

MEMORANDUM

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

- *CRCOG Open House* – As a reminder, we are hosting an Open House at our new location from 3:00-5:00 PM on April 24. We are now located on the 3rd floor at 350 Church St. in Hartford. The parking garage is attached to our new building, and we will validate your parking. We hope to see you at the event!
- *Municipal Services Committee* – The Municipal Services Committee (MSC) held its most recent meeting on April 16. Andy Cirioli and Amanda Gilbride from the Town of Plainville gave an excellent presentation on Plainville's social media campaign. We also had an informative discussion regarding the status of CRCOG's Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) grants and the options to move the project forward. The MSC will hold its next meeting at noon on May 21; all are welcome.
- *FY 2024-25 CRCOG Budget* – CRCOG's Leadership Team is busy preparing our proposed FY 2024-25 budget for submission to the Executive Committee on May 8 and the Policy Board on May 22. We are designing the budget to fund current services and programs, and to implement key projects in our various plans. We do not plan to request a dues increase for next year.
- *May 22, 2024 Policy Board Meeting* –CRCOG's Policy Board will hold its next regular meeting at noon on May 22. This will be a hybrid meeting featuring a presentation from Capital Workforce Partners. We will also conduct a workshop at 11AM in advance of the noon meeting to seek feedback from the Policy Board on our regional Plan of Conservation & Development. I hope that many of you can attend.

BIL/IIJA UPDATE

- *PROTECT Grant Award* – The joint application submitted by NVCOG on behalf of CRCOG, Northeastern CT COG, and Northwest Hills COG was selected for an award from U.S. DOT's [Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation \(PROTECT\)](#) Program. The COGs will use funds to develop a multijurisdictional Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP) for inland, non-coastal municipalities represented by each COG. Projects referenced in a regional RIP may be eligible for reduced local match requirements for future funding opportunities.

- *New Funding Opportunities* - highlights from the [April 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 cohorts with the following upcoming due dates: **May 16**, or **August 29, 2024**. If you applied April 4, and do not receive an award with that cohort, you can revise your application and resubmit.
 - Implementation Grants – Applications are due by **May 16, 2024**. Projects must address road safety concerns identified in a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan.
- 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. DOT [Mega/INFRA/Rural Multimodal Projects Discretionary Grant Program](#). A highly competitive national funding opportunity for regionally significant transportation projects that may be difficult to fund without Federal assistance. One application will be considered for three grants: National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega); Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highway Projects (INFRA); and Rural Surface Transportation Grant (Rural).
- Tools for Rural communities:
 - [U.S. DOT Funding Opportunities for Rural Projects](#)
 - [National Center for Rural Road Safety Key Funding Opportunities](#)
- *Project Screening* - 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](#).
- *Collaboration with Other Agencies* - CRCOG staff continue to collaborate with representatives Federal and State agencies and departments to review funding opportunities and/or coordinate efforts.
- *Additional Resources* - 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](#).
- *Past Awards* - 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.
 - *ARPA Funds* - [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.
 - *Schedule of U.S. DOT Funding Opportunities* - 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.
 - **PROTECT**

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 is now collecting quantities for Treated Road Salt! **NOTE: This is a NON-PIGGYBACKING BID so quantities must be submitted to participate.** Quantities are due to Kim Bona by May 17, 2024. The bid will be issued on June 6, 2024.
- 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 April 11th. 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 April 15 and approved amendments to the current CCSWA Bylaws and Ordinance in an effort to simplify the document and to encourage membership. CCSWA is also beginning work on an organics diversion project with assistance from CRCOG staff.
- CRCOG received notification from DEEP grant that CRCOG has been awarded a Regional Waste Authority (RWA) grant to strengthen CCSWA.
- 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.
- CRCOG’s GIS team began providing project mapping data through the CRCOG Regional Data Portal.
- CRCOG Staff and several municipal volunteers have begun quality checking on 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.

- CRCOG is seeking a communications intern for the summer. The job posting went up on the CRCOG website on March 19. A first review of resumes will take place after April 19. The goal is to have a candidate in place by May.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- The **Transportation Committee** met on April 22. Staff updated the Committee on the following: Safe System Approach Video, BIL/IIJA Update, Draft FFY2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), CTDOT ADA Update, LOTCIP Quarterly Report, and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP): Request for Proposals. The Committee approved the following: one (1) LOTCIP funding increase / scope modification for a project in Vernon; LOTCIP Inflation-Based Funding Adjustments/Funding Hard Caps; and Resolution: CRCOG Support of Greater Hartford Mobility Study. The Committee recommended the following items for Policy Board approval: TIP Amendments and LOTCIP Project Solicitation: Project Rankings.
- The **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Solicitation** has been released, with applications due by **May 13, 2024**. Eligible projects include: on-and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, multi-use trail projects, and safe routes to school projects. Project sizes may range from \$500,000 to \$4 million, inclusive of a 20% non-federal match. There is **\$9.5 million in federal funding** available for CRCOG projects (\$11.9 million total project funding). More information is available at <https://crocog.org/request-for-proposals-2024-transportation-alternatives-program-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**, which will be funded by CRCOG's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant award. Interviews for consultant assistance have been conducted, and negotiations are underway. The next **Vision Zero Task Force** 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 members 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 May 24th from 9:00-12:00.
- 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's latest regional CERT class kicked off last week.
- 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 June 13, 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) 400** class last week and planning for additional 300 and 400 classes in the coming months.
- The **K-12 Emergency Planning Committee** held its last meeting of this school year with the presentation focusing on human trafficking.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- We received 20 applications for our **Economic Development Coordinator** position with first-round interviews scheduled for April 19.
- Staff is making the following progress on the update to the region's **2024 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD)**:
 - Review and edits made based on RPC and TAC comments on the draft POCD.
 - Finalizing language and content and identifying photo needs in preparation to send to graphic designer by the end of the month.
- CRCOG continues as the lead agency for the Hartford MSA on the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program**.

- In our role as the lead applicant, we submitted an application for \$17.7 million on behalf of a coalition of multiple COGs across the state for an implementation grant to EPA to remove barriers and install solar panels on low-income housing across the state.
- Coordinating with Sustainable CT on a future project with their Summer Fellows to identify pathways to implementation of the priority activities identified.
- 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.
 - CRCOG is helping to coordinate conversations between Towns and CIRCA to provide additional technical assistance for additional resilience planning at sites identified as Resilience Opportunity Areas (ROARs).
- CRCOG is waiting to hear the results of our \$500,000 grant application for new assessment funds for the regional **Brownfields Program**, as well as our request for additional “Supplemental Funding” from EPA, and from DECD on our application on behalf of 169 Bartholomew Avenue in Hartford.
- An RFQ for the **Regional Housing Strategy** is being developed for release later this spring/early summer. A survey requesting information has been sent to town planners in advance of this effort.
- CRCOG is working with the communities of Hartford, New Britain, and New Haven to release a new RFP for regional micromobility and meeting with these communities to review the draft document for release late April/early May. In addition to our CRCOG member municipalities, we are expanding the program to allow interested members of our Regional Purchasing Council to participate in the program once a vendor has been selected.
- CRCOG is assisting the CTDOT with their active transportation microgrant program. We have sent 10 community requests totaling \$41,325 to CTDOT for approval and will be coordinating with our towns to disburse the funds by the end of May. CTDOT will continue to award grants of a maximum \$5,000 to eligible entities on a first-come, first-served basis until all \$500,000 in funding has been allocated.