

SCCOG NEWSLETTER

Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments

July/August, 2008

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Member Towns:

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Colchester
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Franklin
Griswold
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Town of Groton
Ledyard
Lisbon
Montville
New London
North Stonington
Norwich
Preston
Salem
Sprague
Stonington
Borough of Stonington
Voluntown
Waterford

Intermodal Transportation Center Project Underway

SCCOG has received a \$750,000 grant to study the regional intermodal transportation center located in New London. Work on the study, entitled *Regional Intermodal Transportation Center Master Plan and Efficiency Study*, is scheduled to begin in early summer and is expected to take a little over a year to complete. The study's purpose is to create a plan that sustains and enhances the regional intermodal center, improving the link between, and the operations of, the various transportation providers and facilities in New London that serve the region. The study will also examine opportunities for Transit Oriented Development in the vicinity of the intermodal center.

SCCOG has engaged the services of TranSystems, a consulting firm with offices in Medford, Massachusetts, as its prime consultant to conduct this effort. Joining TranSystems will be the consulting firms of URS, Crosby/Sclessinger/Smallridge, Basile Baumann Prost Cole & Associates, and Fitzgerald & Halliday. The project will be managed by SCCOG staff, and the consultant will work closely with a steering committee that will include representation from the transportation providers, downtown businesses, the City of New London, the Connecticut DOT, and other stakeholders.

Because public input and interested person involvement is considered an integral part of this study effort, SCCOG will regularly provide information being generated during the project and provide study updates at its web site at www.seccog.org. For further information, call the SCCOG office at 889-2324.



Union Station, New London

SCCOG Takes Its Show on the Road

The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments held its June meeting at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. The SCCOG decided to hold its meeting there after learning that the General Assembly would be opening its special session on June 11. SCCOG moved its regularly scheduled June 18th meeting up to the 11th, in order to allow representatives of the southeastern Connecticut Legislative delegation to attend the meeting for the purpose of discussing a scheduled vote in the special session concerning the continuation of the real estate conveyance tax. Member municipalities of the SCCOG felt that at this time the allowance of the sunseting of this tax would have been devastating to municipalities because of reductions in state aid and due to the fact that

many municipalities had already adopted their budgets for the next fiscal year. Council members conveyed their feelings on this matter to those legislators able to attend, and early the next morning, both the House and the Senate voted to continue this tax. During the meeting with the legislators, SCCOG Chairman Joseph Jaskiewicz thanked them for attending and said "I feel honored and privileged to be able to conduct a meeting of the SCCOG at this venue in our state's capitol."

Note: The July 16th meeting of the SCCOG will be held at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton.

SCCOG Receives Law Enforcement Grant

On behalf of the Police Departments of the City of Groton, Groton Long Point, Town of Stonington, and Town of Waterford, the SCCOG has applied for and received a \$22,000 Justice Assistance Grant for Local Law Enforcement (JAGLLE). The state's Office of Policy and Management (OPM) made these grant funds available to local municipal police departments through their regional planning organizations. Eligibility for the grant was determined by the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) and was based on violent crime rates. Jurisdictions with higher violent crime rates receive funding directly from the USDOJ, while those with lower rates receive funding from the JAGLLE program.



Chief Bruno Giulini, City of Groton, rides the City's new Segway

Chief Darren Stewart, Stonington; Chief Jack Drumm, Groton Long Point; and Chief Murray Pendleton, Waterford along with staff try out the new Kawasaki Mules.



The Police Departments of Groton Long Point, Town of Stonington, and Town of Waterford have used their share of the grant to purchase Kawasaki Mule 4x4 vehicles. Chief Jack Drumm of the Groton Long Point Police Department has said he will use this vehicle to assist in beach rescue operations, outfitting the vehicle with a stretcher. The City of Groton Police Department has purchased a Segway using the grant funding. Chief Bruno Giulini said that his department will make good use of the Segway in the City's Thames Street area and during events having large crowds like the July Fireworks Across the Thames. To satisfy OPM requirements, Chief Drumm, Chief Giulini, along with Chief Darren Stewart of Stonington and Chief Murray Pendleton of Waterford, have entered into an agreement to share the vehicles with each other's municipality.

