



**SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
FY 2021 Annual Report**

Submitted to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, and the
Planning and Development Committee and the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding
Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

Pursuant to CGS 4-66r

24 September 2021

ABOUT THE SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) is one of nine regional councils of governments in Connecticut. Its predecessor agency, the Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency, was first established under the Connecticut General Statutes in January 1961. It transformed itself into a council of governments in October 1992 through the adoption of ordinances for this purpose by the twenty towns, cities, and boroughs that composed the region at that time. In 2014, as the result of legislation that consolidated regions, the Towns of Lebanon and Windham joined the SCCOG, and Voluntown left, bringing the number of SCCOG member municipalities to twenty-one. In 2015, the Borough of Jewett City, located in SCCOG member municipality Griswold, voted to join the SCCOG as its twenty-second member.



Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments Region

SCCOG member municipalities and the chief elected officials/chief executives who represent their municipality on the SCCOG board are:

Bozrah	Glenn Pianka, First Selectman
Colchester	Mary Bylone, First Selectman
East Lyme	Mark Nickerson, First Selectman
Franklin	Charles Grant, First Selectman
Griswold	Todd Babbitt, First Selectman
Borough of Jewett City	Timothy Sharkey, Warden
City of Groton	Keith Hedrick, Mayor
Town of Groton	Patrice Granatosky, Mayor; John Burt, Town Manager
Lebanon	Kevin Cwikla, First Selectman
Ledyard	Fred Allyn, III, Mayor
Lisbon	Thomas Sparkman, First Selectman
Montville	Ron McDaniel, Mayor
New London	Michael Passero, Mayor
North Stonington	Michael Urgo, First Selectman
Norwich	Peter Nystrom, Mayor; John Salomone, City Manager
Preston	Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, First Selectman
Salem	Kevin Lyden, First Selectman
Sprague	Cheryl Allen Blanchard, First Selectman
Stonington Borough	Jeffrey Callahan, Warden
Town of Stonington	Danielle Chesebrough, First Selectman
Waterford	Rob Brule, First Selectman
Windham	Tom DeVivo, Mayor; Jim Rivers, Town Manager

The SCCOG is unique in that it also counts as affiliate non-voting members the state's only two federally recognized Native American tribes, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and the Mohegan Tribe, and has liaison representation from the region's two military installations, the United States Naval Submarine Base and the United States Coast Guard Academy.

A staff of nine currently supports the work of the Council. These include an executive director, a deputy director/director of special projects, five planners, an office manager, and a GIS coordinator. Operation of the staff is governed by personnel policies adopted by the Council.

FY 2021 ANNUAL REPORT TO OPM AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In accordance with CGS Sec. 4-66r (2018 Supplement), the annual report due by October 1st shall:

(1) summarize the expenditure of such grant funds, (2) describe any regional program, project or initiative currently provided or planned by the council, (3) review the performance of any existing regional program, project or initiative relative to its initial goals and objectives, (4) analyze the existing services provided by member municipalities or by the state that, in the opinion of the council, could be more effectively or efficiently provided on a regional basis, and (5) provide recommendations for legislative action concerning potential impediments to the regionalization of services.

1) SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE OF FY 2021 RSG FUNDS

In FY 2021, SCCOG received \$322,954 in Regional Service Grant (RSG) funding. SCCOG assigned the following expenditures to the RSG:

FY 21 Regional Services Grant	\$ 322,954
Expenditures:	
OPM Regional Planning	
Direct Salary	\$ 127,487
BF&O	\$ 132,982
SUB-TOTAL	\$ 260,469
OPM COVID Recovery	
Direct Salary	\$ 34,032
BF&O	\$ 35,499
SUB-TOTAL	\$ 69,531
TOTAL	\$ 330,000

Pending completion of its Annual Audit, it appears that the SCCOG overspent its RSG by \$7,046. SCCOG funds will be used to cover this overage, thereby “leveraging” the FY 2021 Regional Service Grant.

