

**CT Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (PROGRAM) 2016 – 2021  
Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside**

**PROGRAM APPLICATION**

**1.0 Project Title**

Provide the title of the Project: **Williams Street Improvement Project**

**2.0 Council of Government (COG)**

The application should be submitted to the COG office having boundaries encompassing the majority of the project's limits. Maps depicting the COG and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundaries as well as the Transportation Management Areas (TMA) are provided under separate cover as an appendix to the application. For projects that span multiple COG boundaries, please list in order beginning with the COG with the greatest geographic coverage or the COG with which project coordination has been initiated.

Council of Government(s): **Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments**

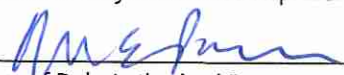
**3.0 Project Sponsor and Commitment Statement**

The Project Sponsor is the applicant and will be the entity that enters into agreement with the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for program administration and funding. **The Project Sponsor MUST be a municipal governmental agency established through State Statutes.** Please indicate the formal legal names of the organization and duly authorized representative.

**IF PROGRAM FUNDS ARE AUTHORIZED:** The Project Sponsor will be responsible for commitment of funds to match federal program dollars and finance any ineligible project costs. The Project Sponsor will also be responsible for commitment to operate, maintain and insure the completed improvements. Upon project completion, the responsibility of liability and maintenance to ensure a safe, secure facility and components remains with the Project Sponsor, regardless of location within State or federal rights-of-way. Formal letters of commitment or resolutions from the appropriate fiscal entity, (i.e. Town Council, Board of Finance), will be required. Additionally, the Project Sponsor will be responsible for meeting public involvement requirements.

Legal Name of Organization: **City of New London**

Legal Name of Duly Authorized Representative: **Michael E. Passero, Mayor**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Duly Authorized Representative

**10/27/2016**  
Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

*By signing my name on the signature line above, I am certifying that I am the duly authorized representative of the sponsoring agency and that I am aware of the application and proposed project on behalf of the organization as well as my responsibility as the Project Sponsor if PROGRAM funds are authorized. My signature further indicates that, to the best of my knowledge, the statements made on this application form and any attachments are true and complete and are made in good faith. I understand that if I knowingly make any misstatement of fact, this application is subject to disqualification and dismissal. All statements made on this application are subject to verification as a condition of funding authorization.*

#### **4.0 Project Contact (Representative from Project Sponsor) and Commitment Statement**

The Project Contact must be a representative of the Project Sponsor's agency. The Project Contact will act as the project manager. The Project Contact will be the primary person to which correspondence, inquiries and project coordination will be directed regarding the application and subsequent project if funds are awarded.

|                |                                    |                  |                                 |
|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| First Name:    | <b>Sybil</b>                       | CT Municipality: | <b>New London</b>               |
| Last Name:     | <b>Tetteh</b>                      | Division/Office: | <b>Development and Planning</b> |
| Title:         | <b>City Planner</b>                | Street:          | <b>181 State Street</b>         |
| Telephone No:  | <b>860-437-6380</b>                | Zip Code:        | <b>06320</b>                    |
| Facsimile No:  | <b>860-447-7971</b>                |                  |                                 |
| Email Address: | <b>stetteh@ci.new-london.ct.us</b> |                  |                                 |

#### **5.0 Eligible Projects**

- 5.1 Construction, planning and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation.
- 5.2 Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers, including children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities to access daily needs.
- 5.3 Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other nonmotorized transportation users.
- 5.4 Construction of turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas.
- 5.5 Community improvements activities including:
  - Inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
  - Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
- 5.6 Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.

Using the numbers above identify which one best fits the project: **5.2**

#### **6.0 Project Location**

Briefly describe the project location:

Indicate the start (and end, if linear) of the project limits:

**The project location is the northerly segment of Williams Street at the Waterford border, south to the area known as Hodges Square, in the City of New London.**

Identify the municipality (ies) having boundaries encompassing the project location.

Primary CT Municipality: **New London**

Other Municipality (ies): **Waterford**

**LOCATION MAP:** Depict the location of the project on a base map such as a town road map, GIS map, aerial photo, or another base map suitable to clearly depict the project's overall location upon. Provide a hard copy.

