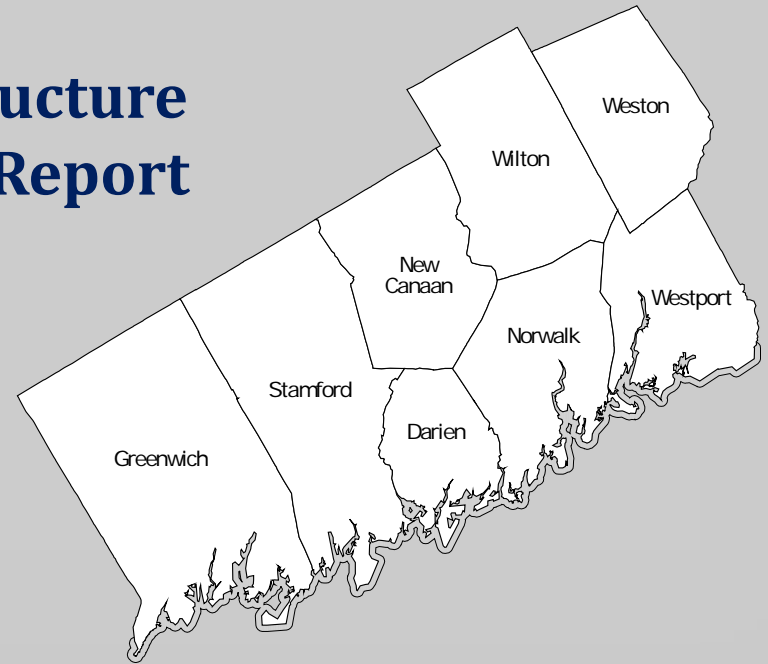


Discussion With Westport P&Z Committee of RTM

SWRPA-SWRMPO Proposed Structure Change to COG - Due Diligence Report

February 28, 2012



- **Current Structure**
- **Findings**
- **Operating Scenarios**
- **FAQ's**



Current Structure:

