

MINUTES OF THE 10/2/17  
SCCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
SCCOG Office, Norwich, CT

Present: Ron McDaniel, Deb Hinchey, Art Shilosky, Michael Passero, Mark Nickerson, Tom Sparkman

Other: Rob Simmons, Ed Sauers, John Melrose, Jason Vincent

Staff: James Butler, Kate Rattan

Chairman McDaniel opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

1. Meet w/R. Simmons re: Stonington Application to Railroad Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program

Mr. Simmons, Stonington First Selectman, introduced himself and Mr. Vincent, Mr. Sauers, and Mr. Melrose. He said he was here to discuss two at-grade railroad crossings in Stonington, both of which are at private roads and neither of which have quad gate loop detectors like the other four at-grade crossings in Stonington do. He discussed the safety issue related to these deficiencies, and noted that the blowing of the train whistle cannot warn people stuck in a vehicle on the tracks because they will not hear the warning in time. Mr. Simmons informed of his discussions with Amtrak and FRA on this matter, and the fact that he has called it to the attention of the federal legislative delegation. He presented several documents and letters about this issue. He said that the Town was considering making application to the Railroad Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program, and possibly for a TIGER grant, for funds to correct this problem. He said he was asking the SCCOG to support these and any other Town application for funds to correct this problem.

The Executive Director said that staff had been asked by the Executive Committee previously for statistics on at-grade crossings in Connecticut. He said staff discussed this with CTDOT and has been informed that there 628 active at-grade crossings in Connecticut, of which 353 cross public roads and 275 cross private roads. Of the 353 public crossings, 159 have two-quadrant gate systems, with 6 of those being four-quadrant gate loop detectors. In southeastern Connecticut, there are 9 public at-grade railroad crossings, 6 of which have the four-quadrant gate system with dynamic exit gate operating mode (detection loops). These are located in Waterford, Groton, and Stonington (4). According to CTDOT, these are the only six in the state with this system. In addition, there are only two quiet zones in Connecticut, with one in Stonington and one in Groton.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Rattan noted that if a gate were to be installed, the private roads would have to be widened to accommodate this. Mr. Simmons said the Town has agreed to do this work.

MOTION: To recommend to the full COG that it endorse the Town of Stonington's application for Railroad Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program funds, TIGER grant funds, and any other grant funds that can be used to install four-quadrant gate loop detector

systems at two at-grade private road crossings in that town (Sparkman, Nickerson). So voted unanimously.

## 2. Corridor Study Grant Application Solicitation Update

The Executive Director and Ms. Rattan briefed the Executive Committee on the solicitation to SCCOG member municipalities for ideas for this CTDOT funded program. The Executive Director stated he would recommend to the Executive committee that when forwarding the SCCOG's two recommended corridors to CTDOT, that the SCCOG request the application of STP funds, as opposed to using PL or LOTCIP funding for this purpose.

## 3. Shared Services Study Update

The Executive Director stated that as announced at the last COG meeting, the consultant had requested additional information from each town necessary to finish the study. The Executive Committee asked staff to send a reminder out to all towns.

## 4. Other

The Executive Committee received an update on the status of the audit.

The Executive Director distributed a report on the end of the last fiscal year finances.

At the request of Chairman McDaniel, the Executive Director and Ms. Rattan provided a detailed report on the status of LOTCIP projects in the region. A copy of that report is attached to these minutes.

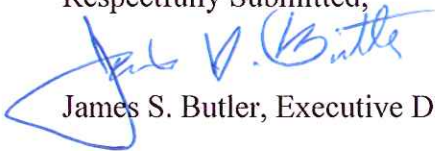
The Executive Director reported on the recent quote received for staff health insurance, and said he would report back once he met with staff and the SCCOG's insurance agent to see how best to contain costs.

The Executive Committee activated the Nominating Committee, and requested that Tom Sparkman chair this committee along with Bob Congdon and Kevin Lyden.

## 5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
James S. Butler, Executive Director

# LOTICIP Status Report

October 2, 2017

The State of Connecticut Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program funds infrastructure construction of both local and State roads which are categorized as an "Collector" or higher classification. This program also may be used for the improvement of bridges with a span of 20 feet or more and non-motorized transportation infrastructure. Program funds may also be used for COG administrative tasks associated with the program. Local project match consists of the full design costs.

