

MEMORANDUM

To: Policy Board
From: Matt Hart, Executive Director
CC: CRCOG Staff
Meeting Date: March 27, 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

- *Office move* – We recently moved into our new location at 350 Church St. (the Metro Center) in Hartford. Staff feedback thus far is very positive and we appreciate the additional space and other benefits of the new space. We certainly have more capacity for in-person meetings at our new location. I would like to thank our team, and Pauline Yoder, Erik Snowden, Tracey Malenfant, and Lily Schneider, in particular, for their hard work to coordinate the move. I would also like to thank the Policy Board for your support as we reviewed various options and negotiated our new lease. We believe that this new home will serve us well for years to come.
- *Climate Resilience Fund Grant* – Some will recall that last spring CTDEEP announced its inaugural round of Climate Resilience Fund grants. CRCOG is slated to receive \$250,000 to begin work on a regional stormwater management strategy and to look at the feasibility of a regional stormwater authority or utility. I have been reaching out to CTDEEP staff and am optimistic that we will receive the grant assistance agreement soon so we can begin work on this important initiative.
- *Municipal Services Committee* – The Municipal Services Committee (MSC) held its most recent meeting on March 19. We discussed CRCOG's plan to provide staff support to our regional Economic Development District and to coordinate the implementation of our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The members also discussed projects and initiatives happening in our towns, such as the deployment of automated traffic enforcement devices and social media strategies. The MSC will hold its next meeting at noon on April 16; all are welcome.
- *Executive Committee* - The Executive Committee met on March 20. We discussed potential amendments to CRCOG's bylaws, the role of the CRCOG Foundation, and a potential scholarship in the name of Lye Wray. The Executive Committee will meet again on May 8.
- *April 24, 2024 Policy Board meeting* –CRCOG's Policy Board will hold its next regular meeting at noon on April 24. We are also planning an open house that day from 3:00-5:00 PM at our new location. We hope that all can make it!

BIL/IIJA UPDATE

- Recently announced funding opportunities and highlights from the [March Edition](#) of CRCOG's Funding Opportunities Newsletter below; archived issues are available [here](#).

- U.S. DOT [Safe Streets and Roads for All \(SS4A\)](#) – Applications for FY2024 are now being accepted. 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.
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) **Urban Forest Equity Grant Program. East Hartford, Enfield, Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, and Vernon** are eligible for funding to improve tree canopy coverage in historically disadvantaged communities. [Apply online](#) before the **April 17** deadline.
- U.S. DOT [Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program](#) – the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) last week and will accept online applications via Grants.gov by **June 17.**
- U.S. DOT [Bridge Investment Program](#) – Applications for this funding opportunity will be accepted on a rolling basis. 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. 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:
 - 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

- The CRPC is accepting **new members for the Energy Consortium**. If interested in participating, please reach out to kbona@crcog.org .
- The CRPC has issued an **RFP for an Energy Consultant** – this will close on April 4, 2024.
- CRPC Bituminous Curb Mix (Class 1 and 2), and Swimming Pool Chemicals BID RESULTS ARE POSTED at <https://crcog.org/municipal-services/crpc/>. There were NO BIDS for Policy Ammo/Fingerprinting Supplies.
- RFQ for Professional Consulting Services – Submissions have been evaluated. A list of qualified Professional Consultants for municipalities to utilize can be found at <https://crcog.org/municipal-services/crpc/>. Please send any questions to kbona@crcog.org .

- CRCOG staff submitted a grant application to DEEP for the CT Recreational Trails Grants Program on behalf of several of our municipalities and Riverfront Recapture for the purpose of purchasing trail maintenance equipment.
- 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 8th. 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** met virtually on March 18, 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. Amended bylaws will be brought to the full CCSWA membership on April 15th. CCSWA is also beginning work on an organics diversion project with assistance from CRCOG staff.
- 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; the discussion 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 to inform rnichols@crcog.org of their selection.
- 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.
- OPM staff is looking for municipal volunteers to quality check the **CT Aerial Acquisition** Orthoimagery and lidar data was captured in April of 2023. CRCOG staff served on the committee and 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.
- The Finance Department continues working on the FY 2024-25 Budget.

