**Capitol Region Council of Governments**

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 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 member municipalities of CRCOG are: **Andover, Avon, Bloomfield, Bolton, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Marlborough, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, South Windsor, Suffield, Tolland, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks.**

**The Officers of the CRCOG Policy Board are:**

David K. Kilbon, Chair, First Selectman of East Granby  
Eddie Perez, Vice Chair, Mayor of Hartford  
Linda Roberts, Vice Chair, First Selectman of East Windsor  
Mary Tomolonius, Treasurer, First Selectman of Canton  
Susan Karp, Secretary, Chair, Glastonbury Town Council

**Community Development Committees**

- Community Development Comm.  
  - Mary Tomolonius, First Selectman, Canton  
- Connecticut River Assembly  
  - Rebecca Augur, CRCOG staff  
- Regional Planning Commission  
  - Susan Errickson, Tolland Planning and Zoning Commission

**General Committees**

- Legislative Committee  
  - Linda Roberts, First Selectman, East Windsor  
- Personnel/Finance Subcommittee  
  - Jon Colman, Bloomfield Town Council

**Public Safety Committees**

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

**Transportation Committee**  
  - Jon Colman, Bloomfield Town Council
Welcome

David K. Kilbon, Chairman of the Policy Board, Capitol Region Council of Governments, First Selectman of East Granby

Lyle D. Wray, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments

A Shared Future: Building Stronger Communities

Connecticut’s Capitol Region encompasses the City of Hartford and the 28 surrounding suburban and rural communities. Ours is a region rich in history, rich in human resources, and rich in natural resources. Our success in maintaining the character of our individual communities and the entire region is often measured by how well we preserve our important historic and natural resources while at the same time allowing for new development. Our continued strength as a region will depend on our ability to maintain the high quality of life and opportunities that many of our citizens now enjoy, while working to extend these opportunities to all current and future residents of the region. All towns have a role to play in creating this shared future.

Jobs and Housing. Three out of four workers in the region work outside of their town of residence. While suburban jobs have increased over the last decade, Hartford remains our major employment center with 28% of the region’s non-farm employment. Furthermore, job retention and expansion in our region depends upon the availability of nearby housing affordable to firms’ essential employees.

Workforce. In 2000, 54.6% of our population was aged 35 and older. This raises the concern that many of our most skilled workers, especially those in technical jobs, are aging out of the workforce, as the “baby boom”
generation starts to reach retirement age in the next decade. This demographic shift will affect all of the region’s businesses’ ability to staff their enterprises.

**Preventing the Next Generation.** Hartford houses almost one-quarter of the region’s population aged 10-19. In a few years this age group will be filling our future labor pool. Yet Hartford continues to lag behind other parts of the region in terms of the percent of residents holding a high school degree or higher. Boosting educational attainment in Hartford and other communities will have a beneficial impact on the region’s overall competitiveness. Without such progress, the entire region’s economic performance will suffer.

**Environment.** Degradation of our physical environment can often be a very subtle and widely dispersed process. Exhaust from thousands of individual vehicles, fertilizer runoff from hundreds of lawns, and pollution from scores of failing septic systems can combine to seriously damage crucial natural resources. Individual and community actions impact the water quality of streams, rivers and water supply sources, and wildlife habitat, which span municipal boundaries. When impervious cover in a watershed reaches between 10 and 25 percent, ecological stress becomes clearly apparent. Beyond 25 percent, stream stability is reduced, habitat is lost, water quality becomes degraded, and biological diversity decreases. In 2004, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection identified 23 water bodies in the Connecticut River Basin that had been impaired by urban stormwater runoff.

**Transportation.** Our regional transportation system allows residents access to jobs within the region and beyond. It also links citizens to necessary services and delivers the raw materials and products that businesses and households need on a daily basis. Passenger automobile transportation, mass transit, non-motorized transportation, air travel, and the transportation of goods together form the complete regional transportation system. The improvement, integration, and accessibility of these components to all residents of the Capitol Region is essential not only to regional quality of life, but also to the region’s global competitiveness.

