SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Representing 22 towns, cities, and boroughs in Southeastern Connecticut.

TO: SECOG Board of Directors
FROM: Amanda Kennedy, Executive Director
MEETING: June 11, 2025
SUBJECT: Monthly Executive Director's Report

1) Financial and Management Matters

A) Grants/funding:

- Yantic flooding: It does not appear that Sen. Osten was able to secure funding for the Yantic flood phase 2 work.
- Solid Waste: Staff are evaluating a potential application for CT Sustainable Materials Management funds to further our solid waste program.
- Brownfields: EPA notified SECOG that we were selected to receive a $1.2 M grant through the Coalition Assessment program. This will fund assessments, remediation plan development, and reuse plans for multiple sites in the region. Emily Bigl and I attended grantee orientation last week at EPA Boston HQ. Thank you to Helen Zincavage and Ms. Bigl for their work in securing this highly competitive grant.
- HB 5002, the housing omnibus bill awaiting Lamont's signature, incudes $400,000 for each COG to hire two staff to provide technical assistance on housing and either solid waste or stormwater.

B) FY 2025 audit: Audit is completed and shows healthy reserves and overall good accounting practices. One corrective action asking for better ongoing tracking of our Municipal shared services program, which relies upon revenue from our RSG grant, our OPM RPIP grants, and multiple municipalities. SECOG submitted a corrective action plan and has a plan in place to ensure quarterly reconciliation of revenues and expenses for this program.

C) Staffing: We have begun the hiring process to bring on a planner specializing in communications and public engagement to support all SECOG programs.

D) Transportation

- Funding Programs

If disability or language assistance is needed, please contact SECOG at 860-889-2324, office@secogct.gov.

Si necesita asistencia lingüística, por favor comuníquese a SECOG.

如果需要残障或语言帮助，请联系 SECOG.

(1) LOTCIP: Debra Pierce is assisting active towns in navigating this program. SECOG held interviews and selected two firms to provide consultant services in FY26 and FY27. 2025 Solicitation of projects anticipated for September. Detailed progress report will be included quarterly.

(2) Transportation Rural Improvement Program (TRIP):

a. In Design/Received Commitment to Fund: Preston – authorized to bid construction contract

(3) Transportation Alternatives (TAP)

(a) Preston Poquetanuck Village Heritage Walk Phase 2 – authorized to bid design

(b) Windham - Air Line Trail and Bridge Resurfacing – negotiating design contract

(c) Groton Depot Rd to Thomas Rd

(d) New London Williams St Phase 2 -

(e) Projects underway:

(i) Norwich- NL Tpke S: City purchasing easements, contract documents approved.

(ii) New London- Williams St: Completing survey and starting design of improvements.

(iii) Groton- G&S Trail to Thomas Rd: Consultant selected, scoping underway.

(4) **Active Transportation Microgrants (up to $5,000 for bike/ped muni/education/non-profit/health districts): Applications for the current round are due June 18th.** CY 2025 Program changes include expanded eligibility for bike racks and health districts. Municipalities are encouraged to review appendix E of the 2019 Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan for potential bike rack locations. Additionally, CTDOT has offered event assistance for awardees (contact bridget.moriarty@ct.gov).

(5) Recreational Trails: n/a

(6) **Community Connectivity: SECOG issued letters of support showing regional significance/coordination for projects in Preston, New London, Groton, and Colchester.**

- SECOG Plans/Studies
  (1) Metropolitan Transportation Plan
  (2) Transportation Improvement Plan**:** secogct.gov's TIP Map has been revised to provide easier access to transportation project information.
  (3) Safety Action Plan: **Project website at secogct.gov/region-comprehensive-safety-action-plan. Public meetings being held 6/16 2 pm virtual and 6/17 5:30 pm at SECOG.**
  (4) Congestion Mitigation Process: SECOG working with consultant (VN) to update CMP, which will include outreach to municipalities.
  (5) Regional Bike/Ped Plan
  (6) Corridor Studies:
    (a) Route 32: CTDOT has begun advancing implementation of the Rte 32 corridor study recommendations.
    (b) East Lyme Rte 161: CTDOT requested additional information. SECOG will task PL consultant to do supplementary analysis.
- Other Plans/Studies
  (1) Amtrak Providence-New Haven Capacity: SECOG staff attended briefing with Amtrak 4/11; **expect opportunities to engage with Amtrak in coming months.**
  (2) I-95 Eastern CT PEL: CTDOT is refreshing and reframing this planning effort, which seeks to make improvements to I95 and its junctions.
  (3) CTDOT Capital Plan 2025-2029:
  (4) Groton-Stonington Bike/Ped Road Safety: Groton Study is being finalized. Stonington coordinated with SECOG regarding discretionary funding of design.
  (5) Waterford Route 1
  (6) New London Bank/Truman
  (7) Norwich- Occum Business Park: SECOG (Rattan/Kennedy) met with NCDC.
- Transit
  (1) Bus Shelter/Signage Program: SEAT continues the effort to request shelters through the statewide shelter program.

(2) SECOG coordinating with SEAT re upcoming Operations Analysis (Bus Study) and revising MOA describing roles and responsibilities for planning.

