

MEMORANDUM

To: Policy Board
From: Matt Hart, Executive Director
CC: CRCOG Staff
Meeting Date: December 20, 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. We appreciate your service to CRCOG and your communities and look forward to working with you over the course of the new term. We will hold a hybrid orientation and luncheon for new members at 11am on January 24, 2024, in advance of the Policy Board meeting that day. The board meeting will also be hybrid and we hope that many of you will be able to attend in person. Here's the registration link: [Policy Board Orientation and Luncheon](#).
- I would like to thank all those that have volunteered to serve on CRCOG's Legislative Committee charged with developing a proposed Legislative Agenda for the full Policy Board's endorsement in January. The Committee has held two meetings and is scheduled to meet again at 1pm tomorrow, December 21st. We may need one more committee meeting before we present a proposed agenda to the Policy Board on January 24.
- Our Public Sector Workforce Task Force held its quarterly meeting on December 4. The Task Force was initially formed as a partnership between CRCOG, Capitol Workforce Partners, and the UConn School of Public Policy, and now includes several other partners from local and state government. The Task Force is organized into three working groups – one focused on the municipal workforce, another on Prek-12 occupations, and the third on state employment. CRCOG is leading the municipal working group in collaboration with CCM. Over the past several months we have been focused on improving the pipeline for building code officials and inspectors and are beginning to make good progress with assistance from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and others. Over the next few next meetings, we will discuss strategies to increase awareness of municipal jobs and career opportunities. I would like to thank Elizabeth Sanderson, our BIL Coordinator, for her assistance with the larger task force and the working groups.
- 2023 was a productive year for CRCOG, as we made good progress on several key projects and initiatives, including our East Coast Greenway study, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and our Strategic Playbook. Check out our end of year video – [Happy Holidays from CRCOG! \(youtube.com\)](#). My thanks to Aailyah Miller and Laura Rosenbluth for putting this together. Happy Holidays to all our Board members and colleagues!

BIL/IIJA UPDATE

- Congratulations to the city of Hartford and the towns of Glastonbury, Rocky Hill, and Wethersfield, who will join the towns of Newington and West Hartford in 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. A total of five Planning & Demonstration Grants were awarded to our region this round, which will bring us nearly \$2 million in federal funding to address road safety issues.
- 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, [December Issue](#), Archived issues are available [here](#). Featured funding opportunities:
 - U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) [Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\) Grant Program](#) makes \$1.5B available for Planning and Capital Project Grants for surface transportation projects. Grant applications are due **February 28, 2024**. This is an excellent opportunity to receive funds to plan, design, and construct projects. There is no minimum award for Planning Grants, a minimum award of \$5 M for Capital Project Grants, and a maximum award of \$25 M for Planning and/or Capital Project Grants. Lead Applicants may apply for up to three grants.
 - U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [Building Resilient Infrastructure And Communities \(BRIC\) and Flood Mitigation Assistance \(FMA\) programs](#). Nearly \$2B 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. Applications are due to DEMHS by **3 pm on Tuesday, January 9, 2024** in accordance with requirements outlined for [BRIC here](#) or for [FMA here](#).
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program \(CPRGP\)](#)– Implementation. Over \$4B is available nationally for projects cited in Climate Action Plans. Visit [CRCOG's CPRGP webpage](#) for more information.
- Your feedback is sought about future BIL Workshops most relevant to you, and about the [Electric Vehicle Charging Station Seminar](#) that was held at CRCOG on October 18. Please respond to [our survey](#).
- 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](#)

- 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, CTDAS, 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 **Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)** – Round 3 expected to be announced in February 2024.
 - 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 held the bid opening for the ezIQC Job Order Contracting Program (NE Region General Construction) **on December 12, 2023, at 10am.**
- The Gasoline bid closed on December 13th. Results are available at <https://crcog.org/municipal-services/crpc/#bids>.
- 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

December 14. CRCOG Staff completed the annual Nationwide Cyber Security Review.