**Local Government Operations.** The region’s 29 municipal governments operate independently but they perform similar functions. Initiatives such as CRCOG’s Regional Purchasing Program have demonstrated that savings—both in terms of the cost of goods and services, and staff time—can be achieved through cooperative action. Municipalities can operate more efficiently through sharing best practices, and exploring shared service opportunities in areas such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), public works and job order contracting.

(The report cover shows a recently updated map of our regional land use database that shows the diversity of land uses across the region.)
**Transportation**

The CRCOG Transportation Department addresses the multi-modal transportation needs in our region with the goal of an efficient transportation system that increases the mobility of people and goods and supports the region’s livable community goals. Transportation staff work with member communities to develop the 20-year Regional Transportation Plan, the 5-year Transportation Improvement Program, and shorter-term transportation planning projects. In 2005, the Transportation Department continued its work on building a shared future through the projects and programs described below.

**New Britain-Hartford Rapid Transit Busway**

The New Britain Busway is the cornerstone of CRCOG’s regional transit strategy and one of our highest transportation priorities. Following a study initiated in 1997, CRCOG and the State Department of Transportation identified the New Britain Busway as the “locally preferred alternative” to address traffic conditions in our most congested corridor. The Busway will operate in a 10-mile exclusive corridor and link New Britain and downtown Hartford with 9 stops along the way.

On February 2, 2006, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced that it was restoring the New Britain Busway to ‘recommended’ status. The following day, the Governor proposed $50 million for the busway as part of her new transportation initiative. The busway is now well positioned to meet its goal of starting construction in late 2007 or early 2008.

FTA’s new evaluation is a dramatic turnaround from last year’s report in which the project fell below a medium rating and lost its “recommended” status. CRCOG staff worked closely with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT), assisting them in successful efforts to address issues raised by FTA last year and to make significant progress on project engineering. The design phase now stands at about 30 percent complete, and preliminary designs will be presented soon to the public and local officials for community comment.
Transportation Finance Summit

In November, CRCOG partnered with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, the Regional Plan Association and Central Connecticut State University to jointly sponsor the 2005 Transportation Finance Summit. (Shown in the photo from the left are: CCSU Professor Anthony Milano, Transportation Strategy Board Chair Kevin Kelleher, OPM Secretary Robert Genuario and ConnDOT Commissioner Stephen Korta). Envisioned as another step toward resolving the transportation challenges that face our State and following on the recent funding initiatives by the Governor, the State legislature, and the federal government, this Summit brought together State legislators, the current and former Commissioners of the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the current and former Secretaries of the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, the Chair of the Transportation Strategy Board, and others to discuss the response to these challenges.

Downtown Circulator: Star Shuttle

The Star Shuttle, Hartford’s new downtown shuttle, became a reality in 2005. Approval for a two-month demonstration operation was given in August. Although planning for the service, with help in part by CRCOG staff, had been underway for quite a while, the buses had to be renovated and painted, drivers had to be selected and trained, and the marketing materials had to be designed and distributed literally within a few days. Connecticut Transit had four brightly colored buses circulating through downtown the day before the Connecticut Convention Center opened their doors to the first major convention September 2005.

The shuttle proved popular immediately, with average daily ridership well over 200. More than 900 trips were made on New Year’s Eve “First Night,” and on at least two occasions ridership was more than 1,000 trips. By the seventh week of operation, Saturday hours of operation were expanded to meet the demand. The service now enjoys approval to operate indefinitely and continues to be popular with residents, employees, and visitors alike.
Pedestrian Plan

Walking Matters is the conclusion and the title of the CRCOG Pedestrian Plan that was adopted by the CRCOG Policy Board in May 2005. For our towns and communities, pedestrian facilities and the presence of an active pedestrian culture help to create a livable community. But in the past 50 years development patterns have not reflected the importance of walking. New roads have been built without sidewalks and commercial developments have been designed for auto access with little thought given to pedestrians. Many new residential developments are distant from community activity centers – parks, schools, shops and offices.