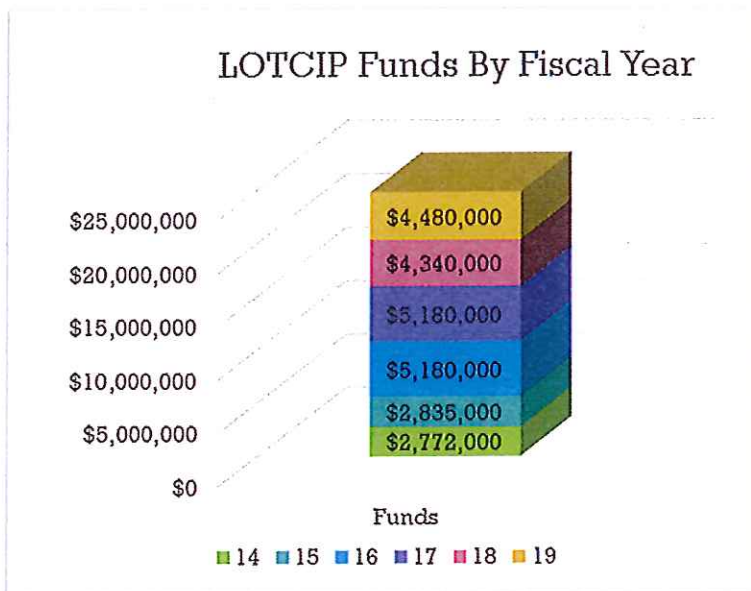


Figure 1

Funds are approved by the legislature annually and FY18 and FY19 funds are anticipated but not yet bonded.

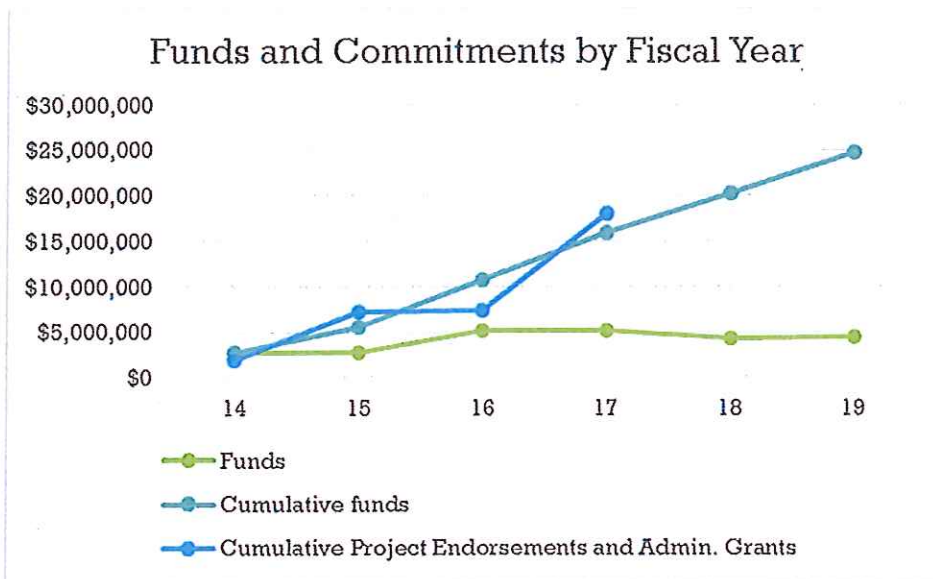


Figure 2

The COG's endorsement of projects has kept pace with our allocations. There is however a lag in the utilization of those funds, shown below in Figure 4. The COG currently has three completed projects, two in construction currently and seven awaiting commitment to fund from the DOT. As of today we have received just shy of \$16 million dollars, and \$333,060 has been set aside for administrative use based on the DOT's administrative funds formula. This amounts to 2% reserved for administration of the program.

CTDOT requires preliminary design to be completed prior to a Commitment to Fund. This includes a cost estimate. While there is a large degree of flexibility within the program cost and scope changes greater than 20% require reauthorization by the COG according to CTDOT program guidance. There are five important financial milestones for a project; Application, Commitment to Fund, Project Authorization, Authorization to Award and Audit. Our 5 projects which have been awarded are shown in Figure 3.



