

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Policy Board  
**From:** Matt Hart, Executive Director  
**CC:** CRCOG Staff  
**Meeting Date:** February 28, 2024  
**Subject:** Staff Reports

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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**

- *CRCOG's Legislative Agenda* – With the General Assembly now in session I have been spending a fair amount of time on legislative matters. We will discuss specific bills under the Legislative Update (Item #5) on our agenda. However, I would note that I had the opportunity to visit our Congressional representatives and Senators' offices during the National Association of Regional Councils' recent conference in DC. I thanked the members of our federal delegation for their support of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and related legislation and emphasized the need for continued investment in our infrastructure. Also, I would like to highlight our virtual meeting scheduled for 1PM this Friday, March 1, with our large state delegation. Speaker Ritter will attend; I hope that many of the Policy Board members will be able to attend as well. Lastly, I would like to thank Wethersfield Mayor Ken Lesser and Town Manager Fred Presley for hosting last week's press conference on the Governor's bill (H.B. 5056) to facilitate the expansion of municipal shared services. The Governor and others made remarks and the press conference was well received.
- *Municipal Services Committee* – Our Municipal Services Committee held its most recent meeting on February 20. Grace Tiezzi from Avon did an excellent job filling in as chair. The Committee discussed our plan to analyze the impact of crumbling foundations on municipal grand lists and received an update on the work of our Central CT Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA). The MSC will hold its next meeting at noon on March 19; all are welcome.
- *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.
- *March 27, 2024 Policy Board meeting* –CRCOG's Policy Board will hold its next regular meeting at noon on March 27. We do not have a guest speaker lined up yet.

### **BIL/IIJA UPDATE**

- The next edition of CRCOG's Funding Opportunities Newsletter will be out soon; archived issues are available [here](#). Featured funding opportunities include:

- U.S. DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) – Applications for Round 3 are open. The program funds projects that will prevent deaths and serious injuries on roadways. Two types of grants are available:
  - Planning and Demonstration Grants – will be reviewed in three rounds with the following due dates: **April 4, May 16, or August 29, 2024.**
  - Implementation Grants – Applications are due by **May 16, 2024.** Projects must address road safety concerns identified in a Comprehensive Safety Action Plans.
  
- U.S. DOT Bridge Investment Program – Planning Grants and Bridge Project Grants are now being accepted. The deadline to submit Planning Grant applications has past (February 19, 2024), but there is still time to prepare a Bridge Project Grant application before the deadline on **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.** CRCOG is applying for a Planning Grant to conduct a study of the Berlin Turnpike and develop preliminary design plans related to a multi-use trail that will improve transportation choice, access, and safety for all road users. The Town of Farmington and University of Connecticut are also preparing applications.
  
- 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)
  - CRCOG's [Memorandum](#) summarizing 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](#)
  
- View CRCOG's [map of Federal Discretionary Grant Awards within our region](#). This [memorandum](#) further details the Federal discretionary grants awarded in Federal fiscal year 2023.
  
- [CRCOG's summary memorandum of the U.S. Department of Treasury's Final Interim Rule](#) 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](#).
  
- BIL/IIJA Programs CRCOG is tracking:
  - 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 closed on 2/20**. Results are at [crcog.org](http://crcog.org).
  
- CRPC is collecting quantities for Police Ammunition and Fingerprinting Supplies, Swimming Pool Chemicals and Water Treatment, and Bituminous Class 1 and 2 Curb

Mix. These bids will be issued on 2/21. If you have not submitted quantities yet, please do as soon as possible to [kbona@crcog.org](mailto:kbona@crcog.org) .

