

ANNUAL REPORT THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY (CCRPA) FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006

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



Seated left to right: Helen Z. Pearl, Dennis Kern, Donald Padlo, and Jennifer Bartiss-Earley.
Standing left to right: Steven Schiller, Matthew O'Keefe, David Dudek, Donald Naples, Ronald Burns, Rudy Cabata, and Joseph Julian
Missing: Timothy Furey, Amy Harris, Patrick Herzing, and Leanne Kennedy

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 CCRPA 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 2005-2006 fiscal year, are described below.

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DONALD PADLO CELEBRATES HIS 40TH!



While a spry fellow, the reference is to Don's years of service on the Agency's Board and not his birthday. For forty years, Don has been one of the three representatives from the City of Bristol.

Don was there in 1966 when the Agency was founded. He has served continuously ever since that time and has held all official positions: chair, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary. He is currently chair of two of the Agency's subcommittees: the Central Connecticut Transportation Improvement Committee and the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

The Agency commemorated and celebrated Don's 40th at the Board meeting held on May 4, 2006. The commemoration included a presentation of a letter of commendation from M. Jodi Rell, the Governor of Connecticut; a copy of the March 17, 1966 meeting minutes - the first meeting of the Agency; and a gift certificate for art supplies. The celebration involved cake - Don's favorite chocolate with vanilla pudding. Motions were floated that every meeting ought to commemorate Don's 40th (and eat cake too)!



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 2005-2006 fiscal year the CCRPA completed an annual update of the

Central Connecticut Corridor's 2004 approved CEDS. The Corridor includes the towns of Bristol, New Britain, Plainville, and Plymouth. The CEDS Steering Committee approved the Update unanimously at its May 15, 2006, meeting with the following members in attendance: Mayor Timothy Stewart and Steve Schiller from the City of New Britain; John Leone, Executive Director of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce, and Jonathan Rosenthal, Economic Development Director of the City of Bristol; Tom Lorenzetti from the Central Connecticut State University's Institute for Technical and Business Development; Bill Millerick, Executive Director of the New Britain Chamber of Commerce; Bill Kuehn, Planning Director of the Town of Plymouth; and Len Tundermann, the Planning Director of the Town of Plainville.

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

HOMELAND SECURITY

The Agency was allocated a \$15,000 grant during FY2005-2006 by the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to help organize the Region's Homeland Security efforts, which included coordination with the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee and its programs, projects, events and activities.

CITIZEN CORPS

The Agency, in cooperation with the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC), is actively involved in planning, coordinating and managing the Citizen Corps Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. This program coordinates the formation, logistical support and training of Citizens Corps teams for the Capitol and Central Connecticut Regions to assist emergency response and law enforcement officials in time of an emergency.

The CRCOG/CCRPA received a \$50,000 grant in 2005-06 from the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to help organize the Region's Citizens Corps CERT Program. This grant helped fund training, equipment, supplies, etc., to manage the CERT program in the Capitol and Central Connecticut Region.

This Regional Council meets monthly under the auspices of the CREPC.

Four CERTs have been trained with the Citizen Corps funding in the Region: New Britain Fire Department; ESPN CERT; Bristol CERT; and Canine Search and Rescue Team.

PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT (PSAP) CONSOLIDATION STUDY

In 2004, CCRPA obtained two grants from the CT Department of Public Safety (DPS) for a PSAP (911 Answering Centers) consolidation study in 13 towns in the Central Connecticut region and neighboring area. The first grant, which funded a study of potential PSAP consolidation of the City of Bristol and the Towns of Plymouth, Thomaston, Watertown, and Wolcott, has been completed and the DPS has accepted the final plan. The CCRPA has been working on the second project, which will be for the study of Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), the Cities of Meriden and New Britain and the Towns of Berlin, Newington, Plainville, Rocky Hill, Southington, and Wethersfield.

HAZARD MITIGATION

The Agency continued work on a regional plan that seeks to anticipate natural hazard events and minimize the potential for damage in our region. Staff interviewed numerous municipal officials and private individuals on natural hazards and the impacts of these events on the communities of the region. All seven towns in the region are participating in this project. The funding was received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to undertake planning work for Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is administering the program. Work intensified as the Plan approached the target date of July 2006.

The grant originates from the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA) that created the National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Fund. Hazard mitigation plans are a preventative measure and are becoming increasingly important. Many Federal programs will require the existence of a local hazard mitigation plan for eligibility and participation. The goal is to reduce future damage from natural disasters by reducing future liabilities and thereby saving money. By increasing the preparedness of towns for natural disasters, the expectation is to reduce the potential for damage and the future need for federal and state disaster assistance.

