Securing Our Future

2004 Annual Report

Capitol Region Council of Governments
Welcome

Stephen T. Cassano, Chairman of the Policy Board, Capitol Region Council of Governments. Our annual report this year has as its theme: securing our future. This report highlights the successful effort to mount a regional homeland security strategy and it shows what is possible when we all work together for common aims in our region. The work done in the region to rise to the challenge of developing a regional strategy for homeland security is but an example of the many things being done to make our region more secure.

The region has been building its capacity to act jointly on public safety and homeland security for close to a decade since the Capitol Region Public Safety Council was created in September of 1995. Comprised of 41 municipalities, the Council has several subcommittees including the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee, Comprehensive Planning Committee and Technical Review Committee. There are over 400 members from police, fire, EMS, municipal government, state and federal agencies, area hospitals and private industry who serve on these committees – striving to make the Capitol Region a safer place to live, work and play. As we move forward, it is vital for the region to work together to meet challenges to secure our future – whether public safety, transportation or more livable communities.

Lyle D. Wray, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments. Joining the Capitol Region Council of Governments in Connecticut in April 2004 following on the tenure of Rick Porth has provided a great opportunity to work on a variety of regional challenges. It has been said that “it takes a village to raise a child” referring to our interdependence and mutual responsibility for the next generation. Similarly, for many important challenges at the regional level, “it takes a region to rise to regional challenges” is just as true. Whether it be homeland security, public transit, livable communities, or affordable housing just as examples, we can move toward solutions more effectively when we work together as a region. The staff team here at CRCOG is dedicated to serving in that quest to the best of our ability.
Year at a Glance

- Initiated a regional homeland security effort combining the 2004 federal Homeland Security grant funds of 36 municipalities to identify priority projects for the benefit of the entire region

- Successfully completed a multi-faceted emergency disaster exercise in and around the Capitol Region that was one of the largest emergency drills conducted in the U.S.

- Adopted a major revision to the Regional Transportation Plan that included a new emphasis on economic development and smart growth

- Through the Capitol Region Purchasing Council (CRPC) welcomed two new members, Cromwell and East Haddam, and recently forged a strategic alliance with the Windham Region Council of Governments beginning December 1, 2004. CRPC’s volume-based purchasing efforts saved participant towns approximately $776,021 during the year

- Completed three major transit studies: the Griffin Busway Feasibility Study, the Hartford East Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study and the New Haven - Hartford - Springfield Commuter Rail Implementation Study

- Completed the New Britain to Hartford Busway Station Area Planning Project that generated ideas for transit oriented development to enhance the proposed transit investment with enhanced community livability

- Worked together to keep our citizens safe through continued efforts in public safety, incident management and pedestrian and bicycle safety and the formation of several civilian emergency response teams (CERT)

- Maintained livable communities through natural resource conservation, long range transportation planning, and developing our region’s workforce

- Developed and adopted a regional strategy to address long-term homelessness

- Enhanced the effectiveness and efficiency of local governments through cooperative purchasing savings, best practices review of vehicle maintenance, and technical assistance on transportation

- Supported partnerships on the Adriaen’s Landing Convention Center and the Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership
Working to Keep Our Citizens Safe

Keeping our citizens safe in the Capitol Region has many facets including public safety, homeland security, incident management and pedestrian and bicycle safety.

**Regional Homeland Security Initiative.** Thirty-six municipalities have committed to participate in the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) sponsored Regional Homeland Security initiative for Homeland Security Grant funds. More than one hundred representatives attended a plenary session in May to prepare for the grant. Subcommittees were formed for planning, organization, training and equipment. Fourteen priority projects were identified by consensus. Examples of these projects include: expanding the mobile data system to fire and EMS, providing extensive interdisciplinary training, enhancing local emergency operations centers, equipping three regional command posts and seven regional police emergency response teams, updating the capabilities of the Regional Access Frequency System (RAFS), creating increased capacity in the regional pharmaceutical stockpile, expanding Citizen Corps volunteer initiatives and creating a region wide emergency notification system. CRCOG’s Initial Strategy Implementation Plan (ISIP) was submitted to and approved by the State of Connecticut and funds are expected in the second quarter of 2005.

