

TOWN OF GREENWICH
CONNECTICUT

Date: February 14, 2014

To: Greenwich Representative Town Meeting Members and Greenwich Planning & Zoning Commissioners

From: Peter J. Tesei, Greenwich First Selectman and SWRMPO Member
Robert Byrnes, RTM Member, SWRPA Board Chairman
Paul C. Settlemeyer, RTM Member, SWRPA Board Member
Margarita Alban, Planning and Zoning Commissioner, SWRPA Board Member

Re: Western Connecticut Council of Governments

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide members of the Representative Town Meeting and the Planning and Zoning Commission with an update on the State mandated change in the organization structure for inter-municipal planning in South Western Connecticut. First Selectman Peter Tesei and RTM members Bob Byrnes and Paul Settlemeyer plan to bring an ordinance change request to the Representative Town Meeting in April. The RTM has previously received memos dated May 26, 2011, and August 25, 2013, relating to proposed changes in the structure of regional planning.

STATUS REVIEW: September 1 to January 1, 2014

In June 2013, the State Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law Public Act 13-247. That Act mandates that all Regional Planning Agencies (RPA), of which there are 2, and all Council of Elected Officials (CEOs), of which there are 2, must convert to Council of Governments (COG), of which there are currently 9, by January 1, 2015. The South Western Regional Planning Agency, SWRPA, in which Greenwich has been a voting member for 50 years, will cease to exist not later than December 31, 2014.

The Act, broadly referred to as "Regionalism Legislation" strongly encouraged, consolidation of the current 13 Regions into 8 Regions. Last fall, Regional Planning Organizations throughout the State explored merger options since there was a desire to select your consolidation partner, rather than have a mandated partner. SWR CEOs and the SWRPA Board, together with the 10 municipalities in the Housitonic Valley (greater Danbury area) Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) approved resolutions voluntarily merging the two regions. The State Office of Policy and Management (OPM) approved the voluntary merger in December 2013. If a voluntary merger had not been agreed to by December 31, 2013, OPM would have dictated our consolidation partner. The new entity, the Western Connecticut Council of Governments, WCCOG, will have 18 municipal members.

CURRENT STATUS:

Bob Byrnes and Paul Settlemeyer currently represent SWRPA on the Merger Committee. The Committee is composed of 3 SWR CEOs, 5 HV CEOs, 3 SWRPA Board members, and the Executive Directors from each region. The committee is working on staff benefits, locations, budgets, balance sheet, and other organizational issues. A majority of the open issues have been addressed and thus the above presenters believe bring an ordinance before the April RTM meeting is timely.