

**Western Connecticut Council of Governments and
the Housatonic Valley and South Western Region
Metropolitan Planning Organizations Meeting**
Thursday September 21st, 2023 12:00 p.m. at the Ridgefield Town Hall Annex
66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877
Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/88222966740>
Meeting ID: 882 2296 6740

Agenda

- 1) COG/HVMPO Meeting call to order: Hon. Rudy Marconi, Chairman
- 2) SWRMPO Meeting call to order: Hon. Lynne Vanderslice Chairman
- 3) **Public Participation:** *limited to topics on this agenda and to 2 minutes per speaker.*
- 4) ***Approval of the 07/20/2023 SWRMPO/HVMPO Meeting Minutes** Attachment 4, pp. 1-4
- 5) ****Approval of the COG 07/20/2023 Meeting Minutes** Attachment 4 pp, 1-4
- 6) ****COG Action Items:**
 - a. Climate Population Reduction Grant (CPRG) Grant
 - b. Public Involvement Plan (PIP), Amended Attachment 6b, pp. 5-6
 - c. USDOT Reconnecting Communities Grant: WestCOG Application Attachment 6c p. 7
 - d. USDOT SMART Grant: WestCOG Application Attachment 6d p. 8
 - e. Reconnecting Communities Letters of Support Attachment 6e, pp. 9-12
 - f. LOTCIP Project Solicitation Attachment 6f, 13-22
 - g. LOTCIP Program Funds Management Policy and Guidance Attachment 6g pp. 23-25
 - h. LOTCIP Adjustments Attachment 6h. 26-28
 - i. Employee Handbook Amendment – Holiday/Office Closure Attachment 6i, 29-30
 - j. CT DEEP OSWA - Weston Letter of Support Attachment 6j, 31-33
- 7) ***MPO Action Items:**
 - a. TIP Amendments (HV & SWRMPO) Attachment 7a, pp. 34-37

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.

8) MPO Information Items:

9) COG Information Items:

- a. Regional Firearms Training Facility Update
- b. Stormwater Update
- c. Bottle/Can Redemption Centers
- d. USDOT Thriving Communities Grant Program
- e. USEPA Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA)

Attachment 9c, pp. 38-40

Attachment 9d, p. 41

Attachment 9e, pp. 41-43

10) Other Business

11) Next meeting: MPO/COG Thursday, October 19, 2023

12) Adjournment

**A quorum of 6 voting members for HV and 5 for SWR is required. Separate votes are required for each MPO.*

***A quorum of 10 elected officials is required.*

Western Connecticut

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



Disclaimer: These interim minutes of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments ("WestCOG" or "COG") are released and "available for public inspection" and "posted" on WestCOG's website, in accordance with C.G.S. §1-225(a). Said interim minutes are subject to review and approval by the COG members, after which time the final approved minutes will be available and posted in accordance with laws. Accordingly, the interim minutes may contain inaccuracies and do not reflect the final action of the COG.

INTERIM MINUTES

Council/Housatonic Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization/South Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 07/20/2023 Meeting

The Ridgefield Town Hall Annex- 66 Prospect St. Ridgefield, CT 06877 and via Zoom

COG Chairman Rudolph Marconi / Vice Chair- Julia Pemberton
Treasurer -Lynne Vanderslice / Secretary Kevin Moynihan
HVMPO Chairman Rudy Marconi / Vice Chairman Julia Pemberton
SWRMPO Chairman Lynne Vanderslice / Vice Chairman Kevin Moynihan

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Bethel..... Absent- COG/HVMPO
Bridgewater..... Absent-COG/HVMPO
Brookfield First Selectwoman Tara Carr – COG/HVMPO
Danbury Mayor Dean Esposito- COG HV/MPO
Darien First Selectwoman Monica McNally- COG/SWRMPO
Greenwich..... Selectwoman Lauren Rabin - COG/SWRMPO
New Canaan..... First Selectman Kevin Moynihan- COG/SWRMPO
New Fairfield Absent- COG/HVMPO
New Milford..... Mayor Pete Bass – COG/HVMPO
Newtown..... Absent- COG/HVMPO
Norwalk..... Absent COG/SWRMPO
Redding..... First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton- COG/HVMPO
Ridgefield..... First Selectman Rudy Marconi- COG/HVMPO
Sherman First Selectman Don Lowe COG/HVMPO
Stamford..... Chief of Staff Bridget Fox-SWRMPO
Weston..... Absent- COG/SWRMPO
Westport..... First Selectwoman Samantha Nestor- COG/SWRMPO
Wilton..... First Selectwoman Lynne Vanderslice- COG/SWRMPO
Transit Representative..... Rick Schreiner- HVMPO
Transit Representative..... Matt Pentz and Barry Diggs -SWRMPO
CTDOT Kevin Tedesco (Non-voting MPO member)
MPO Staff..... Francis Pickering (Non-voting MPO member)

- 1) **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** FHWA Transportation Planner Jennifer Carrier, FHWA Intern Andrew Guo, and Danbury Traffic Engineer Veera Karukonda. WestCOG staff members in attendance were Mike Towle, Kristin Hadjstylianos, Todd Fontanella, Kevin Mahoney, Nicole Sullivan, Mike Wilson, Victoria Ricks, Summer Intern Sebastian Silberman and Cricket Carpenter. Also in attendance were Planning Lead at WSP Martin Hull, Paul Hearn from Baralmar Advisors LLC, Greenwich Town Clerk Jackie Budkins, Newtown Police Chief David Kullgren, Connecticut Main Street Center Executive Director Michelle McCabe, Executive Director of Connecticut Retirement Security Program- Office of the State Comptroller Jessica Muirhead, and Connecticut Main Street Center program Assistant Lily Smith.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meetings were called to order at 12:02 p.m. by Chair Rudy Marconi and SWRMPO Chair Lynne Vanderslice.

FEATURED PRESENTATION: Michelle McCabe Executive Director of Connecticut Main Street Center presented: "Main Street Management": A Critical Component of Local and Regional Development.

FEATURED PRESENTATION: Jessica Muirhead Executive Director of Connecticut Retirement Security Program- Office of the State Comptroller joined the meeting on Zoom with her Presentation: Introducing MyCT Savings: CT's Secure Choice Plan.

Approval of the 06/15/2023 HVMPO/SWRMPO Meeting Minutes: After review and on a motion made by Sherman First Selectman Don Lowe and seconded by Redding First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton the minutes of the HVMPO 06/15/2023 meeting were unanimously approved. After review and on a motion made by New Canaan First Selectman Kevin Moynihan and seconded by Darien First Selectwoman Monica McNally the minutes of the SWRMPO 06/15/2023 were unanimously approved.

Approval of the COG 06/15/2023 Meeting Minutes: After review and on a motion made by Redding First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton and seconded by Sherman First Selectman Don Lowe the minutes of the 06/15/2023 COG meeting were unanimously approved.

****COG Action Items:**

Quarterly Financial Update: WestCOG Financial Director Victoria Ricks provided the update. After review and on a motion made by Redding First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton and Seconded by Darien First Selectwoman Monica McNally the Quarterly Financials were unanimously approved.

LOTICIP Adjustments: WestCOG Senior Project Manager Kevin Mahoney provided the review. Following discussion, a motion was made by Wilton First Selectwoman Lynn Vanderslice and seconded by Redding First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton to call the question. Sherman First Selectman Don Lowe, Greenwich Selectwoman Lauren Rabin, and Brookfield First Selectwoman Tara Carr abstained, and New Milford Mayor Pete Bass voted no. After a tally of the votes, a motion

was made by New Milford Mayor Pete Bass and seconded by Darien First Selectwoman Monica McNally to amend the agenda, to advance items 11c and 11d to before item 10a, and to table item 8c until after discussion on these items was concluded.

MPO Action Items:

Section 5310 Grant Program: West Senior Planner Todd Fontanella provided the overview. After review and on a motion made by Sherman First Selectman Don Lowe and seconded by Redding First Selectman Julia Pemberton the HVMPO Section 5310 Grant Program was unanimously approved. After review and on a motion made by New Canaan First Selectman Kevin Moynihan and seconded by Darien First Selectman Monica McNally the SWRMPO Section 5310 Grant Program was unanimously approved.