**Capitol Region Emergency Disaster Exercise.** On May 15, 2004, a multi-faceted mock emergency disaster exercise took place in and around the Capitol Region. The exercise was designed to test the activation of the Regional Emergency Disaster (RED) Plan; provide regional coordination of communications; activate a Regional Emergency Operations Center and a Regional Coordination Center; coordinate RED Plan resource deployment for emergency support functions; and test the Metropolitan Medical Response System and the Medical Reserve Corps. The exercise involved several distinct and independent emergency situations including a major power outage in Manchester, ill employees at the Hartford Steam Boiler building, a tour bus accident in West Hartford and a gasoline explosion in Wethersfield. This was one of the largest emergency planning drills in the United States and it received major local as well as national news coverage.

**CAPTAIN Mobile Data Communication System.** In its sixth year of operation, the statewide CAPTAIN Mobile Data Communication system continues to improve and expand. It is now home to almost 1,300 laptop computers in eighty-four police organizations, which link them to local, state and
national criminal information files. An enhancements project was recently completed and rolled out. The system is now migrating from CDPD to GPRS Edge technology that will feature increased bandwidth and new hardware for all participating departments.

**Capitol Medical Reserve Corps.** Through a federal Department of Health and Human Services grant and a partnership between CRCOG and the City of Hartford, the Capitol Region Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) was formed this year. Dr. James W. Freston, a Professor of Medicine at the University of Connecticut Health Center, has served as Commander since the inception of the MRC. The Medical Reserve Corps is designed to provide immediate assistance during times of disaster and currently has over 100 volunteers consisting of doctors, nurses, physician assistants, EMT’s, medical administrators, dentists, veterinarians, mental health workers and pharmacists. In addition, five specialized Platoons have been established. The group played a major role in the May 15th drill and will offer support to the 2005 international TOP OFF exercise. The group is in the process of establishing a Capitol Region MRC website which will link directly to the CRCOG site.

**Capitol Region Regional Incident Dispatch (RID) Team.** One of the first in the US and the first in the Northeast, the Capitol Region Regional Incident Dispatch (RID) team was formed this year. Commanded by Michael Boucher of the Farmington Police Department, the team includes 23 state certified dispatchers from 12 departments. The team has received extensive training and is in charge of handling all two-way communication in any of the three regional command posts during a RED Plan activation.

**Bicycle Safety.** Since adopting the Regional Bike Plan in 2000, CRCOG has sought to improve bicycle safety. (Photo shows a new Bike to Work feature: Tune-up Demonstrations). In the past year, staff fielded questions from several towns about the design of bike facilities, from wide shoulders to bike lanes to bike paths. In 2004, CRCOG had several successes in promoting a share the road ethic. This message went to the public in a variety of ways: TV coverage of our Bike to Work events, an article in the Connecticut Children’s Hospital Partners in Health Newsletter, and an editorial in the Hartford Courant. In addition, our Bike to Work program reaches out to bike commuters and would be
bike commuters, encouraging them to bike safely. A number of articles about our Bike to Work promotion appeared in local newspapers in the Region.

**Pedestrian Safety.** CRCOG’s Pedestrian Safety Study, which will be completed by the end of the calendar year, will help to define pedestrian safety issues in the region. The companion Pedestrian Plan will lay out strategies for improving pedestrian safety.

**Driver Safety.** The Greater Hartford Incident Management Steering Committee (GHIMSC) has been active for almost eight years working to improve emergency response to incidents on our highways. In 2004, the committee saw their work taken to the next level through the efforts of the Incident Management Task Force of the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) chaired by CRCOG Chair Stephen Cassano. CRCOG staff and other members of the GHIMSC were instrumental in assuring that issues important to responders in the Capitol Region were included among the 49 recommendations for improvements made by the TSB to the State General Assembly. Two projects have already been funded: increased highway coverage by the CT Highway Assistance Motorist Patrol (CHAMP) vans (shown), and further development and distribution of highway diversion plans.