**CONCEPT PLAN** As appropriate and necessary for the scale and context of the project proposed, provide a map with a conceptual layout to graphically depict the location of the project and its relation to existing features, regulated areas, and adjacent facilities the project would connect to. Provide a hard copy.

## 7.0 Project Description

*Briefly describe the project:*

This project seeks to connect the Town of Waterford with the City of New London via a continuous sidewalk and bike lane network on Williams Street running from the Quaker Hill neighborhood in the north, through Connecticut College where new sidewalks are proposed and existing sidewalks are proposed to be rehabilitated, south into Hodges Square and downtown New London. In addition to this regional pedestrian and bicycle connection, this project will calm traffic on Williams Street via raised roadway elements in order to provide a safer route to bike and walk to area schools. This project will link multiple transportation modes, specifically, new bike- and walkways from the Waterford town line will provide access to bus lines located at Connecticut College and Hodges Square. From Hodges Square, access to rail and ferry transportation is within easy walking or biking distance (~1 mile). Hodges Square and the College also offer transportation connections to shopping malls and employment locations.

The TAP proposal for Williams Street Improvements is directly aligned with the local/regional/State Plan of Conservation and Development and directly aligned with Bike and Pedestrian local/regional/State Master Plans. The target area is the key connecting corridor from the Waterford town line, along the College and Museum campuses, through Hodges Square, with access to Riverside Park, to eastern Connecticut destinations via the Gold Star Bridge Pathway, and to downtown economic generators, including Waterfront Park, historic Fort Trumbull State Park, and Ocean Beach to the south. The area is unique in all it has to offer to both motorized and non-motorized traffic. The TAP project will serve to generate economic development to the City and will allow unrestricted recreational access to the historic and beautiful Riverside Park along the banks of the Thames River and other distinctive city features.

This project has little or no impact on the natural environment and avoids regulated areas. The project does however address lower carbon emissions and overall climate change by encouraging greater bicycle and pedestrian usage to move riders and walkers to educational, work, and recreational assets. While this project does not directly address storm resiliency, the TAP target area is part of a larger redevelopment plan that will incorporate strategies in Hodges Square for improved drainage along city streets, new street trees, and enhanced resiliency strategies when completed.

## 8.0 Purpose and Need

*Briefly explain the purpose and need for the project, including anticipated significance and impacts of this project. Provide any additional information that may assist with determining the eligibility and selection of this project. This is an opportunity to discuss why the project should be selected for PROGRAM funding*

Much of the impetus for this project stems from a tragedy which occurred in December, 2015 on Mohegan Avenue when a Connecticut College student was struck and fatally injured by a hit-and-run motorist while attempting to cross the roadway. In the wake of the student's death, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) has collaborated with the City of New London, the Town of Waterford, Connecticut College, the Coast Guard Academy and the Williams School, among others, to conduct a Roadway Safety Audit of the entire Mohegan Avenue/Williams Road area, from their confluence in the south to Benham Avenue in the north. Many of the recommendations of that study are addressed by this project.

However, ideas for this area have been long considered. A 2013 Kent + Frost Master Plan study of Hodges Square emphasizes the need for a connection north, both to Connecticut College and the Town of Waterford. Hodges Square was separated from these neighbors by the construction of a divided highway carrying Route 32. Williams Street connects these two areas, and carries the State Road 635 designation south of its intersection with Briggs Street. It is expected that amenities such as bicycle lanes and pedestrian scale lighting will follow this project south as cooperation with CTDOT will facilitate improvements to this State owned roadway.

Most importantly, this project will provide a completed safe sidewalk network with Hodges Square and downtown New London from the Town of Waterford and Connecticut College, helping to spark economic growth in the area and promoting safe routes to school. This project will help Connecticut College students connect to part time jobs in Hodges Square, and help Hodges Square residents access the college campuses, the Williams School, and Lyman Allyn Art Museum to the north. The Williams Street improvements will remove significant safety barriers and provide a solution to the impasse to pedestrians and cyclists created by the Interstate 95 interchange that has existed for decades.