2) SCCOG’S REGIONAL PROGRAMS

This past year the SCCOG provided/planned to provide a number of different programs and projects that fall into four broad program areas, some of which are funded by the RSG and some by other funding sources:

A. Comprehensive Planning:

This program operates with a combination of funds from the annual municipal dues to the Council and the RSG grant from the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management. Major tasks within the program include: support of regional economic development efforts; administrative and technical support of the Council of Governments; the conduct of mandated review activities; legislative review; coordination with other agencies; training programs for members of local commissions; provision of assistance and training to local officials and the public in using census materials; analysis of census data; coordination with other agencies; non-reimbursed technical assistance to member municipalities; and the provision of information to the public. Of note are the following initiatives:

Regional Planning: In 2017 the Council adopted an updated Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD), and work on implementing actions continued this past fiscal year. The RPOCD recommends a number of strategies and specific activities that are being implemented via our hazard mitigation planning, shared services coordination, housing planning, planner and commissioner training, transportation planning and regional economic development activities discussed in this report. In addition, SCCOG's statutorily-required review of municipal Plans of Conservation and Development includes documentation of how the contents of each municipal plan specifically relate to regional goals and strategies. SCCOG encourages municipal requests for state or federal funding to include statements of how proposed municipal activities relate to regional goals established in the RPOCD and has assisted municipal staff in preparing this information. Throughout the year, the SCCOG holds a quarterly meeting of the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), consisting of representatives of each of our member municipalities' planning commissions, to engage the municipal commissions in regional initiatives, share best practices, provide training on specific topics, and identify issues of concern that the SCCOG might assist in addressing. In FY 2021, SCCOG staff facilitated virtual meetings with the RPC with the primary topic of discussing how individual municipalities were responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Activities: SCCOG staff continued to assist member municipalities in responding to the COVID-19 public health crisis throughout FY 2021. Activities included convening regular special ZOOM meetings with the region's municipal CEOs and health district directors to transmit current information and public health guidance, and regularly compiling information from member municipalities to enable consistency in COVID protocols. SCCOG continued to support Connecticut's Executive Branch agencies, particularly DEMHS, in coordinating a Regional Recovery steering committee and associated working groups, at the request of the Office of the Governor. This work required a substantial investment of time in conducting outreach to regional stakeholders and preparing materials in preparation and response to COVID recovery meetings. SCCOG staff also attended weekly COVID response calls convened by the Departments of Agriculture and Department of Aging and Disability Services. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SCCOG expanded its capacity to conduct virtual and hybrid meetings and provided guidance to member municipalities in complying with changing protocols for public meetings.

Regional Economic Development Activities: During the fiscal year, the SCCOG continued to support the efforts of the Thames River Heritage Park Foundation, which coordinates activities involving close to 20 historic sites as a state park, and which for the fifth consecutive summer

operated a water taxi on the Thames River connecting these sites. The SCCOG and its Executive Director also supported and participated in the work of the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer), and the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB). SCCOG staff also participated in the development of the Eastern CT Next Gen Manufacturing Partnership, an initiative supported by the Governor's Workforce Council.

Housing Planning: SCCOG and its staff continue to support the work of the Southeastern Connecticut Housing Alliance (SECHA) and to provide technical assistance in housing planning and implementation to its member municipalities. As mentioned below in Part D, SCCOG encouraged its member municipalities to apply for CT Department of Housing Affordable Housing Plan Technical Assistance Grants; seven SCCOG municipalities received grants and SCCOG staff assisted six towns with developing draft plans that are being considered for adoption. As part of this work, SCCOG staff also developed region-wide resources including an analysis of Census data and a stand-alone strategy resource guide for affordable housing implementation strategies.

Regional Water Planning: The SCCOG has a Regional Water Committee, which serves as the region's water planning body, with representation on that committee by the major municipal water purveyors in the region. The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (Eastern WUCC), in which SCCOG staff plays an important role, did not convene; however, the State's three WUCCs met convened on three occasions for Statewide WUCC Implementation meetings. SCCOG staff is strongly involved with the Interconnections/Regionalization Workgroup of the Statewide WUCC Implementation effort.

Regional Wastewater Management Planning: In July 2019, SCCOG adopted a Regional Wastewater Management Plan, produced in FY 2018 supported by OPM RSG funds. The plan assesses the current condition of the centralized wastewater system in the region, projects future demand and facility capacity, identifies infrastructure at-risk to natural hazards, and establishes recommendations for local and regional solutions to meet projected wastewater demand. SCCOG staff have kept contact with local wastewater staff to push forward projects identified in the plan.