The Capitol Region Pedestrian Plan is designed to insure that our region provides for all forms of transportation, including walking. To change the habits of many decades will take persistence and will require that all involved in decisions regarding pedestrian facilities – planners, engineers, and local elected officials – be brought on board. This plan includes a wide range of actions that can be taken at the regional level to move us toward these goals and to create a region that is truly livable for all its citizens.

Relating to pedestrian needs, the Bike and Pedestrian Committee learned of the needs of the vision impaired from representatives of the Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB). They gave a presentation on how to design crossings to accommodate pedestrians with low vision or who are blind. The presentation explained how blind individuals are taught to travel independently and what kinds of cues they use to cross streets and roadways safely. The BESB has offered to work with any towns that would like assistance in designing pedestrian crossings that accommodate sighted and unsighted pedestrians.

Bicycle Planning

CRCOG staff was recognized at the Central Connecticut Bicycle Alliance Annual Dinner for our continuing support of the Bike to Work program. Since its start in May of 2000, the bike to work program has grown to include 25 events in 2005 with more than 300 participants. This program is an important part of our Bike Plan implementation as it, more than any other promotion, emphasizes the importance of biking as a transportation mode.

The Connecticut Greenways Council gave an award to the Bike to Work program in recognition of how the program promotes bicycling. (Shown in the photo from left are: DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy, CT Greenways
Chair LaVerta Matthews, Department of Public Health Commissioner J. Robert Galvin, MD and Tom Maziarz, CRCOG Transportation Director).

Reducing Language Barriers

In May 2005, the Policy Board adopted a policy to reduce language barriers and allow broader participation in CRCOG’s transportation planning program. The policy was based on a study of languages spoken in the region and it addresses issues such as how, when, and where to provide meeting notices in alternate languages, where translation services were needed, and when documents would be translated to ensure meaningful access to everyone. Arrangements will be made to provide interpreter services when needed, and summaries of key documents are translated into Spanish. Documents translated to date include a brochure on CRCOG, a Bicycle Safety brochure, and an executive summary of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Environmental Justice -- Clean Diesel

CRCOG’s Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB) established the reduction of diesel emissions in central city neighborhoods as a primary goal. Residential neighborhoods in Hartford are part of CRCOG’s environmental justice target area and have a high proportion of low-income and minority households. To address EJAB’s goal, CRCOG developed a grant request to retrofit CT Transit buses with diesel particulate filters. The project will significantly reduce particulate levels in Hartford and New Haven neighborhoods since the Connecticut Transit routes are heavily concentrated in the central cities. ConnDOT is processing the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant.

CRCOG’s Transportation Director was asked to chair the transit committee for Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection’s (CT DEP) Clean Diesel Plan. The committee completed its work in the fall, and CT DEP published the draft plan in December.

Land Use Database Project

CRCOG completed a GIS Land Use database in 2005 and delivered the project materials to CRCOG municipalities early in January 2006 (the regional...
map is shown on the cover of this report). CD packages and maps were mailed to each town planner. This regional land use database is a parcel-level view of 2003 land use for all 29 municipalities in the Capitol Region. The data was extracted from town assessors’ records, and compiled in CRCOG’s Geographic Information System (GIS). This GIS-based product includes land use information for nearly all properties or parcels in each of CRCOG’s 29 communities with a total of over 225,000 parcels. CRCOG staff distributed the State’s 2004 CT orthophotography to the CRCOG town planners. This data set includes all of the photo tiles that make up the Capitol Region.

**Freight Planning**

CRCOG initiated a new freight transport planning program in 2005. The first year of the program was dedicated largely to identifying and exploring issues, and establishing an organizational format for conducting the planning program.

Compared to the traditional highway and transit planning conducted by MPOs like CRCOG, this freight planning program was conducted on a much broader geographic scale, and with much more private sector involvement. Due to the expanded geographic scale of most freight issues, we anticipate working cooperatively with neighboring Hartford area RPA's, Midstate and Central CT as well as with the Springfield (MA) area MPO, and with the Connecticut DOT.