- CRCOG staff members continue in a leadership role to enhance cyber security in DEMHS Region 3. The Region 3 Cyber Security Task force met on February 8<sup>th</sup>. DEMHS briefed the membership on the state cyber grant program and discussed a potential Cyber Security Response Plan Workshop.
- The **Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA) Executive Committee and its full membership** met virtually on January 22, 2024 to continue the discussion regarding proposed amendments to the current CCSWA Bylaws and Ordinance in an effort to simplify the document and to encourage membership. With two (2) empty seats on the Finance Committee, the Executive Committee voted to act as the Finance Committee until these vacancies can be filled. CCSWA will continue efforts to increase membership and offer valuable programs and services, including food waste/organics, to test the market and provide cost-effective solutions to waste management and diversion for its members. CRCOG staff are currently working on an RFI for food waste and organics to determine needs and offer programs and services to its membership. CRCOG anticipates an award notification from CTDEEP on its Application and Request for Additional Information (RAI) for the Regional Waste Authority (RWA) Grant. Round 2 of the EPA **Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR)** and **Recycling Education Outreach (REO) Grant Programs** is anticipated with a focus on waste management and diversion. The next meeting of the CCSWA Executive Committee will be held virtually on March 18, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. Contact CRCOG for additional information.
- The next meeting of the Human Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) is scheduled to meet virtually on June 18, 2024. The HSCC meets as a roundtable discussion; presentations will focus on housing “un”affordability and insecurity 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 is highlighting these shared cooperative service programs through newsletters, ongoing social media campaigns, and website updates. Any municipality interested in participating in these programs should contact Robyn Nichols at [rnichols@crcog.org](mailto:rnichols@crcog.org).
- The towns of Andover, Columbia, and Hebron, decided to pause efforts to finalize an MOU for shared regional animal control officer(s)/facilities under the Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) due to staffing and capital improvement matters. The towns will re-evaluate their needs at the end of 2024 (Nov/December) to determine next steps. The RFP for Shared Regional Building Official/Code Enforcement closed February 8, 2024. CRCOG Staff and the Evaluation Committee are reviewing the proposal(s) to assess qualified firms to provide these services to interested municipalities. CRCOG municipalities interested in the shared regional RPIP grants for Assessment, Building Official, and/or Animal Control should contact [rnichols@crcog.org](mailto:rnichols@crcog.org) or [pyoder@crcog.org](mailto:pyoder@crcog.org) for additional information.
- The Finance Department started preparations for the FY 2024-25 Budget, onboarded a new full-time employee, and held new contract procedure training for employees. In addition, transitioning to the new building is in full swing.
- Staff continues to work on the HUD Gap Funding for Crumbling Foundations and the Crumbling Foundations Testing Program. Please contact Pauline Yoder for additional information on these program.

## **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

- The **Transportation Committee** met on February 25. Staff updated the Committee on the following: Vision Zero Program Distinction for Schools; Connecticut Road Safety Summit; Farmington Area Connectivity Study Draft Report; BIL/IIJA Update; New CRCOG Office Location; CTDOT Bus Stop Enhancement Program; Upcoming CTDOT Presentation on ADA Compliance; Greater Hartford Mobility Study Staff Review; LOTCIP Project Solicitation Update; FFY 2023 FTA Section 5310 Application Cycle; and Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program Solicitation. The Committee recommended the following item for Policy Board approval: TIP Amendments.

- The 2024 project solicitation for the **Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)** closed on February 21, 2024. Staff received 19 applications from 15 municipalities. Rankings are anticipated for Transportation Committee review and Policy Board approval in April/May.
- CRCOG staff continue to coordinate with FHWA and the City of New Britain to proceed with the update of the **Regional Transportation Safety Plan**, which will be funded by CRCOG's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant award. An RFQ for consultant assistance closed on January 30, and reviews are underway. Staff has also assembled a **Vision Zero Task Force**, which will hold its first meeting on March 8.
- 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 Spring 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 will host a FEMA 402 Class – National Incident Management System Overview for Senior Officials (Executives, Elected and Appointed) for Policy Board members on April 26<sup>th</sup>. More details to follow.
- CRCOG kicked off planning for Project Public Health Ready (PPHR) 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 a forum for IT managers in the region. The next meeting will be held on April 11, 2024.
- CRCOG continues to meet 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 have posted the position for an **Economic Development Coordinator**, applications due March 25, 2024 and open until filled. In advance of this posting, we have also conducted outreach to stakeholders involved with the CEDS update on the position as well as immediate next steps to implement CEDS actions.
- Staff has received approximately 50% of new/reinstated 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)**:
  - Staff completed a draft POCD for internal review
  - Identified an approval process and timeline for the new POCD that involves extending the current plan until the Fall
  - Met with the RPC Chair and Vice Chair
  - Integrated feedback from towns regarding draft typology efforts
  - Selected a firm for the creation and design 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**.

- The draft final PCAP was released for public comment, which closed on February 23 and due to EPA March 1. Staff received minimal comments.
- Continue to coordinate with other COGs and the Green Bank on potential solar-related project for funding application phase
- 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.
  - The draft final NHMCAP was published and open for comment until February 16.
- Staff has not yet received word regarding our \$500,000 grant application for new assessment funds for the regional **Brownfields Program**.
  - CRCOG as applicant on behalf of local applicants:
    - Moxie on the Rocks, East Hartford – the Financial Assistance Plan is in the process of being executed by all parties (required prior to receiving the contract from DECD)
    - 169 Bartholomew Ave, Hartford – requested to apply on their behalf, application due March 1
  - RLF Committee met and reviewed an application of a new RLF proposal for the “Arrowhead Gateway” project in Hartford. The Committee’s questions were given to the applicant, and the RLF Committee met again to review the proposed budget and answer any final questions. The Committee approved the application and staff is currently working on next steps with EPA and the applicant.