Regional Stormwater Planning: SCCOG continues to assist the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD) in administering a regional stormwater collaborative. This collaborative brought together and assisted towns in the region which are required under CT DEEP's MS4 Program to implement stormwater control measures.

Hazard Mitigation Planning: Municipalities must have a current FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan in order to receive certain federal funding for disaster planning and hazard mitigation projects. SCCOG satisfies this requirement for its member municipalities through its development of regional hazard mitigation plans, which have been adopted in 2005, 2012, 2015 (to add former WINCOG towns), and 2017. In FY 2019, SCCOG received an OPM RPIP grant to develop a guidebook and toolkit for communities to enroll in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS), which allows a reduction in flood insurance rates for residents in municipalities that have become members of this program, and four are currently enrolled. In FY 2021 SCCOG applied for a FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant to update its hazard mitigation plan; SCCOG expects to receive this grant in fall of 2021.

Brownfields: SCCOG worked with the Towns of Sprague and Lisbon to submit an application for

federal funding under EPA's Community-Wide Assessment Grant program.

Military/Community Planning: SCCOG staff continues to work with SUBASE New London and its neighboring municipalities to identify and resolve potential use conflicts. In December 2017, SCCOG completed a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) with SUBASE New London to identify current or potential conflicts between military activities and existing or planned uses in surrounding municipalities. This project was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment (DOD OEA), with an in-kind match provided by the SCCOG and six participating municipalities. In 2018, SCCOG was granted additional DOD OEA funding to review and develop actions to address projected housing and transportation needs expected from increased employment at Electric Boat, located one mile south of the SUBASE. This project was completed in late 2019. In 2020, SCCOG received an additional grant from DOD Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (formerly OEA) to address parking issues in the vicinity of Electric Boat in the City of Groton. That project commenced in late 2020 and is expected to be completed in 2022.

Human Services Coordination: SCCOG continues to staff a Regional Human Services Coordinating Council (RHSCC) to support the capacity of the region's human service providers and encourage coordination and efficiencies. SCCOG formed the first COG-sponsored RHSCC in the State in 2011, prior to RHSCCs being required by state statute. The RHSCC brings together representatives from the region's human service network and SCCOG chief elected officials to coordinate activities and to discuss matters of mutual concern. In FY 2019, a Regional Performance Incentive Grant enabled SCCOG to complete a study outlining opportunities for shared services and regional collaboration. SCCOG has continued to work with RHSCC members to develop shared resources addressing agency and community needs, most recently working with the United Way of Southeastern CT, Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT, and Community Foundation of Southeastern CT to develop a volunteer/board recruitment and training program.

Municipal Shared Services: In late 2014, SCCOG received an RPIP grant to prepare a municipal shared services study; work was completed on this project during FY 2018. Since the project's completion, SCCOG has continued to explore opportunities to provide regional resources that provide human resources services, sharing of public works resources, building inspection services, and specialized land use administration and enforcement. Additional discussion of the shared services study's recommendations is included below in section 4. In Fiscal Year 2021, SCCOG worked with its member municipalities to explore developing regional resources to address continued and emerging needs for qualified Building Services, Zoning Enforcement, and Inland Wetlands personnel. As a result, SCCOG hired a part-time Building Inspector to provide these services to two member municipalities. In addition, 13 of SCCOG's 22 member municipalities participated in CRCOG's Capitol Region Purchasing Council during the year.

Municipal Planner and Commissioner Training: In FY 2021, SCCOG continued to work towards the goal of educating regional commissioners and planners. The training video series started in the previous fiscal year was added to with a dedicated Zoning Board of Appeals video. As State Statutes now require that land use commissioners attend educational sessions, the COG will continue to assist towns in meeting this requirement. Additionally, the COG worked with municipal planners to determine how municipalities and land use commissions specifically were responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Planners were also invited to the quarterly Regional Planning Commission meetings.

Statutory Planning and Zoning Referrals: Connecticut General Statutes require that municipalities advise Councils of Governments of certain changes to zoning or subdivision regulations to allow COGs to assess potential intermunicipal impacts. During the past FY, SCCOG staff reviewed and responded to 55 statutorily required referrals from municipalities in or adjacent to the SCCOG region.

2020 Census Participation: In FY 2021, the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments worked with its municipalities to attain a complete count in the 2020 Decennial Census. Following the completion of the Census, staff has also tracked the release of Census results. In addition, the SCCOG became recognized as an Anchor Partner of the Census Bureau by promoting data summits to municipalities. SCCOG staff also stayed informed of Census-related news to be able to provide answers to any municipalities with questions.

