

March 8, 2024

Ms. Kimberly Bradley
Trails and Greenways Program Coordinator
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Letter of Support for Town of Farmington Recreational Trail Program Grant

Dear Ms. Bradley:

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is pleased to endorse the Town of Farmington's application to the Connecticut Recreational Trails Grant Program for a planning project that will design the first phase of the Farmington Center Connectivity Project. The project aims to address critical gaps in connectivity, establishing an off-road path for safe active transportation along the 3-lane section of the Route 4 Corridor, encouraging more residents to incorporate active transportation into their daily commutes. Upon completion, residents will enjoy improved accessibility, enhanced community connections, health benefits, increased economic impact, and numerous environmental advantages.

We advocate for all our municipalities to actively pursue the development of multi-use trails, and believe this application will meet Connecticut's Recreation Tail Plan Goals, including:

- making communities better places to live by preserving and creating open spaces;
- encouraging physical fitness and healthy lifestyles;
- creating new opportunities for outdoor recreation and non-motorized transportation to equitably improve access and service; and
- preserving culturally and historically valuable areas.

This application is consistent with the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which promotes active transportation and other initiatives to create Complete Streets to improve mobility for motorists and non-motorists alike.

I greatly appreciate your agency's consideration of this application and urge your support.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

Cc: Caitlin Palmer, Director of Regional Planning and Development, CRCOG
Kathleen Blonski, Town Manager, Town of Farmington
CRCOG Policy Board

March 8, 2024

Ms. Kimberly Bradley
Trails & Greenways Program Coordinator
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

RE: Letter of Support for Town of Simsbury Recreational Trail Program Grant

Dear Ms. Bradley:

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is pleased to support the Town of Simsbury's application to the Recreational Trails Program to design the trail that will connect the existing Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and the newly constructed Route 189 Multi-Use Trail, traversing the Simsbury neighborhood of Tariffville and the Farmington River. We anticipate that this trail segment will subsequently be designated as part of the East Coast Greenway (ECG), an impressive vision to establish a 3,000-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor connecting 15 states from Florida to Maine.

Closing the gaps in the ECG is a regional priority for CRCOG and has repeatedly been identified in the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). To facilitate this work, CRCOG initiated the Capitol Region East Coast Greenway Study to examine and identify the preferred ECG route for the remaining gaps in Simsbury, Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford. The preferred alignment identified for Simsbury was unanimously endorsed by the CRCOG Policy Board in January 2024.

The region's MTP also emphasizes improving safety and enhancing mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists. Not only will this trail provide a key link for recreational trail users across the region and state as part of the ECG, it will also have a positive impact on the residents of Tariffville by providing all users, regardless of ability, with an alternative means of transportation to connect to retail and commercial opportunities on the other side of the river in Simsbury.

CRCOG has also committed to continue facilitating multi-jurisdictional coordination as necessary, recognizing that a connected regional complete streets network will require ongoing cooperation of a multitude of stakeholders including our local municipalities, as well as the State of Connecticut.

CRCOG wholeheartedly supports the Town of Simsbury's application and encourages you to approve its request for CTDEEP Recreational Trails funding.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

CC: Caitlin Palmer, Director of Regional Planning and Development, CRCOG
Wendy Mackstutis, First Selectman, Town of Simsbury
CRCOG Policy Board

March 8, 2024

Ms. Kimberly Bradley
Trails & Greenways Program Coordinator
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

RE: Letter of Support for Town of Windsor Recreational Trail Program Grant

Dear Ms. Bradley:

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) strongly supports the Town of Windsor's application for a Recreational Trails Program grant to fund the construction of the initial phase of a 14,000 linear foot riverfront trail segment from the East Barber Street Boat Launch to the Windsor Center River Trail. This first phase will highlight Windsor Meadows State Park.

This proposed trail segment has been a long-standing feature in CRCOG's planning documents concerning existing and planned multi-use pathways. Upon its full completion, the trail will establish a crucial link from Windsor Center to Hartford through the Riverfront Recapture trail system, while also integrating with other trail networks such as the Charter Oak Greenway and the Captain John Bissell Trail. The Connecticut Recreational Plan Map highlights the promotion of connections to Riverfront Recapture projects along the Connecticut River in both northern and southern directions as priorities of state significance. Additionally, the proposed trail segment is included in the Upper Connecticut River Greenway, an officially designated greenway by the Connecticut Greenways Council.

CRCOG's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan underscores the multitude of benefits associated with investments in infrastructure that promote walking and bicycling. These modes of transportation are cost-effective, environmentally friendly, energy-efficient, and offer significant health benefits. Connecting Windsor Center to the existing Riverfront Recapture trail network will greatly benefit residents of the Capital Region, as well as attract visitors seeking healthy recreational opportunities.

Based on its merits, we urge you to approve the Town of Windsor's application.

Sincerely,



Matthew Hart
Executive Director

CC: Caitlin Palmer, Director of Regional Planning and Development, CRCOG
Nuchette Black-Burke, Mayor, Town of Windsor
CRCOG Policy Board

March 11, 2024

Ms. Kimberly Bradley
Trails & Greenways Program Coordinator
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

RE: Letter of Support for Middletown/Berlin and Berlin/New Britain Recreational Trails Grants Program

Dear Ms. Bradley:

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is pleased to support the City of Middletown/Town of Berlin and Town of Berlin/City of New Britain application for a Recreational Trails Grant to fund the Lamentation Mountain/Pistol Creek/Middletown Multi-Use Trail Connection Project.