**Intelligent Transportation Systems.** The GHIMSC, along with town public works directors and transit operators, worked with ConnDOT to develop a regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) architecture for the greater Hartford area. This effort was made to comply with a federal directive that this document be prepared before April 2005, but also to assure that any proposed ITS-type project can be fully integrated with similar projects, either existing or proposed by other entities. The architecture can be accessed on the web. Information on the Hartford Area Regional ITS Architecture may be found at: [http://consystec.com/hartford/web/_regionhome.htm](http://consystec.com/hartford/web/_regionhome.htm). ITS projects use advanced technology to solve transportation problems. They increase operational efficiency, improve safety, reduce environmental costs, and enhance personal mobility without requiring the significant investment required when highway miles are added.
Livable Communities: Foundation for a Secure Future

Communities can be made more livable by the way we connect public transit and where we live, work, and shop. In the Capitol Region, there is a continuing initiative to advance more livable communities through better linkage of transportation and land use planning.

Transit Oriented Development: Station Area Planning Project

Planning around transit (bus or rail) stations is known as Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and it has been successful throughout the country. The Pittsburgh busway and the Washington D.C. Metro are examples where districts surrounding the rapid transit systems thrive, adding to the quality of life in these communities. (The plan for the Cedar Street Station in Newington is shown here). TOD can occur in Greater Hartford too. The Capitol Region Council of Governments, working with citizens and the cities of Hartford and New Britain and the towns of Newington and West Hartford, has completed plans for the areas near stations for the New Britain – Hartford busway. The ideas are designed to make the most out of the proposed transportation investment and are intended to stimulate discussion.

In each of the four municipalities, a Municipal Advisory Committee, comprised of municipal staff, residents, and members of local boards, commissions, and organizations, met regularly over the past year to guide the station area planning process. In addition, public open houses were held in each community to inform and get input from a larger audience. The committees for each community have accepted the plans and the New Britain City Council passed a resolution endorsing the plans for the Downtown New Britain and East Street Station Areas.

The Station Area Planning Project examined how to coordinate transportation and land use around proposed stations to support economic development and to create distinctive communities. Each station area concept plan developed for the New Britain – Hartford busway has a different flavor, reflecting the character of the individual station areas. Other ideas should be pursued as they evolve, as long as they maintain the study’s goal of creating vibrant, walkable districts attractive to residents and visitors alike and supportive of rapid transit. The plans are on view on CRCOG’s website.
Technical Assistance for Livable Communities and Smart Growth

CRCOG’s Livable Communities project continues to be productive. In Suffield, for example, a complete rewrite of its zoning code followed the outreach and education of the Picture it Better Together project. The rewrite included “village districts” in the Town Center and West Suffield. Town Planner Phil Chester said the newly adopted zoning regulations also reinforce Suffield’s desire to retain its agricultural heritage. Other successes in the town include the near completion of a new, pedestrian-focused design for the town center on land including Main Street and, as of January 2004, the Town has spent $2 million on purchasing developing rights from farms--keeping active farming while permanently preserving the land.

The Parkville neighborhood in Hartford has also been building upon the work done under the Picture it Better Together project. (Photos at left show participants on the walking audit examine how well the New Park Avenue environment follows principles of smart growth, and participants back in the workshop use maps to dream of a new neighborhood, based upon smart growth principles.)

CRCOG is working with the CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Hartford 2000 (a Hartford neighborhood umbrella group), and the Parkville Revitalization Association to explore how a neighborhood can use smart growth principles to direct future growth and redevelopment. Utilizing $12,000 in grant money from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), provided to CRCOG through the State DEP, CRCOG is assisting the neighborhood to envision a more livable community through a series of workshops. The final result will be a Concept Plan and Action Plan for the New Park Avenue area. As a first step in the project, a Smart Growth Workshop and Walking Audit was held in late June. Working with neighborhood organizations, CRCOG invited residents and other stakeholders to participate in the workshop and walkabout. The participants learned about smart growth principles, walked through the project area considering how smart growth might enhance the neighborhood, and then sat down to put their ideas on maps. Response to the workshop was favorable with most participants rating it good or excellent.
An Efficient and Inclusive Transportation System

Regional Transportation Plan Update. CRCOG completed a major update of the Regional Transportation Plan in 2004. The new plan provides new emphasis on assuring that our transportation programs support regional goals regarding economic development and smart growth. There are also new chapters on coordinating land use planning and transportation planning, realizing Bradley International Airport’s potential both as a transportation asset and an engine of economic growth, and improving freight transport. The chapter on environmental justice was expanded as well. The Policy Board adopted the new Plan on March 23, 2004.

