

MEMORANDUM

To: Policy Board
From: Matt Hart, Executive Director
CC: CRCOG Staff
Meeting Date: January 24, 2024
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

- *Lyle Wray, Executive Director Emeritus* - I would like to thank the Policy Board for its support following the recent passing of Lyle Wray, our Executive Director Emeritus. Lyle's family and friends held a moving memorial service this past Saturday, January 20. I have been touched by reading the memories, anecdotes, and stories of Lyle, many of which we have featured in a special edition of our newsletter. Lyle was universally admired as a professional and as a human being. He had a positive impact on so many of us and contributed greatly to the quality of life and civic fabric in our region and our state. The CRCOG team will remember Lyle fondly and work to honor his legacy.
- *Executive Committee* – CRCOG's Executive Committee met on January 10. Among other topics, the Committee will be working over the next few months to update our bylaws and to review potential changes to the mission and composition of the CRCOG Foundation. I appreciate the Committee's assistance with these tasks.
- *Task Force to Review Elimination of Property Tax on Motor Vehicles* – I have been appointed to the state Task Force and attended its most recent meetings earlier this month. I have emphasized the importance of this revenue source for municipalities and the ramifications of a shift to residential and commercial taxpayers. I have also encouraged the Task Force to take a step back and to look at how we fund local government services more broadly and to resist the urge to make changes to one revenue stream in isolation. I will keep the Board informed of the Task Force deliberations.
- *Office move* – We remain on track to move into our new location at 350 Church St. (the Metro Center) in Hartford in mid-March. We look forward to welcoming the Policy Board at an open house this spring.

BIL/IIJA UPDATE

- CRCOG Staff have prepared a [map of Federal Discretionary Grant Awards within our region](#). Based on data published from The White House last Fall, it is estimated that seven discretionary grants awards will bring over \$43 million to fund local government projects in our region. These figures do not include the Safe Streets and Roads for All Grants announced in December, which will bring an additional

\$1.1 million to three municipalities in the region. A [memorandum](#) further detailing Federal discretionary grant awards in our region is included in this meeting packet.

- View [CRCOG's summary memorandum of the U.S. Department of Treasury's Final Interim Rule](#), which provides an overview of the expanded uses that unallocated Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF, a.k.a. ARPA Funds) may be used for. If your community has unallocated ARPA Funds, you may consider using them to fund surface transportation, or other programs or projects identified in the 2023 Interim Rule.
- View U.S. Department of Transportation's (U.S. DOT) Key Notice of Funding Opportunities schedule for 2024 [here](#).
- Read CRCOG's Funding Opportunities Newsletter, [January Issue](#); archived issues are available [here](#). Featured funding opportunities:
 - U.S. DOT Bridge Investment Program – Planning Grants and Bridge Project Grants are now being accepted. Planning Grant applications are due **February 19, 2024**, and Bridge Project Grant applications are due **March 19, 2024**. Bridges/culverts must be listed on the National Bridge Inventory to be eligible for this funding source, which seeks to improve bridges rated in poor or fair condition.
 - 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**. There is no minimum award for Planning Grants, a minimum award of \$5 M for Capital Project Grants, and a maximum award of \$25 million for Planning and/or Capital Project Grants. Lead Applicants may apply for up to three grants. A local match of 20% of the total eligible project cost is required, unless the project is in a Rural Area, Area of Persistent Poverty, and/or Historically Disadvantaged Community, as defined in program documents.
 - 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.
- Tools for Rural communities:
 - [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. Contact [Elizabeth Sanderson](#).
- CRCOG staff continue to collaborate with representatives Federal and State agencies and departments to review funding opportunities and/or coordinate efforts.
- Visit CRCOG's [BIL/IIJA webpage](#) for information about federal programs and general information, including:
 - Registering with SAM.gov and obtaining a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) necessary for applying for Federal assistance (formerly DUNS) (see the General Information section)
 - View CRCOG's [Memorandum](#) summarizing the discretionary grant programs that may be most applicable in our region. 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. An updated checklist is now available – visit the [updated webpage](#) or [view the new pdf](#)
- BIL/IIJA Programs CRCOG is tracking:
 - 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 are focused on improving waste management in communities.

ADMINISTRATION AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES

- **CRPC FUEL OIL!** Quantities were **DUE ON January 22nd** – the bid will be issued on January 30th. This is a **NO PIGGYBACKING BID**. If you missed the deadline, but still want to participate, please contact Kim **ASAP**: kbona@crcog.org .
- The RFQ for Professional Services closed on January 17th.
- 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 Gap Funding Program on Monday, December 18th at 10am. **To date, 19 applications have been received.** (*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.*)
- The **Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA) Executive and Full Membership Committee** hosted its Annual Meeting virtually on Monday, December 18, 2023. Mike Looney, CCSWA Chair, announced that he will vacate his position as Director of Hartford Public Works and will be stepping down from CCSWA. Dave Stueber, Mayor’s Chief of Staff, and CCSWA Solid Waste Tonnage Representative, will also be stepping down. CRCOG and current CCSWA leadership are in discussions on how to fill these vacancies. Also discussed were proposed amendments to current CCSWA Bylaws and Ordinance – comments and another reading to consider these changes will be held at the next Executive Committee Meeting to be held virtually on Monday, January 22, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. Fred Presley, Wethersfield Town Manager, will lead as newly elected CCSWA Chair. CRCOG continues to communicate with CTDEEP on waste management and diversion matters in our region and anticipates an award notification on our Application and Request for Additional Information (RFAI) regarding the Regional Waste Authority (RWA) Grant.
- The Human Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) will continue to meet quarterly in 2024 to discuss health, human, and social service matters impacting our member communities. CRCOG seeks discussion topics and speakers for presentations and will be sending a survey to HSCC members to determine interest. Proposed topics to date include: Housing Affordability/Insecurity, Panhandling, and Youth Crime. The next HSCC meeting will be March 19, 2024 and will be virtual. All CRCOG municipal members are encouraged to appoint a human services municipal representative to the HSCC and should contact rnichols@crcog.org.
- CRCOG GIS staff are 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 GIS Staff continue to provide mapping and geographic analysis services for transportation planning, regional planning, and economic development projects.