- CRCOG launched the HUD Foundation Funding Gap Program on Monday, December 18th at 10am. This program is designed to help families with low to moderate income who cannot close the gap between the CFSIC remediation program and homeowner costs. Our thanks to Congressman Courtney and HUD for making this program a reality.
- The **Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA) Finance Committee** met on November 13, 2023 and approved the 2024/2025 Budget. CCSWA conducted its Annual Meeting on December 18 and appointed an Executive Committee and Officers for the coming year. Fred Presley (Wethersfield) will serve as chair, Tom Roy (Simsbury) as vice-chair, Russ Arnold (Farmington) as treasurer, and Mike Manfre (Glastonbury) as secretary. The members also discussed priorities for the coming year, including a recruitment campaign for new members and testing the market for organics collection.
- In response to CTDEEP's Request for Additional Information (RAI) regarding the Regional Waste Authority (RWA) Grant, CRCOG has submitted a revised application and anticipates an award notification in the near future.
- The Human Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) met virtually on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, to discuss homelessness and the rise in contributing factors in our region. All CRCOG municipal members are encouraged to appoint a human services municipal representative to the HSCC and should contact rnichols@crcog.org.
- 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.
- 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 the CRCOG Master Agreement. Avon, CT recently signed an Agreement for a large fiber/broadband project (over \$700K). Any municipality interested in participating in these programs should contact rnichols@crcog.org.
- CRCOG continues to meet with members interested in the Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP). Andover, Columbia, and Hebron plan to finalize an MOU for animal control services effective in July 2024. CRCOG continues to seek qualified candidates for a full-time Building Official and will be issuing an RFP. CRCOG also seeks municipalities interested in shared assessment services. Any municipality interested in the shared regional RPIP grants should contact pyoder@crcog.org for additional information.
- The Finance Department successfully completed final audit work with the firm of CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) ahead of schedule, hired a new Accountant Trainee, and continues to administer the many new grants received by CRCOG.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- The **Transportation Committee** met on December 18. Staff updated the Committee on the following: Automated Speed Enforcement Cameras, BIL/IIJA Update, East Coast Greenway Study: Simsbury Recommendations Report, CRCOG Comments on CTDOT Capital Plan, 2024 LOTCIP Project, New Federal Performance Measure: Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Municipal Input for Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), and Utility Debris in ROW. The Committee recommended the following item for Policy Board approval: TIP Amendments. One LOTCIP funding increase request was approved for a project in West Hartford.
- The 2024 project solicitation for the **Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)** remains open. 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**. This effort will be funded by CRCOG's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant award. An RFQ for consultant assistance was released on December 13. Additional details are available at <https://crcog.org/rfq-crcog-rtsp/>.

- 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 2024: Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Priority Network Plan and Regional Warehousing Land Use and Traffic Study.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- CRCOG is winding down work on the FY 20 **State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)** and will also begin the FY 21 grant shortly. 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.
- 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. The committee met last week and received presentations from both East Hartford and West Hartford.
- CRCOG kicked off planning for Project Public Health Ready application process. To advance this work we have established a Steering Committee and three working groups, one for each of the 3 PPHR Goals and have asked our 14 local health departments/districts to assign team members.
- A training session was held on our newest regional asset - a modular vehicle barrier system. This system includes a trailer and 48 barriers and will be housed by the Bristol Police Department and available to all communities.
- The Capitol Region Citizen Corps Council held a bimonthly meeting. Teams continue to train and build upon their missions. CRCOG just completed a regional CERT class at our offices on Thursday evenings.
- CRCOG provided a Regional 5-day Incident Command System (ICS) 300/400 class for the Hartford Police and Fire Departments. Additional classes are being planned for January.
- We continue to wind down the CAPTAIN Mobile Data Communications System.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Held the **Regional Planning Commission** meeting, topic of discussion was the POCD update.

- Staff is making the following progress on the update to the region’s **2024 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD)**:
 - Held our 3rd Advisory Committee meeting
 - Has drafted overall goals and policies for the POCD to “build communities of choice, belonging, and opportunity”
 - Closed our photo contest to source photos from around the region with more than 60 photos submitted. Determining process for selecting winners.

- 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.
 - In collaboration with other COGs, CRCOG led a public kick-off meeting with sector break-out sessions on November 14th, hosted by CCM, with over 150 participants across the state.
 - Hosted a workshop on November 27th with commissioners and interested groups represented from the towns of West Hartford, Avon, Bloomfield, Manchester, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Windsor and City of Hartford.
 - Participated with other COGs at the CT Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC) on December 11.

- Staff has completed and published online a [Municipal and Small Business Resource Center](#) as part of our EDA CARES grant-funded project.

- 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. Drafting an extension of our agreement with CIRCA for Resilient 2.0. Tasks 1 and 2 are completed regarding establishing and conducting engagement with municipalities, and collection and organization of data and documents to inform the vulnerability and resiliency planning process.

- CRCOG staff submitted a \$500,000 grant application for new assessment funds for the regional **Brownfields Program**. We have received confirmation that our application has met the requirements and is now under review. We finished close out of the prior grant award.
 - Applied to DECD for brownfields funding for two brownfield sites and received funding for one of them.