Environmental Justice. The Environmental Justice Advisory Board, which was established in 2002, continued its work this year. The Board was created to allow minority and low-income communities a greater role in the transportation planning process at CRCOG. The new Board helped develop the new project selection process used for the STP-Urban program, they reviewed and evaluated the new TIP, and they played a major role in the recent update of the Regional Transportation Plan. They are currently reviewing options for reducing particulate emissions from CT Transit buses that operate in inner city neighborhoods. This ‘clean diesel’ initiative was started due to concerns about health risks posed by diesel exhaust.

Jobs Access Program: Now in its sixth year of providing transportation services to assist former welfare recipients and low-income individuals in getting to work, CRCOG’s Jobs Access program continues its success by providing transportation to an average daily ridership of 3,000 passengers. CRCOG and its Jobs Access partners remain committed to working to obtain new and/or long-term funding to maintain a program that is essential to many of the region’s residents and businesses.

$18,000,000 for Town Sponsored Road Projects. In June 2004 the Policy Board approved $18,000,000 in federal STP-Urban funds for 19 projects submitted by CRCOG member municipalities. This federal program provides funds to municipalities to undertake major road improvements projects that might not be possible given limited local budgets.

"I began working at Mohegan Sun on June 30, 2003, which is 1 year and 4 months ago. I began as a housekeeper and have been promoted to supervisor on the third shift. They promoted me from within. This is a good job with great benefits. This wouldn’t have been possible without the bus transportation. Thanks!" Quoted from a letter received from a Jobs Access participant.

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years, CRCOG solicits proposals from towns and uses an evaluation process approved by our Transportation Committee to select the best projects from those submitted. This year 14 different communities received funding.

**Upper Albany Neighborhood Assistance.** CRCOG transportation staff worked with neighborhood groups, City staff, and the MetroHartford Alliance to solve neighborhood problems and help advance solutions. Prepared a parking study and drafted an MOU between with Connecticut DOT and the City to establish a unique cooperative effort on design of an Albany Avenue reconstruction project.

**Bus Users Forum.** In response to a suggestion proposed during an Environmental Justice Challenge Grant workshop, CRCOG and CT Transit expanded their outreach to the community by jointly sponsoring several Bus Users Forums. The first was held October 16, 2003 at Capital Community College in Hartford. The second was held March 11, 2004 at the Raymond Public Library in East Hartford and the third was held September 29, 2004 at the Albany Branch of the Hartford Public Library. A lively discussion ensued at each meeting with bus passengers offering suggestions for improving their bus riding experience. CT Transit enjoyed the opportunity to explain customer service protocol and has since followed up on several low cost recommendations. Higher cost recommendations have been documented so that they may be implemented when funds become available.

**Enfield Dial-A-Ride.** Responding to a request from the Town of Enfield for help in analyzing their Dial-A-Ride operation, CRCOG staff undertook a survey of member towns to better understand the Dial-A-Ride services that are offered throughout the Region. A summary of the responses as well as the raw data will be distributed to all of our towns to help them benchmark the quality and efficiency of their local operations and to aid them in making strategic improvements, if warranted.

**Manchester & East Hartford Bus Stop Signs.** CT Transit staff has been busy installing new bus stop signs in Manchester and East Hartford. The signs were designed by CRCOG’s bus stop subcommittee in response to CT Transit’s determination that bus stops throughout the Region were sometimes confusing at best and in some cases not even marked. One design, to be used region wide, was adopted so as to be easily identifiable as the “portal” to the local bus service. Installation of these new bus stops signs will continue in other towns over the next several years.
Utility Infringements on Municipal Right-Of-Way. CRCOG staff worked with municipalities to advance guidelines related to public utility poles and structures within the municipal right-of-way. Specifically, CRCOG worked with other agencies to identify issues and develop recommendations for addressing such items as utility pole removal and timeframes, consultation with telecommunications companies, and the design and installation of structures within the right-of-way.

