

MINUTES OF THE 1 JUNE 2021
SCCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Via ZOOM

Present: Fred Allyn, III, Keith Hedrick, Mark Nickerson, Danielle Chesebrough, Mike Urgo
Staff: James Butler, Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan
Other: Elizabeth Burdick, Ledyard; Lisa Slonus, Weston & Sampson; Brian Kent, Bike Groton

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

1. Ledyard LOTCIP Project/Estimate Adjustment

The Executive Director explained this item was tabled at the previous Executive Committee meeting. Ms. Slonus of Weston & Sampson presented the major cost increases as outlined in her memorandum explaining the reasons for the changes in cost from the estimate that accompanied the original pre-application to the cost figure which has been determined after preparation of the final application. In response to a request from Mr. Nickerson, Ms. Slonus said the original estimate was \$1.87M, and has increased to \$2.85M.

MOTION: To recommend that the SCCOG approve of the cost increase in Ledyard's LOTCIP project to install a multi-use pathway on Colonel Ledyard Highway from \$1.87M to \$2.85 (Nickerson, Hedrick).

Mr. Urgo asked had the cost of \$2.85M been known at the time the SCCOG received the pre-application, would the SCCOG still have selected this project for LOTCIP funding. The Executive Director responded that he believed so, because the project was selected for advancement based on its merits, and that the COG knew it would and still has adequate LOTCIP funding available to fund all the projects submitted during that solicitation.

The Chairman called for a vote and four members voted in favor, with one abstention (Allyn). Motion carried.

2. Requests to Amend SCCOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Executive Director summarized the two requests to amend the MTP, one to include the pedestrian bridge at the planned National Coast Guard Museum in New London, and a second to include the proposed Norwich modification to Exit 18 on I-395 and the construction of an arterial road into a new business park. He said that as he informed the Executive Committee last month, he could not recall any request to amend the region's Transportation Plan to add projects outside of the regularly scheduled required updates to the Plan. He said that both requests are the result of a solicitation by Congressman Courtney for projects and that Congress is giving preference to projects that are in State Transportation Improvement Programs (STIP). He reminded that to be in a STIP, a project must first be in the MPO's MTP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He concluded by saying that he had given these amendment requests careful consideration, and while the timing for amending the MTP is unusual, he sees no

down side for these projects to be included in the region's MTP as FYI (Future Year Investment) with other projects in Appendix B of the Plan.

MOTION: To recommend to the SCCOG the approval of the National Coast Guard Museum Association's and the City of Norwich's request to amend the MTP to include their projects in Appendix B of the MTP (Nickerson, Urgo). So voted unanimously.

3. 2021 Planning Study Prioritization

The Executive Director summarized the two applications received, one from the City of Norwich to conduct a circulation study of Chelsea Harbor Drive and other downtown streets and one from the Town of Groton to prepare a Community Connectivity Master Plan. He referred the Executive Committee to SCCOG Transportation Program Manager Kate Rattan's memo to him, in which she recommends prioritizing the Norwich project as first priority and the Groton project as second priority.

MOTION: To recommend to the SCCOG as Planning Study priorities the Norwich Chelsea Harbor/Downtown Mobility Study as first priority, and Town of Groton Community Connectivity Master Plan as second priority (Urgo, Chesebrough). So voted unanimously.

4. Bike Groton Request for Corridor Study

The Executive Director introduced Brian Kent, President of Bike Groton. Mr. Kent outlined his request for the SCCOG to conduct a corridor study of the proposed Eastern Shoreline Path (ESP). He noted that the Eastern Shoreline Path was recommended in SCCOG's 2019 Bike-Pedestrian Plan. He underscored that the ESP would be a designated route as opposed to a facility. He said that CTDOT's Bureau of Planning is interested in this proposal, but has advised that a high level study of conditions impacting engineering and safety needs to be done before such a designation is assigned. He asked that SCCOG and its staff advance the proposed study to CTDOT. The Executive Director asked how much would the requested study cost, and how the funding share might work. Discussion ensued, with members noting that CTDOT has to be intimately involved for such a study to succeed because the majority of the route designation would be on State roads. The Executive Director suggested that SCCOG staff work with Mr. Kent this summer to begin drafting a scope, and to then set up meetings with CTDOT to discuss the draft scope and how such the study might be funded. He said he would hope to bring information developed back to the Executive Committee in the fall. Executive Committee members present voiced their concurrence with this approach.

5. FY 2021 TIP/STIP Amendments

The Chairman summarized the proposed TIP/STIP amendments.

MOTION: To recommend to the full SCCOG the approval of the FY 2021 TIP/STIP amendments (Nickerson, Hedrick). So voted unanimously.

6. Discussion re: Resumption of In-Person SCCOG Meetings

The Executive Committee discussed a schedule for resumption of in-person SCCOG board meetings. It was agreed that the first in-person SCCOG meeting would be July 21st. Staff informed the Executive Committee of plans to allow the SCCOG to conduct hybrid meetings where both in-person and Zoom meeting attendance can take place in the large meeting room.

7. Other

The Executive Director said that New London Homeless Hospitality Director Cathy Zall has requested to address the SCCOG regarding the UniteCT emergency rental assistance program. The Executive Committee agreed to have Ms. Zall address the SCCOG at the June 16th meeting.

The Executive Director noted that while recently in the process of advertising for a new Planner, he noted that the SCCOG's salary schedule is out of date, with numerous staff's salaries falling outside of the published range for their positions. He said that the last salary study done for the SCCOG was performed by the Essex Group in 2013. He said that a lot has changed since then including different job titles and duties for some staff, and he recommended a new salary study be conducted before the next budget cycle. The Executive Committee agreed and stated their consent for the conduct of such a study.

The Executive Director reported that he had recently received one additional request from a SCCOG member municipality to provide Zoning Enforcement services. He said that although the time the Town requires is only five hours per week, the CEO of the Town has informed him that the fully-loaded hourly rate that the SCCOG charges for staff is more than that Town can afford/is willing to pay. The Executive Committee briefly considered this issue and agreed that the SCCOG has to continue charging all of its Towns contracting for this service both the direct hourly and the audited BF&O rate for the Planner assigned. The Executive Director stated that he is hoping to put a list together of ZEOs who might be interested in directly contracting with this town and other towns in the region needing this service.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James S. Butler, Executive Director