SWRPA – SWRMPO 1947 to Present



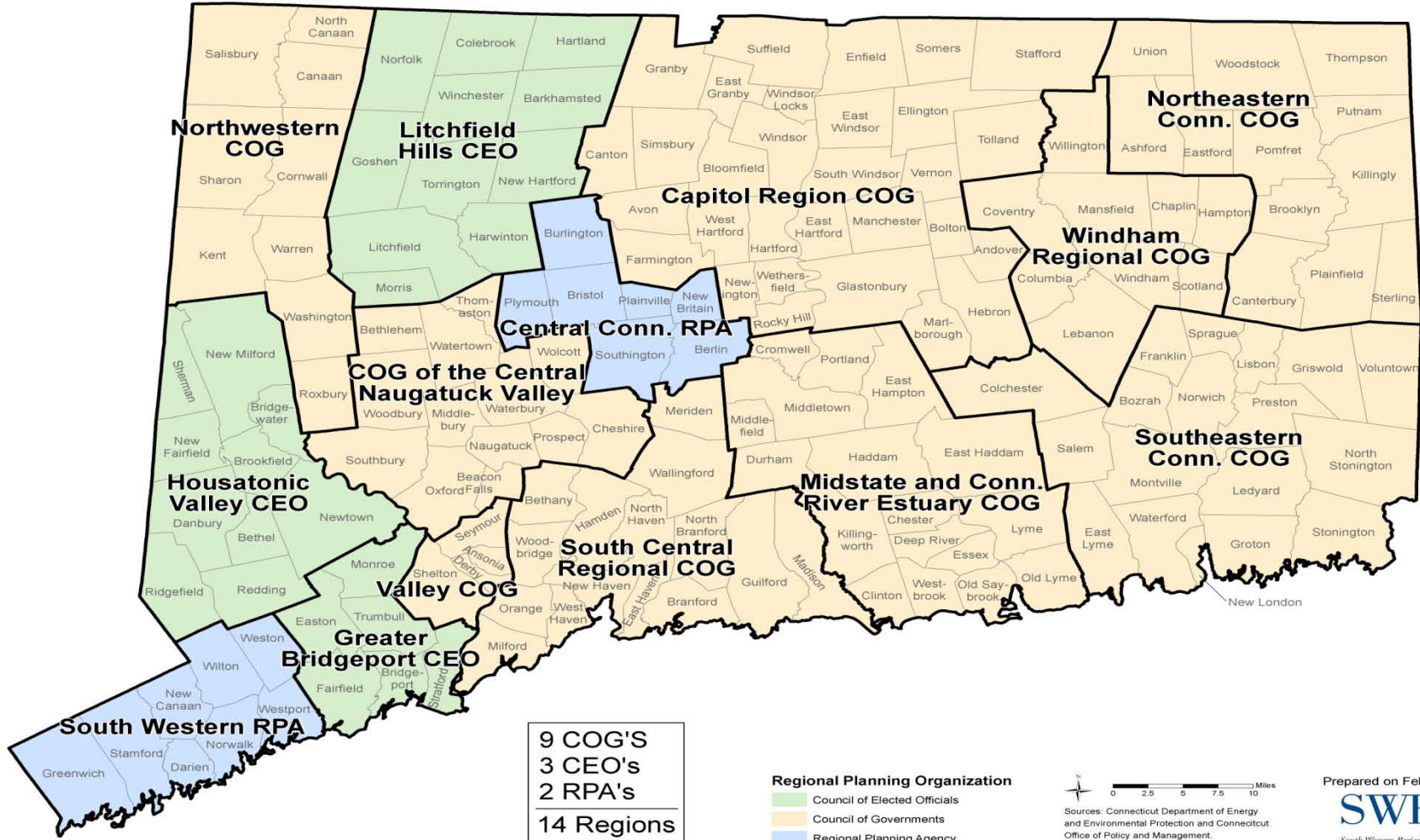
Timeline

- 1947 – Regional Planning Agencies (RPA) were authorized with county government abolished
- 1950s – Connecticut established 15 RPAs
- 1962 – Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) created by Federal government to guide transportation planning and funding
- 1965 – Council of Elected Officials (CEO) option enacted
- 1971 – Council of Governments (COG) option enacted
- 1971-2011 – Of the current 14 regional planning organizations
12 have become CEOs or COGs
– SWRPA only one of two remaining RPAs



Current Structure:

Current Connecticut Regional Planning Organization Structure



Current Structure:

Regional Planning Organizations - 2012

Regional Planning Agencies

RPA's - 2

- SWRPA
- Central Connecticut

Council of Governments

COG's - 9

- Valley
- South Central Regional
- Southeastern Connecticut
- Central Naugatuck Valley
- Northwestern Connecticut
- Capital Region
- Windham Region
- Northeastern Connecticut
- Estuary – Mid-State

Council of Elected Officials

CEO's - 3

- Housatonic Valley
- Litchfield Hills
- Greater Bridgeport



Current Structure:

SWRPA – SWRMPO – Professional Staff

SWRPA Board

- 22 person volunteer board
- **Focus:** Overall fiduciary and governance responsibility for SWRPA Staff
- Committees:
 - Referrals
 - Transit Oriented Development
 - Environmental - Watershed
 - Legislative
 - Strategic Planning
 - Communications