Transportation Improvement Program Amendments (HV & SWR): WestCOG Planner Nicole Sullivan provided the review. After review and on a motion made by New Milford Mayor Pete Bass and seconded by Redding First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton the HVMPO Transportation Improvement Program Amendments were unanimously approved. After review and on a motion made by Darien First Selectwoman Monica McNally and seconded by New Canaan First Selectman Kevin Moynihan the SWRMPO Transportation Improvement Program Amendments were unanimously approved.

Rescheduled Action and Information Items:

LOTICIP Funds Management Policy and Guidance: WestCOG's Kevin Mahoney gave an overview.

2023 LOTICIP Project Solicitation: Kevin Mahoney gave an overview. Mayor Pete Bass asked for the opportunity for further presentation at future point.

LOTICIP Adjustments: WestCOG Senior Project Manager Kevin Mahoney reintroduced this item. On a motion made by Wilton First Selectwoman Lynn Vanderslice and seconded by Redding First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, the LOTICIP Adjustments were unanimously approved.

MPO Information Items:

USDOT Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program: WestCOG Transportation Director Kristin Hadjstylianos provided the overview.

2) COG Information Items:

Regional Firearms Training Facility Update: WestCOG Deputy Director provided the update. There is a Sub-Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday July 27th @ 11:00am.

Public Involvement Plan: WestCOG's Nicole Sullivan provided the overview.

USDOT RAISE Grant Award: WestCOG's Kristin Hadjstylianos provided the overview.

3) Other Business:

4) Next meeting: MPO/COG Thursday, August 17th 2023

- 5) Adjournment: On a motion duly made the meeting was adjourned at 2:17pm

INTERIM MINUTES SUBJECT TO FINAL APPROVAL BY THE COG MEMBERS



Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

DATE: September 18, 2023

Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Amended September 2023

Background: As host to the Housatonic Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (HVMPO) and South Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (SWRMPO), the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) opened a 45 day public comment period to amend the Public Involvement Plan (PIP). Public comments on the amended PIP were accepted from August 1, 2023 until 12:00pm on September 15, 2023. Legal Notices were issued in five regional newspapers, two of which provided translations to Spanish and one to Portuguese. Press releases were forwarded to local papers, Municipal Clerks, and posted on WestCOG social media.

Public information meetings were held on September 7, 2023 at the Comstock Community Center in Wilton, CT and September 12, 2023 at the WestCOG office in Sandy Hook, CT. Virtual meeting attendance was provided as an option for both meetings.

The amended PIP is considered for endorsement at the WestCOG board meeting on September 21, 2023.

Amendments made: Federal guidance indicates that a 45 day public comment period must be opened when revisions are incorporated into the PIP. Although minor in scale, WestCOG amended the PIP to include the following:

- Description of visualization techniques
- Updated list of outreach platforms
- Updated description of public access to meetings
- Updated description of the scoping process for plans and studies

Comments received: WestCOG received 1 public comment during the 45 day comment period. The comment is as follows:

“Your public involvement plan(PIP) is pretty good, but I would like to see more ‘right tech’ reachout-which might include print outs in public places-like libraries and town halls. The transportation plan, for instance, is pretty onerous to tackle on line, on a monitor(IMO), for the average resident.

Also, while more ambitious, it would be nice to see educational outreach to public schools. The topics I see at the monthly meetings seem to be very relevant, and nicely complementary, in a localized actualization, to things taught in science classes. A field trip, by a class, to one of the COG/MPO meetings might be something to think about. I would have liked to witness one of these meetings as a high school student. It would have a revelation for me from a science and civics standpoint.

So: in summary, lets try to complement the digital with 3D outreach where there might be clear gains in public participation-which seems to be too low from what I am seeing. These mentioned approaches might have less competition for attention-than online approaches.”

Western Connecticut

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TO: WestCOG Members
 FROM: Todd Fontanella and Kristin Floberg
 DATE: September 18, 2023
 RE: WestCOG Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Application – Regional Transit Study

Action Requested: Approval to submit above referenced grant application.

Background: The WestCOG region has diverse transportation needs and, as it is served by three transit systems, each of these systems would benefit from a coordinated planning effort. Some of the mobility needs that have surfaced as part of individual system plans, and in statewide plans which show that there are unmet needs – particularly in human services transportation. Further, it is noted that transit connections between clusters of Environmental Justice (EJ) populations in adjoining regions – where jobs and other opportunities are located – are limited or nonexistent. WestCOG’s purpose and need for this Study is to bring planning resources to the individual systems while constructing a technical bridge to cooperatively address their needs.

WestCOG staff have determined that this Study is eligible for a USDOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Transportation Planning Grant, which is now available. The application for this grant will be due on September 28, 2023.

Application Details:

WestCOG will be partnering with the region’s three transit agencies to sponsor this Study which it will manage using a consultant. WestCOG will invite the Connecticut Department of Transportation, CTtransit, HARtransit and Norwalk Transit District (NTD) to a conference call early in the study process. On this call, the project team will formally kick off the study and provide general information on the study scope, process, and schedule.

The consultant, in conjunction with WestCOG, will work with a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to help guide the overall Study process. Study tasks will include:

- engaging the public and transit stakeholders;
- evaluating the existing transit systems/networks and services offered;
- developing a ridership profile and survey;
- developing service alternatives, and
- preparing findings and recommendations.

The staff has estimated that the overall Study budget is \$1,250,000. The grant program allows for a 100% federal share; accordingly, WestCOG is proposing to apply for the full cost of the Study, which would include WestCOG staff time.

Please advise if you have any questions. Thanks!

Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TO: WestCOG Council Representatives
FROM: Mike Wilson, Senior Planner
DATE: September 18, 2023

RE: USDOT Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant Program

Overview: The SMART program was established to provide grants to eligible public sector agencies to conduct demonstration projects focused on advanced smart community technologies and systems in order to improve transportation efficiency and safety.

The SMART Grants Program includes two stages: Stage 1- Planning and Prototyping Grants (Stage 1 grants) and Stage 2- Implementation Grants (Stage 2 grants). Eligible activities include coordinated automation, connected vehicles, sensors, systems integration, delivery/logistics, innovative aviation, smart grid, and traffic signals. USDOT is only accepting applications for Stage 1 grants at this time.

Website: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SMART>

Deadline: 5 p.m. ET, October 10, 2023

WestCOG applied to this program last year for a study concerning intelligent and connected flow control systems (such as ramp metering) on the Merritt Parkway. Although favorably reviewed, the application was not successful. Staff intend to apply again for the study this year, after revising the narrative to address previous review comments. A meeting with key stakeholders is planned for this week.

Next Steps: Approval to submit this application will be requested from the COG at the September meeting.

Please contact me at mwilson@westcog.org if there are any questions. Thank you.

Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



September 18, 2023

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

RE: Norwalk Redevelopment Agency US DOT 2023 Reconnecting Communities and
Neighborhoods Application Support

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) to confirm that the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency's Reconnecting Communities grant application for the MLK Community Reconnection Project is consistent with the transportation goals set for the Southwest region of Connecticut and will support regional efforts to remediate the physical and social segregation that I-95 has had on our region.

When I-95 was constructed in 1957, it razed working-class neighborhoods and divided a thriving community. This physical and visual divide has had a cascading effect on our region's economy, which has disproportionately impacted minority populations. As we seek to mitigate the effects of these decisions and revitalize our communities, we must acknowledge that our highway system, particularly I-95, is a major regional asset, yet – it has negatively impacted Norwalk's local economy.

The City of Norwalk is a focus of the South Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2019 Long Range Transportation Plan for the Southwestern Region (SWRMPO-LRTP). Broad plan goals prioritize developing a comprehensive transportation network that is accessible, safe, and reliable while simultaneously contributing to the local economy and a high quality of life for residents.

The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency's efforts to reconnect the Wall/West and South Norwalk Neighborhoods that comprise the urban core and are divided by I-95 overhead is an essential project to equity, safety, and economic development. Complete streets implementation will include bike lanes, pedestrian infrastructure, road diets, and green infrastructure; public transportation connections from the central bus hub to the South Norwalk Intermodal Center; and public art and wayfinding. These improvements will improve transportation efficiency and ease the visual impact of the transition between the two neighborhoods.

I convey WestCOG's interest in this application and support the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency's efforts to advance equitable and creative solutions to infrastructure barriers in our region through the USDOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program.

Sincerely,

Francis Pickering
Executive Director

September 14, 2023

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

RE: Letter of Support for Stamford's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program Grant Application

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG), I wish to express my full support for the City of Stamford's application for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Program.