CRCOG also interviewed rail and truck freight providers to identify issues and opportunities and invited them to become members of our freight advisory committee. We are still in the early stages of the project and will continue to look for ways to develop an effective analytic and institutional approach to freight planning.

**Traffic Circulation and Accessibility Study**

CRCOG staff completed a study of the Route 9 (Interchange 29), Route 175, Fenn Road, Ella Grasso Boulevard area, in which conceptual improvements to address traffic congestion, poor intersection operations, long vehicular queues and safety issues were developed. The study was a coordinated effort with planning for the busway station areas located in Newington and New Britain.
The Town of Newington, the City of New Britain and Central Connecticut State University have acknowledged the need to address traffic circulation and access to developable parcels both now and in the future. Short- and long-term concepts such as intersection improvements and new ramps to/from Route 9 as well as area wide improvements that incorporate access management and traffic calming techniques were identified within the study.

Jobs Access

Now in its eighth 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 serving 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.

MPO Review and Certification

In April, CRCOG received the final report from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration regarding the MPO certification review conducted in 2004. FHWA and FTA commended CRCOG for its “exemplary attention to the transportation planning process”. No “corrective actions” were found during their thorough review of the entire Capitol Region transportation planning program. This review is conducted every three years to assure that our program complies with all of the federal rules and regulations that apply to transportation planning.

2006 Transportation Initiatives

- Route 195 and Route 305 Corridor Studies
- Public Works Mutual Aid – CRCOG will be working on a public works mutual aid pilot program to examine a variety of options such as sharing equipment between municipalities, jointly purchasing equipment, and contracting with other municipalities for services.
- Safety Planning – The passing of the latest federal transportation bill (SAFETEA-LU) has resulted in an established core highway safety program. CRCOG will be working with ConnDOT and the new strategic safety planning program to address critical safety needs within the region.
Community Development

CRCOG’s Community Development department covers the areas of housing, land use and environmental planning, municipal services, and cooperative purchasing. In conjunction with the Regional Planning Commission, the Department conducts a variety of land use reviews mandated by the Connecticut General Statutes, and works to implement goals and policies contained in the Plan of Conservation and Development for the Capitol Region. In 2005, the CRCOG Community Development Department helped the region’s municipalities build a shared future through a variety of initiatives, described below.

Busway Rapid Transit Station Area Planning

This year, CRCOG completed the New Britain/Hartford Bus Rapid Transitway Station Area Planning Project for Land Use and Development. This is a transit oriented development project for 11 planned stations along the New Britain/Hartford Bus Rapid Transit line. The primary goal of the project is to coordinate transportation and land use planning in order to encourage transit-supportive economic development around stations that will maximize the benefits of the busway investment to the host communities and the transit system. The project worked with municipal and community leaders in Hartford, West Hartford, Newington, and New Britain to make the ¼-mile area around stations into vibrant, walkable districts with easy access to regional transit. CRCOG is continuing to work with the communities to implement the plans.

Affordable Housing Initiatives

In 2005, CRCOG worked on several fronts to encourage the expansion of housing opportunities in the Capitol Region.

Homelessness. CRCOG worked to advance the recommendations contained in the Regional Strategy to Address Long-Term Homelessness, adopted November 2004. This strategy acknowledges that the problem of homelessness is an issue of importance to all Capitol Region municipalities, not just those that currently provide emergency shelter beds, transitional housing, or supportive housing. Through adoption of this strategy, the Policy Board endorsed the statewide and national goal of focusing on prevention and support that leads to self-sufficiency and independence. This will include
continuing to expand affordable housing opportunities, supporting improvements in education and job training efforts that will lead to good jobs for those who are currently underemployed or unemployed and providing transitional and supportive housing for those who require health care, mental health services, job training, or other assistance to enable them to retain housing.

CRCOG also participated in the work of the Mayor of Hartford’s Commission to End Chronic Homelessness. Then CRCOG Chairman Steve Cassano and Canton First Selectman Mary Tomolonius served on this Commission, which in June of 2005 issued its final report that incorporated the recommendations of the CRCOG regional strategy.

