

November 27, 2024

Jamie Sydoriak, Environmental Analyst
CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
Land Acquisition & Management Unit
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Re: FY2024 Urban Green & Community Garden Grant Program - Joe Marfuggi Riverwalk

Dear Ms. Sydoriak:

I am writing to express the Capitol Region Council of Government's (CRCOG) support for Riverfront Recapture's request to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Urban Green & Community Garden grant program to help fund certain trailside amenities associated with construction of the Joe Marfuggi Riverwalk and Galleries in Hartford.

Developing an active transportation network is a major focus of CRCOG's comprehensive transportation plan for the Capitol Region. As part of CRCOG's ongoing commitment to these efforts, CRCOG is working to finalize the Capitol Region East Coast Greenway Gap (ECG) study that will identify the preferred alignment of the ECG for the 12-mile gap that remains in Hartford and the adjacent communities of East Hartford, Bloomfield, and Simsbury. While the study is not yet complete, the preferred alignment includes the entirety of the Joe Marfuggi Riverwalk in Hartford.

We applaud Riverfront Recapture's work to privately fundraise more than \$1 million towards the development of the Marfuggi Galleries where museum-quality displays and models will tell the story of the Connecticut River. These installations alongside the natural beauty of the river and the opportunity for active and passive recreation will draw tens of thousands of visitors each year from the city, the Capitol Region, and beyond. Funding from this program will be used to install amenities such as the gallery benches, landscape, hardscape and signage. These amenities will be instrumental in making the trail and galleries a green space that the public will return to time and time again.

This project is also well supported by the goals and strategies in our newly adopted regional Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). One such goal is to cultivate spaces that connect people to nature and their community – this project will promote open space as a community, cultural, economic and health asset (Strategy 1) and will also connect the region's open space through a regional greenway system (Strategy 2), among many others.

The development of the Joe Marfuggi Riverwalk is an integral and well supported part of the Capitol Region's planned active transportation network and aligns with our

POCD. We strongly encourage CT DEEP's Urban Green & Community grant program to support the development of these trailside amenities and to approve this application in the amount requested. We greatly appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

Cc: Michael Zaleski, Riverfront Recapture, Inc.
The Honorable Arunan Arulampalam, City of Hartford
CRCOG Policy Board and Transportation Committee