(3) SECOG has been in discussions with CTDOT regarding improved coordination and information regarding bus and commuter rail transit.

(4) SECOG has been assisting SEAT and the City of New London regarding options for continuing New London Smart Ride, currently funded through ARPA.

- 5310/MGP: SECOG advanced its recommendations to CTDOT.
- Federal Grants: -
- Electric Vehicles: Contact Emily Bigl to be added to the SECOG EV info group.
- Letters of Support: In addition to four letters regarding Community Connectivity, SECOG issued letters of support for Preston (CIF), Stonington (CDS), City of Groton (LISFF), and Norwich (CDS).
- **CTDOT reminds Municipalities to submit Local Highway Finance Report 536 by June 13th**, contact cheryl.vernet@ct.gov for more information (Stonington, Franklin have yet to submit).

E) Municipal Services

- Technical Assistance

(1) Planning: provided to Franklin, Bozrah, Lisbon, Sprague. As noted, Phil Chester has been contracted to provide services to Franklin in addition to Sprague. SECOG staff are now able to provide interim/ongoing planning support.

(2) Building Inspection: provided to Bozrah, Franklin, Montville, Preston (supported by RPIP grant). Setting up additional vacation/emergency coverage. Most towns are now on year three of the RPIP grant, paying 75% of service cost. BO Trainee has transitioned to Montville employment. SECOG staff may be available for emergency/vacation coverage.

(3) Zoning/blight enforcement: provided to Bozrah, Griswold, Preston, Sprague (first three supported by RPIP grant)

(4) SECOG in conversation with Windham regarding additional OPM RPIP funding to support additional shared services, tbd.

F) Regional Planning

- Open Space/Conservation (Melonakos-Harrison):
  (1) SECOG submitted letter of support and commitment to partner for TVCCA's application for funding through CT DEEP's Community Resource Hub program, which will connect local communities to DEEP programs and information. SECOG also coordinated with Preston staff regarding data collection needs.
- Solid Waste: Next meeting 7/29. Ms. Bigl and Ms. Harrison are preparing an application for funding through CT SMM funds to develop a solid waste road map.
- **Utilities: SECOG has been in touch with the CT Port Authority regarding Buckeye's planned closure of their fuel terminal in Groton, and continues to coordinate on this matter. There is potential for CPA to help Buckeye acquire a MARAD grant for necessary improvements to this facility**
- GIS: SECOG will receive $200,000+ in 2025-2026 to support improvements to municipal parcel/CAMA data. David Cook is working with vendors on tasks.
- Human Services Coordinating Council: On hold pending staff assignments.
- Regional Emergency Management: Deb Pierce met with Mike Caplet to plan a restart of RESF-1, Transportation, with a focus on coordinating potential evacuation resources.
- Brownfields: See above re EPA Coalition Assessment Grant. Existing grant-funded assessments underway in Windham and Waterford.
- Regional Plan of Conservation and Development: will begin in 2025 for 2027 adoption. seCTer and SECOG are discussing ways to collaborate on parallel POCD/CEDS planning processes.
- Resilience
  (1) Hazard Mitigation Planning: SECOG has developed a map of HMP recommendations to better identify opportunities for implementation funding.
  (2) Yantic River Flooding: Flood prevention planning underway in partnership with CIRCA, whose consultants are evaluating three target areas for further development. See note above re cancellation of BRIC grant. Staff evaluating other funding opportunities.

(3) Watersheds: Mr. Robinson developing white paper on watershed planning in SE CT.

(4) Stormwater: **Next stormwater collaborative meeting 6/26 (virtual).**

(5) Extreme Heat: See above, both potential grant programs have been defunded.

- Utilities

  (1) Drinking Water: WUCC convening pending direction from CT DPH.

  (2) Wastewater: 2019 Plan to be reviewed for next steps.

- Defense Industry Coordination

  (1) SECOG working with Groton Utilities and Eversource on resiliency planning, with intent to apply for DCIP implementation funds later this year.

  (2) SECOG will begin new Compatible Use Plan project shortly; additional grant funds for Town of Groton housing work.

  (3) SECOG (HZ/AK) attended initial meeting with EB staff and partner organizations seeking to structure a more collaborative relationship on workforce development and retention issues.

- Housing**:**

  (1) Hard copies of SECHA/SECOG's Achievable Housing Lookbook are available for widespread distribution.

  (2) **HB 5002. See above; I continue to coordinate with other COGs on this bill and associated workplan. Assuming the bill passes into law, it would enable the creation of a regional fair rent commission and require that munis 15,000 or larger have a Fair Rent Commission or participate in a regional commission. It would require most municipalities to develop plans demonstrating their capacity to accommodate a specific number of new housing units, with limits on how many can be age-restricted or studio/1 bedrooms. SECOG anticipates providing a high level of assistance to its members in satisfying these requirements, including the development of the required developable land inventory and capacity analysis. SECOG will prepare a summary document of the impacts of this legislation.**

- Economic Development
- Letters of Support: no additional.
- Legislative: Ms. Harrison will prepare a summary of HB 5002. Ms. Lindo will prepare a summary of other major legislation impacting municipalities.