**Affordable Housing.** CRCOG, in cooperation with the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association, conducted a September 2005 workshop on affordable housing design. This workshop provided an opportunity for municipal officials to learn about the need for affordable workforce housing in Connecticut, and to explore what it takes to create attractive, affordable housing. CRCOG is also working with other statewide organizations to develop technical resources and to develop strategies that will help increase the supply of affordable housing throughout the state.

In October, CRCOG released its annual Connecticut Capitol Region Home Sales Price Report, July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005. This report showed that home sales prices and the number of homes sold in the Capitol Region continued to rise last year. Five of the region’s municipalities had median home sales prices greater than $300,000, up from just one in 2004 and none in prior years. The report also addressed issues of the relative affordability of home ownership in the Capital Region. In fiscal year 2005, only 21% of sales within the region were considered affordable to moderate-income households, as compared to 40% in FY 2001.

**Brownfield Assessment Grants.** On May 10, 2005, the U.S Environmental Protection Agency announced the Capitol Region Council of Governments, in partnership with the MetroHartford Alliance, had been awarded $200,000 to inventory and assess properties contaminated by hazardous substances. This grant will benefit the 34 communities in the combined CRCOG/MetroHartford Alliance region, and will work in tandem with a Brownfields Assessment project currently underway which is focused on sites contaminated by petroleum products.
CRCOG and the MetroHartford Alliance believe that one of the greatest economic challenges facing the greater Hartford region is finding available sites for new and expanding industry. Cleaning up contaminated sites allows them to be recycled into new economic opportunities for companies expanding or relocating into the area. The increased value of these properties will bring additional revenue to our municipalities, help revitalize communities, and provide alternatives to greenfield development.

Planning for Natural Hazards. In 2005, CRCOG, on behalf of its member communities, applied for a $322,500 Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The grant was awarded in November. The purpose of the plan to be created under this grant is to allow communities to identify their risks and vulnerabilities to natural hazards before disasters strike, and to reduce future federal and state disaster assistance expenditures; to create a multi-town, multi-hazard mitigation plan that will evaluate and establish mitigation strategies for the following natural hazards: floods, hurricanes, tornadoes/high winds, wildfire, drought, and severe winter/ice storms, along with others identified in the planning process; and to create a FEMA-approved and locally-adopted natural hazard mitigation plan that will make municipalities eligible to apply for any FEMA hazard mitigation project grants (e.g. home relocations, acquisitions, public outreach and education, local flood control projects) under the: Flood Management Assistance Program (FMA), Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), or the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM). The regional plan will fill this requirement if the municipality is a participant, and if the final plan is locally adopted.

This plan complements and coordinates with other emergency disaster plans already in place in the region, such as CRCOG’s Public Safety Program’s Regional Emergency Disaster (RED) Plan.

Hartford Neighborhood Planning. As part of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant administered through the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), CRCOG completed its examination of how smart growth principles could be applied to a commercial corridor in the Parkville neighborhood of Hartford. This collaborative effort resulted in a concept plan for New Park Avenue, and a series of Fact Sheets that describe smart growth principles and specific recommendations that neighborhood residents and
organizations can use to help them discuss their desired goals and vision for this thoroughfare with City officials, developers, and commercial interests. The project also documented the process used to carry out this project, in the hopes that it might be duplicated in other neighborhoods within Hartford, and other parts of the greater Hartford region.

**Preservation of Agricultural Lands and Food System Resources.** In 2005, CRCOG assisted in the preservation of the region’s agricultural lands through participation on the Working Lands Alliance Steering Committee, the State Food Policy Council, the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area Board, and advocated for state funding for agricultural lands preservation. CRCOG also worked to implement recommendations contained in the Food System chapter of the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development by completing a map of food resources in Hartford for the Hartford Food Policy Council. This map shows emergency food pantries, grocery stores, farmers markets, and other resources that assist residents’ access to healthy food to maintain good nutrition.