- CRCOG's IT Shared Services Cooperative Purchasing programs, services, and enhancements continue to expand, including online permitting (ICC-CDS (Municipality)/OpenGov – ViewPoint/ViewPermit), fiber optics/broadband (Sertex), and VOIP (IP Genie) services. Municipalities can leverage time, efficiency, and pricing through a Side Letter to the CRCOG Master Agreement. These programs also provide essential services to underserved, EJ, and LIDAC communities. CRCOG will be highlighting these shared cooperative service programs through newsletters and ongoing social media campaigns. Any municipality interested in participating in these programs should contact rnichols@crcog.org.
- CRCOG is finalizing an MOU for shared regional animal control services with Andover, Columbia, and Hebron, effective 2024. CRCOG is interviewed building official candidates on January 11, 2024 and issued an RFP for consulting firms qualified to provide licensed professionals for Regional Building Inspection and Code Enforcement services. Municipalities interested in the shared regional RPIP grants for Assessment, Building Official, and/or Animal Control should contact rnichols@crcog.org or pyoder@crcog.org for additional information.
- The Finance Department published and mailed copies of the audited financial statements, issued 1099's, and continues to administer the many new grants received by CRCOG. Clifton Larsen Allen (CLA) Auditors presented final audit reports to CRCOG Personnel Finance Committee on January 10, 2024 and the Personnel and Finance Committee accepted the Audit.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- The **Transportation Committee** met on January 22. Staff updated the Committee on the following: CTDOT Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Guide, Updated Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), UConn T2 Center Safety Circuit Rider Program, BIL/IIJA Update, LOTCIP Quarterly Report, Funding Opportunities Guide Update, Greater Hartford Mobility Study Update, and FFY 2023 Obligated or Grant Projects Lis. The Committee recommended the following items for Policy Board approval: TIP Amendments, East Coast Greenway Study: Simsbury Recommendations Report, and Task-Based Travel Demand Modeling and Data Management Consultant.
- 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 with responses due January 30. 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.
- 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.
- CRCOG held a SWAT Commander's Meeting and conducted a tour at the New England Disaster Training Center at Camp Hartell. Our eight regional SWAT teams attended along with the FBI, Hartford Bomb Squad, and Capitol Region Dive Team. We are planning to hold our Annual SWAT Day in May at this facility.
- The Capitol Region Citizen Corps Council held a bimonthly meeting. Teams continue to train and build upon their missions. CRCOG is planning our next regional CERT class for the Spring.
- The CTDEMHS Region 3 Cyber Security Task Force holds bi-monthly meetings providing federal and state cyber briefings, information sharing opportunities and forum for IT managers in the region. The next meeting will be held on February 8, 2024. For more information, please contact Erik Snowden at esnowden@crcog.org.
- CRCOG staff met with Newington about conducting a potential regional Full-scale exercise involving CTfastrak.

- CRCOG staff participated in Operation Migrant Welcome Response Plan webinar and tabletop exercise held on January 12th and hosted by DEMHS.
- 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 March and April.
- We continue to wind down the CAPTAIN Mobile Data Communications System.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- We are pleased to welcome CRCOG’s first Environmental Planner, Sonya Carrizales, to the RP&D team! Sonya is a recent graduate from Mount Holyoke College and started Monday, January 22.
- Coordinating new appointments to the **Regional Planning Commission** in time for the first meeting of 2024.
- Staff is making the following progress on the update to the region’s **2024 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD)**:
 - Sent out typology draft mapping to all city/town planning staff for review with related FAQ sheet and StoryMap.
 - Staff writing and refining narrative for goals and policies of the POCD to “build communities of choice, belonging, and opportunity”
 - Integrated feedback from our Advisory Committee on draft goals and policies
 - Selected the winners of our photography contest
 - Coordinating with multiple firms to acquire design quotes for the creation of the final document
- 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.
 - Presented to CEEJAC on January 9
 - Intergovernmental meeting on January 10
 - LIDAC engagement with Sustainable CT Equity Coach on January 16
 - Received and internally reviewing the draft PCAP
 - Coordination with other COGs on potential project for funding application phase
- Reminder that staff has completed and published online a [Municipal and Small Business Resource Center](#) as part of our EDA CARES grant-funded project.

- Staff meeting with other Economic Development Districts (EDD) within CT and MA in preparation for launching our own efforts.
- 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.
 - Received a draft of the NHMCAP that was reviewed internally and is [currently available for public comment](#) until February 16. A public meeting on the Plan is being held January 22.
 - Finalized an extension of our agreement with CIRCA for Resilient 2.0.
- 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 meet the requirements and is now under review. We finished close out of the prior grant award.
 - Applied on behalf of “Moxie on the Rocks” and successfully awarded fund from DECD. Have met with the DECD project manager and working on finalizing contract documents.
 - Working with potential new RLF applicant in Hartford for a property in the City’s “Arrowhead Gateway” focus area.