Natural Resource Preservation

This was an active year for natural resources and farmland preservation efforts including:

Park River Greenway. The City of Hartford has long been identified as a linchpin in the connectivity of numerous interregional and interstate multi-use trail projects. The planning for the development of a multi-use trail along the South Branch of the Park River in Hartford began in earnest in FY 2004 and represents the first real opportunity for trail linkage in Hartford. CRCOG, collaborating with the City of Hartford and numerous nonprofit organizations and State and Federal entities, has assisted with the conceptual planning and design for a 1.8-mile multi-use trail that will reach from the vicinity of the West Hartford line near New Britain Avenue to Pope Park in Hartford. This trail could eventually link to Newington, West Hartford, and Downtown Hartford.

Agricultural Preservation. CRCOG’s participation in the Working Lands Alliance expanded in 2004, with the inclusion of a CRCOG representative to that organization’s Steering Committee. Through the active advocacy of the Working Lands Alliance, the 2004 legislative session in the General Assembly was a successful one. State Bond Funds were released, after an 18-month delay, to purchase the development rights of seven key farms in Connecticut, and additional funds were pledged for future purchases. Once slated to be merged with the Department of Consumer Protection, the state’s Department of Agriculture was restored to independent, stand-alone status. Additionally, CRCOG staff worked alongside local officials, land trusts, and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service to ensure the timely allocation of federal Farm Bill funds to protect the Region’s and the State’s important farmland.

Greenway and Open Space Planning Coordination. Recognizing that open space, natural resources, and greenway planning often stops at municipal boundaries, CRCOG co-sponsored the first two of four planned “Bring Your Own Map Parties” in 2004. These events bring together town
officials and committed citizens in geographic clusters for conversation and mapping in an effort to identify existing natural resource clusters and greenway corridors and envision ways of linking these areas across town lines. The two remaining events and a series of follow-up meetings with smaller groups are planned for 2005.

**Open Space Grants.** CRCOG continued its support for municipalities seeking Open Space preservation funds from the State, writing letters of support for several of the Region’s municipalities. For the first time in 2004, CRCOG was able to focus its support for areas identified in the Conservation Focus Areas map of *Achieving the Balance: A Plan of Conservation and Development for the Capitol Region*, in an effort to preserve more land in key regional corridors.

**A Diversity of Housing Choices**

CRCOG’s annual home sales report documented affordability challenges facing the region’s low- and moderate-income households. In 2004, 18 of 29 towns in the region had median sales prices of $200,000 or more, and the average home price overall increased by 9.1% for the year. Nearly half of the home sales affordable to low- and moderate-income households were located in five towns (Hartford, East Hartford, Manchester, Enfield, and Vernon). The CRCOG Housing Committee and Policy Board also acknowledged the need to address homelessness on a regional basis through adopting a Regional Strategy to Address Long-Term Homelessness. The regional strategy called for CRCOG participation on the Mayor of Hartford's Commission to End Chronic Homeless. CRCOG Chairman Stephen Cassano of Manchester and Canton First Selectman Mary Tomolonius serve on the Commission to identify the role that municipalities can and should play to help end chronic homelessness in Hartford and other regional communities in 10 years.
Effective and Efficient Local Governments: Building Blocks of a Strong Region

The Municipal Services Committee, energized by the creation of a new Municipal Roundtable meeting feature, registered its best attendance in years during 2004, as managers, CFO’s and CIO’s came together monthly to exchange information on everything from strategies for reducing health insurance costs, to revaluation, to managing telecommunication towers. Topics like Voice over IP and regional software solutions were also explored, and project work in both areas will be pursued to help towns cut technology costs while advancing the functionality of their current networks and applications.

Procurement. The Capitol Region Purchasing Council (CRPC) welcomed two new members during FY 2004, Cromwell and East Haddam, and recently forged a strategic alliance with the Windham Region Council of Governments to provide procurement services on behalf of all nine of its towns beginning December 1, 2004. The CRPC is now 50 towns strong. For FY 2004, the CRPC’s volume-based purchasing efforts saved participants approximately $776,021.

Non-Tax Revenues. The Committee commissioned an update of the agency’s Non-Tax Revenue Study, the last edition of which was produced in 1999. Town’s were surveyed over the summer and a results compendium will be published in early 2005.

Vehicle Maintenance Operations. Staff also wrapped up the agency’s second benchmarking study, this time focusing on vehicle maintenance operations in 22 communities. A findings forum was held in early June and those in attendance asked CRCOG to help explore related cooperative purchasing and equipment sharing opportunities in the coming year. In
addition, a user’s group was formed and convened for the first time this fall to encourage the ongoing exchange of information and expertise across communities.