Better connectivity is needed to provide east-west movement for households in the distressed Downtown and West Side neighborhoods. Stamford seeks federal funding to construct a 12-foot wide, multi-use, lighted greenway trail along the Mill River. Additionally, upgraded greenspace, lighting, traffic calming and pedestrian safety infrastructure, and environmental clean-up are included in the project. Census Tracts 201, 214, and 215 in Stamford have been identified as "disadvantaged" by the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. RCN investment will improve access to employment centers, recreational amenities, and the Stamford Transportation Center (the busiest passenger rail station in Connecticut). By filling in the missing gaps of Mill River Park and improving access under Interstate 95 and the Metro-North Railroad tracks, the West Side and Downtown Neighborhoods will be reconnected. This funding will be the final step in realizing the 100-year vision of a connected greenway between the Long Island Sound and Scalzi park uniting Stamford together.

Furthermore, completion of the Mill River Greenway was identified in the 2023-2050 South Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Regional Bicycle Plan as a regional priority. It would provide a safe, welcoming, and efficient alternative to the high traffic Washington Boulevard (CT-137). This project supports the region's goals of enabling safe and accessible streets for all users- especially those underserved with limited choices and expanding bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the region.

Please give Stamford's grant application your full consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francis Pickering". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "F" and a long, horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Francis Pickering
Executive Director
Western Connecticut Council of Governments

Western Connecticut

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TO: WestCOG Council Representatives
 FROM: Kevin Mahoney
 DATE: September 15, 2023
 RE: **LOTICIP New Project Solicitation**

Action Requested: Decide next step in WestCOG's new LOTICIP-funded project solicitation.

Background:

In recent years, WestCOG has had a 'flexible' process for securing COG endorsement of LOTICIP funds for new projects. The municipal proposals submitted in response to solicitations have been in various stages of completeness and development. Based on staff review and consultation with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), certain proposals were considered suitable for COG endorsement, as submitted. Other proposals were judged to need refinement (i.e., better scope definition, cost estimation) prior to endorsement. For projects in the second category, WestCOG staff provided written comments on the adjustments and refinements needed to be recommended for COG endorsement. When the suggested refinements were completed by the municipality, the WestCOG staff recommended to the TAG and COG, that the project be endorsed. Under this process, municipalities were not required to resubmit a project proposal through a second annual solicitation. In the past two years, five projects have been approved by WestCOG's board through this method. Another 17 project proposals (listed in the attached "WestCOG Legacy Project Proposals") submitted in the same period, have not been endorsed. Of those 17 proposals, three (highlighted in the attachment) have been refined to address all WestCOG staff comments.

The flexible process described above was employed during a time when WestCOG had ample LOTICIP funds available for commitment. In recent years, through a concerted effort, WestCOG is at or approaching a "fully programmed" status. Going forward, WestCOG will be increasing its funding commitments at about the same pace as its incremental State allocation (approximately \$13 million annually). The staff-prepared Project Solicitation anticipates approximately \$10 million for new projects and \$3 million for increases to existing (previously endorsed) projects.

In the current constrained funding environment, the WestCOG staff is recommending that all proposals (i.e., those submitted in previous years but not approved by the COG and those submitted for the first time) be evaluated using the same criteria. In other words, projects submitted in prior years must be resubmitted and will not be given preferential consideration. The staff-prepared Project Solicitation includes the following language:

Project proposals submitted under previous solicitations, but not endorsed by the COG by the issuance date of this solicitation, will not be given further funding consideration unless an updated proposal is submitted pursuant to this solicitation. Municipalities are encouraged to submit updated proposals.

The TAG objects to this provision. As outlined in the ensuring chronology, at its September 12, 2023 meeting, the TAG recommended the COG defer approving (“table”) the Project Solicitation to allow for development of an alternative policy.

Given the limited funds available for new projects, WestCOG staff believes funding priorities should be based on the “Project Evaluation Criteria” listed in the Project Solicitation. Effort (but not time alone) committed to improving previously-submitted but under-developed proposals should lead to increased ranking under the established criteria.

Condensed Chronology:

July 11, 2023 TAG Meeting

WestCOG staff made a presentation on “LOTICIP Funding Status and Programming Recommendations” (via PowerPoint) and provided DRAFT “Program Funds Management Policy and Guidance” and “Project Solicitation” for comment and discussion.

The Draft materials elicited six comments made either at the meeting or by subsequent email.

July 20, 2023 COG Meeting

WestCOG staff began, but did not complete, a presentation on “LOTICIP Funding Status and Programming Recommendations” (via PowerPoint) and provided DRAFT “Program Funds Management Policy and Guidance” and “Project Solicitation” for comment and discussion.

The Draft materials elicited two comments.

August 17, 2023 Information Session

WestCOG staff completed a presentation on “LOTICIP Funding Status and Programming Recommendations” (via PowerPoint) and again provided DRAFT “Program Funds Management Policy and Guidance” and “Project Solicitation” for comment and discussion. Numerous WestCOG chief elected officials and several municipal staff participated.

September 12, 2023 TAG meeting

WestCOG staff distributed revised “Program Funds Management Policy and Guidance” and “Project Solicitation” and discussed revisions made in response to comments. The TAG’s recommendation for COG approval was solicited. Following discussion regarding the legacy project proposals, the TAG voted to recommend the Project Solicitation be tabled. The WestCOG staff recommendation did not change.

Options:

The basic options available to the COG are:

1. Defer action on the Project Solicitation and charge the TAG with developing the recommended policy and solicitation language regarding legacy proposals.
2. Approve the Project Solicitation.

Numerous additional options exist if the Project Solicitation is not approved. If the Project Solicitation is not approved at the September 21, 2023 meeting, subsequent steps in the process including the initiation of new projects, will be delayed an undetermined period.

WestCOG Legacy Project Proposals

(Proposals submitted but not endorsed by COG)

Year submitted	Municipality	Project Description	Most recent activity	Estimated LOTCIP funds	
2021	Danbury	White Street Complete Street	WestCOG 10/2021 comments	\$3,000,000	
2021	Redding	Central Georgetown Improvements	WestCOG 10/2021 comments	\$839,000	
2021	Westport	Easton Road Sidewalks	Refined proposal pre-App 7/2023	\$3,560,000	\$3,560,000
2022	Bethel	Sidewalks, Rte 302 near Andrews Street	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$1,263,000	
2022	Danbury	360 Degree Video Detection System	Refined proposal 5/18/2023	\$4,400,000	\$4,400,000
2022	Danbury	RR Grade Crossing Surface Replacement Phase 1	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$3,456,000	
2022	Danbury	RR Grade Crossing Surface Replacement Phase 2	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$3,240,000	
2022	Danbury	Lake-Westville Avenue Intersection Improvements	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$3,490,000	
2022	Danbury	Main Street Complete Streets	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$2,490,000	
2022	Danbury	Traffic Signal Upgrades – Phase 1	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$3,456,000	
2022	Danbury	Traffic Signal Upgrades – Phase 2	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$3,456,000	
2022	Danbury	Traffic Signal Upgrades – Phase 3	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$3,456,000	
2022	Norwalk	Glover Avenue Spur, Norwalk River Valley Trail	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$930,000	
2022	Norwalk	Gregory Blvd-Calf Pasture Beach Road Intersection	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$2,186,000	
2022	Norwalk	Richards Avenue Improvements	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$3,528,000	
2022	Westport	Hillandale Rd o/Muddy Creek Bridge Replacement	Draft Application 7/2023	\$2,700,000	\$2,700,000
2022	Wilton	Scribner Hill Road Slope Stabilization	WestCOG 11/2022 comments	\$1,689,000	
TOTAL				\$47,139,000	\$10,660,000

**Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program
Project Solicitation
September 22, 2023**

1. **Objective:** To invite proposals from Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) municipalities for funding through the Region's Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP). This document also identifies the framework to be used for selecting and administering regional LOTICIP projects. It is WestCOG's goal to program and administer funds in a manner that is orderly, equitable, and beneficial to the Region. **Interested municipalities must submit Project Proposals and supporting attachments (cost estimate, CEO letter committing to fund design, other as appropriate) for each proposed project by 4:00 PM, November 10, 2023.** Digital-only submissions are requested. A Project Proposal Outline and Cost Estimate template are provided with this Solicitation.
2. **Background:** LOTICIP provides State funding for a variety of municipal transportation capital improvements, including bridge rehabilitation and replacement, road/street reconstruction, intersection improvements, traffic signalization, streetscapes, sidewalks, multi-use trails and pedestrian facilities (including pedestrian bridges). As established by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and outlined in the latest version (currently November 2021) of the [LOTICIP Guidelines](#), COG's are assigned certain program administration responsibilities including soliciting, prioritizing and endorsing projects. Consequently, WestCOG will review proposals for eligibility, scope, and reasonable cost estimation. WestCOG will prioritize and selectively endorse eligible projects.
3. **Eligibility:** LOTICIP provides up to 100% funding for eligible construction and Right of Way (R/W) acquisition costs. The [LOTICIP Guidelines](#) provide detailed eligibility criteria, which are summarized below:
 - Improvements to roads/street and bridges (regardless of length) functionally classified as a rural major collector, urban collector or arterial (see next two bullets related to broader eligibility for bridge and Transportation Alternative projects).
 - Improvements to bridges (rehabilitation or replacement) on public roads with lengths 20 feet and greater, regardless of functional classification.
 - Transportation Alternative projects (typically, bicycle and pedestrian improvements) are eligible, regardless of location (i.e., do not need to be associated with a collector or arterial).
 - Minimum project construction cost is \$300,000.