Sustainable CT: Eight of SCCOG's 19 eligible municipalities are currently certified bronze through this program. This past summer SCCOG hosted two Sustainable CT fellows, provided by the Institute for Sustainable Energy, who worked with 13 towns seeking certification, re-certification, or certification at the silver level from previous bronze certification. Four towns submitted applications for recertification.

Regional Geographic Information Systems: SCCOG continues to maintain and update a regional web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) portal, which SCCOG initially created with the support of a 2009 RPIP grant. SCCOG also complies with PA 18-175, which requires municipalities with digital parcel data to transmit that data to their Council of Governments, and for COGs to then deliver that data to OPM annually. SCCOG gathers the data annually and provides the required material to OPM.

Regional Online Property Information: In 2013, SCCOG received another RPIP grant to prepare an online property survey index for SCCOG towns; this index geolocates documents that are used by property owners, engineers, and consultants, and are otherwise difficult to find as they are not similarly indexed in municipal applications.

Legislative Coordination: The SCCOG meets annually with the southeastern Connecticut legislative delegation to discuss issues important to SCCOG member municipalities that might be the subject of proposed legislation before the start of the legislative session. SCCOG's 2021 legislative agenda included calls for actions on the following:

- Actions to ensure greater predictability and stability for education costs (particularly special education)
- Actions to divert bottles and cans from municipal solid waste (addressed by PA 21-58)
- Authorization of municipal stormwater authorities (addressed by PA 21-115)
- Work with the Mashantucket-Pequot and Mohegan Tribes on the expansion of gaming in Connecticut (addressed by PA 21-23).

In addition, representatives from the federal legislative delegation representing southeastern Connecticut regularly attend and report on their activities at the SCCOG's monthly meetings.

B. Transportation Planning:

This program consists of three sub-elements.

The general transportation planning program is funded with municipal dues, a CTDOT grant, and funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Major tasks include: updating of the regional transportation plan; data collection and analysis; assessment of the transportation impact of large trip generators including the region's casinos and tourist attractions; updating of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); activities related to meeting the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments; technical assistance to municipalities on a non-reimbursable basis; public information; participation with CTDOT in a variety of projects. Other tasks include further development of the Council's geographic information system capability; a comprehensive regional survey of local land use; and special studies as needed.

In FY 2021, SCCOG adopted the following major transportation plans: 2019-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (addition of projects to regional priority list), 2021-2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program. SCCOG reviewed and adopted a Regional Transportation Safety Plan, produced by CT DOT, which SCCOG will update every four years going forward. SCCOG's activities were reviewed by FHWA as part of its quadrennial review process. SCCOG staff conducted counts at park & ride facility utilization on a quarterly basis and submitted this information to CT DOT.

Since 2014, SCCOG has received funding from CTDOT to administer and manage the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) in the region. Five LOTICIP projects have been completed, one is completing construction, and five are in design. In FY 2021 additional project concepts for LOTICIP funding were advanced, with one project conceived in FY 2020 submitting its full funding application. Projects funded with Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds progressed, with construction in New London nearly complete and a project in Norwich proceeding to contract stage.

Implementation of SCCOG's 2019 Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan continued with activities including the preparation of Bicycle Facility Planning Study for Route 2 in North Stonington, and providing technical assistance to the Bike Groton group. SCCOG also responded to a request for information from CT DOT planning regarding local bicycle plans and data. SCCOG's most recent UPWP includes staff time to plan for the proposed Eastern Shoreline Path.

SCCOG staff ensured that member municipalities were aware of funding opportunities, reviewed applications, and provided letters of support where appropriate (Community Connectivity, BUILD, Corridor Studies). SCCOG solicited applications for Section 5310 grants (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities) and submitted six successful applications to CT DOT.

The transit planning program is funded with municipal dues and CTDOT's transportation planning grant, which includes funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The primary activities include: technical planning assistance to Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) and the Eastern Connecticut Transportation Consortium (ECTC); forecasting SEAT's financial needs and revenues; activities related to meeting the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments and the Americans With Disabilities Act; and public information. Included in the technical assistance to SEAT is

support of efforts to implement new transit initiatives. In 2014, SCCOG worked with SEAT to develop Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) of the SEAT bus system. During FY 2021, SCCOG staff continued to work with SEAT staff and the SEAT Board of Directors to implement the report's recommendations, and provided assistance with the development of a microtransit service in New London.

