

June 12, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: FY2023 ATIIP Planning & Design Grant Application
East Coast Greenway – East Hartford Gap Closure**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is pleased to support the Connecticut Department of Transportation's (CTDOT) application under the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) FY23 Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) for the East Coast Greenway: East Hartford Gap Closure, to close a critical gap on the East Coast Greenway (ECG) in East Hartford, CT.

CRCOG initiated the Capitol Region East Coast Greenway Study to identify the preferred alignment of the ECG through the last remaining 12-mile gap in the Capitol Region in the municipalities of Simsbury, Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford. CTDOT is seeking \$1.6 million in ATIIP funding to expand upon CRCOG's East Coast Greenway Gap Study to finalize planning and to take the project through final design for the ECG section in East Hartford.

The East Coast Greenway (ECGW) is an ambitious vision for a 3,000-mile contiguous pedestrian and bicycle route between Maine and Florida through 15 states, traversing some of the nation's most populous regions. The trail network specifically supports recreation and active transportation options for the surrounding neighborhoods and connects people to employment, education, and other critical resources. The Greenway also preserves open space, protects wildlife, and supports vegetation important for stormwater management and air quality urban heat island management. In Connecticut, the Greenway consists of a 200-mile route between the Rhode Island state line at Sterling and the New York state line at Greenwich.

Closing this three-mile gap in the ECGW is a priority within the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), and will provide a safe and accessible facility for transportation and recreation in East Hartford. Additionally, the project will provide a direct and attractive link for residents and visitors on both sides of the Connecticut River to jobs, recreational opportunities, and other key destinations along the Charter Oak Greenway and the Hop River Trail network.

This project aligns with CTDOT's vision for the state's capital region as outlined by the Greater Hartford Mobility Study (GHMS). The GHMS, completed in the Fall of 2023, aims to improve mobility by planning an integrated, resilient, multi-modal transportation system in the Greater Hartford Region to enhance the quality of life, economic vitality, and opportunity in the region. The GHMS identifies closing the

remaining 12-mile gap in the ECG as a mid-term priority project. Completing final design of this three-mile section in East Hartford will aid in creating a safe, multi-modal cross-river connection at the Founders Bridge Bikeway, while maintaining the timeline for the remaining gap closures.

If awarded, CRCOG will work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) to place this project in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

For the reasons highlighted above, I encourage you to approve this application in the amount requested. We greatly appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

Cc: P. Sucato, CTDOT
The Honorable Connor Martin, Town of East Hartford
CRCOG Policy Board and Transportation Committee

June 12, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**RE: FY2023 ATIIP Planning & Design Grant Application
University of Connecticut Active Transportation Plan**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is pleased to support the University of Connecticut's (UConn's) application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for its FY2023 Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) competitive grant program. UConn's Storrs campus is a census-designated place (CDP) in the Town of Mansfield, CT, and the University is requesting planning and design funds to improve road safety for pedestrians and users of micromobility devices on key campus roads.

UConn's transportation network serves a significant number of pedestrians and bicycles, as well as motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation such as skateboards, scooters, e-bikes, and wheelchairs. This project will take a systemic approach to improve safety for all users of key transportation corridors. Proposed improvements are consistent with the University's Active Transportation Plan (ATP), which was published in October 2022 with involvement from faculty, staff, students, and Mansfield residents. The ATP identified barriers to a connected and safe active transportation network and unique challenges faced by a large college campus in a rural community. Elements of the ATP need to be further developed and supported with planning and design for construction coordination and implementation with other planned infrastructure improvements.

Improving road safety and promoting micromobility transportation are priorities within CRCOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). If awarded, CRCOG will work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) to place this project in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

We respectfully request that you fund the full request of the application. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

Cc: Mr. Sean Vasington, UConn
CRCOG Policy Board and Transportation Committee

June 20, 2024

State Senator Martin Looney
Legislative Office Building, Room 3300
Hartford, CT 06106

State Representative Matthew Ritter
Legislative Office Building, Room 4105
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: City of New Britain Round 5 Application - Transforming East Main

Dear Senator Looney and Representative Ritter:

On behalf of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), I am pleased to offer my full support of the City of New Britain's Community Investment Fund (CIF) Round 5 application, "Transforming East Main Street." The City's proposal consists of remediation and demolition work to ready the former Public Works Yard site, located directly adjacent to the East Main Street CTfastrak station, for transit-oriented development and the vertical construction costs associated with a mixed-use development program.