Projects shall be in compliance with the Connecticut General Statutes § 13a-153(f), which requires that "accommodations for all users shall be a routine part of the planning, design, construction, and operating activities of all highways."

In addition to the CTDOT criteria, projects selected through this solicitation will be limited to \$4,000,000 of LOTCIP funds. Costs above this amount, regardless of eligibility, will be the responsibility of the municipality unless a waiver is approved by the COG.

Project proposals submitted under previous solicitations, but not endorsed by the COG by the issuance date of this solicitation, will not be given further funding consideration unless an updated proposal is submitted pursuant to this solicitation. Municipalities are encouraged to submit updated proposals.

A sponsoring municipality will be required to have a current, executed CTDOT Master Municipal Agreement (MMA) prior to COG endorsement.

Eligible applicants are the eighteen municipalities comprising WestCOG.

The cost of project design, which may be performed by either municipal staff or consultants, is the responsibility of the sponsoring municipality. This cost is considered the municipal “match” or share of the project’s total cost. A letter signed by the municipal Chief Elected Official committing to fund project design is a required element of a Project Proposal.

4. **Funding and Programming:** WestCOG “over programs” LOTCIP funds which means that it will, as appropriate, endorse an aggregate funding amount greater than has been allocated by legislation. Over programming allows more effective use of allocated funds by considering the time required to advance from project initiation to construction and the possibility of attrition.

It is anticipated that WestCOG will commit to approximately \$10 million of LOTCIP funds for new projects during State FY 2024 (July 1, 2023– June 30, 2024). Approximately \$3 million in additional LOTCIP funds may also be available for cost increases. As previously noted, the maximum LOTCIP funds per project endorsed through this solicitation is \$4,000,000.

5. **Project Evaluation Criteria:** The following factors will be used to evaluate and prioritize proposals:

- Conformance to CTDOT requirements and [LOTCIP Guidelines](#).
- Readiness to proceed.
- Shared program benefit (i.e., past program funding).
- Municipality’s historical performance advancing projects.
- Regional significance.

A project’s readiness to proceed refers to the level to which scope, limits, impacts and cost have been defined and vetted. Historically, too many projects have been abandoned, significantly altered or meet public opposition after being endorsed by the COG. Project concepts that have not been carefully evaluated for feasibility and/or potential negative impacts (e.g., property, existing infrastructure, environmental resources) should not be submitted but rather considered for a subsequent solicitation, after completing critical reviews and refinement.

6. Project Review and Endorsement Process:

- **Municipalities submit proposals:** Interested municipalities submit a Project Proposal, Cost Estimate, letter signed by the Chief Elected Official committing to fund design and other supporting information (Project Proposal Outline and Cost Estimate templates provided).
- **Staff review and evaluation of proposals:** WestCOG staff will review proposals for eligibility, conformance with program requirements, and in relation to the evaluation criteria resulting in a recommendation for each proposal.
- **TAG review:** Staff will present a summary of its evaluation and recommendations to the TAG, after which the TAG will make recommendations to the COG.
- **COG endorsement:** The COG will present the staff and TAG recommendations, after which the COG will determine which projects and associated funding level it will endorse.

Project Proposals that are considered eligible for LOTCIP funding but lack an adequate level of scope definition and/or cost estimation will be referred back to the sponsoring municipality for refinement and subsequent reconsideration for COG endorsement.

7. **Post-Endorsement Project Development and Administration:** Sponsoring municipalities have primary responsibility for advancing development of LOTCIP projects, including design, R/W acquisition, construction contract solicitation (i.e., bidding), construction inspection and contract administration. These functions can be performed by municipal staff or consultants. Following the COG's initial endorsement, the focus turns to securing CTDOT funding (Commitment to Fund letter) and project delivery. To facilitate continued progress, COG-endorsed projects will be monitored and managed as described below.

Progress and Schedules

The COG endorses projects based on information provided in Project Proposals. However, to secure a Commitment to Fund from the CTDOT, the municipality must complete a LOTCIP Application ([LOTCIP Guidelines](#), Appendix B). The municipality is required to submit a DRAFT LOTCIP Application (complete but not signed) to WestCOG within 60 days of COG endorsement. WestCOG's review typically results in comments and revision prior to signing and resubmission.

Once a COG-endorsed Application is submitted to CTDOT, the Local Roads Unit staff will review it and coordinate with the municipality, typically making comments and asking questions. The municipality is responsible for providing responses. Timely resolution of comments is critical to overall project delivery. The municipality should coordinate any issues related to scope or cost increase with WestCOG staff prior to responding to the CTDOT. In some cases, a supplemental COG endorsement will be required. Following satisfactory resolution of comments, CTDOT will issue a Commitment to Fund letter.

Within 60 days of the Commitment to Fund letter, the sponsoring municipality is required to prepare and submit a project delivery schedule to WestCOG. The schedule should include the expected dates of reaching significant pre-construction and construction milestones. Example milestones include design initiation (consultant notice to proceed), phase design submissions (preliminary, semi-final, final), completion of property maps and appraisals, completion of R/W acquisition, recipient of

permits, authorization to advertise, advertisement for bids, contract award, construction notice to proceed and completion of construction. Although schedules are subject to change, maintaining progress is important and schedule discipline should be exercised.

The COG's commitment (endorsement) of LOTCIP funding for projects expires six (6) years from the initial endorsement, unless the Authorization to Advertise milestone has been reached within that time. A municipality may apply for an extension of the expiration date or, in the case of an expired endorsement, reapply for LOTCIP funding. These requests will be considered in the context of other pending requests.

Quarterly Reports

The CTDOT requires that sponsoring municipalities provide updated schedule and cost information for all projects that have received a Commitment to Fund letter. See [LOTICIP Guidelines](#), Appendix M. The information is used by CTDOT for staff workload scheduling and financial planning (i.e., funds are available for projects when needed). WestCOG staff collect the information from municipalities and prepare/deliver the report to CTDOT.

Changes

Projects are scoped, reviewed, and initially endorsed based on preliminary information. Subsequent project development (i.e., detailed evaluation and design, public involvement, impact mitigation) may reveal additional information, requirements, and cost. The following guidance is provided in relation to scope and cost increases.

Projects with CTDOT funding commitments that experience an increase estimated cost of 20% or more require coordination with WestCOG and CTDOT as outlined in the [LOTICIP Guidelines](#).

LOTICIP funding is designated (by WestCOG and CTDOT) for a particular project scope and location. These funds are not "block grants" that may be used for any eligible purpose. In the event a project, as endorsed by the COG, is no longer viable, municipal staff shall inform WestCOG. Depending on circumstances, rescoping or cancellation with or without a replacement project may be appropriate. Significant consideration is given to the preference of the municipal sponsor.

If at any time during project development (i.e., after COG endorsement and prior to Authorization to Award), the estimated project cost exceeds the COG-endorsed amount, regardless of the reason, the municipality will be required to fund the increase with municipal sources or secure the COG's endorsement for additional LOTICIP funding. Although an increment LOTICIP funds will be reserved for adjustments to previously endorsed projects, municipalities should not assume that LOTICIP funds will be available for all cost increases. Municipalities should be prepared to 'offset' cost increases (e.g., reducing LOTICIP funds for other projects, municipal funds).

