

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 16, 2005

TO: CRCOG Policy Board

FROM: Linda Roberts, CRCOG Legislative Chair

SUBJECT: Capitol Region Council of Governments 2006 Legislative Agenda

The CRCOG Legislative Committee met on October 12 to identify priorities for legislative issues in the 2006 session. The Committee reviewed results from the online survey on legislative priorities sent to the Policy Board. The consensus of the meeting was to identify a list of legislative items of priority regional interest and to have a second list of items that CRCOG would support.

This is a preliminary report for discussion with the recommendation of the Legislative Committee to present a more detailed legislative package to the January Policy Board meeting with printed copies for distribution.

CRCOG Regional Legislative Issues

Regional transportation. CRCOG will continue to visibly advocate the New Britain to **Hartford busway** and to identify next steps following a hoped for positive federal re-rating of the project in early 2006. CRCOG will advocate the Springfield-Hartford-New Haven **commuter rail enhancement** and support next steps in environmental assessment and placement in the state budget for commuter rail operation. CRCOG advocates the continuation of the successful downtown **Star Shuttle circulator** as a transit program that complements public transit improvements that are advancing.

Inter-town Service Cooperation. Build on CRCOG's proven track record in the areas of purchasing, CAPTAIN communications system and other areas of inter-town cooperation to identify new ways to better serve town residents in the region and to save taxpayer money. Incentives offered by the legislature for inter-town service cooperation planning and to seed cooperative service delivery hold potential to save funds. CRCOG is conducting a study of promising opportunities for additional areas of inter-town service cooperation and a pilot state grant for follow through would help advance this work. A funded pilot of innovative inter-town service cooperation in the CRCOG region would be the short-term goal.

Strengthen Support for Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation. Build in incentives for towns to work to move forward on the livable community goals in the plan and additional capacity in regional planning organizations to assist in technical assistance to bring about implementation of regional plans. Transit oriented development, involving a mix of development uses within one quarter to one half mile of transit such as

parking, retail, housing and offices is one specific area relevant both for the busway, and commuter rail that will likely require state support to move forward at a reasonable pace.

CRCOG Support Areas

A number of issues are longstanding ones and will not be described here in detail now but will be expanded in a fuller report for January:

- Tax incidence and build out analysis for the state.
- Maintain the current level of conveyance tax.
- Workable ethics requirements for towns. Possibly consider a regional ethics body for the CRCOG region.
- Prevailing wage and binding arbitration.
- Support for regional partner agendas in the Capitol Workforce Partners and the MetroHartford Alliance as their agendas are finalized.

Based on the input from the Policy Board, a revised legislative package will be presented to the January meeting for final adoption.