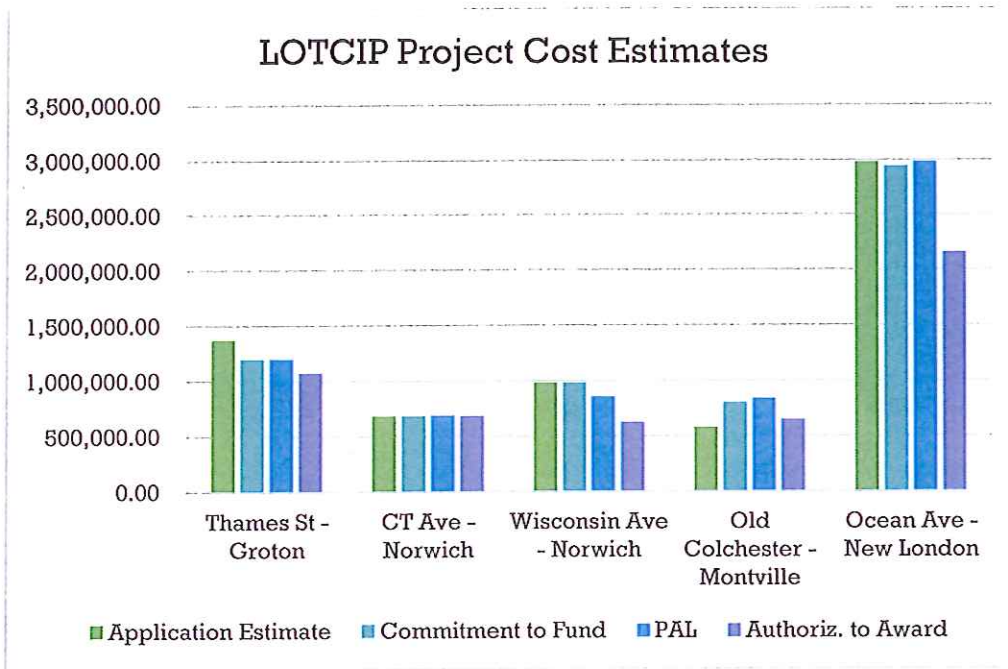


Figure 3

The Authorizations to Award (lowest reasonable construction bid plus contingencies and incidentals) have been consistently at or below the Project Authorization (100% design estimate). Only one of the projects' application estimates was considerably lower than the Project Authorization (Letter); the Old Colchester Road in Montville re-scoped the project to include reconfiguration of the intersection with Black Ash Rd as a safety improvement this accounts for the change. New London's estimate decline is the result of the removal of two signal upgrades and reclamation of the road compared to the initially sought reconstruction (this triggered reauthorization by the COG and DOT). This region has also seen very competitive bidding on our LOTICIP and Municipal projects in the past 2 years.

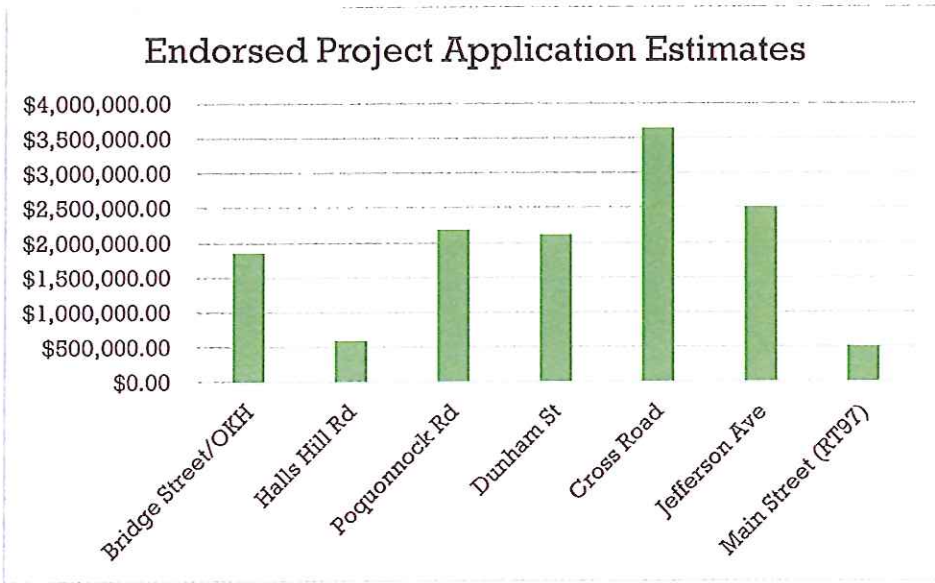


Figure 4

Endorsed projects are currently being reviewed by DOT. Comments will be made to the sponsor towns and those comments must be addressed prior to a Commitment to Fund. Design time will vary, it is anticipated that