The proposed project represents an effort to improve connectivity between the Town of Berlin and other contiguous municipalities, including the cities of Middletown and New Britain.

We advocate for all our municipalities to actively pursue the development of multi-use trails, and believe this application will meet Connecticut's Recreation Tail Plan Goals, including:

- making communities better places to live by preserving and creating open spaces;
- encouraging physical fitness and healthy lifestyles;
- creating new opportunities for outdoor recreation and non-motorized transportation to equitably improve access and service; and
- preserving culturally and historically valuable areas.

This application is consistent with the CRCOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which promotes active transportation and other initiatives to create Complete Streets to improve mobility for motorists and non-motorists alike.

I greatly appreciate your agency's consideration of this application and encourage you to approve the request for CTDEEP Recreational Trails funding.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

CC: Caitlin Palmer, Director of Regional Planning and Development, CRCOG
Mark Kaczynski, Mayor, Town of Berlin
CRCOG Policy Board

March 8, 2024

Ms. Kimberly Bradley
Trails and Greenways Program Coordinator
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Letter of Support for Town of West Hartford Recreational Trail Program Grant

Dear Ms. Bradley:

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is happy to support the Town of West Hartford's application to the Connecticut Recreational Trails Grant Program to conduct a planning study that seeks to enhance mobility and connectivity in our region.

The proposed project in West Hartford involves a planning study to assess various options for extending the southern end of the Trout Brook Trail to New Britain Avenue, improving connectivity to Hartford and Newington. This project will complement work underway in Newington. Once complete, the study will serve to better position the Town for future grant opportunities to realize these crucial trail connections.

We advocate for all our municipalities to actively pursue the development of multi-use trails, and believe this application will meet Connecticut's Recreation Tail Plan Goals, including:

- making communities better places to live by preserving and creating open spaces;
- encouraging physical fitness and healthy lifestyles;
- creating new opportunities for outdoor recreation and non-motorized transportation to equitably improve access and service; and
- preserving culturally and historically valuable areas.

This application is consistent with the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which promotes active transportation and other initiatives to create Complete Streets to improve mobility for motorists and non-motorists alike.

Based on its merits, we urge you to approve the Town of West Hartford's application.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments

Cc: Caitlin Palmer, Director of Regional Planning and Development, CRCOG
Shari Cantor, Mayor, Town of West Hartford
CRCOG Policy Board

March 11, 2024

Ms. Kimberly Bradley
Trails & Greenways Program Coordinator
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

RE: Letter of Support for City of Hartford Recreational Trail Program Grant

Dear Ms. Bradley:

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is pleased to support the City of Hartford's application to the Recreational Trails Program for the Park Trail Connectivity Action Plan. This plan will provide a roadmap to close remaining gaps and provide increased connectivity between Hartford's neighborhood parks and trails. This initiative looks to provide residents with greater access to the resources and amenities the city has to offer.

As stated in the 2014 Capital City Parks Master Plan, the dream of an interconnected park system in Hartford remains unrealized and accessibility to the city's riverfront, parks, and trails is not equitable. Creating equitable access for all users aligns with CRCOG's Plan of Conservation and Development for the region. Additionally, increasing connectivity for both bicyclists and pedestrians is an important policy recommendation in CRCOG's 2023 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Building on the conceptual recommendations in the 2014 Parks Master Plan, the goal of the Action Plan includes preparing designs that are ready for implementation and construction.

The Park Trail Connectivity Action Plan will outline solid measures aimed at developing a secure, inclusive, and versatile recreational multi-modal network that leads to enhanced health benefits and improved quality of life, and develops connections that create a more cohesive community.

CRCOG wholeheartedly supports the City of Hartford's application and encourages you to approve its request for CTDEEP Recreational Trails funding.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

CC: Caitlin Palmer, Director of Regional Planning and Development, CRCOG
Arunan Arulampalam, Mayor, City of Hartford
CRCOG Policy Board

March 11, 2024

Ms. Kimberly Bradley
Trails and Greenways Program Coordinator
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Letter of Support for Town of Marlborough Recreational Trails Program

Dear Ms. Bradley,

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is happy to support the Town of Marlborough's application to the Connecticut Recreational Trails Grant Program for Phase 2 of the Blackledge River Greenway Trails project.

The Blackledge River Greenway Trail will convert an existing woodland road into a six-foot wide stone dust trail, connecting the West Road Trail to North Parker Road. The new trail will improve access to hundreds of acres of land within the Salmon River State Forest, Town Open Space, athletic fields, and two major Town Recreational Facilities. The trail's popularity has surged since the onset of COVID-19, and its close proximity to the towns of Hebron (one mile away) and Glastonbury (three miles away) will make the Greenway more of an asset to the region.

This application is consistent with the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which promotes active transportation and other initiatives to improve mobility for motorists and non-motorists alike. CRCOG's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan also underscores the many benefits associated with infrastructure investments that promote active transportation.

We sincerely appreciate your agency's consideration of this application and urge your support in this project.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

Cc: Caitlin Palmer, Director of Regional Planning and Development, CRCOG
David Porter, Town Manager, Town of Marlborough
CRCOG Policy Board