The City, College, and Coast Guard Academy are working closely with State DOT to resolve motorized and non-motorized traffic issues along the Route 32 section of roadway. The invested entities are meeting regularly to move those changes forward, with the proposed improvements to Williams Street serving an integral part of any planned safety solutions.

## **9.0 Community Character and Regional Significance**

*Briefly describe how this candidate project directly relates to the region and community, including anticipated benefits and fit with the character of the area served.*

Northern New London is made up of a neighborhood, two collegiate institutions and a highway. Route 32 cuts through the northern New London and severs the connections between Hodges Square and the Coast Guard Academy with Connecticut College and Williams Street heading north into Waterford. This project will help to reconnect those areas. While CTDOT plans to eventually reconstruct Route 32 into a roadway suitable for a collegiate environment, the transformation of Williams Street into a viable pedestrian and bicycle connection is an important first step for the region. CTDOT has pledged to continue working in the neighborhood to enhance safety features and implement traffic calming strategies.

The Coast Guard Academy and Connecticut College are two of the biggest draws to the region for people from other areas of New England, the United States, and indeed from all around the globe. The Lyman Allyn Art Museum, located between the College and the Academy, is a Connecticut treasure known for its holdings in American art and its 18<sup>th</sup>–through 20<sup>th</sup>–century collection of fine and decorative arts. The conversion of the northern portion of Williams Street into an area friendly to bicyclists and pedestrians will help these institutions draw people to the region. Potential students will have the opportunity to see these institutions as connected with their surrounding community, and be more likely to experience all that New London has to offer.

The Hodges Square area is of historic significance to the City of New London. It houses one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, a large city park (Riverside Park), and an historic mill (circa 1650) that represents one of the earliest mill industrial sites in the country. Hodges Square was recognized as an historic district by the National Register of Historic Places in October 2016. Hodges Square is also the connecting neighborhood for the College, Coast Guard Academy, and Museum at the north to the southern portion of the city, where the State Pier, downtown amenities, transportation center, and the City Pier/Waterfront Park are located.

## 10.0 Public Support

*Demonstrate the level of public support or opposition that has been voiced to date, if any, either via a public forum, written correspondence or other form of communication, including media coverage. Provide a description of the events, published articles, media coverage, or other related materials that are relevant to demonstrate public support for the project.*

Local and regional support for this project has been clearly demonstrated through the planning and design process for the Williams Street improvements. The TAP project has received significant support through forums, public meetings, and regional communication with project stakeholders, as follows:

1. Hodges Square Village Association - the HSVA meets monthly with the City of New London Planner who is actively working with the group from the plan-adoption phase through the implementation phase. These meetings are documented with agendas and minutes which are posted on the HSVA website.
2. Meetings Held with CT College, Coast Guard Academy, State DOT, and City of New London - numerous meetings have been held with State, City, College/Academy, and Museum entities to ensure that the recommendations contained within the Road Safety Audit are included in any future planning and grant making for the area. These meeting will be regularly convened through TAP project completion.
3. Letters of Support – Letters of support for this project are attached as part of the application. Connecticut College enthusiastically supports this project, and is acutely aware of the need for safety improvements in light of the tragic accident that occurred in December. The College supports the actionable recommendations stemming from the 2016 Road Safety Audit and recognizes that this project scope is an important first step in the larger, long term plan for Hodges Square redevelopment. Additionally, Connecticut College is supporting this project through a cash match commitment for the enhancements along Williams Street. The Town of Waterford supports this project as a regional economic enhancement to draw people and businesses into the region to access cultural, educational, commercial and recreational amenities in the area of Williams Street. Lyman Allyn Art Museum is supporting this project with their own application to CT DEEP for a Recreational Trails grant to further enhance the non-motorized options in the TAP target area.
4. The Day Editorial - a recent editorial printed in The Day newspaper (October 9, 2016) states full support from both the Commissioner of CT DOT and the President of Connecticut College of a redesign of Route 32 in the TAP project area. The proposed project will fully compliment recommendations for both Williams Street and Route 32 (Mohegan Avenue).