**Municipal Services Program**

CRCOG’s Municipal Services Program carries out a variety of programs to help member city/towns improve governmental efficiency and save tax dollars through cooperative projects, shared services and other direct service initiatives. The Municipal Services Committee guides this work, and in 2005 concluded a strategic planning process that identified five priority action areas for program activities: 1) providing cost-effective, quality professional development opportunities for supervisory staff; 2) expanding the Capitol Region Purchasing Council’s bidding activities to include statewide mandated services as well as emerging product technologies; 3) harnessing opportunities for inter-municipal shared service arrangements; 4) formalizing an information sharing system across communities; and 5) exploring various technology enhancement options. Specific program accomplishments for 2005 included:

**Professional Development.** CRCOG launched a professional development program with two half-day supervisory training sessions early this fall, which drew some 35 local officials from across the region to Hartford Hospital’s Newington Campus.
The Capitol Region Purchasing Council hosted its first webinar through the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing’s Distance Learning Program. The 90-minute workshop, entitled Incorporating Cooperative Purchasing into Your Agency, gave CRPC members the opportunity to discuss best practices with procurement officials from across the country, and earn continuing education credits at a reduced group rate.

Staff members from Hebron, Newington, Somers and Wethersfield enrolled in the agency’s training pilot in September to learn about Motivating Your Employees: A Toolkit for Maximizing Productivity and Keeping Your Employees Happy. Participants in this semester-long class tested a hybrid-learning model that combined traditional classroom meetings, a course text and online modules supported by the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium.

Cooperative Purchasing – 56 Members Strong

The Capitol Region Purchasing Council welcomed seven new members in 2005, bringing the cooperatives’ purchasing power to 56 communities. Six towns, including Brookfield, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding and Sherman, came on board as the result of an agreement signed with the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials. Most recently, the City of Bristol also joined the collaborative.

The Purchasing Council: 36 Years of Savings

On November 7th, the Purchasing Council held its annual meeting marking 36 years of coordinating cooperative purchasing activities across the region. New projects ranging from on-line reverse auctioning services to on-call contracting systems were endorsed by the membership, and research into both areas is currently underway. Annual volume-based savings estimates totaling more than $635,000 were reported—a
140% return on CRCOG member dues and contributions. The CRPC also added new bids covering treated road salt to improve snow and ice removal and control operations and storm water monitoring services to meet Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection requirements.

Also in 2005, the Purchasing Council updated its web page (located at www.crcog.org/crpc.htm) to include sections for posting open bidding activities and results packages for easy access by participating vendors and member communities alike.

**Expertise Exchange**

**Issues Forum.** In recognition of the broad range of common issues that local governments face, despite differences in size, type or character, the Municipal Services Program spent much of 2005 helping its members sort through budgetary, regulatory and policy issues to assist them in making informed decisions.

A sampling of addressed topics includes options for providing Dial-A-Ride services; clarifying local responsibilities under the Help America Vote Act and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act; crafting energy conservation policies; identifying health insurance cost containment strategies; the “how-to’s” of running successful orientations for newly-elected officials; and evaluating regional approaches to GIS and VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) technologies.

**Online Bulletin Board.** To facilitate the easy exchange of information on-line, CRCOG rolled out a new Bulletin Board feature as an extension of the agency’s website. Located at www.crcog.org/bb, the Board allows registered members to easily post questions, share announcements and formally poll other town officials. The Municipal Services Committee currently has a dedicated forum of its own, and additional forums centered on procurement and public works operations are planned.

**2006 Community Development Initiatives**

Planning and Policy Development:
- Continue to work with New Britain/Hartford Busway communities to implement Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).
• Support the work of the Capitol Region Partnership’s regional indicators initiative – COMPASS – that will track progress, highlight best practices that could be applied, and celebrate successes in the areas of creating good jobs, producing skilled workers and creating a high quality of place.

• Carry out recommendations of the *Plan of Conservation and Development for the Capitol Region* through working to expand affordable housing opportunities, natural resource preservation, and creating and maintaining livable communities.

