

ANNUAL REPORT THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY (CCRPA) FISCAL YEAR 2002-2003

Serving Berlin, Bristol, Burlington, New Britain, Plainville, Plymouth and Southington

AGENCY MISSION

The Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency has been organized to provide a regional framework within which "To Plan and Promote Regional Policies and Programs to Enhance the Vitality, Accessibility, and Quality of life in our Communities." To accomplish this mission, the Agency provides paratransit services to the Region's senior citizens and disabled, coordinates municipal land use planning and zoning, prepares transportation plans, supports economic development, environmental planning, and emergency services preparedness and response planning. Some of the specific projects we have undertaken during the 2002-2003 fiscal year, are described below.

NEW BRITAIN-HARTFORD BUSWAY

Under a \$150,000 grant from the Connecticut Transportation Strategy Board, the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency is working to enhance the region's public transportation system by preparing a plan to improve accessibility to the New Britain-to-Hartford Busway, a dedicated public transportation corridor that will allow buses to travel between Downtown New Britain and Downtown Hartford separately from the rest of traffic. The Busway will reduce travel times for many commuters and create more employment and recreation options for residents from Hartford to Waterbury.

While the Busway will help increase ridership on local routes, the Plan will try to capitalize on the facility by suggesting land use changes for areas that will be served. Increased ridership will create a need for new services such as park-and-ride lots, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and improved bus routing. The Plan will determine how best to implement these types of services to respond to the Busway's impact.

The project's Steering Committee meets approximately bi-monthly to determine the best planning scenarios and includes the following members:

Peter Agostini, President, New Britain Transportation Company

Barbara Breslin, FHWA – Non voting member
Charlie Eisenhofer, East Side NRZ
Art Helfgott, Program Manager, CW Resources
David Lee, General Manager, CT Transit
Cindy Lemek, Executive Director, All Aboard!
Greg Levitz, Sales Manager, Rideshare Company
Mario Marrero, Transportation Planner, Capitol Region Council of Governments
Susan McMullen, Capital Projects Administrator, City of New Britain
Bill Millerick, President, New Britain Chamber of Commerce
Tom Morrow, Executive Director, Bristol Community Organization
Jeri Nagel, Job Developer, Mid-Connecticut Works
Linda Osten, Principal Community Development Planner, Capitol Region Council of Governments
Steve Schiller, Planner, City of New Britain
Len Tundermann, Planner, Town of Plainville
Stephen Varga, Executive Director, Greater NB Community Development Commission
Lin Wellman, Visions New Britain



CCRPA staff has also served on the New Britain-Hartford Busway Advisory Committee, participating in many public hearings and meetings of the New Britain Select Aldermen Subcommittee on the Busway. CCRPA staff also served with CRCOG staff on the Jobs Access Task Force, which supported transit ridership increases from 750 to 3,200 riders.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

To qualify for Federal economic development assistance the region must have a Federally approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). During the 2002-2003 fiscal year the Agency received a \$40,000 grant from the United States Economic Development Administration to prepare a CEDS for the four most economically impacted towns of the Region: Bristol, New Britain, Plainville, and Plymouth. To guide the CEDS preparation process, a steering committee was formed which includes the following representatives:

