

ANNUAL REPORT THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY (CCRPA) FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004

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, economic development, environmental, and emergency services preparedness and response plans. Some of the specific projects we have undertaken during the 2003-2004 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 completed work on its "Busway West" Plan, which was prepared to enhance the region's public transportation system by planning improved 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 separated from automobile 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 recommends measures to capitalize on the facility by suggesting transit route updates, park-and-ride lot locations, bus stop amenities, and bicycle/pedestrian safety in the areas served by public transportation. The Plan makes recommendations on how best to implement these types of services to

respond to the Busway's impact. Staff is currently encouraging support for the plan by the Region's towns.

Staff completed this project with help from a steering committee, which included the following members:

Peter Agostini, President, New Britain Transportation Company
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, formerly with the 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
Judith Tillman, New Britain Resident
Len Tundermann, Planner, Town of Plainville
Stephen Varga, Executive Director, Greater NB Community Development Commission

CCRPA staff has also served on the New Britain-Hartford Busway Advisory Committee and the New Britain Municipal Advisory Committee for Busway station area design.



COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

To qualify for Federal economic development assistance the region must have a Federally approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in effect. During the 2003-2004 fiscal year the Agency completed a contract with a consultant group which prepared a CEDS for the four most economically impacted towns of the Region: namely, Bristol, New Britain, Plainville, and Plymouth. Approval of the CEDS was granted by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) in April of 2004. EDA requires that a CEDS be updated annually and the CEDS Steering Committee, which includes the following members, will guide the CEDS update process during FY 2004-05:

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 Lorenzetti, Training Development Manager, ITBD
Sue MacDonald, Cook-Willow Convalescent Home
Ken Malinowski, Director, Municipal Development Department New Britain
Bill Millerick, Executive Director, New Britain Chamber
Mayor Gerard Couture, City of Bristol
John O'Toole, Northeast Utilities
Mayor Timothy Stewart, City of New Britain
Mike Petosa, Labor Department
Jonathan Rosenthal, Executive Director, Bristol Development Authority
Mitzy Rowe, Executive Director, Bristol Housing Authority
Janet Serra, Executive Director, Litchfield Hills Tourism District
Maria Simao, CCSU
Len Tundermann, Town Planner, Plainville
Calvin Vinal, President, Webster Bank

The CEDS includes goals, objectives, strategies, and specific projects that the region wishes to pursue to foster continued economic development.



CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLANNING

The Agency made a commitment to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions by adopting a Resolution joining the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. During the summer of 2004 the Agency hosted a summer intern sponsored by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation. The intern will complete the first step of the program - a regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory.



The Inventory report, which will be available on the Agency's website, will provide information about community-wide emissions in each city and town in the Region, as well as a detailed look at the emissions produced by the seven municipal governments. The report will identify the largest sources of emissions in the region, and note that if no action is taken to address the issue, regional greenhouse gas emissions will increase by 26% in the year 2020.

Towns will be able to use the information in the Inventory to identify and prioritize areas where there are significant potential energy cost savings through emissions reduction measures.

This program follows on the President's 1993 Climate Change Action Plan, the New England Governors' Conference 2001 Climate Change Action Plan, and the Connecticut "Climate Change Stakeholders Dialogue Recommendations" approved by the Governor in January 2004, encourages municipalities to make changes that would reduce their production of greenhouse gases and save tax dollars in the long-term, such as the City of Bristol is doing with its traffic signal LED conversion program.

LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

As the region's federally designated Metropolitan Planning Agency (MPO), the CCRPA is responsible for the creation of the Long-Range Transportation Plan for the Region. The Long-Range Transportation Plan provides a snapshot of the Region's overall transportation network with an eye toward the future. The Plan, completed in February of 2004, lays the groundwork for the region's transportation system in 2030. Roadway, public transportation, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities are recommended to help create a seamless transportation network that will provide residents with maximized mobility, efficiency, safety and choice.

The Long-Range 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 worked with citizens, local staff and officials, transportation providers, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation to produce this Plan. The next plan will be completed in early 2007.



HOMELAND SECURITY & CITIZENS CORPS

The Agency cooperated with the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC) to initiate the organization and training of an appropriate number of Citizens Corps teams for the Region to assist emergency response and law enforcement officials in time of an emergency.



The Agency also provided assistance to its member jurisdictions to review and update each municipality's Emergency Operations Plan and to add a Terrorism Annex to each of those Plans. These plans are guidance documents used by Public Safety Services (Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services) when a threat to public safety has occurred.

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.

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 included 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 invited to form Citizen Corps and Community Emergency Response Teams for their respective Towns. This Regional

Council meets quarterly under the Auspices of the CREPC.