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

In an effort to monitor and manage traffic congestion links in the transportation network, CCRPA has been involved in developing a Congestion Management Process (CMP) analysis in the region. It has successfully completed the first year data collection, analysis and reporting in 2005. This task is being coordinated with similar efforts at the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and Mid State Regional Planning Agency (MRPA), our partners in the Hartford Urbanized Area. The CMP consists of various tools and technologies to measure and assess traffic operations on the Region's roadways. A grant through the Federal Highway Administration has allowed CCRPA, CRCOG, and MRPA to purchase geographic positioning system (GPS) receivers to collect drive-time data such as speed and delay. This data is plotted on the geographic information system (GIS) to graphically display locations of congestion on maps. To effectively analyze the problems, a good deal of traffic data must be collected at various times during the day, such as volume, delay times, travel speeds, signalization detail and turning movements. With this detailed knowledge, the proper solution to improve operations can be developed and implemented. The first year results showed significant congestion during peak hours in some sections of Route 6 in the region. The project will be continued for other major routes and a timeline study will be conducted once sufficient data has been collected in order to monitor growing traffic patterns and manage congestion.

FREIGHT PLANNING

CCRPA has been involved in people movement since 1973, but has just recently embarked on a project that concerns the movement of goods. Freight is shipped by truck and train in the region, but has not been a part of the transportation planning picture until now. CCRPA has joined up with CRCOG and Midstate RPA in a collaborative effort to get an understanding of the freight movement issues in the Hartford Urbanized Area. With this understanding of the issues and the impact of freight on the entire transportation network, solid recommendations can be made that improve the system. In coordination with the two other MPOs in the Hartford urbanized area, CCRPA worked with a consultant to gather the substantial commodity flow data necessary for a true understanding of the regional freight picture. The thrust of this effort is to mainstream freight planning into the regular MPO program of transportation activities and to establish

public-private partnerships with the providers of freight movement in the region.

TRANSIT SERVICES

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

In a collaborative effort, the CCRPA helped secure approximately \$160,000 for the City of New Britain to replace older bus shelters and add bus route signage. The federal funds were provided by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Sec. 5307 Transit Enhancement monies, through the invaluable assistance of the Greater Hartford Transit District and help from other partners, such as ConnDOT, FTA, and the Capitol Region Council of Governments. The CCRPA and the City of New Britain are both committed to helping current users of the bus system and attracting new riders as well. By improving the bus system environment, both goals are advanced. Such initiatives are vital as the New Britain to Hartford Busway gets closer to reality. The CCRPA hopes to expand these efforts beyond the City in the future, to improve transit in other parts of the regional transit system.

The CCRPA produced an update to the 1996 Transit Development Plan in fiscal 2006, which is scheduled for public review in the fall of 2006. The Plan recommends further enhancement efforts to showcase the bus transit system in the region through more route signage, information kiosks, dissemination of route maps, and a variety of marketing efforts in assorted media. The Plan also summarizes the transit-related recommendations appearing in recently completed CCRPA published plans, Busway West and the Central Connecticut Plan for Alternative Transportation and Health (CCPATH).

ELDERLY & DISABLED DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORTATION

CCRPA coordinated the State Matching Grant Program for Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Transportation between member towns and CT Department of Transportation. Assistance was rendered in the application process.

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.

GIS – GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

In recent years CCRPA has been continuously expanding its GIS capacity by adding GIS hardware/software and actively 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. In 2005-06 the CCRPA completed a Community Resource Inventory Mapping for the Town of Plainville. Similarly, under a \$10,000 DEP grant, CCRPA is currently developing a Buildout Analysis and a Regional Plan of Conservation and Development for the region. The Buildout and Impact Analysis portion of the project have already been completed. It included updating land use, parcel and zoning maps of seven towns in the region and then analyzing buildout scenarios based on updated data. The buildout and impact analyses, which determined how much land is available for future development and what kind of impact it will have to the community in terms of population, traffic, environment, etc, are the base data to produce a regional plan. The CCRPA will utilize these results to develop a regional plan of conservation and development recommending what might be the regional development prospects and make recommendations for managed growth.