• Continue to maintain and enhance CRCOG’s GIS and other data resources, and explore ways through which CRCOG can support development or enhancement of municipal GIS systems.

• Increase understanding of the regional housing market through housing needs assessment, involvement in statewide public education efforts, and preparation of an annual median sales price study. Work to expand housing opportunities for all of the region’s citizens, including those who are currently homeless.

• Improve the potential for redevelopment of contaminated properties through site assessments conducted under two EPA Brownfields Petroleum and Hazardous Substances Assessment Grants.

• Initiate work on a Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan for natural hazards, funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This plan will help identify the regions’ risks and vulnerabilities to a range of natural disasters before they strike, and identify municipal and regional actions to mitigate threats to life and property.

Municipal Services and Cooperative Purchasing:

• Work with the CRCOG Municipal Services Committee to address issues and implement initiatives that help enhance local government efficiency, effectiveness and intergovernmental cooperation.

• Implement recommendations of Municipal Services Committee strategic planning process in the priority areas of training and professional development; equipment sharing; technology; data collection/survey services; and expanding CRCOG’s capacity as a service provider to its members.

• Continue administration of the CRCOG Regional Purchasing Program.

• Work to improve the Regional Purchasing Program through implementation of recommendations for expanded bid offerings, exploration of new initiatives such as job order contracting, and instituting fee changes to increase the financial self-sufficiency of the program.

• Administer CRCOG’s Natural Gas Procurement Program.

• Conduct periodic surveys and research projects on behalf of member municipalities to help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local government operations.
Public Safety and Homeland Security: Protecting Our Citizens Together

The Public Safety and Homeland Security programs protect our citizens through the activities of the Public Safety Council and its committees, including the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC).

The Capitol Region Public Safety Council, a standing committee of CRCOG, develops and implements regional projects to promote strategies for public safety service delivery, managerial cooperation and the use of advanced technologies. Early committees of the Council include the CAPTAIN Technical Review Committee and the Comprehensive Planning Committee.

In 2001, CREPC was established. CREPC is charged with planning for emergency disasters and homeland security as well as acting as a consolidated local emergency planning committee for hazardous materials. Today, CREPC has eighteen emergency support functions and serves forty-one municipalities.

Ten Years of Regional Collaboration

In November the Public Safety Council hosted a luncheon at the Hartford Marriott in celebration of its accomplishments over the last ten years. Lee Erdmann, Chair of the Public Safety Council, shared project highlights. Commissioner James “Skip” Thomas provided an overview of the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) initiatives. (Shown in the photo from left to right are: Stephen Thal; Betty Morris, Executive Director North Central CT EMS Council; Assistant Chief Gary Allyn, West Hartford Fire; Keith Victor, West Hartford Intercity Coordinator).

Towns Share Homeland Security Funds

Last fall, CRCOG received a homeland security subgrant of $6.4 million from the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. This award represents pooled monies of thirty-nine towns that designated CRCOG as the administrator of their FY 2004 homeland security grants. Member towns also elected CRCOG to
administer their 2005 funds, resulting in an additional $3.5 million for the benefit of the region. (Shown in photo: Congressman John Larson; Chief William Austin, West Hartford Fire; Lee Erdmann, Hartford Chief Operating Officer).

Spending strategies, consisting of twenty-nine high priority projects, were agreed upon at well-attended plenary sessions. Working with public safety personnel across the region, progress has been made on the identified projects, which include equipping the regional response teams, training first responders, entering into a contract to upgrade the Police Regional Access Frequency System (RAFS), establishing Citizen Corps Councils, and conducting an interoperability services audit.

Several of the projects include funding for events and visits aimed at fulfilling project goals. Led by the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association, CRCOG supported the State Animal Response Team (SART) conference as part of the Animal Rescue project. Funded through the data sharing project, members of the Public Safety Council traveled to Ohio to view systems used by law enforcement agencies to prevent and solve crimes and to promote communication. Additionally, the Navy shared best practices through its LINX program.