SWRPA Staff

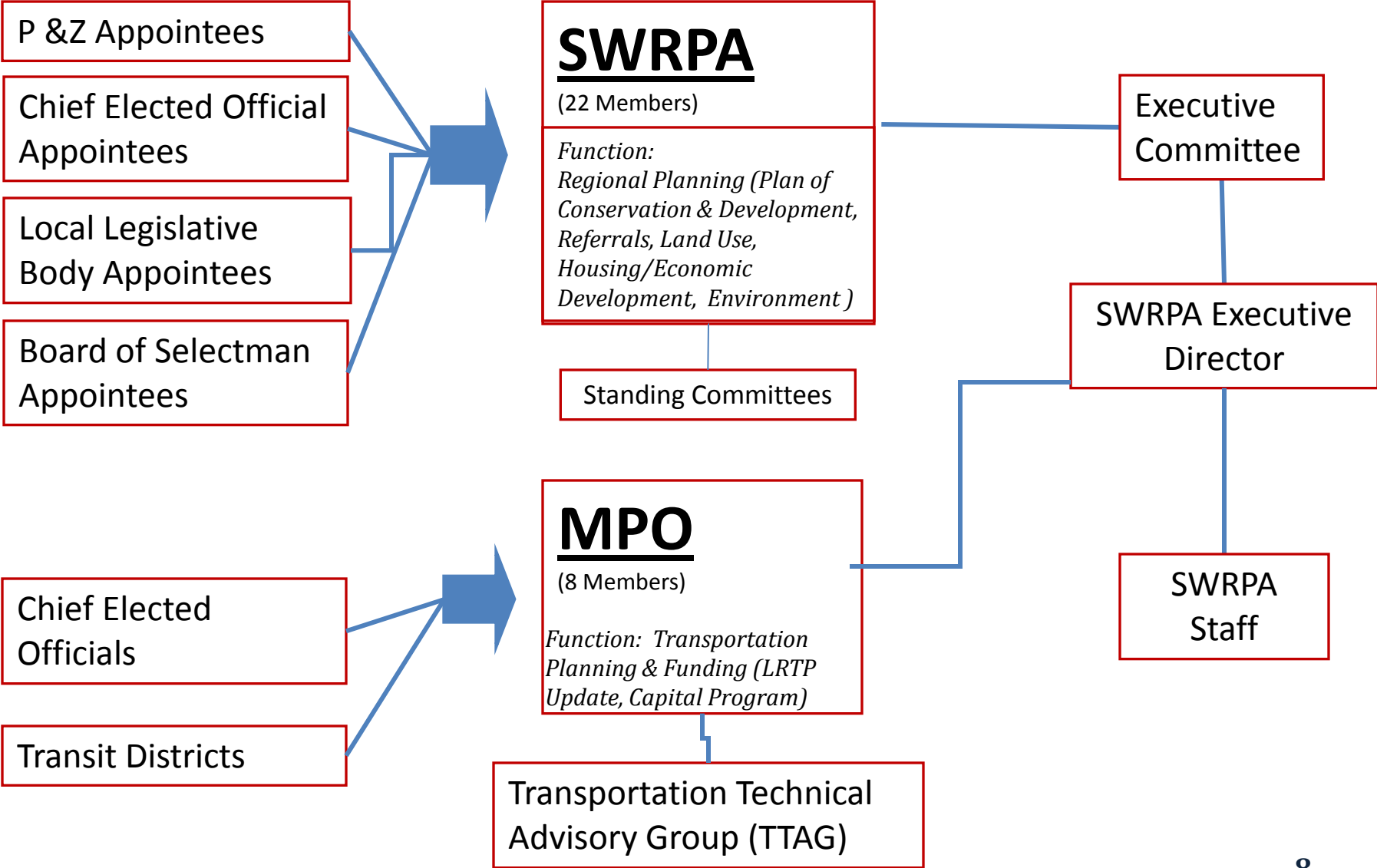
- Research, planning and advisory services to municipalities
 - Regional Planning
 - Transportation
- Budget just under \$1.5 MM
 - Federal DOT funds
 - State DEEP & OPM funds
 - Member municipalities

SWRMPO

- Focus – Oversight of
 - Transportation planning
 - Region's required 4-year long range transportation plan
 - Region's required transportation capital program
- Representation:
 - Region's 8 municipal Chief Elected Officials
 - 3 Transit District Directors (Norwalk, Stamford, Westport)



Current Organizational Structure



Findings:

Two COG and Two CEO Participants



Findings:

Two COG and Two CEO Participants

SWRPA and MPO Chairs/Vice-Chairs with the Executive Director held discussions regarding satisfactions and concerns with:

- Litchfield Hills CEO
- COG of the Central Naugatuck Valley
- Housatonic Valley CEO
- South Central COG

Objective:

- Understand their views of effectiveness working in the COG and CEO structures.
- Observe the advantages and disadvantages over the RPA structure.



Findings:

Two COG and Two CEO Participants

- Leadership is placed where it belongs with the chief local elected officials (CEOs):
 - In the past the focus was only on a group of volunteers and in many cases communications were weak or non-existent with the CEOs.
- Leadership by the CEOs has value-added in the form of greater prestige, attention and importance to the organization.
- Volunteerism is still preserved since each municipality selects a member and an alternate to a Regional Planning Committee.
 - Additional appointees to other committees can occur through mutual agreement of the CEOs.



Findings:

Two COG and Two CEO Participants

- One monthly meeting consolidates all regional planning and transportation issues.
 - This type of streamlining is important during an era when more than ever we need economy and efficiency in government.
- The skill sets of many of the CEOs worked well in conducting the business of the new agency structure.
 - This was especially apparent with financial work since all CEOs participate in the annual preparation of a municipal budget and the maintenance of a multi-year financial plan.



