

May 5, 2014

Memo To: Board of Selectmen

Prepared by: Jayme Stevenson, First Selectman

Re: Regional Consolidation and Re Designation from RPA to COG

Public Act 13-247 (Budget Implementer Bill enacted on 7/1/13)

Summary

The M.O.R.E. Commission (2010) has studied and made recommendations to lawmakers regarding regional planning organizations. Several of the commission's recommendations regarding regional planning organizations were adopted through PA 13-247.

Currently, there are 14 regional planning organizations in CT. OPM has suggested this number be reduced to 8.

On or before 1/1/14, OPM must conduct an analysis of logical regional planning areas based on economic development regions and strategies, labor markets, natural boundaries, municipal relationships, census and demographics, political boundaries, transit corridors, current federal, state and municipal service delivery regions and capacity of each region to deliver diverse state and local services. Such analysis will establish a minimum size for logical planning areas (15 +) that considers numbers of municipalities, population and geographic size of the region. OPM study was completed on 10/1/13.

Any 2 regions that voluntarily merge prior to 1/1/14 may be exempt from OPM re designation and will receive an incentive payment (\$125,000 per sub-region for a FY 14 and 15). Each new region whose members voluntarily merge will receive, subject to state budget approval, \$125,000 per region +50 cents per capita annually beginning in FY 2015. Currently, SWRPA receives \$13,300 from the state for regional planning activities.

All regional entities must become Regional Councils of Governments by 1/1/15. COGs, by this legislation, are authorized to administer and provide services to their region which may include:

1. Engineering
2. Inspections and Planning
3. Economic Development
4. Public Safety
5. Emergency Management
6. Animal Control
- 7. Land Use Management**
8. Tourism Promotion
9. Social
10. Health
- 11. Education**
12. Data Management
- 13. Regional Sewerage**

14. *Housing*
15. Computerized Mapping
16. Household Hazardous Waste Collection
17. Recycling
18. Public Facility Siting
19. Coordination and Master Planning
20. Vocational Training and Development
21. Solid Waste Disposal
22. Fire Protection
23. Regional Resource Protection
24. Regional Impact Studies
25. Transportation

It is important to note that the newly designated COGs have not been granted taxing authority at this time.

Current Status of Regional Consolidation for SWRPA

SWRPA petitioned OPM in 9/13 to authorize the voluntary consolidation of SWRPA and HVCEO. The merger was approved by OPM on 12/6/13 satisfying the state deadline for voluntary merger thus allowing SWRPA and HVCEO to receive the funding incentives.

Westport, Weston and Greenwich have passed ordinances allowing for their participation in the new Western CT COG. New Canaan, Norwalk, Wilton and Stamford are all in various stages of ratification with target ordinance adoption between 6/14 and 12/14. The status of ordinance adoptions in the HVCEO is unknown at the time of this memo.

A subcommittee of members from SWRPA and HVCEO are working on organization by laws, personnel manuals, service delivery analysis and facilities planning.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

MPO's were created with the Highway Act of 1962. MPOs are federally mandated and funded transportation policy making organizations. SWRPA, HVCEO and 4 other CT regions made up the Tri-State MPO from 1962-1982 when the region was divided into smaller entities. SWRPA is currently a standalone MPO serving our 8 member municipalities. There are currently 11 MPOs in CT. Re designation could result in 5 or fewer MPOs.

PA 13-247 also calls for CT DOT to review and potentially re designate MPOs within the state. MPO re designation by the CT Department of Transportation is pending. Chief Elected Officials are the municipal representatives to the MPO.