Attachments

- Project Proposal Outline
- Cost Estimate template

Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP)
Project Proposal Outline
Project Solicitation

1. Project Title:
2. Project Sponsor Information:

Municipality:
Contact Name:
Title:
Contact's email address:
3. Project Location: *Please attach location map.*
4. Project Eligibility:

____ Road, bridge or intersection on a major rural collector, urban collector or arterial
____ Improvement to a bridge with span of 20 feet or greater
____ Pavement preservation or pavement rehabilitation
____ Sidewalk-only construction
____ Transportation Alternative project, e.g., multi-use trail, pedestrian bridge, etc.

Note: Project construction cost must be at least \$300,000 to be eligible under this program. The maximum LOTICIP funds per project is \$4,000,000. [See solicitation.]
5. Project Purpose and Need: *Describe the project objectives and problems or deficiencies that will be addressed by the project.*
6. Project Description: *Describe the specific infrastructure (i.e., types, materials, locations, limits) being proposed.*
7. Project Plans: *Provide plans (concept or preliminary).*
8. Cost Estimate: *Provide a detailed cost estimate spreadsheet, including 10% contingencies and 10% incidentals (construction inspection and materials testing), as well as right-of-way acquisition costs. Indicate funding (LOTICIP, municipal share) for each phase. The Cost Estimate template (Sample Cost Estimate Form) is available at the CT DOT [LOTICIP web page](#) and a copy is also provided with WestCOG's solicitation.*

Summary of Costs:

Complete the table below to indicate the funding of each LOTCIP-eligible phase. LOTCIP funds are not eligible for design. Right-of-Way and Construction phases are eligible for 100% LOTCIP funding. Most (but not all) R/W and Construction phase work is eligible for 100% State (LOTICP) funds.

Phase	LOTICP Funds (\$)	Municipal Funds (\$)	Total (\$)
Right-of-Way (R/W)			
Construction (CON)			
Combined (R/W & CON)			

9. Anticipated Project Delivery Schedule

Begin Design Date:

Completion of Final Design Documents Date:

10. Supporting Information (as applicable):

- *Planning or engineering studies*
- *Preliminary plans*
- *Traffic volumes (ADT and/or turning movements)*
- *Speed data*
- *Crash data*
- *Safety issues*
- *Recent area improvements (e.g., signal, road, or sidewalk improvements)*
- *Existing or proposed area land development, especially major traffic generators*
- *Environmental impacts anticipated*
- *Environmental permits required*
- *Right-of-Way acquisition needed*
- *Other funding sources (if applicable)*
- *Other applicable information*

11. Priority of Project for Sponsor:

If a municipality is submitting more than one application, please provide the numerical rank for this project (i.e., 1st priority, 2nd priority, etc.)

12. Local Commitment to Fund Design: *Attach a letter signed by the Chief Elected Official, indicating the municipality's commitment to fund engineering design, as well as any proposed municipal share of right-of-way or construction costs, if applicable.*

13. Please submit the completed proposal in digital format to Kevin Mahoney KMahoney@westcog.org at WestCOG by the due date.

Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program Program Funds Management Policy and Guidance

INTRODUCTION

All work funded by the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) must conform to the current LOTICIP Guidelines, which are issued and periodically updated by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT). However, the Councils of Governments (COGs) have discretion over the assignment of funds amongst eligible locally sponsored projects. This Policy and Guidance statement sets forth several WestCOG policies and processes on programming and managing LOTICIP funds.

LOTICIP is a significant and reliable funding stream being administered by experienced State, COG and municipal staff. With this level of program maturity, it is appropriate for WestCOG to establish and document program management policy and principles to guide future funding decisions directed toward efficient use of State-provided funds and equity among municipalities pursuing program opportunities. All WestCOG municipalities are eligible to receive funding but, for a variety of reasons, not all municipalities have benefited equally.

By adopting this Policy and Guidance statement, the WestCOG board has indicated to municipal officials and WestCOG staff its general posture on managing LOTICIP funds. The WestCOG board may, at its sole discretion, amend, replace, waive or rescind this statement.

ANNUAL PROCESS

WestCOG staff will initiate a process to establish a goal for “end-of-year” funding commitments. Typically, the goal will be expressed as WestCOG’s cumulative committed LOTICIP funds at the end of a State fiscal year. The goal will consider current WestCOG commitments, significant current year changes (e.g., project cancelations) and anticipated future State allocations. The end-of-year goal will be used to compute an annual incremental change (increase) in funding commitments.

The annual incremental target will be divided into amounts for new project commitments and a reserve amount for adjustments to previously endorsed projects.

WestCOG staff will prepare a draft solicitation for new projects that includes the annual incremental target. The solicitation may also include other recommended programming factors and restrictions (e.g., maximum funding level per project).

The staff recommendations, as reflected in a draft solicitation, will be presented to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAG) for comment and concurrence.

The draft solicitation will be presented to the COG; any differences between WestCOG staff and TAG recommendations will be identified.

The COG may, in conjunction with the solicitation, establish a maximum LOTCIP fund per project amount (cap) as an indication to municipalities that future funding increase beyond the established maximum should not be expected.

The COG-approved solicitation will be issued.

WestCOG staff will evaluate new project proposals submitted by municipalities against the criteria and rating factors in the solicitation and the reliability of the associated cost estimate. Staff will prepare recommendations for new project funding commitments.

The staff evaluation and funding recommendations will be presented to the TAG for comment and concurrence.

The staff evaluation and funding recommendations will be presented to the COG. Any differences between TAG and staff recommendations will be identified.

All changes to LOTCIP funding commitments, including the addition of new projects and corresponding funding levels, will be approved by the COG.

ONGOING

Upon the COG's commitment to fund a project, design and project development should be vigorously prosecuted. The COG's LOTCIP funding commitment for projects will **expire six (6) years from the initial endorsement, unless the Authorization to Advertise milestone** has been reached within that time. As a phase-in provision, no endorsement will expire until July 1, 2025. A municipality may request an expiration date be extended or reapply for LOTCIP funding of an expired endorsement. The COG will consider these requests in the context of other programming and funding factors.

Changes in estimated construction cost occur routinely during project development and are not always avoidable. However, reasonably complete scoping, preliminary design and adherence to cost estimating fundamentals can significantly reduce the frequency and magnitude of estimated cost changes. Although an increment LOTCIP funds will be reserved annually for adjustments to previously endorsed projects, municipalities should not assume that LOTCIP funds will be available for all cost increases. Municipalities should be prepared to 'offset' cost increases (e.g., reducing LOTCIP funds for other projects, municipal funds).

The maximum LOTCIP funds committed to a single project initially endorsed by the COG prior to July 1, 2023 will be \$7,000,000. The maximum LOTCIP funds committed to a single project initially endorsed by the COG after July 1, 2023 will be established by the COG and may be indicated in the solicitation as indicated under the "Annual Process" section (above).

All funding decisions will consider an applicant's (municipality) historic program benefits (i.e., previous LOTCIP funding).

Requests for increased funding at the Final Design submission and construction award milestones will receive preferential consideration.

All municipal funding requests will be reviewed by WestCOG staff; the municipal request and staff recommendation will be presented to the TAG for its recommendation. All requests will be presented to the COG, along with staff and TAG recommendations for action.

WestCOG LOTCIP Program
09/21/2023 Adjustment

Municipality	Project	Amount	Status	Expiration Date
Available funding (FY2014-2025), net of estimated administrative costs		\$131,312,580		
Danbury	White Street and Locust Avenue	(\$3,613,000)	3. CTF, in final design	N/A
Greenwich	US 1 Sidewalk Connectivity & ADA Accessibility	(\$4,521,000)	1. Pre-Application	4/26/2029
	Total COG-Endorsed Funds (including requested adjustments)	(\$149,711,038)		
	Remaining Balance	(\$18,398,458)		
	Endorsed/Allocated	114.0%		

①
②
③

TAG: Recommended approval 09/12/2023

COG: Considered 09/21/2023

- ① Increase of \$25,557,120 (COG staff estimate) from \$105,755,460
- ② Increase of \$963,000 from \$2.650,000
- ③ Increase of \$211,000 from \$4,310,000

Net Change in COG-Endorsed Funds (Two Projects) \$1,174,000 Increase

Distribution of COG-committed Projects/Funds by Municipality

Municipality	Number of LOTICIP Projects	COG-committed LOTICIP Funds
Bethel	2	\$3,400,000
Bridgewater	0	\$0
Brookfield	4	\$5,724,351
Danbury	3	\$11,225,000
Darien	2	\$2,850,000
Greenwich	6	\$17,149,212
New Canaan	3	\$2,470,000
New Fairfield	2	\$1,574,581
New Milford	5	\$7,770,709
Newtown	1	\$2,247,047
Norwalk	3	\$10,873,045
Redding	0	\$0
Ridgefield	2	\$6,122,000
Sherman	1	\$750,000
Stamford	15	\$57,858,500
Weston	4	\$9,821,000
Westport	3	\$3,362,393
Wilton	3	\$6,513,200
TOTAL	59	\$149,711,038

Western Connecticut

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TO: WestCOG Council Representatives
 FROM: Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director
 DATE: September 18, 2023
 RE: Employee Handbook revisions

Purpose

To provide for remote work during severe weather and to standardize agency holidays.