A number of special projects important to improving travel in the region have been conducted under this program. SCCOG worked with CT DOT to advance potential improvements to the Gold Star Bridge, providing information so that CT DOT could review feasibility of improving pedestrian facilities. SCCOG staff also engaged with the City of Norwich and CT DOT on a concept to reroute Route 2 away from Norwich's downtown areas. SCCOG also solicited requests for corridor studies and advanced successful applications for corridor study projects in Norwich and Groton.

C. Emergency Management Planning:

SCCOG has played several roles in coordinating emergency management planning in the region. In 2014, upon the dissolution of WINCOG, SCCOG assumed the role of lead fiduciary for the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Region 4 Regional Emergency Planning Team (REPT), which it continues to do. In FY 2021, the REPT and its REPT Steering Committee approved a \$385,659.20 budget for the purchase of equipment and services and for the provision of training to the region's emergency responders. In addition to these grant funds, SCCOG administered six other ongoing emergency management grants during the past fiscal year.

D. Technical Planning Assistance to Municipalities:

In FY 2021, SCCOG contracted with six of its member municipalities to provide municipal planning services to member towns on a reimbursable basis. Towns receiving this service include Bozrah (two contracts: one for Planning and Zoning, and one for Inland Wetlands); Franklin (Planning and Zoning, and Inland Wetlands); Lisbon (Planning and Zoning); Salem (Planning and Zoning); and Sprague (Planning and Zoning). During this past year, SCCOG staff provided a total of 2,115 hours of technical assistance to the participating municipalities under this program. In addition, SCCOG provided on-call planning assistance on an emergency or temporary basis to its member towns, such as when a town requires additional support of existing staff or when a town is in the process of conducting a search for a new planner.

In FY 2021, SCCOG worked with several towns (North Stonington, Bozrah, Franklin, Salem, Sprague, and Lebanon) to assist them in their preparation and adoption of Affordable Housing Plans, partially supported by CT Department of Housing technical assistance grants. In FY 2021, SCCOG staff spent 537 hours on this service, under contract to the receiving municipalities. SCCOG also assisted several other municipalities in applying for the most recent round of grants for this work and expects to continue this service in FY 2022.

As previously mentioned, in FY 2021 SCCOG developed a program to offer Building Official services to municipalities, in response to a need expressed by several municipalities. Under contract to two municipalities (Ledyard and Preston), SCCOG contractors provided 406 hours of service.

In addition to maintaining region-wide parcel data and a regional GIS and parcel documents viewer, SCCOG staff provided additional GIS services to municipalities under contract as needed, including

developing an online, interactive Trails viewer for the Town of Ledyard.

3) PERFORMANCE OF SCCOG’S REGIONAL PROGRAMS

The SCCOG adopts a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) every two years as required by federal law in order to receive transportation planning funds in its capacity as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Each year, SCCOG prepares an annual Work Program that summarizes the work planned in that particular year including that work outlined in the UPWP. These two documents collectively document SCCOG’s goals and objectives, planned tasks, and budgets allotted for specific tasks and programs. The SCCOG’s FY 2021 Work Program, adopted by the SCCOG on December 18, 2019, is as follows. A review of this document in comparison to the above-described regional programs and services would indicate that the SCCOG achieved its goals and objectives with the funding which was actually made available to it this past fiscal year.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAM:

Funding:	OPM Regional Services Grant	\$387,500	
	SCCOG (Municipal Dues)	97,029	*
	SECHA	12,000	
	Investment Income	500	
	DEMHS FY 18 RCG	10,000	
	DEMHS FY 19 RCG	10,000	
	DEMHS FY 20 RCG	5,000	
	DEMHS FY 17 EMPG	1,500	
	TOTAL:	\$523,529	**

* Total dues to be collected is \$157,688, with \$60,659 used to match federal and state transportation funds.

** Includes funding for unallocated/return to Reserve. Actual funds available for comprehensive planning program are \$397,359.

