

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Minutes

May 2, 2023 Executive Committee

Held by Zoom

PRESENT:

Danielle Chesebrough (Chairman), John Salomone, Cheryl Blanchard, Charlie Grant, Fred Allyn. CT DOT: Elise Greenberg, Jennifer Pacacha. AECOM: Jill Cahoon. Staff: Amanda Kennedy, Kate Rattan.

Chairman Chesebrough opened the meeting at 8:32 AM.

1. Briefing: Eastern CT Rail and Transit Feasibility Study (ECTRS)

Ms. Greenberg stated that the study was directed by the legislature for CTDOT to review the feasibility of extending commuter rail to Rhode Island, establish new rail stations in Groton and Stonington Borough, provide commuter rail connecting New London to Norwich, and extend other ground transportation and improve interconnectivity in the region. Outreach has included public meetings, employer interviews, and five subject working groups. A Preliminary Feasibility Study has been completed. A major constraint is that there is capacity for only one additional train to cross the railroad bridge over the Thames River per hour, in each direction. This limits new crossings from New London to points east. Also, M8 train sets require high level platforms, which cannot be placed on curves. The Study reviewed multiple potential rail station areas on the main line and selected four for additional study, including an alternative to the current Mystic station (located on a curve), and feasibility of high-level platforms in Westerly.

Ms. Cahoon summarized the analysis of rail feasibility connecting New London to Norwich, which determined that the western rail line was more feasible than the eastern due to lack of bridge constraints, immediate ridership demand at Mohegan Sun and additional redevelopment potential, and the coordination with the SUBASE that would be necessary were passenger rail to run on the eastern corridor passing through the SUBASE. Both alignments would require infrastructure investments. The preliminary feasibility study recommends short term improvements to local bus quality and routes and a route to Hartford. The study will complete technical analyses with a refined set of alternatives and hold additional public meetings in September. The Final Plan will be completed in November and will include a TOD

Member Municipalities:

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market assessment for each station area.

Mayor Allyn asked how heavily subsidized Shoreline East is right now, Ms. Greenberg stated it has the lowest farebox recovery of the three commuter rail services in CT. Ms. Kennedy asked if legislators have been engaged in the study. Ms. Greenberg stated yes, indirectly, and there has been interest from RI legislators as well.

2. Municipal Solid Waste

Ms. Kennedy asked for direction on how SCCOG should get involved with MSW issues, after CEOs had raised it as an issue in several meetings. She presented several options. Mr. Grant supported SCCOG forming an ad hoc working group, and Mr. Salomone concurred. Ms. Chesebrough said that municipal staff leads should be engaged in addition to CEOs. Mr. Salomone suggested asking CCM to participate/present. Mayor Allyn suggested asking SCRRRA to attend. Mr. Grant said he would reach out to Windham Mayor DeVivo to participate. Mayor Allyn volunteered to chair the working group and Mr. Grant volunteered to vice chair.

3. Quarterly Budget Review

Ms. Kennedy presented a third quarter budget vs. actual report, which did not identify any major issues. Payroll is slightly less than expected at this point because of a staff departure and delay in onboarding new staff earlier this year.

4. STIP/TIP Amendment

Ms. Kennedy stated one TIP amendment request came in for review, for service plaza signs on I95 & I395.

<u>FACode</u>	<u>Proj#</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>Comme nts</u>
NHPP	0170-3640	I-95 & I-395	STATEWIDE	SERVICE PLAZA MAINLINE SIGN AND SIGN SUPPORT REPLACEMENT	CON	FYI	3,750	3,750	0	0	NEW PROJECT

MOTION: To recommend approval of the TIP amendment by the full SCCOG Board (Blanchard, Grant). So voted unanimously.

5. Resolution: Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Ms. Kennedy presented the Unified Planning Work Program, which is the workplan SCCOG files with CTDOT, FTA, and FHWA for the two-year period ending June 2025. She noted that transportation planning funding has increased under the current federal infrastructure bill and the UPWP includes an additional staff person focused on transportation as well as a budget for consulting activities. SCCOG will need to provide a resolution approving the document.

MOTION: To recommend approval of the UPWP by the full SCCOG Board (Grant, Allyn). So voted unanimously.

6. seCTer Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Ms. Kennedy stated that seCTer is currently taking public comment on the draft CEDS and that Paul Whitescarver will report on any changes to be made at our SCCOG meeting.

MOTION: To recommend approval of the CEDS by the full SCCOG Board (Salomone, Grant). So voted unanimously.

7. Speaker Requests/Scheduling

Ms. Kennedy stated Eversource's Steve Sullivan is scheduled for November 15th. She asked whether the Board would be interested in presentations by CISA (cybersecurity) or the State Opioid Committee (re opioid settlement funds). Allyn, Grant mentioned that many towns had completed cybersecurity audits. Ms. Blanchard thought the opioid speaker would be helpful, especially for the smaller municipalities. Mayor Allyn mentioned Ledyard was working with Ledge Light and SRRAC. Ms. Kennedy suggested Jen Muggeo could speak on Ledge Light's coordination work and said she would continue working on identifying a resource.

8. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting (Chesebrough).

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda E. Kennedy, Executive Director