PEQUABUCK RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN

CCRPA, in cooperation with the Farmington River and Pequabuck River Watershed Associations, is currently involved in the development of a comprehensive management plan for the Pequabuck River. The CCRPA has already completed the Pequabuck River State of Watershed Report and is waiting for final approval from the CT DEP. This report brings a variety of facts and information about the watershed to the public. This report is being used as a base for the development of the management plan with a stakeholders committee representing participants from the six towns in the watershed. The study is funded by \$36,879 in Section 604(b) and Section 319 grants from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The Pequabuck River Management Plan will describe the goals for the watershed, and activities to improve water quality, preserve fish and wildlife habitat, and lessen the impact of land use on the water quality.



PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS - CCPATH

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.

TRANSIT SERVICES

CT Transit, New Britain Division, operates 2 bus routes in Bristol and 9 in New Britain. Service is also provided in Kensington and Plainville.

VISIONS NEW BRITAIN

CCRPA was represented on the Visions New Britain Transportation Committee where we 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 continuously assisting its member towns and other agencies with various GIS data, analysis, and mapping that relates to the Region's environment, land use, and transportation. The Agency has updated the complete land use and open space maps for the Town of Plymouth. In the near future, under a \$10,000 DEP Grant we will develop a Buildout Scenario for the region.

LAND USE REFERRAL

The Agency's referral function is mandated by the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut. While referral recommendations 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 the opportunity for input. 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.

For fiscal year July 2003 to June 2004, the Agency received a total of 67 individual referrals: 31 from our seven member municipalities and 36 from municipalities sharing our borders. The vast majority, 57, of the referrals pertained to zoning matters. Eight of the referrals involved subdivisions, with one

focusing on subdivision regulations. One referral combined zoning and subdivision issues: a moratorium on housing development placing a "time out" on subdivisions, re-subdivisions and multi-family site plans. In addition, one referral was a counseling determination on a multifamily development on a municipal border which was reviewed by the Agency upon the request of a member town for consistency with the Year 2010 Regional Development Plan.

The 57 zoning referrals were a diverse group. As with prior years, referrals vary in their range. The majority (51) involved changes to zoning regulations and 6 involved petitions to the zoning maps.

While no referral is inconsequential, referrals do vary in their impact and relative importance. Some proposals are procedural and have no practical impact to surrounding towns. Other referrals are very substantive with the potential for significant impact to the town itself and the neighboring towns. Length also varies. Some are just one critical word and others involve entire new sections to a town's zoning regulations. Nor is length a gauge of significance. One critical word is enough to totally change the scope of a regulation. Other times, both detailed text and definitions are needed to give a provision the depth to be effective.

The most notable proposals were regulations seeking to revitalize older urban areas with artist work studios and residential dwellings; establishment of farm stands to booster the viability of local farming; procedures to mitigate and prevent the noise and structural damage from blasting and other extreme construction methods; and finding appropriate buildable land provisions to protect the environment and not be exclusionary.

The rezoning petitions were also diverse. These ranged from the very narrowly focused proposals for one or two lots to much larger areas with difficult terrain and where up versus down zoning would have significant long terms consequences on the area and the environment.



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.

The Region's ADA Paratransit Advisory Committee meets on a Quarterly Basis to oversee the operation of Regional Paratransit services. Committee voting members are Diane Maiorano, 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.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR FISCAL 2003 (July 1, 2003-June 30, 2004)

More than ninety percent of the services the Agency provides are funded by Federal and State grants. Out of a total annual budget of \$1,261,910, 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 2003-2004 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	\$108,817
State	386,886
ADA Paratransit Service	647,159
Member Municipalities	88,000
Municipalities/CEDS	1,000
Plymouth Plan	23,971
Other	<u>6,077</u>
Total Revenues	<u>\$1,261,910</u>

Expenditures

Direct Costs:

Salaries	\$285,269
ADA Paratransit Service	647,159
Other	35,448

Indirect Costs	<u>299,079</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$1,266,955</u>

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
Joseph Barbeau	Transportation Planner
Rita Mastrobattista	Financial Administrator
Sharon Neupaver	Secretary

AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS – AS OF 6/30/04

Berlin	Morgan Seelye Dennis Kern
Bristol	Timothy Furey Donald Padlo Michael Parks
Burlington	Richard Alden Theodore C. Scheidel
New Britain	Helen Z. Pearl Lisa Carver Steven Schiller, Chair
Plainville	David Dudek Glenn Petit
Plymouth	William Doherty Steven Panasuk
Southington	Leanne Kennedy Rudolph Cabata Matthew O'Keefe

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