Tasks		
1.	Program management	\$50,000
2.	Public information and participation	\$5,000
3.	Provide administrative and technical support for the Council of Governments including its Regional Planning Commission (RPC), Regional Human Services Coordinating Council (RHSCC), and other committees as needed	\$234,859
4.	Support economic development efforts with planning services including ongoing implementation of the regional CEDS; participation in seCTer; and EWIB	\$10,000
5.	Coordinate and cooperate with other agencies	\$10,000
6.	Provide technical assistance to municipalities, including training programs	\$20,000
7.	Perform Census-related activities, including assistance to the Bureau of the Census in reviewing and analyzing information from the 2010 Census and preparation for the 2020 Census	\$1,000
8.	Provide technical and administrative support to the SCCOG Regional Water Committee, the Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC), and other efforts to promote a regional water network	\$5,000
9.	Perform advisory reviews of matters referred under Federal and State law	\$2,000
10.	Monitor and act on legislation affecting the region	\$2,000
11.	Serves as fiduciary and participates in DEMHS Region 4 Collaboration with NECCOG to support Regional Emergency Planning Team, including administration of HazMat program	\$26,500
12.	Ongoing implementation of the 2017 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (non-transportation elements)	\$5,000
13.	Implement the two-part Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) completed in 2019.	\$5,000
14.	Continue to provide Regional Election Monitor services using a grant from the Secretary of the State	\$9,000
15.	Continue to assist the Southeastern Connecticut Housing Alliance (SECHA) in their advocacy for more affordable housing in the region	\$12,000

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROGRAM:

Funding:	CTDOT Grant	\$545,930
	SCCOG	60,659
	LOTICIP	5,000
	TOTAL:	\$611,589

Tasks:		
1.	Program management	\$65,0006
2.	Public information and participation	\$30,0005
3.	Coordination and cooperation with other agencies, including CTDOT	\$40,000
4.	Data base development and management	\$51,1000
5.	Prepare and adopt an updated Regional Transportation Plan	\$25,000
6.	Prepare and adopt an updated Regional Transportation Improvement Program	\$10,000
7.	Coordinate tasks in FY 2017-19 Unified Planning Work Program; prepare and adopt a FY 2019-2021 Unified Planning Work Program	\$3,000
8.	As needed, participate in ongoing statewide transportation initiatives	\$10,000
9.	Continue implementation of the 2017 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (transportation related elements)	\$10,000
10.	Maintain and implement the SCCOG's Congestion Mitigation Process (CMP)	\$25,000
11.	Prepare and implement the requirements of the agency's Title VI Program	\$5,000
12.	Monitor and assist with major projects/issues:	\$50,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up activities related to: Rtes. 2, 2A, and 32 improvements; Rte. 85 improvements, and other regional transportation priorities. Participate in preparation of updated I-95 study Port of New London/State Pier Ferry service improvements Rail: electrification/other improvements; passenger service revitalization; including advocate for expansion of SLE Multi-modal facilities development and preservation of multi-modal function at Union Station State priority transportation projects in the region Groton-New London Airport development Assist Norwich Alternative Fuels Initiative Preston/Ledyard/Groton Bikeway Initiative 	
13.	Prepare a regional transportation safety plan in accordance with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan	\$5,000
14.	Completion preparation of regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	\$5,000
15.	Provide technical assistance to member municipalities, assistance may include:	\$80,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use/traffic corridor studies Transportation elements of local plans 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic counts 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access management study follow-up 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation facilities, including multi-modal 	
16.	Review applications and oversee grants for Section 5310, vehicle replacement, and other Surface Transportation Programs such as, the Municipal Grants for the Elderly; LOCHSTP; the Local Road Accident Program, the Enhancement Program and STP-U funding program	\$20,000
17.	Within available resources, conduct regional studies/planning activities:	\$168,589
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with CTDOT, affected municipalities, and the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Indian Tribes in developing strategies to manage casino impact on the region's transportation system 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist SEAT in the following areas: implementing the Comprehensive Operational Analysis completed in 2015; projecting financial needs; designing routes and schedules; updating the plan to provide transit services under the Americans With Disabilities Act; integration with LOCHSTP and conducting facility improvement studies as needed 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in interagency planning and coordination related to transit support for the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute/Welfare-to-Work Program 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop the Geographic Information System for the region, including maintaining a web-based Regional GIS 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical assistance to the Eastern Connecticut Transportation Consortium (ECTC) in the area of paratransit service 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with SEAT, ECTC, and the Rideshare Company and other organizations to coordinate their separate transit and paratransit services for the region, including Jobs Access and Reverse Commute program, welfare to work, Municipal Grants for the Elderly, Groton-Dial-A-Ride and other programs into a LOCHSTP program. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Environmental Justice program 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and analyze 2010 Census information for use in COG's transportation planning program 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Congestion Management System (CMS) Strategy reports 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with CTDOT efforts to examine freight movements through and to the region 	
18.	Manage the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) in the Region, including application review and prioritization, and design review of proposed municipal projects	\$5,000
19.	Assist CTDOT in conducting the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvement in this region	\$5,000