LAND USE REFERRAL

The Agency's referral function is mandated by the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut. While these decisions are non-binding, the review mandate is important procedurally as this process keeps the Region and neighboring municipalities aware of developments in the larger 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 2005 to June 2006, the Agency received a total of sixty-six referral submissions. Twenty-nine of these referrals came from our seven member municipalities and all seven municipalities submitted referrals. Thirty-seven of these referrals came from municipalities sharing our borders and

these referrals came from Avon, Canton, Cheshire, Cromwell, Farmington, Harwinton, Meriden, Newington, New Hartford, Thomaston, and Waterbury. Furthermore, a referral can be comprised of more than one component, which explains why there are more parts than there is a whole.

Fifty-eight of the sixty-six referrals were zoning related. Of these fifty-eight, three referrals involved changes to zoning maps, two involved moratoriums; and fifty-four involved changes to the rules themselves, both modifications of text and entirely new regulations.

In contrast, the number of subdivision referrals was eight. Three of these referrals involved specific proposals to subdivide land: one from our member town and two from towns bordering our region. The other five referrals were advisory and were submitted for reference and optional review. Section 8-26b limits Agency review to subdivisions along and across municipal boundaries and, unlike zoning referrals, not to changes in the rules governing the subdivision of land. One involved a moratorium and the other four involved changes to the regulations that govern the creation of subdivisions.

Last and by no means least, two referrals were reviewed under the provisions of Section 8-23f. One was for the Town of Southington and the other was for the City of Waterbury.

As in prior years, this year's fifty-eight zoning referrals were a diverse group. Among the received referrals were economic development related proposals from the Town of Southington: the creation of the "Redevelopment Overlay District" and changes in rear lot requirements in industrial zones, the creation of an "Economic Development Zone" in the Town of New Hartford, and allowing helicopter landing facilities for businesses in the City of Bristol. Other referrals sought to re-organize zoning regulations, from one specific area, such as the regulations on telecommunication facilities for the Town of Burlington, to an entire zoning book for the Town of Plymouth. The environmental issues were another focus, from revised boundaries for the Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone in the Town of Cromwell to seeking to create a definition for "limits of clearing" in the Town of Canton. Referrals could have a lighter side too. The City of New Britain submitted a referral to allow outdoor dining and the Town of Cromwell received a petition to expand a golf driving range. One of the most intriguing proposals was the petition to establish a "private horse stable", essentially a retirement home for horses.

Numerous referrals focused on housing. One referral sought the establishment of accessory apartments while another referral sought to consolidate a town's single family zones from three to two. The referral for the "Housing Opportunity District" sought to create affordable housing utilizing a proposal that combined open space and multi-family units. One referral involved a proposal to eliminate active adult housing entirely in one town. Another referral began as an age restricted, planned unit, open space, titled "Recreational Residential Open Space Development" and then returned, same title, "Recreational Residential Open Space Development", but without the age 55 and over restriction.



ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE

The CCRPA operates the Region's Paratransit Service under a \$796,120 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 Torre Skjerli, CW Resources; Shawn Cohen, Plainville Senior Center; Mike Karwan, New Britain Senior Center; Robley Newton, Connecticut Department of Social Services; F. Jay Sullivan, New Britain Commission on Persons with Disabilities.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR FISCAL '05-'06 (July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006)

More than ninety percent of the services the CCRPA provides are funded by Federal and State grants. Out of a total annual budget of more than \$1.2 million, the total local match budgeted for all seven of our member municipalities is \$88,000. That figure has not changed for a decade. During the 2005-2006 fiscal year, the \$88,000 local "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 CCRPA 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 '05-'06

Revenues:	
Federal	\$257,355
State	98,799
ADA Paratransit Service	725,301
Member Municipalities	88,001
Municipalities/CEDS	17,337
Plymouth Plan	500
Other	<u>9,491</u>
Total Revenues	<u>\$1,196,784</u>
Expenditures	
Direct Costs:	
Salaries	\$181,801
ADA Paratransit Service	713,930
Other	10,894
Indirect Costs	<u>250,926</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$1,157,551</u>

AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS – AS OF 6/30/05

Berlin	Morgan Seelye, Chairperson Dennis Kern
Bristol	Timothy Furey Donald Padlo Ronald Burns
Burlington	Amy Harris Joseph Julian, Secretary
New Britain	Helen Z. Pearl Donald Naples Steven Schiller
Plainville	David Dudek, Treasurer Jennifer Bartiss-Earley
Plymouth	Patrick Herzing
Southington	Leanne Kennedy Rudy Cabata Matthew O'Keefe, Vice Chair

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
Rita Mastrobattista	Financial Administrator
Sharon Neupaver	Secretary

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