CRCOG's current regional planning and development initiatives, supported by both our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), is substantially focused on encouraging transit-oriented development (TOD) in urban and suburban communities and strengthening the transportation connections between them. New Britain's proposal represents a critical piece of TOD in one of the region's urban and low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDAC).

In keeping with our TOD focus, CRCOG recently performed a regional analysis and market study in conjunction with a consultant, WSP, that included the subject site. The final product recommended a mix of uses for the site, including a select retail component and multifamily housing. The City's planning efforts, including the DECD grant-funded 2019 Brownfields Area Revitalization study, and CRCOG's market study, clearly substantiate the feasibility and demand for a mixed-use project at this location.

For the reasons stated above, I encourage you to support the City of New Britain's application to CIF Round 5. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at mhart@crcog.org

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Erin Stewart, Mayor, City of New Britain
CRCOG Policy Board and Transportation Committee

June 20, 2024

Ms. Melinda Wilson
Executive Director
Community Investment Fund 2030
Department of Economic and Community Development

Re: Town of Enfield Application for Community Investment Fund 2030

Dear Ms. Wilson:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Town of Enfield's application seeking a \$20 million grant from the Community Investment Fund to assist in the redevelopment of Enfield Square. This transformative \$300 million project represents a significant public-private partnership aimed at transforming a largely vacant and dilapidated mall into a vibrant mixed-use commercial and residential development. The redevelopment plan for Enfield Square includes the creation of 250,000 square feet of new retail space and a 425-unit multi-family residential complex, with twenty percent of these units designated as affordable housing. This project is crucial to assist the Town in its efforts to revitalize an underutilized area, stimulating local economic growth, and providing much-needed affordable housing for our community.

The requested grant funding is critically needed to help finance the necessary infrastructure improvements and site preparations to attract and secure private investment. By supporting this project, we can ensure the successful transformation of Enfield Square into a thriving hub that will benefit businesses and residents alike.

I would also emphasize that Enfield is home to one of the Capitol Region's few low income and disadvantaged communities (LIDAC), and the planned redevelopment of Enfield Square is fully consistent with our regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Consequently, I urge the Community Investment Fund Board to approve the Town of Enfield's grant application, as it will pave the way for economic and community development and improved quality of life for the residents of Enfield and surrounding communities.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Ken Nelson, Jr., Town of Enfield, Mayor
CRCOG Policy Board

June 20, 2024

Mr. Matthew Pugliese
Deputy Commissioner and Chief Investment Office
State of Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Re: NE Neighborhood Partners Application to Community Investment Fund 2030

Dear Mr. Pugliese:

I am pleased to provide a letter of support for Northeast Neighborhood Partners joint application seeking planning grant funding through CT DECD's Community Investment Fund 2030 to support the technical assistance needed to undergo a feasibility study for the development of Climate Resilience Hubs in three Justice 40 Communities - Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport. Climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable and marginalized communities, worsening existing inequalities in low-income neighborhoods, I would note that these cities are three of Connecticut's most disadvantaged communities.

Climate Resilience Hubs are envisioned to serve as community-driven facilities intended to meet the needs of residents around climate change mitigation, emergency management, and community resilience. The project is an excellent candidate for Community Investment 2030 funding as it aims to improve response and recovery within underserved and marginalized communities through information, resources, and access to services before, during, and after an extreme weather event.

Our regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) recognizes that the region is struggling with resilience across multiple fronts – environment, economy, infrastructure, community capital, and more – and the proposed Climate Resilience Hubs would address this by facilitating economic inclusion in communities, addressing impacts of climate change, and improving regional resiliency. These hubs would also directly support CRCOG's regional Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) goal to adapt to climate change, specifically the strategy to better “connect communities with tools and resources to address climate change” through community-led programming that enhances neighborhood cohesion, communication, and access to services.

On behalf of CRCOG, I encourage you to support the Northeast Neighborhood Partners' application for Community Investment Fund 2030 funding for this transformative project.

Sincerely,



Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

CC: Brenda Watson, Executive Director, North Hartford Partnership
CRCOG Policy Board, C. Palmer, K. Bishop