**Natural Gas Procurement.** CRCOG’s Natural Gas Procurement Committee completed an extensive RFP process this past winter and successfully negotiated contracts with a new supplier, Select Energy, which commenced on August 1, 2004. Basis (transportation) costs have been locked in for the full 24-month contract period, and competitive commodity costs have been secured through the end of June 2005.

**Forging Partnerships for a Strong Future**

The region has many effective leaders committed to initiatives that exemplify the benefits of regional cooperation. In addition, CRCOG has continued to support a number of important regional partnerships working on projects that will benefit the entire region.

**Regional Cooperation Awards**

At its June 2004 Annual Meeting, the Capitol Region Council of Governments presented four awards in recognition of exemplary inter-town cooperation among its member municipalities and others working to forward regional initiatives.

Chief Michael Whalen, Chief William Austin, and Paul Benyeda, Manchester Emergency Management Director, were presented an award for their leadership in the May 15, 2004 emergency disaster drill that involved several distinct and independent emergency situations and events in and around the Capitol Region. Their initiative and coordination efforts allowed this exercise to fulfill its mission, including the successful testing of the Regional Emergency Disaster (RED) Plan.

Municipal officials of East Granby, Suffield, Windsor and Windsor Locks were presented an award for their service and efforts in the Bradley Development League, Inc., a consortium dedicated to promoting economic development on and around Bradley International Airport. Officials in these towns share information and market this area without regard to municipal boundaries.
Jeff Watt, Chairman of the RHAM Board of Education, Brendan Shea, Chairman of the Hebron Board of Finance and Tri-Town Board of Finance, and Michael Gut, Chairman of the Marlborough Board of Finance and member of the Tri-Town Board of Finance, were honored for their commitment to inter-town cooperation which was instrumental in the collaboration of the Tri-Town Board of Finance and the ultimate passage of the RHAM budget. Andover First Selectman Charlene Barnett was honored for her efforts to promote regional teamwork and cooperation, and for her testimony during the 2004 legislative session that helped to pass an act regarding regional school budgets that benefits Capitol Region towns. Pictured is Leigh Ann Hutchinson accepting for Charlene Barnett, Jeff Watt, Steve Cassano and Vickie Avelis accepting for Brendan Shea.

Carl Stephani, Executive Director of the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA), was presented with an award for his support, leadership and vision in the CRCOG/CCRPA Homeland Security funding initiative.

CRCOG also presented a Regional Leadership Award to Deputy House Speaker Melody Curry for her efforts to gain bipartisan support of regional initiatives and legislation, including the act regarding regional school budgets. In addition, Sonya F. Googins, State Representative of the 31st District, paid tribute to Dana S. Hanson, CRCOG's first Executive Director and leader of the agency for 26 years, who passed away in February of 2004. Representative Googins acknowledged Mr. Hanson's leadership in initiating CRCOG support for numerous inter-municipal cooperative ventures that continue to thrive in the region, including the Capitol Region Purchasing Council, Riverfront Recapture, Inc. and its work to create a multi-town riverfront park system, and laying the groundwork for CRCOG’s regional public safety program, which has matured over the last ten years to become a model for the State.

**Adriaen’s Landing**

Led by the Capital City Economic Development Authority, the initiative enjoys substantial support from the City of Hartford, and the vision and aid of myriad corporate, non-profit, neighborhood and other organizations. Under construction since 2000, the 30-acre Adriaen’s Landing development plan includes the following major components: The Connecticut
Convention Center, The Marriott Hotel, The Connecticut Center for Science and Exploration, an enhanced Riverfront and a residential, retail and entertainment district. The convention center and hotel will open in 2005. A recent high point was the design competition for the CT Center for Science & Exploration, which generated tremendous public interest. Five world-renowned architects vied for project. The winning firm was Cesar Pelli & Associates, whose concept is shown at right.

**Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership**

CRCOG continues its active involvement in the Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership (HSEP). This five-year-old bi-state organization was cited as an economic development “best practice” at a forum conducted in Charlotte, N.C. by national consultant Michael Gallis, who has performed large-scale strategic planning initiatives for both Connecticut and Rhode Island in recent years.