Betty Boukus, State Representative
Lisa Bumbera, Northeast Utilities
Dr. Pat Checko, Director, Burlington/Bristol Health Dist
Connie Wilson Collins, John Driscoll United Labor Agency
David Crandall, Hospital for Special Care
Cary DuPont, Executive Director, Bristol United Way
Sam Hamilton, Revolving Loan Fund
Joe Harper, CCSU
Patrick Herzing, Chair, TPZ Plymouth
Greg Howey, President, Okay Industries
Alex Johnson, Workforce Development Board
Frank Johnson, MAC
William Kuehn, Town Planner, Plymouth
Dr. Donna LaGanga, Director of Continuing Ed & Workforce Development, Tunxis Community College
John Leone, Executive Director, Bristol Chamber
Robert Longfield, ESPN
Tom Lornzetti, Operations Manager for Customized Training, Tunxis Community College
Sue MacDonald, Cook-Willow Convalescent Home
Ken Malinowski, Director, Municipal Development Department New Britain
Bill Millerick, Executive Director, New Britain Chamber
Mayor Frank Nicastrò, Bristol
John O'Toole, Northeast Utilities
Mayor Lucian Pawlak, New Britain
Mike Petosa, Labor Department
Jonathan Rosenthal, Executive Director, Bristol Development Authority
Mitzzy Rowe, Executive Director, Bristol Housing Authority
Janet Serra, Executive Director, Litchfield Hills Tourism District
Maria Simao, CCSU
Carl Stephani, Executive Director, Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
Eileen Sweeney, Executive Director, Central Connecticut Tourism District
Len Tundermann, Town Planner, Plainville
Calvin Vinal, President, Webster Bank

That Plan that was developed sets forth the goals, objectives, strategies, and specific projects that the region wishes to pursue in order to encourage its economic development. The highest priority projects for the region include two industrial park development projects in the City of Bristol and two corridor development projects in the City of New Britain. Those projects are intended to be completed within the next five years.

MASTER TRANSPORTATION PLAN

As the region's Metropolitan Planning Agency (MPO), CCRPA is responsible for the creation of the Master Transportation Plan for the Region. The Master Transportation Plan provides a snapshot of the region's overall transportation network with an eye toward the future. The Plan will lay the groundwork for how the region's transportation system should look 26 years into the future. Roadway, public transportation, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities are being planned to help create a seamless transportation network that will provide residents with maximized mobility, efficiency, safety and choice in the transportation system.

The Master Transportation Plan for Central Connecticut is a cooperative effort involving the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA) and its seven member municipalities. It defines the short-term and long-term (2004-2030) transportation needs of the Central Connecticut Region and is part of the comprehensive, continuing and coordinated transportation planning program underway in the Region.

CCRPA Staff is working with citizens, local staff and officials, transportation providers, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation to produce this Plan by early 2004.

CITIZENS CORPS

The Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency received a \$14,722 grant from the Homeland Security Division of the State of Connecticut Department of Public Safety to help organize the Region's Citizens Corps.

To accomplish this objective, the Agency formed the Central Connecticut Citizens Corps Regional Council, which includes representatives from the Region's seven municipalities, and the American Red Cross. The first meeting of the Council was held on April 1, 2003. Representatives of the Connecticut Office of

Emergency Management, Homeland Security Division, and the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee attended. All in attendance were briefed on the Citizen Corps and its components. All municipality representatives were tasked with forming a Citizen Corps and Community Emergency Response Team for their respective Towns. This Regional Council will be meeting quarterly.

HOMELAND SECURITY - PLANNING AND VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

In April 2003 Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency was awarded two grants which together totaled \$70,630 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) which is now part of the newly created Department of Homeland Security. The grants were awarded to meet two vital needs of the Central Connecticut Region communities: Emergency Planning for natural and intentional disasters particularly terrorism incidents, and the creation of a Citizen Corps program to promote volunteerism to support the First Responders in a time of emergency.

The \$55,908 Emergency Planning grant is for reviewing and updating each municipality's Emergency Operations Plan. These plans are guidance documents used by Public Safety Services (Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services) when a threat to public safety has occurred. This grant will also allow the Agency to prepare a Terrorism Incident Response Plan.

Together these two programs represent Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency's commitment to help support our Public Safety Service members and the communities of our region.

PEQUABUCK RIVER STATE OF THE WATERSHED

Under grants for \$36,879 from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, the Pequabuck River State of Watershed Report is progressing towards completion. This report brings a variety of facts and information about the watershed to the public. The Report is intended to meet the need for critical data to provide a base for the development of a comprehensive watershed management plan for the region in the near future. The study, being completed by the CCRPA in cooperation with the Farmington and Pequabuck River Watershed Associations, is funded by a Section 604(b) grant through the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The Pequabuck River State of Watershed Report will describe the watershed's history and

dynamics, current water quality and quantity, fish and habitat, and land use.

PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS - CCPATH

The staff has undertaken an initiative related to public transit, the use of bicycles, walking and hiking trails and the public health of the Region. The name of this initiative is the Central Connecticut Plan for Alternative Transportation and Health (CCPATH). The project is designed to identify all existing trails, paths, walks, and other accessways which are not available for motorized vehicles, but which are, or could be used by bicyclists and pedestrians to access public transit services. Once existing accessways are located and mapped, and public transit access points have been identified, CCRPA staff will work with its member towns to identify potential additional linkages between these paths and public transit services. The objective of this project is to facilitate public access to the Region's transit services to enable more people to walk to their destinations and improve their personal health.

In recognition of the innovative value and importance of this project, on May 12, 2003, Governor Rowland, on behalf of the Connecticut Department of environmental Protection, presented the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency a Greenways Award in Planning, for the trail mapping and analysis of the plan.



TRANSIT SERVICES

Effective October 6, 2003, the bus routes for Bristol, Plainville, and New Britain were changed. A local bus route serves downtown Bristol, Route 6, and Tunxis Community College. There is also a "new" route that travels from Downtown Bristol to New Britain on an hourly basis.

VISIONS NEW BRITAIN

CCRPA was represented in Visions New Britain and on the New Britain American Red Cross Transportation Committee and furnished guidance

and information for the improvement of public transportation.

PLYMOUTH PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency has contracted with Plymouth to revise their Plan of Conservation and Development. This project began in the Summer of 2003 and should be completed by late 2004.

GIS – GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

CCRPA is currently engaged in various GIS projects that relate to the Region's environment, land use, and transportation. CCRPA currently has four computers that are available for GIS mapping; thus, the Agency is able to fulfill the mapping requirements of its member towns. The agency recently updated the complete parcel map for the town of Plainville. The agency is working with the City of Bristol to prepare a map of the Route 72 Corridor and has recently completed mapping Bristol's wetland areas. We will supply the preliminary data and mapping to the consultant preparing a land use plan for the corridor. The agency is also preparing maps of the public sewered areas in the region.

HOPPERS-BIRGE POND & CONNECTICUT ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM

On May 14, 2003, three CCRPA planners joined with professionals from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, the North Central Conservation District, the City of Bristol, and the Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team, to assist Bristol in the City's decision making process to determine the future of the Hoppers-Birge Pond Property.



CCRPA staff was led by Ken Shooshan-Stoller, Deputy Director, and included Margus Laan, Senior

Land Use Planner, and Bob Cless, a trained archeologist, analyzed the property's archeological and historical resources.

The Hoppers-Birge Pond Property is a 203.3 acre site and is the single largest municipally owned, publicly available open space in the City. The Property provides a venue for picnics, hiking, walking and bicycling along trails, and fishing and canoeing in Birge Pond. While these activities are important, the importance of the Hoppers-Birge Pond Property is based on the geologic kettles on the site, which are geological formations of glacial origin. These geologic kettles make this Property very unique. Another important aspect of the property is its historic past, as a location of travelways of earlier eras. The Birge Pond dam and remnant sluiceway supplied water power, and the forest supplied charcoal to Bristol's early industries.

The Team's recommendations stressed the importance of the kettles, as the unique geological resource of the Property and of the Region, as a vital link to our glacial origins, and as an important educational resource for today and future generations. The Team recommended that preservation of the kettles be a primary City goal and that any proposed future use or combination of uses on this Property should be judged by the impact of this potential use on the continued viability of the kettles.

LAND USE REFERRAL

Under a \$40,800 grant from the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, the Agency's referral function is mandated by the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut. While Agency decisions are non-binding, the review mandate is important procedurally as this process keeps the Region and neighboring municipalities aware of developments in the surrounding area and provides an opportunity for comment. Referrals are required in three areas: for zoning matters by Section 8-3b; for subdivision matters by Section 8-26b; and for Plans of Conservation & Development by Section 8-23f.