DEMHS Region 4 Spending Plan Adopted

The Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Region 4 Regional Emergency Planning Team (REPT), chaired by Lisbon First Selectman Thomas Sparkman, adopted its Recommended Spending Plan for FY 2007 funds at a meeting on May 9th. This plan was put together after months of effort by the REPT Steering Committee, chaired by the Town of Groton Emergency Management Director Joe Sastre, which oversaw the conduct of a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats), prepared the draft plan, and coordinated the meetings and recommendations made by the emergency service personnel and other interested persons participating in Regional Emergency Support Function (RESF) committees.

The Spending Plan makes recommendations for the expenditure of more than \$957,000 in grant funds over 10 projects; the Plan has been forwarded to DEMHS Commissioner James Thomas for his approval. Copies of the Recommended Spending Plan may be found on the SCCOG web site at www.seccog.org.

DEMHS Region 4 is comprised of the 41 municipalities and two tribal nations located in the Southeastern Connecticut, Northeastern Connecticut, and Windham Regional Council of Governments, as well as the municipalities of Lyme and Old Lyme.

I-95 Project Begins

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CONNDOT) has begun planning and design work on State Project No 58-307, which involves safety improvements to I-95 from the Gold Star Memorial Bridge to the Rhode Island state line. The improvements include the installation of concrete median barrier, upgrade of guide rail, bridge parapets, signage, roadway illumination, and near-term interchange improvements. This project is an outgrowth of a 2004 study of I-95 from Branford to Rhode Island, conducted by CONNDOT with widespread local participation. The project is expected to precipitate a more significant future improvement project, which could involve widening to three lanes in each direction, for this stretch of the Interstate. An Environmental Impact Statement for the future project was initiated by CONNDOT this spring.

The current safety improvement project has been broken into segments because of funding constraints, and the first segment of the project will include I-95 in the Towns of Groton, Stonington, and North Stonington. At a public informational meeting in Groton on June 18th, a CONNDOT official said that construction on this segment of the project could begin as early as the spring of 2010, and is expected to take about two years to complete.

Copies of maps depicting the proposed improvements are available in each of the three affected municipalities and at the SCCOG office.

New Planner Begins in North Stonington

Former SCCOG Planner Juliet Leeming left the SCCOG's employ on May 2nd. She has taken a position as North Stonington's Senior Planner and Zoning En-

forcement Officer. We wish Ms. Leeming well in her new duties.

Regional Performance Incentive Grant Received

SCCOG has received a grant in the amount of \$309,430 under the state Office of Policy and Management's (OPM) Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP). This program was established in Public Act 07-239, An Act Concerning Responsible Growth. Criteria for funding required that proposed projects be new on a regional basis; demonstrate cost savings; not result in any loss of services; and be sustainable on a regional basis once established. Weighted priority was given by OPM to grant applications from councils of governments that included project participation by at least fifty percent of its member municipalities; one hundred percent of SCCOG's twenty municipalities have elected to participate in this project.

SCCOG intends to use the grant funds to establish and maintain a web-based regional Geographic Information System (GIS). One of the grant application requirements was to demonstrate cost savings based on the establishment of a service regionally. The SCCOG grant application estimated a cost savings of \$737,000 to create the web-based GIS regionally, or \$36,385 per town, as opposed to each town developing their own. SCCOG recently advertised for vendors interested in creating/maintaining the web-based regional GIS, and it is expected that work on this project will begin this summer.

SCCOG Staff: James S. Butler, AICP, Executive Director; S. Richard Guggenheim, Assistant Director; Thomas Seidel, Planner III, Richard Serra, Planner III, James Rabbitt, AICP, Planner III; Claudia Tamayo, GIS Coordinator; Wendy Leclair, Executive Secretary; Jane Dauphinais, Director of SECHA