Background

Since 2015, WestCOG has closed its office an average of 1½ days per year due to severe weather, following direction of the Governor's office. The Employee Handbook did not foresee the ability for remote work, and, accordingly, under state law¹ employees were paid for these days but were not expected to work remotely (nor did the agency provide means to do so).

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns, WestCOG migrated its systems into the cloud, allowing nearly all agency functions to be performed remotely. With this change, employees can work even when the office is closed.

Separately, in 2021 the federal government made Juneteenth a national holiday; the state followed in 2023. Nearly all WestCOG functions involve federal and state agencies; differences in calendars have an impact on productivity.

Discussion

In recognition of these developments, the Executive Committee has proposed updating the Employee Handbook effective January 1, 2024 to:

1. Require employees to work from home during severe weather, or to take the day off.
2. Align the agency calendar with the state's, swapping the day after Thanksgiving for Washington's Birthday and adding Juneteenth as a paid holiday.

The net impact of this will be:

1. Reduction in paid time off (average of ½ day per year)
2. More days when agency staff can reach partners (2 days per year)

Next steps

Language for consideration and potential adoption follows.

¹ "According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, exempt employees (managerial, administrative, professional) must be paid for the entire day if the office closes for a partial day... However, if an employer requires work from home when the office is closed and an exempt employee chooses not to work, the employee must take the day off." Source: [Incllement Weather Policy | Connecticut HR & Safety Resources \(cbiam.com\)](https://www.cbiam.com/IncllementWeatherPolicy)

New language (effective January 1, 2024)

Severe Weather

If weather conditions become severe, the Executive Director will determine whether the office will be:

- closed early
- closed for the entire day
- delayed in its opening.

In ~~these~~ situations where the office is closed, or employees are unable to come into the office, full-time employees are expected to work their regular hours remotely. Employees that are unable to work remotely may take paid time off, you must contact the Executive Director. If the office is closed, all employees scheduled to be at work will be paid (not those on a scheduled day off or vacation day). If the office is open and you cannot come in, you must contact the Executive Director. In this case you can use vacation or personal leave, or unpaid time if no time available.

Holidays

WESTCOG ~~recognizes twelve (12) regularly scheduled holidays~~ provides employees with the following paid holidays, which mirror the legal and designated holidays of the State of Connecticut, for Full-time, Part-time and Grant employees. A new holiday date schedule is published each year.

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Day

~~President's Day~~ Lincoln's Birthday

Washington's Birthday

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Juneteenth

Independence Day

Labor Day

Columbus Day

Veteran's Day

Thanksgiving Day ~~+~~

day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Day

Western Connecticut

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



09/18/2023

Katherine Dykes, Commissioner CT DEEP
Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Dear Commissioner Dykes,

I am pleased to write a letter in support of the acquisition of the Belknap II application submitted by the Aspetuck Land Trust to the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA). We strongly support this acquisition because Belknap II is contiguous with already protected open space and will provide a needed parking lot and trails to further connect the public to one of the largest open space areas in Fairfield County. The Belknap II property will be the important connector between the Norwalk River Valley Trail to the West, Nature Conservancy's Devil's Den to the East, and the new 705-acre Weston Wilton Forest Reserve to the North, an assemblage project Aspetuck has been working on for years and for which OSWA has supported critical land acquisitions.

As an organization whose mission is to conserve, improve and protect the natural resources and the environment of the State of Connecticut, we applaud your vision to support programs like this one which provide public access to the natural world and make Connecticut an attractive place to live. The OSWA program provides crucial support in Aspetuck Land Trust's efforts to increase the pace and scale of conserving open space in CT before it is gone forever.

Conserved open spaces are critical for climate resiliency, carbon sequestration, filtering water, and providing healthy habitats for native species, plants, and animal life. This proposed acquisition would contribute to the following stated goals of the 2020-2030 Western Connecticut Regional Plan of Conservation and Development:

- Identify and protect the most important open space locations within the region, preserving at least 4,354 additional acres, consistent with the State's Green Plan. (p100)
- Ensure that protected open space is located in areas accessible to population centers as well as in areas that serve to protect the region's important ecological resources. (p100)

The contiguity of the site with existing preserves, especially the NRV, as well as the additional parking and trail connections ensure that this site is both accessible to the region and increases the accessibility of existing open space.

We look forward to working with the Aspetuck Land Trust, if awarded this grant, in supporting the acquisition of the Belknap II Property. Protecting this property will improve the quality of life and strength of the economy in our community and saves one of the last remaining open spaces in the Weston Wilton Forest Reserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

1 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook, CT 06482

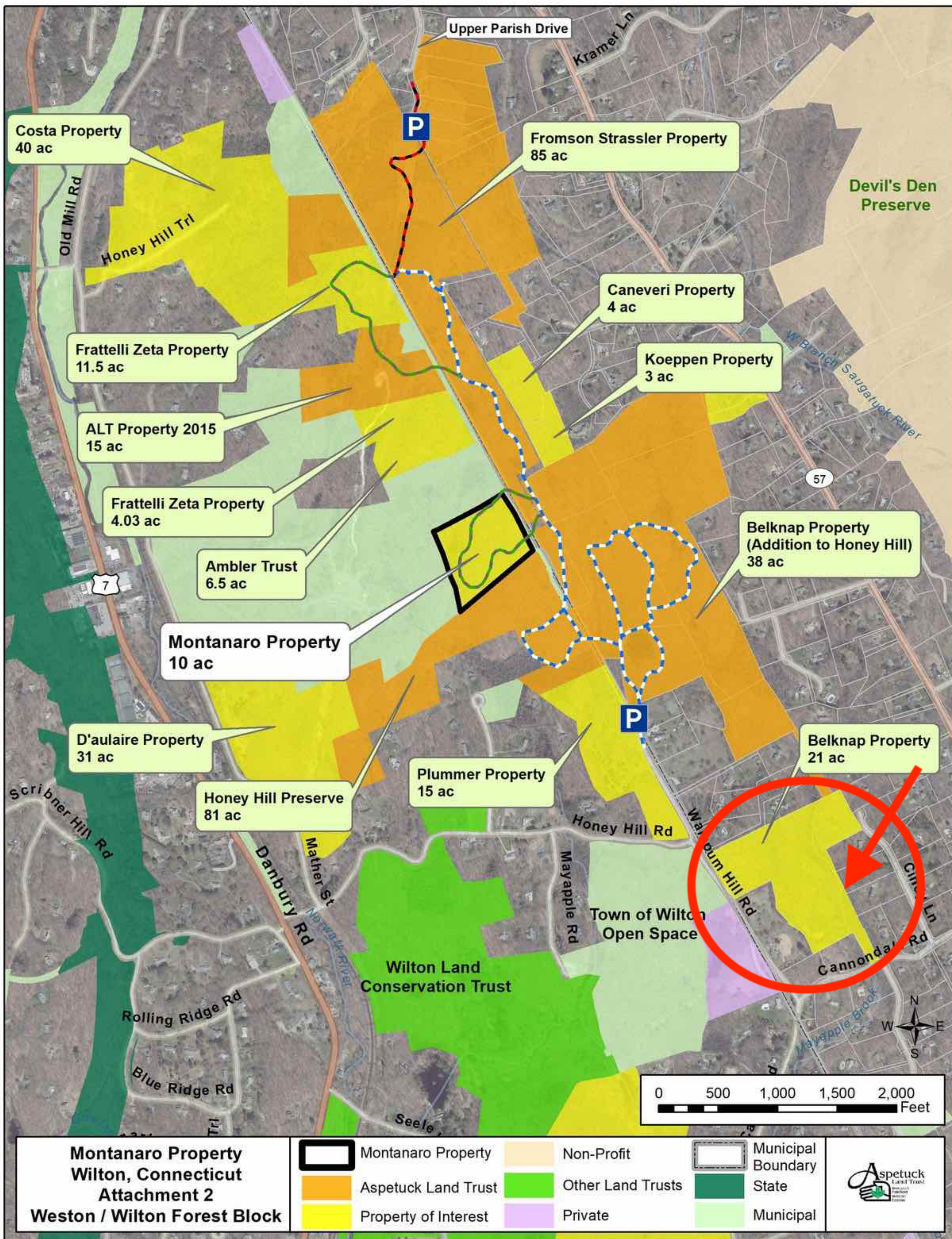
Visit us online at westcog.org
Telephone/fax 475-323-2060

Sincerely,



Francis Pickering
Executive Director
Western Connecticut Council of Governments

DRAFT





Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

DATE: September 13, 2023

SWRMPO FFY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Background: The FFY2021-2024 South Western Region TIP was endorsed by the MPO on October 15, 2020. The TIP was incorporated into the larger Statewide TIP, which was approved by USDOT and EPA on January 26, 2021.