- 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 programs.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- The **Transportation Committee** met on March 25. Staff updated the Committee on the following: Regional Safety Action Plan Update, March Funding Opportunities Newsletter, 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All Program, LOTCIP Inflation-Based Funding Adjustments Discussion, LOTCIP Project Solicitation: Summary of Proposals Received, Draft FFY2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Route 20 Corridor Study Draft Final Report, FHWA Local Aid Support Online Training Courses, and Municipal Input on CTDOT Resilience Improvement Plan. The Committee acted on two items related to an upcoming funding solicitation for the Transportation Alternatives Program. Staff gave a presentation on the Greater Hartford Mobility Study Staff Analysis and CTDOT Responses. The Committee recommended the following item for Policy Board approval: TIP Amendments and Authorizing Resolution: LOTCIP On-Call List 3 Consultants.
- The 2024 project solicitation for the **Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)** closed on February 21, 2024. Staff received 19 applications from 15 municipalities for a total of \$39.7 million in project costs. Rankings are anticipated for Transportation Committee review and Policy Board approval in April.
- 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 interviews have been scheduled. Staff has also assembled a **Vision Zero Task Force**, which held its first meeting on March 8. The next meeting is scheduled for April 25.
- An RFQ for the **Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Priority Network Plan** was released on March 22 with responses due April 24.
- An RFQ for the **Regional Warehousing Land Use and Traffic Study** is being developed for release later this spring.
- 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.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- CRCOG staff are winding down work on the FY 20 **State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)** and have begun work on the FY 21 grant. 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) specifically targeted for Policy Board members on April 26th. Invite to follow this week.
- 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 is planning for our **Annual SWAT Training Day** to be held at the New England Disaster Training Center at Camp Hartell on May 15th.
- The **Capitol Region Citizen Corps Council** held its bimonthly meeting. Teams continue to train and build upon their missions. CRCOG is planning our next regional CERT class for Saturdays beginning on April 17th.
- 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 provided a **Regional Incident Command System (ICS) 300** class last week and hosting a 400 in April.
- We continue to wind down the **CAPTAIN Mobile Data Communications System**.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- First review of resumes for our **Economic Development Coordinator** position begins this week. We have received 18 applicants thus far and plan to interview the first week of April.
- Staff has received approximately 30 out of 38 appointments to the **Regional Planning Commission**. So far, we have 19 newly appointment commissioners and welcomed them to our first meeting of the year on March, 21st.
- Staff is making the following progress on the update to the region's **2024 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD)**:
 - Internal review of the first draft of the POCD was completed and external review (RPC and our Technical Advisory Committee) are now reviewing, comments are due April 8th.

- RPC voted to utilize the current plan for purposes of referrals until we pass the updated POCD later this year.
- Presented the draft plan contents to RPC at their regular meeting on March 21st.
- Executed a contract with FHI for the graphic 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 PCAP was sent to and approved by EPA.
 - We are the lead applicant on behalf of a coalition of multiple COGs across the state for an implementation grant to EPA for \$16-17 million dollars to remove barriers and install solar panels on low-income housing across the state. We will be seeking Policy Board approval for this request at the March meeting.
 - We continue to coordinate with other COGs and the Green Bank on the solar-related project, creating an informational “one-pager” for Housing Authorities, securing letters of support, coordinating with CTDEEP to ensure both applications are viable with EPA, collecting data, drafting the grant narrative and project budget for submittal to EPA on April 1st.
- 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 NHMCAP has been sent to FEMA for their approval.
 - CIRCA has completed the identification of Resilience Opportunity Areas (ROARs) for the region and will be seeking several towns interested for additional technical assistance for further resilience planning for these sites.
- CRCOG is waiting to hear the results of our \$500,000 grant application for new assessment funds for the regional **Brownfields Program**.
 - CRCOG as applicant on behalf of local applicants:
 - Submitted an application to DECD for brownfield remediation funds on behalf of an applicant for 169 Bartholomew Ave, Hartford.
 - RLF Committee approved an application for the “Arrowhead Gateway” in downtown Hartford. CRCOG has issued a commitment letter to the applicant for the remainder of our current loan funds and is seeking additional supplemental funds from EPA (submitted to EPA on March 15) to cover the entirety of the applicant’s remediation request.
 - We have also recently received interest in our loan funds from four other communities that we will continue to pursue as we obtain more funding.
- Other updates:
 - Staff is working to update the webpages for Regional Planning & Development including our new **Environment and Energy**, **Housing**, and **Small Business Resource** pages.
 - In coordination with Sustainable CT, we are interviewing 10 candidates interested in working within the CRCOG region this summer as SCT Fellows.

- Staff published a [new report](#) on a new tool available to municipalities to provide long-term protection for greenway trails per PA 23-207.