Findings:

Two COG and Two CEO Participants

- All volunteers and professionals expressed satisfaction with the new structure.
- Volunteers felt the level of work was manageable.
- The new structure reinforced the collegial operations of the elected officials, the volunteers and the professional staff.



Operating Scenarios



Operating Scenarios:

South Western Organizational Structure: COG

Focus

- Non-transportation regional planning matters previously performed by SWRPA, agency finances, organization administration
- Transportation planning matters previously performed by MPO
- Promoting regional coordination and cooperation

Representation

- Comprised of 8 municipal Chief Elected Officials serving as representatives – 1 vote per representative
- 8 person regional planning commission (RPC) carries out planning duties and responsibilities (including referrals) in cooperation with the municipal Chief Elected Officials
- Opportunities for volunteer participation on special and advisory committees supporting the COG and RPC's comprehensive and functional planning responsibilities/duties



Operating Scenarios:

COG Regional Planning Commission

Focus

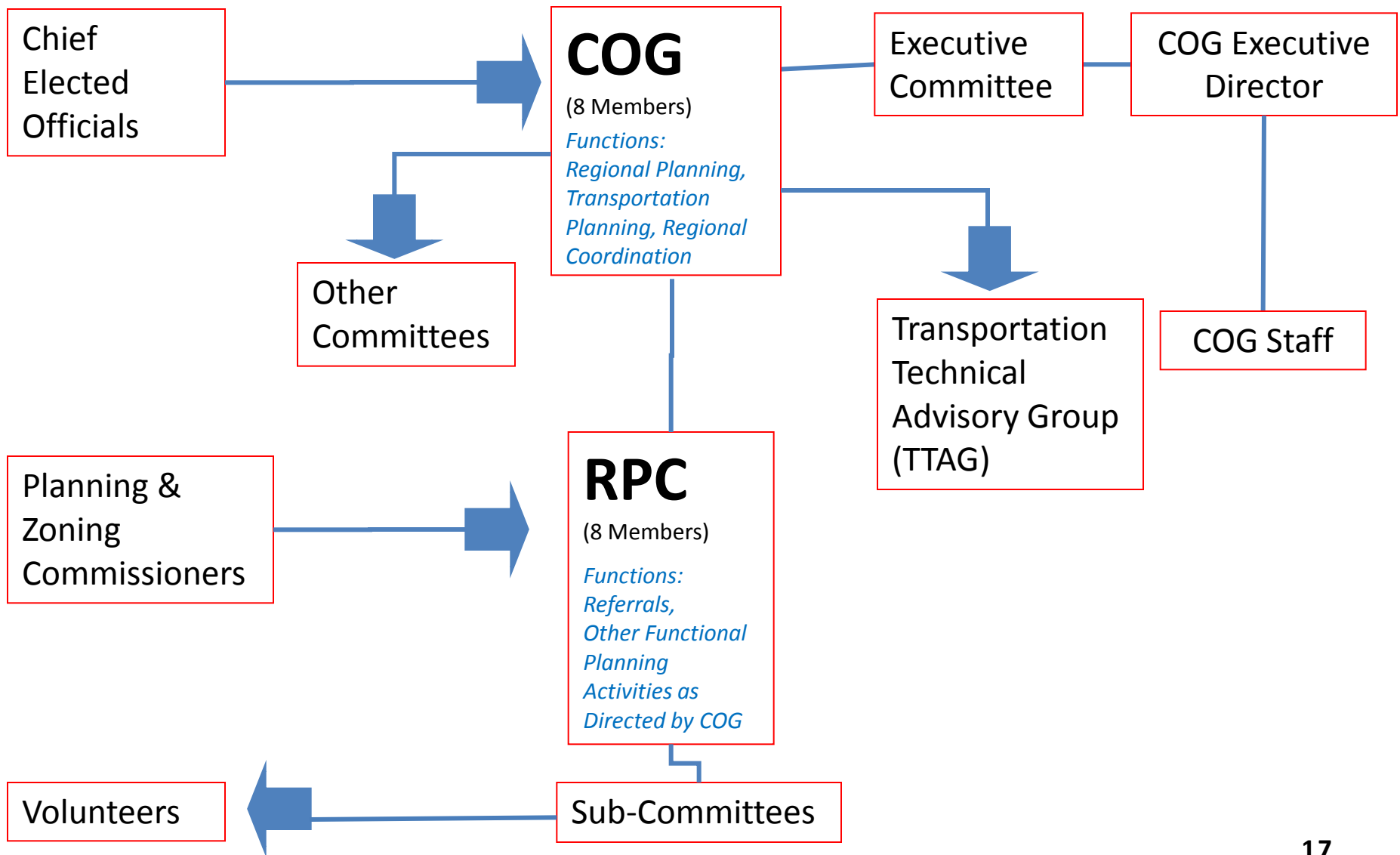
- **Comprehensive planning:** propose and update a plan of conservation & development
- **Functional planning:** as directed by the COG, RPC should carry out planning activities for specific functional areas, i.e. housing, economic development, environment, etc.
- **Zoning and subdivision referrals**
- **Other** reports/plans/policies that the COG deems appropriate