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Funding:	Contracts with Municipalities	\$140,000

Tasks:		
	Provide planning services to municipalities on a fee-for-service basis. The assistance includes advisory services to local commissions, the conduct of special studies, the updating of local plans or regulations, and GIS assistance. In FY 2021, contracts were held with Bozrah (2), Franklin, Lisbon, Salem, and Sprague	

4) ANALYSIS OF SERVICES THAT COULD BE PROVIDED REGIONALLY

As stated in section 2) above, using an RPIP grant, the SCCOG completed work in FY 2018 on a Shared Services Opportunity Study for its member municipalities. The key objectives of this study was to examine current examples of shared services in the region; identify and evaluate potential impact of new shared service opportunities; and provide a process template that could be transferrable to other regions and municipalities in Connecticut. The study identified 33 existing shared arrangements where services are shared in 15 service areas. Opportunities for sharing services were examined for potential cost savings, potential service enhancement, and for potential improvement in service sustainability. The final shared services report that was prepared by the SCCOG may be read in full at seccog.org/publications. Some of the opportunities for new or expanded shared service arrangements include:

- regional animal control
- increased number of municipalities contracting with SCCOG for planning services
- shared assessment operations
- joint bidding for revaluation services
- selling/swapping unique public works services and specialty equipment
- shared marketing of recreational programs through use of a common website for registration and scheduling
- sharing of training opportunities
- potential formation of regional district to administer recreation functions
- evaluation of alignment of municipal and board of education financial software under joint license using a common system
- migration to single Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and Document Management system across the region
- integrated municipal and boards of education Human Resources offices
- joint bidding/procurement of IT hardware and software.

5) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Funding: Our first recommendation continues to be provision of a stable source of funding for Councils of Governments, which is important to allow us to continue to provide the programs and services that we do now, and that we might be able to do if the State and our member municipalities so requested. This includes the maintenance of Regional Service Grants at or in excess of the FY 2021 appropriation, and restoration of funding for the Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP).

Authority: A second recommendation is to further clarify in state statute that Councils of Governments can provide any service regionally that its member municipalities can, whether expressly stated in statute or not. As an example, our attempt to establish a regional ethics commission was put on hold in response to our attorney's opinion that this was not expressly allowed in state statute, and therefore could pose a problem in terms of appeals taken against the findings and recommendations of a regional commission. This lack of a statute allowing COGs to perform services for its members collectively that towns can perform individually, continues to be an impediment raised when regionalization of services is discussed.

Solid Waste Management: Although SCCOG's member municipalities are not directly impacted by the anticipated closing of the MIRA recycling plant in Hartford, they are similarly being stressed by the increasing and unpredictable costs of disposing of solid waste, including recyclables. What was once a revenue source (recyclables) has now become an additional expense paid out of general municipal budgets. In both 2020 and 2021, SCCOG's legislative agenda has asked for legislation that recognizes the changing financial implications of solid waste and recycling disposal. The agenda recommended three actions:

- 1) Increase the bottle redemption fee and expand the program to include additional bottle types (an act passed to implement this recommendation. Ban the sale of nips (no action).
- 2) Direct DEEP to revise its guidance and recommendations regarding single-stream recycling, an approach which is no longer economically viable due to changes in the global market for recycled materials.
- 3) Pass legislation to allow the use of crushed glass in the construction of roads, sidewalks, and septic systems. Currently, the only CT DEEP approved use of this recycled product is for landfill cover, and since there are few landfills left, the demand for the product is low. Allowing it to be used for other regulated purposes would reduce its volume in the waste disposal stream, thereby reducing costs, and would help create a market for recycled glass.