Action Requested: MPO endorsement after review and support by the TAG.

Amendments #2023-0921

0301-0509: NHL- Stamford Maintenance of Equipment Facility

The CTDOT requested amendment will add a new project to the TIP for the City of Stamford. The Maintenance of Equipment (MOE) Facility is located on Cherry Street in the Stamford Rail Yard. Improvements are needed at the MOE Facility, Car Wash Facilities, Upper/Lower Storage Yard, and MOE parking lot.

<u>Region</u>	<u>FA Code</u>	<u>Proj#</u>	<u>AQ Cd</u>	<u>Rte/ Sys</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Tot \$ (000)</u>	<u>Fed \$ (000)</u>	<u>Sta \$ (000)</u>	<u>Loc \$ (000)</u>
1	5337	0301-0509	X6	NHL-ML	STAMFORD	NHL - STAMFORD MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPMENT FACILITY	CON	2024	75,000	60,000	15,000	0

0301-0176: NHL-Walk Moveable Bridge Program

The CTDOT requested amendment will remove Section 5337 funding for this phase from the TIP. The project has sufficient funding for this current phase.

<u>Region</u>	<u>FA Code</u>	<u>Proj#</u>	<u>AQ Cd</u>	<u>Rte/ Sys</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Tot\$ (000)</u>	<u>Fed\$ (000)</u>	<u>Sta\$ (000)</u>	<u>Loc\$ (000)</u>
1	5337	0301-0176	X6	NHL-ML	VARIOUS	NHL - WALK MOVEABLE BRIDGE PROGRAM	CON	2024	-25,000	-20,000	-5,000	0

0301-0529: NHL-STRAWBERRY AVENUE BRIDGE

The CTDOT requested amendment will add a new project to the TIP for the New Haven Line in the City of Norwalk. The rehabilitation of this bridge includes repairs to the substructure and full replacement of the superstructure.

0301-0187: NHL-REPLACEMENT EAST AVENUE BRIDGE, NORWALK/EAST NORWALK STATION

0301-0189: NHL- FORT POINT STREET BRIDGE

0301-0188: NHL- OSBORNE AVENUE BRIDGE

The CTDOT requested amendments will add FY2024 funding to the TIP for the bridges noted above on the New Haven Line in the City of Norwalk. This will cover project costs due to supply chain and labor shortages.

<u>Region</u>	<u>FA Code</u>	<u>Proj#</u>	<u>AQ Cd</u>	<u>Rte/ Sys</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Tot\$ (000)</u>	<u>Fed\$ (000)</u>	<u>Sta\$ (000)</u>	<u>Loc\$ (000)</u>
1	5307P	0301-0529	X6	NHL-ML	NORWALK	NHL-STRAWBERRY AVENUE BRIDGE	CON	2024	3,700	2,960	740	0
1	5307C	0301-0187	X6	NHL-ML	NORWALK	NHL-REPLACEMENT- EAST AVENUE BRIDGE, NORWALK/EAST NORWALK STATION	CON	2024	25,000	20,000	5,000	0
1	5307C	0301-0189	X6	NHL-ML	NORWALK	NHL- FORT POINT STREET BRIDGE	CON	2024	25,000	20,000	5,000	0
1	5307C	0301-0188	X6	NHL-ML	NORWALK	NHL- OSBORNE AVENUE BRIDGE	CON	2024	3,700	2,960	740	0

0135-0347: BIP-Realign I95 & Replace Bridge 00032 (PEL)

The CTDOT requested amendment will add a 2024 planning phase to the TIP for the City of Stamford. The amendment incorporates the planning grant funds received for this project under the Bridge Investment Program (BIP).

<u>Region</u>	<u>FA Code</u>	<u>Proj#</u>	<u>AQ Cd</u>	<u>Rte/ Sys</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Tot\$ (000)</u>	<u>Fed\$ (000)</u>	<u>Sta\$ (000)</u>	<u>Loc\$ (000)</u>
1	DIGR	0135-0347	PD	I-95	STAMFORD	BIP - REALIGN I-95 & REPLACE BR 00032 (PEL)	PL	2024	1,111	1,000	111	0

0056-0316: Pavement Preservation from NY State Line to Exit 6- AC Conversion

The CTDOT requested amendment will add Advanced Construction (AC) Conversion to the project description. Additionally, the total cost will be increased with the remaining unobligated balance of the project.

<u>Region</u>	<u>FA Code</u>	<u>Proj #</u>	<u>AQ Cd</u>	<u>Rte/ Sys</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Tot\$ (000)</u>	<u>Fed\$ (000)</u>	<u>Sta\$ (000)</u>	<u>Loc\$ (000)</u>
1	NHPP	0056-0316	X6	I-95	GREENWICH/ STAMFORD	PAVEMENT PRESERVATION FROM NY STATE LINE TO EXIT 6 - AC CONVERSION	CON	2024	12,181	10,963	1,218	0

0300-0214: NHL- Time Phase 1 (Track, Catenary Upgrades- 6 Bridges, CP 259 Interlocking)

The CTDOT requested amendment adds funding to the TIP for Phase 1 of the New Haven Line upgrades. The upgrades include clearance improvements to six bridges along the line, as well as improvements to utility, stormwater, track, and catenary.

<u>Region</u>	<u>FA Code</u>	<u>Proj#</u>	<u>AQ Cd</u>	<u>Rte/ Sys</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Tot\$ (000)</u>	<u>Fed\$ (000)</u>	<u>Sta\$ (000)</u>	<u>Loc\$ (000)</u>
78	5307P	0300-0214	X6	NHL-ML	VARIOUS	NHL - TIME PHASE 1 (TRACK, CATENARY UPGRADES - 6 BRIDGES, CP 259 INTERLOCKING)	CON	2024	100,000	80,000	20,000	0

0135-XXXX: West Main Street Corridor Complete Street, FY2022 RAISE

The amendment will add a Preliminary Engineering (PE) phase to the TIP for the City of Stamford. The city received FY2022 RAISE grant funding for the 1.1-mile West Main Street corridor. The planning project will support the design and engineering of a Complete Street.

<u>Region</u>	<u>FA Code</u>	<u>Pro i#</u>	<u>AQ Cd</u>	<u>Rte/ Sys</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Tot\$ (000)</u>	<u>Fed\$ (000)</u>	<u>Sta\$ (000)</u>	<u>Loc\$ (000)</u>
1	DIGR	0135-XXXX	X6	US 1	STAMFORD	WEST MAIN STREET CORRIDOR COMPLETE STREET, FY22 RAISE	PE	2023	3,500	2,100	0	1,400

HVMPO FFY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Background: The FFY2021-2024 Housatonic Valley TIP was endorsed by the MPO on October 15, 2020. The TIP was incorporated into the larger Statewide TIP, which was approved by USDOT and EPA on January 26, 2021.

Action Requested: MPO endorsement after review and support by the TAG.

Amendments #2023-0921

0034-0324: Intersection Improvements at Coal Pit Hill & Triangle Street

The CTDOT requested amendment will adjust the construction phase for this project in the City of Danbury. There is a cost increase for this phase, and the funding year is being moved from FY2024 to the next period of the TIP (2025-2028).

