog.org for additional information.
- The Finance Department continues audit work with the firm of CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA), administering the many new grants received by CRCOG, and filling an open Accountant Trainee position.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- The **Transportation Committee** met on November 13. Staff updated the Committee on the following: Crash Responders Safety Week, World Day of Remembrance, BIL/IIJA, Commuter Parking Lot Utilization, 2024 LOTCIP Project Solicitation Update, LOTCIP Consultant Assistance (On-Call List 3) Request for Qualifications, and Greater Hartford Mobility Study Public Meetings. CTDOT gave a presentation on the State Local Bridge Program. The Committee recommended the following items for Policy Board approval: TIP Amendments, 2024 Annual CTDOT Safety Performance Targets, and Endorsement of Enfield Traffic Impact Study.
- CRCOG staff distributed a solicitation for the **Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)** on November 8. The solicitation includes \$42 million in funding, and applications are due February 21, 2024. Additional details are available at <https://crcog.org/request-for-proposals-2024-lotcip-solicitation/>.
- CRCOG staff continue to coordinate with FHWA and the City of New Britain to proceed with the update of the **Regional Transportation Safety Plan**. An RFQ for consultant assistance is anticipated to be released in the coming months. This effort will be funded by CRCOG’s Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant award.

- Staff continues to advance the following **studies**: Capitol Region Roundabout Screening; Farmington Area Connectivity Study; Route 20 Corridor Study, Windsor Locks; East Coast Greenway Gap Closure Study; and Route 44 Corridor Study, Canton.
- RFQs for **two new regional studies** are anticipated for release in Winter 2023/24: Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Priority Network Plan and Regional Warehousing Land Use and Traffic Study.

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 maintenance of regional equipment. There are set asides for the Hartford Bomb Squad, Capitol Region HAZMAT team, and the Metropolitan Medical Response System.
- The Capitol Region Incident Communications Team (I-COMM) was honored at a conference in New York and awarded “Team of the Year” by the North Atlantic Chapter of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO). I-Comm, celebrating its 20th year, is comprised of dispatch professionals from the 38 CRCOG communities and three additional municipalities in Connecticut’s Capitol Region. The award was for the I-COMM team’s support to the Bristol Police Department in the wake of the tragic line of duty deaths of SGT Alex Hamzy and LT Dustin Demonte in October 2022. The I-COMM Team was activated almost immediately and provided relief and coverage for Bristol’s Dispatch Center in the days directly following the tragedy as well as during the wakes and the funeral of the fallen officers. Team Commander Mike Boucher, CRCOG’s Cheryl Assis and several members of the team were present to accept the award.
- Our PK-12 Emergency Planning Committee was recognized as a “Best Practice” by the CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security’s (DEMHS) Statewide Regional Collaboration Committee. CRCOG’s Emergency Planning Committee is chaired by Canton Superintendent Dr. Jordan Grossman and membership consists of Region 3 Superintendents, school security personnel and Emergency Management Directors. The committee was formed more than ten years ago and meets four times per year to discuss current trends/events, best practices and to hear presentations from experts in the field.
- The Capitol Region Citizen Corps Council recently held its bimonthly meeting was held.
- CRCOG is currently hosting a regional CERT class at the CRCOG offices on Thursday evenings.
- Last week CRCOG provided a Regional 2-day Incident Command System (ICS) 400 class at the CRCOG offices. Additional classes are being planned for January.

- CRCOG staff once again assisted the TSA by providing role players for a full-scale emergency active shooter exercise at Bradley Airport.
- We continue to wind down the CAPTAIN Mobile Data Communications System.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- RP&D will be conducting interviews for the position of Environmental Planner later this month.
- In September staff officially closed our 5-year grant funded initiative, “Active CT,” that we conducted in partnership with CT Department of Public Health (DPH). We have successfully closed out our remaining projects and submitted our final report.

Also, as part of this grant, we completed a statewide survey on complete streets and created a repository of all complete streets plans and policies, now available on the [BWCT website](#).

- Staff is making the following progress on the update to the region’s **2024 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD)**:
 - Held our second Advisory Committee meeting and providing briefings to the updates to the Regional Planning Commission (RPC).
 - Staff is drafting goals and policies for the POCD
 - “Table Talk,” continues to be a success, offering small groups opportunities to host conversations about POCD related topics. Five Table Talks have been completed with four more Talks anticipated to submit results.
 - Launched a photo contest to help source photos from around the region.
- CRCOG continues as the lead agency for the Hartford MSA on the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program**. Staff continues to meet bi-weekly with other COGs and participate in regular coordination calls with EPA and the State. A consultant team has been selected and staff is working to finalize scope, budget, and contract details by the end of the month.
- CIRCA and staff continue to work on the **Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation and Climate Action Plan** update as well as **Resilient 2.0**, which are being completed concurrently.
- CRCOG staff submitted a \$500,000 grant application for new assessment funds for the regional **Brownfields Program**.

- Staff is close to finalizing work on a Municipal and Small Business Resource Center as part of our EDA CARES grant-funded project. We will publish the Resource Center on the CRCOG website later this month.