## 11.0 Permitting

*Provide a list of anticipated permits that are required for the project. It is not required that permitting be completed for the application.*

Preliminary Design and Permitting – The preliminary design for the proposed project is attached to this application. The preliminary design incorporates new sidewalk on the east side of Williams Street from Chapel Way (northern College entrance) to the town line with Waterford. The design also includes improvements to approximately 1,000' of side walk on the west side of Williams Street. The improvement sections of Williams Street are under the jurisdiction of the City of New London, from the town line south to

the intersection with Briggs Street. Permitting through State DOT will be required for the proposed raised pedestrian crosswalk in that area.

Rights of Way – The City of New London is meeting regularly with State DOT regarding improvements to the area. DOT has committed to funding any proposed restriping in the area of Williams Street and Briggs Street. DOT continues to be in communication with the City regarding other Rights of Way within the city road network.

Preliminary Engineering – preliminary engineering has been conducted on site in regards to the area proposed for raised crosswalks. Additional engineering is required for the dedicated bike lanes, as the width of Williams Street narrows in certain sections. Currently the preliminary plans are showing shared road lanes.

Planning Study – Two planning studies for the area have been conducted and are attached to this application for reference. The 2013 Kent + Frost Master Plan for Hodges Square outlines significant vision for the historic neighborhood. The 2016 Road Safety Audit addresses the safety challenges in the Route 32/Williams Street area. This project focuses on the recommendations included in both studies and is highly complementary to the actionable steps contained in those documents.

## 12.0 Project Cost Estimate

*Provide the estimated cost of the project; include a detailed cost estimate and the basis for the cost estimate. Of this total cost, a maximum of eighty percent (80%) can be funded by the Federal Highway Administration through the PROGRAM and a minimum of twenty percent (20%) must be secured by the Project Sponsor. Project's submitted for consideration under this program shall have a minimum estimated project cost of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000).*

**\$761,531**

## 13.0 Local Match Financing

*The minimum twenty percent (20%) match typically must come from non-federal sources as there are restrictions on the application of federal monies to the match share of PROGRAM funds. Indicate whether the non-federal match can reasonably be secured by the project sponsor for the project if PROGRAM funds are authorized.*

**Local match financing will be 20% of the total project cost or \$152,306.**

Are you providing the match with non-federal sources? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Can the local match be reasonably secured? ☒ Yes ☐ No

## 14.0 Attachments and Additional Information/Materials – Please limit comments and attached pages to those critical for Review of the Application and proper understanding of the Project Proposal.

*This section is optional and may be used to provide any additional information pertinent to the presentation of the candidate project for consideration of funding under the PROGRAM.*

The State of Connecticut has designated 25 municipalities as "distressed", indicating severe economic need conditions. Over the past decade, the City of New London has moved from 5th out of 25 (2005), to 1st (2016), indicating a movement to the most severe need municipality in the state. This project also represents a unique regional partnership with the Town of Waterford, and a unique local partnership with Connecticut College. As a private education institution, it is significant that the college is offering to provide half of the cash match requirement in order to see this project to completion. The economic conditions within the City of New London would not allow for the initiation of this project without TAP funding and the support of Connecticut College.

Williams Street Improvement Project  
City of New London/Town of Waterford

*Please indicate any additional materials being submitted with the application package or provided to the COG for consideration. If additional pages were used to answer questions on this application, please indicate the section and number of pages. Applicants are encouraged, however, to limit responses to the space provided in the PROGRAM Application.*

*The information below will be utilized during the review by staff at the COG and at the Department to ensure that each reviewer has a full application package. A listing with a brief description of each item should be provided noting the number of pages for each attachment and the pertinent application section, as applicable.*

| <u>Number of Pages</u> | <u>Application Section</u> | <u>Brief Description</u>                      |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 3                      | 7                          | Project Area and Project Area Details         |
| 1                      | 7                          | Cost Estimates                                |
| 5                      | 10                         | Letters of Commitment/Support & Day Editorial |
| 40                     | 8                          | Creative Placemaking Master Plan              |
| 45                     | 8                          | Road Safety Audit                             |