During fiscal year July 2002 to June 2003, the Agency received a total of 85 individual referrals: 40 from our seven member municipalities and 45 from municipalities sharing our borders. The vast majority of the 85 referrals pertained to zoning (71). There were also thirteen subdivision referrals and three referrals involving Plans of Conservation & Development for two towns. Two referrals involved both subdivision and zoning issues.

The 71 zoning referrals were diverse. Some involved just the adjustment of a single word in one regulation, while others included major revisions of commercial and industrial regulations. Several referrals involved moratoria, which were intended to give the towns breathing and thinking room, on issues related to multi-family and age specific type residential developments, and village districts. Other zoning regulations were intended to "heat up" development, specifically in the older cities. Two referrals dealt with protection of ground water, with major revisions proposed in aquifer protection regulations. Zoning changes were not limited to text and included map changes as well. Some map changes were minor, e.g., switching the zoning classification of a lot to the adjoining area. Other map proposals were major, e.g., proposing new commercial and industrial classifications.



ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE

The Agency operates the Region's Paratransit Service under a \$655,140 grant from the Connecticut Department of Transportation. This service is offered to disabled people who cannot utilize fixed-route transit.

ADA Paratransit Advisory Committee

The Region's ADA Paratransit Advisory Committee was re-instituted and held its first meeting on January 8, 2003. Committee voting members appointed are Mary Jane Corn, Central Connecticut Visiting Nurses Association; Judy Grenier, Bristol Community Organization; Mike Karwan, New Britain Senior Center; Robley Newton, Connecticut Department of Social Services; F. Jay Sullivan, New Britain Commission on Persons with Disabilities. Torre Skjerli, CW Resources, was selected as a non-voting member. The Advisory Committee will meet on a Quarterly Basis to oversee the operation of Regional Paratransit services.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR FISCAL 2003 (July 1, 2002-June 30, 2003)

More than ninety percent of the services the Agency provides are funded by Federal and State grants. Out of a total annual budget of \$1,278,275, the total local match budgeted for all seven of our member municipalities is \$88,000. That figure has not changed for nearly a decade. During the 2003 fiscal year, that match enabled more than \$3.5 million of outside funds to flow to the Region's member municipalities for transportation and other projects. It is anticipated that similar amounts will be generated through the Agency for our member municipalities annually in the years to come.

While there has been no change in the total amount of the CCRPA budget supported by municipal dues, the proportion of the total \$88,000 paid by each of our seven member Towns varies annually in relation to changes in the proportion of population and total grand list value in each town.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR FISCAL 2003

Revenues:	
Federal	\$128,822
State	377,954
ADA Paratransit Service	655,140
Member Municipalities	87,978
Municipalities/CEDS	24,540
Other	5,781
Total Revenues	<u>\$1,280,215</u>

Expenditures	
Direct Costs:	
Salaries	\$257,039
ADA Paratransit Service	655,140
Other	72,588
Indirect Costs	<u>267,023</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$1,251,790</u>

AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS – AS OF 6/30/03

Berlin	Morgan Seelye Joan Carey
Bristol	Timothy Furey Donald Padlo Michael Parks
Burlington	Richard Alden Theodore C. Scheidel
New Britain	Susan McMullen Helen Z. Pearl Steven Schiller, Chair
Plainville	David Dudek Glenn Petit
Plymouth	William Doherty Steven Panasuk

Southington

Leanne Kennedy
Rudolph Cabata
Matthew O'Keefe

CCRPA STAFF

Carl J. Stephani, ICMA-CM	Executive Director
Ken Shooshan-Stoller	Deputy Director
Margus Laan, AICP	Senior Planner
Tony Savino	Transit Manager
Pramod Pandey	Regional Planner
Robert Cless	Regional Planner
Joseph Barbeau	Transportation Planner
Rita Mastrobattista	Financial Administrator
Sharon Neupaver	Secretary
Shiva Shankar Reddy As	GIS Intern