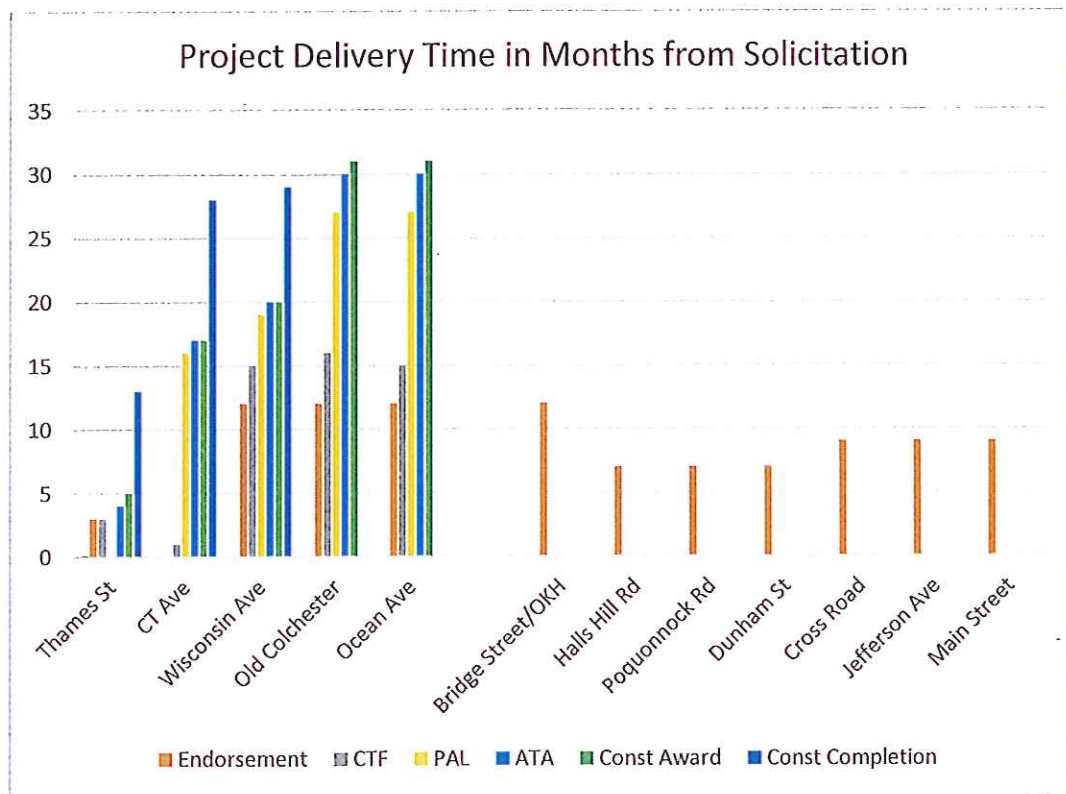


Figure 5

The project timeline has been charted for each project with major milestones in months from Solicitation. There have been three solicitations, the most recent in 2016.

Some final notes; if all endorsed projects receive a commitment to fund, the balance of FY'18 funds at this time is \$2,313,929. Additionally, we anticipate another \$4,480,000 in FY '19. At this time, the COG will be managing 7 projects in design and 2 in construction. This workload will stretch the capacity of the COG at current staffing levels and additional solicitations should be timed to coincide with additional COG staff capacity.

DOT is looking for a high degree of rigor in the Preliminary Design Applications, which will hopefully drive down project timelines. COG staff anticipates no new solicitation until at least the new year (2018); this is an opportunity for towns to work on preliminary design. As a reminder, public involvement is a requirement of this program and should be started prior to application (in the preliminary design stage) and continued through design – the involvement thus far has not appeared robust and poor public involvement can lead to costly change orders and missed opportunities.