Representation

- One RPC representative per COG municipality with one vote each
- State statute requires that an RPC representative be a member of and appointed by their municipal planning commission, with the concurrence of the local municipality's appointing authority



Operating Scenarios: Organizational Structure of a South Western Region COG



Operating Scenarios:

COG Advantages & Benefits Findings

Thought Leadership Task Force – Advantages & Benefits

Chief Elected Official Involvement

- Align municipal leadership with decision making
- Directly involved in non-transportation discussions/decisions
- Responsible for COG agendas, activities and accountable
- Accountable to the citizens
- Provides opportunity for stronger, unified voice in State Legislative matters

Efficiency

- SWRPA staff reduces Board meeting preparation from 24 meetings to 12
- COG could provide stronger, unified voice in State Legislative matters
- More efficient and productive allocation of professional staff focus and time

Municipal Autonomy Status Quo

- Conversion to COG would not diminish local municipal autonomy.
- Municipal Planners and Planning & Zoning Commissions would maintain their autonomy unaltered.
- COG does not have taxing authority.
- Conversion to COG would have no impact on current State study re Regional Planning Agencies boundaries.



Operating Scenarios:

COG Challenges & Concerns Findings

Thought Leadership Task Force – Challenges & Concerns

Questionable Advantages

- Conversion to COG will result in additional work burden on CEOs and Regional Planning Commissioners.
- Challenge to justify conversion to COG when the current organizations are working well and there are no apparent significant advantages to a conversion.

Shifting of Power & Roles

- One vote per COG member effectively results in some reapportionment of balance of power
- Assuming current SWRPA Planning & Zoning members migrate to the COG Regional Planning Commission, 14 current SWRPA members will be “decommissioned”.



Top Ten COG FAQ's



1. Would a COG foreshadow a return to county government?

No...

A COG is not a government, and does not have any authority to perform governmental functions.



2. Will the COG be a taxing authority?

No...

Connecticut state statute does not provide a COG
any authority to levy taxes.



3. Will there be a way for current SWRPA representatives to participate?

Yes...

The Regional Planning Commission may create any sub-committee it deems appropriate; volunteer members may be appointed by the RPC to such committees.



4. Will the voting procedures be different for a COG?

No...

- Simple majorities of voting memberships will constitute quorums, similar to SWRPA and the MPO.
- Simple majorities of members present at meetings will be required to approve voting measures, similar to SWRPA and the MPO.



5. Will the State be able to use this proposed structural change to force consolidations of regions?

No...

- Regional boundaries are currently determined by the Office of Policy and Management.
- State government can mandate consolidations if they wish, regardless of regional structure.



6. Will local planning and zoning commissions have a diminished role in the COG?

No...

Since RPC membership is to be comprised only of P&Z commission members, there are no seats at the table for appointees from other legislative bodies.



7. Will the COG appoint members to the RPC?

No... state statute requires that:

- The RPC will be comprised of local P&Z members.
- Local P&Z commissions appoint its members to the RPC.
- The local appointing authority must provide concurrence for RPC appointments.



8. Will the workload for COG members and RPC members increase?

Maybe...

- Certain COG members may have additional work, especially if they are in a leadership role. However, COG members in other regions have not reported increased workloads.
- RPC members may have additional work related to their responsibilities to attend RPC meetings and, in some instances, COG meetings.



9. Will a proposed COG impact “Home Rule”?

No...

- The COG does not and will not have any authority over local decision making processes.
- On a regional basis, a COG has the same referral responsibilities as a regional planning organization such as SWRPA.



10. Any questions you may have...

