

Executive Committee Notes

Wednesday July 5th, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.

The Ridgefield Town Hall Annex

66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Darien First Selectman Monica McNally

New Canaan First Selectman Kevin Moynihan

Redding First Selectman Julia Pemberton

Ridgefield First Selectman Rudy Marconi

OTHERS ATTENDING: WestCOG Staff: Executive Director Francis Pickering, Deputy Director Mike Towle.

The meeting began at: 2:05

WestCOG Executive Director Francis Pickering provided updates on the following items:

Transportation

LOTICIP. Staff are developing new solicitation guidelines and are suggesting new policies (example; – maximum funding cap, and proposed expiration for projects that have not advanced). Planning to release solicitation in August/September.

RAISE Grant Award. WestCOG received funding (\$4,528,000) to finish engineering for the Norwalk River Vally Trail (NRVT) and Still River Greenway (55 miles). Staff will coordinate with communities and partners to reconcile matching funds.

Norwalk Route 1 Study. Staff posted the RFQ. Interviews are planned for mid/end August.

BUILD Study. Staff continue working with the consultant. The Consultant is currently working on data collection inventory, and the project committee starts in July.

Quiet Zone Study. Household survey has gone out as well as mailers to 7,400 households. Consultants sent draft of the Diagnostic Meeting report for comments.

SS4A Grant Submission. Applying for small-scale/uncomplicated safety projects at 93 locations based on the Regional Transportation Safety Plan. Staff will submit the regional application before the July 10 deadline.

ENGLISH: For language assistance or other accommodations, contact Western Connecticut Council of Governments at least five business days prior to the meeting at help@westcog.org. ESPAÑOL: Para asistencia con el idioma y otras adaptaciones, por favor póngase en contacto con WestCOG por lo menos cinco días hábiles antes de la reunión al help@westcog.org. PORTUGUÊS: Para obter assistência língua ou outras acomodações, entre em contato com WestCOG pelo menos cinco dias úteis antes da reunião em help@westcog.org. FRANÇAIS: Pour obtenir de l'aide linguistique ou d'autres mesures d'adaptation, contactez WestCOG au moins cinq jours ouvrables avant la réunion à help@westcog.org. POLSKI: W przypadku pomocy językowej lub innej pomocy, skontaktuj się z WestCOG co najmniej pięć dni roboczych przed wydarzeniem w help@westcog.org.

UPWP Approval. The UPWP defines how WestCOG will spend the Transportation Funding Grant. FHWA, FTA and CTDOT approved HVMPO and SWRMPOs UPWPs for FY24-25 which take effect July 1. It was approved by FHWA and CTDOT and is now in action.

PROTECT Grant Application. A 100% federally-funded program. The state is making a statewide evacuation plan. WestCOG and MetroCOG are looking to study sea level rise to understand how frequent and how deep the impacts will be. Looking at precipitation events and storm systems to handle them. It will then prioritize routes based on their connectivity. Committee members will discuss liability concerns once it is updated.

CTDOT Community Connectivity Grant Program. Due: July 21, urges municipalities to apply as it might not have solicitation in the next year or two.

CT Mileage-Based User Fee Study. The study is funded by the Eastern Transportation Coalition in coordination with CTDOT. It is evaluating an alternative approach to funding the state's transportation system. A mileage-based user fee means that drivers pay for the miles they drive instead of paying at the pump. Looking for volunteers to participate in the study – participants will have a device installed in their car to capture mileage data. WestCOG will send an email with information on how to participate in program.

FTA Section 5310. Senior center and disability funding will be presenting priorities to TAG and then to COG for endorsement. Applications were due June 30th - WestCOG staff and the MPO transit representatives are reviewing all applications received and will present suggested priorities to the TAG members on July 11th. The TAG's recommended priorities will be presented to the MPO for endorsement at this month's meeting.

USDOT Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program. New Funding notice that is combined with three programs Mega, Infra (multi modal freight), Rural (large rural projects).

Regional Planning/Services Project Updates

Regional Election Advisor. COG did participate when mandated and funded. Program is back and now optional. Driven by concerns for early voting process and how towns transition into that. There is at least \$25,000 available to each COG (no match) for this service.

Structure and Improvement Description (SAID) Project. Ortho Imagery Property to describe structures and improvement. RFQ is ready, assessors have been communicated with.

Affordable Financing Strategy Update. 2nd steering meeting is underway and collected good data and feedback. Looking to develop a tool to determine if and how communities can reach the 10% target.

Inland Wetlands and Buildable Square Reports. Inland Wetlands review white paper. The buildable square looks at affordable housing solutions and best practice for Buildable Square.

Farm Viability Grant. Grant awarded, waiting for reply from Department of agriculture to begin.

Grant Writer. WestCOG is posting a position for a grant writer this month to coordinate/apply for grants to support the COG and member municipalities.

Policy

Legislative Committee. Rudy Marconi, Julia Pemberton, Monica McNally Jen Tooker expressed interest. Will begin earlier than previous years.

WestCOG Deputy Director Mike Towle provided updates on the following items:

1. Regional Planning/Services Project Updates

- a. Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). The priority action plan will be due in March 2024. MetroCOG (the lead agency on the project) just received approval from EPA for the work plan.
- b. Police Training Facility. A project council is being formed this month with executives to move the project forward.
- c. Broadband. Ridgefield and New Fairfield Studies are completed. Wilton and Brookfield are underway.
- d. Emergency Communications Project Update. Working with New Canaan to explore a regional project to assist communities in standardizing their radio systems.
- e. Summer Intern Projects Update. All moving along well. Princeton intern is working on an affordable house study. Sustainable CT fellows are assisting with the climate plans. Stormwater interns are mapping at a rapid pace the stormwater drain systems.

2. Upcoming meetings

- a. TAG- Tuesday July 11th, 2023
- b. MPO/COG- Thursday, July 20th, 2023

The meeting concluded at: 3:11