<u>Region</u>	<u>FA Code</u>	<u>Proj#</u>	<u>AQ Cd</u>	<u>Rte/ Sys</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Tot\$ (000)</u>	<u>Fed\$ (000)</u>	<u>Sta\$ (000)</u>	<u>Loc\$ (000)</u>
02	STPO	0034-0324	X7	CT 53	DANBURY	INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT COAL PIT HILL & TRIANGLE ST	CON	FYI	12,000	9,600	2,400	0

0174-0471: Replace Traffic Control Signals at Various Locations

The CTDOT requested amendment will add a new project to the TIP that programs Preliminary Design (PD), Right of Way (ROW), and Final Design (FD). For the HVMPO, this project will provide a full replacement of the traffic control signal at Route 806 (Newtown Rd) at Nutmeg Square & Berkshire Shopping Center in the City of Danbury.

<u>Region</u>	<u>FA Code</u>	<u>Proj #</u>	<u>AQ Cd</u>	<u>Rte/Sys</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Tot\$ (000)</u>	<u>Fed\$ (000)</u>	<u>Sta\$ (000)</u>	<u>Loc\$ (000)</u>
<u>2,5,10</u>	<u>STPA-BRX</u>	<u>0174-0471</u>	<u>X7</u>	<u>VARIOUS</u>	<u>DISTRICT 4</u>	<u>REPLACE TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNALS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS</u>	<u>PD</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>1,657</u>	<u>1,657</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2,5,10</u>	<u>STPA-BRX</u>	<u>0174-0471</u>	<u>X7</u>	<u>VARIOUS</u>	<u>DISTRICT 4</u>	<u>REPLACE TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNALS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS</u>	<u>ROW</u>	<u>FYI</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2,5,10</u>	<u>STPA-BRX</u>	<u>0174-0471</u>	<u>X7</u>	<u>VARIOUS</u>	<u>DISTRICT 4</u>	<u>REPLACE TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNALS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS</u>	<u>FD</u>	<u>FYI</u>	<u>560</u>	<u>560</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

How It Works

Making Change Has Never Been So Easy

Here's everything you need to know to CLYNK like a pro.

HOW TO CLYNK

Bag it

Put your bottles and cans in the designated green recyclable CLYNK bag – be careful not to overstuff.

Tag it

Tag the bag securely with your personalized CLYNK bag tags which can be printed anytime you visit the CLYNK kiosk found at a participating grocer. When you sign up online, we will send you 10 tags to get started.

Scan it

Make sure to scan each bag when you get to your nearest CLYNK drop-off location, which helps ensure all your bottles and cans can be properly tracked by our system.

[Find Locations Near You](#)

Drop it

Drop the bags off and go about your day!

WHAT TO CLYNK:

Your Redemption Checklist

- ✓ Each bottle and can will include redemption information if the container is redeemable. If it doesn't, don't put it in your bag.
- ✓ Each bottle and can is completely empty and barcodes are legible.
- ✓ Bottles are not broken, cans are not crushed, and product labels – with barcodes – are intact. Also, leave the caps on!
- ✓ Bags are not overstuffed, ripped or damaged – this will help prevent item loss before processing.
- ✓ Bags don't weigh more than 20 pounds – mix plastic and aluminum with glass to more evenly disperse weight.

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WHY TO CLYNK:

The Process Behind Your Bottle & Can Return

[The Bottle Bill](#) | [The Barcodes](#) | [The Payments](#)



Legislation known as the Bottle Bill is what's behind the bottle and can deposit you pay at the register and what allows you to redeem that deposit by returning those bottles and cans. You, along with retailers and manufacturers, play important roles in making the Bottle Bill work.

You, the consumer: Responsible for paying the deposit at checkout and voluntarily returning the containers for a deposit reimbursement. Your CLYNK account accumulates these deposits until you're ready to cash out.

Retailers: Responsible for receiving empty containers and reimbursing your deposits. For our partner retailers, CLYNK provides this service. CLYNK is the entity that returns your deposit, allowing you to cash out or apply your funds at your local Hannaford.

Manufacturers: Responsible for reclaiming and recycling containers they have used for the beverages they sell. CLYNK is the facilitator that returns clean, recyclable material back to the manufacturers. It is our combined efforts that maintain a continuous loop.



How Can I Sign Up?

There are two ways to sign up for CLYNK, and they're both super fast and super easy.

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Online

Why wait? [Sign up now](#). It takes just a couple of minutes, and we'll mail your CLYNK cards, a supply of bag tags, and a voucher for your first 10 CLYNK bags – on us.



At a CLYNK kiosk

Sign up during your next trip to the grocery store. [Find a CLYNK kiosk near you](#). You'll leave with a CLYNK membership card, bag tags, and a free box of bags.

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Thriving Communities Program

Two Opportunities for Potential Applicants

For fiscal year (FY) 2023 funding, the Thriving Communities Program (TCP) offers two separate response opportunities for potential applicants: a Letter of Interest, due on November 15, 2023, and a Notice of Funding Opportunity, due on November 28, 2023.

1. A [Call for Letters of Interest \(LOI\)](#): For eligible applicants to receive technical assistance, planning, or capacity building services. There is no cost requirement to participate, and DOT will prioritize helping the most under-resourced disadvantaged communities.
2. A [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#): For eligible applicants to provide technical assistance, planning, or capacity building services to help disadvantaged communities.

Opportunity	#1: Call for Letters of Interest (LOI)	#2: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Purpose	Apply to receive technical assistance, planning, and capacity building services from DOT-selected Capacity Builders.	Apply to receive funding to provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building services to communities.
Eligible Applicants	<p>Eligible applicants are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local, state, or Tribal governments including pueblos or villages • United States territories • Metropolitan planning organizations • Transit agencies • Other political subdivisions of state or local governments 	<p>Eligible lead applicants for TCP-N are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-profit organizations • philanthropic entities • other technical assistance providers including academic institutions or private sector organizations with a demonstrated capacity to develop and provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building to a range of communities located across multiple states and regions <p>Eligible lead applicants for TCP-R are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State governments and their agencies • Indian Tribes • Local governments and their agencies • Governmental planning, economic development, or transportation organizations working at the regional or metropolitan level • Regional, Tribal or Statewide planning non-profit organizations
How to Apply	<p>Submit a Letter of Interest through USDOT's fillable web-based form.</p> <p>Interested applicants can prepare for online submission by utilizing the Letter of Interest Worksheet.</p>	Apply to the Notice of Funding Opportunity through Grants.gov.
Application Deadline	4:59 p.m. (ET) November 15, 2023	4:59 p.m. (ET) November 28, 2023
Link to Full Program Requirements	Call for Letters of Interest for the Thriving Communities Program (FY 2023)	Notice of Funding Opportunity for the FY 2023 Thriving Communities Program

Western Connecticut

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



TO: TAG and MPO Members
 FROM: Todd Fontanella
 DATE: August 18, 2023
 RE: **USEPA Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

The Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Program (known as "DERA") was created under the [Energy Policy Act of 2005 \(PDF\)](#). This Act gave EPA grant and loan authority for promoting diesel emission reductions and authorized appropriations to the Agency. The most current funding reauthorization for this Program occurred in 2020, providing up to \$100 million annually through 2024. The program will continue to award grants and rebates to achieve diesel emissions reduction.

On August 2 USEPA released the 2022-2023 NOFO for this Program. Priority for funding will be given to projects that engage and benefit local communities already overburdened by air pollution, protect grant funded investments from severe weather events caused by climate change, and to applicants that demonstrate their ability to promote and continue efforts to reduce emissions after the project has ended.

As noted in the Program guidance, eligible activities include the retrofit or replacement of existing diesel engines, vehicles, and equipment with EPA and California Air Resources Board (CARB) certified engine configurations and verified retrofit and idle reduction technologies.

As in previous rounds, municipalities are eligible applicants.

See the important Program dates in the table below and in particular visit the links for the webinar information sessions:

Important DERA Program Dates

Activity	Date
NOW OPEN: 2022-2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)	Wednesday, August 2, 2023
Webinar Information Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday, August 22, 2023 @ 3:00PM EST Wednesday, August 30, 2023 @ 2PM EST

Activity	Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday, September 14, 2023 @ 6PM EST
Deadline for Submitting Questions	Friday, November 10, 2023, 11:59PM EST
NOFO Closes - Application Deadline	Friday, December 1, 2023, 11:59PM EST
Anticipated Notification of Selection	March 2024
Anticipated Awards	June 2024 to August 2024

More information on the Program is available at [2022-2023 Diesel Emissions Reduction Act \(DERA\) National Grants](#)

Please note that Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](#) no later than **Friday, December 1, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)** to be considered for funding.

Contact me at (475) 323-2076 or tfontanella@westcog.org with questions or to obtain additional information.