**State of the Region Conference.** HSEP’s 4th Annual "State of the Region" Conference attracted more than 200 interstate government and business leaders, where keynote speaker Michael Mandel, chief economist for BusinessWeek magazine, said a slow growing region such as New England must invest in and create a culture that seeks to grow innovative small businesses if it hopes to participate in the next economic breakthrough that will surely come in the fields of biotechnology, nanotechnology, telecommunications, energy or space.

**Biomedical Devices Study.** A study of the medical device industry in the 100-mile, I-91 Corridor from New Haven, Conn. to Greenfield, Massachusetts was completed in 2004. It found that the region has high concentrations of medical device companies and all of the ingredients important to their growth -- hospitals, research universities, biotech firms, highly educated workforce, and precision-skilled suppliers in such fields as metalworking and plastics. The report noted that the industry was currently declining in the corridor while nearby areas (such as Boston) are growing. Next steps include hosting a major medical device conference and trade show in October 2005 to draw attention to the industry as an economic engine, and holding a symposium for Connecticut manufacturers that want to learn how to enter the medical device business.

**InternHere.com.** To help retain young talent in the region -- a top priority across New England – a new website will be launched in early 2005 called “InternHere.com.” The site is designed to connect college students to internship opportunities offered by hundreds of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts employers. The goal of the site is to help change college students' perception of a lack of job opportunities in the region, and to encourage them to stay in the area post-graduation.
**Workforce Development.** The workforce development groups from Greater Hartford and Hampden County in Western Massachusetts successfully secured federal grants that will bring more than $11 million to the region. The interstate nature of the pitch played a significant role in the U.S. Department of Labor making the awards, and the agency recognized the collaborative effort as a national best practice at a ceremony in the nation's capital in October.
The Capitol Region Council of Governments was formed January 28, 1976 and organized under the laws of the State of Connecticut in accordance with General Statutes Sections 4-124i through 4-124p and the Special Act No. 73-79 of the Connecticut General Assembly. CRCOG is a legally separate organization under a joint venture arrangement with member municipalities. The Chief Elected Official of each member municipality sits on CRCOG’s Policy Board. The Policy Board is responsible for establishing and approving CRCOG policies, resolutions and the annual budget.


**The CRCOG Policy Board Officers are:**

Stephen T. Cassano, Chair, Mayor of Manchester  
David Kilbon, Vice Chair, First Selectman of East Granby  
Eddie Perez, Vice Chair, Mayor of Hartford  
Linda Roberts, Treasurer, First Selectman of East Windsor  
Richard Hines, Secretary, Chairman of the Avon Town Council

**CRCOG Committees and Chairs are:**

**Community Development**

Regional Planning Commission
- Susan Errickson, Tolland Planning & Zoning Commission

Housing Committee
- Donald Trinks, Mayor of Windsor

Municipal Services Committee
- Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, Wethersfield

Connecticut River Assembly
- Joseph Smith, Wethersfield

**General**

Legislative Committee
- Linda Roberts, First Selectman, East Windsor  
  Elaine Sarsynski, First Selectman, Suffield

Personnel/Finance Subcommittee
- Jon Colman, Bloomfield Town Council

**Public Safety**

Public Safety Council
- Lee Erdmann, COO, Hartford

Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee
- Chief William Austin, West Hartford Fire Department

Comprehensive Planning Committee
- Chief James Strillacci, West Hartford Police Department

CAPTAIN Technical Review Committee
- Chief Rudolf Rossmy, Vernon Police Department

**Transportation**

Transportation Committee
- David Kilbon, First Selectman, East Granby
Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2003

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Excess of Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures $ + 252,700

Fund/Project Balance - July 1 $ 2,670,572

Fund/Project Balance - June 30 $ 2,923,272

Notes. As demonstrated by the Combining Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances—All Funds, CRCOG continues to meet its responsibility for sound financial management.

Total revenues equaled $4,387,426 an increase of 1.9% compared to FY 2002. Expenditures of $4,134,726 show an increase of 2.7% over FY 2002.

The Excess of Revenue over expenditures of $252,700 includes a $14,065 increase in the Reserve account. The remainder represents the fund balance of the various programs administered by CRCOG.