**New Technology Links Law Enforcement Agencies**

CRCOG recently completed an upgrade project for the CAPTAIN Mobile Data Communication System, migrating to new GPRS Edge Technology. The CAPTAIN project was initiated by CRCOG in 1996. The current state-of-the-art laptop computer system is now installed in approximately 1,200 Connecticut police cruisers, connecting officers to criminal information files. Enhancement plans consist of linking Fire and EMS vehicles to the system, moving to a browser-based client and expanding CAPTAIN’s data sharing capabilities. (Shown in the photo from left to right are: Chief Gary Vest, Powell, Ohio; Commander John Murphy, East Hartford Police; Chief Richard Mulhall, Newington Police; Cheryl Assis, CRCOG Staff; Ohio Academy Commander, Major Peyton Watts; James Donnelly, Public Safety/Telecommunications Director; and Lt. Dianne White, Ohio Trooper).

**Emergency Preparedness**

During the past year, CRCOG has been involved with several emergency preparedness initiatives. In conjunction with the City of Middletown, CRCOG sponsored a seminar for chief elected officials on emergency preparedness. The seminar was facilitated by the National Emergency Response and Rescue
Training Center at Texas A&M University and included a mock press conference conducted by TV station NBC 30.

Members of CREPC participated in numerous drills and exercises such as a Places of Dispensing (POD) drill held in Bloomfield, a full-scale hazardous materials exercise in Enfield, the State Hurricane drill, and East Hartford’s POD exercise drill. CREPC also took part in the third Top Officials drill (TOPOFF 3), a federal drill involving a simulated chemical attack in New London. Furthermore, members continue to complete Regional Coordination Center (RCC) mini exercises and courses in National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Currently, CREPC is working in conjunction with the State of Connecticut on a Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) drill scheduled for April.

(Shown in the photo is a CREPC meeting held at the State Armory.)

2006 Public Safety and Homeland Security Initiatives

- As part of the training project, CRCOG will be offering courses in the National Incident Management (NIMS) system, beginning in March with the introductory 700 course.
- The interoperability audit is scheduled for completion in May. Results of the audit will include recommendations and an analysis of public safety communications interoperability and survivability for each community, discipline and the region.
- All of the participating communities local Emergency Operation Centers, as well as the three regional centers, will be upgraded and enhanced.
- Every Police Department in need of an Automatic Fingerprint Information System will receive one.
- All towns will receive a reverse notification system.
- Any participating community with an existing Civilian Emergency Response Team (CERT) or interested in starting a CERT will receive equipment for team members and paid expenses for classes and trainers.
• The Police Regional Access Frequency System (RAFS) will be completely upgraded by this summer.
• The Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) programs will receive state-of-the-art equipment, such as Triage & Emergency Management Preparedness System (TEMPS) beds and M17 medic bags.
• All 166 SWAT team members will receive ballistic helmets and communications gear. Equipment ordered for the police regional response teams include cameras, armor upgrades and radiation detectors for peacekeepers, and a bearcat vehicle for the region.
• Exciting new initiatives in the areas of animal protection and special needs are underway.
• The CAPTAIN Mobile Data system will be expanded to include Fire and EMS units and the data sharing capacity will be enhanced.

Regional Partnerships

CRCOG continues to be an active partner with other regional organizations including the MetroHartford Alliance (www.metrohartford.com/), the Capital Workforce Partners (http://www.capitalworkforce.org/), and the Capitol Region Partnership made up of a number of regional organizations. The Capital Regional Partnership has been working with CPTV on a documentary on challenges in the region for an early 2006 broadcast. The Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership is a six-year-old bi-state organization (Connecticut and Massachusetts) that addresses economic issues. The Partnership successfully launched www.internhere.com that matches college students and employers in the two-state region.
## Annual Financial Report
(At June 2005)

### TOTALS
(Memorandum Only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental Revenues:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>$1,094,035</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>1,282,852</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest Income</td>
<td>12,239</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Grants &amp; Fees</td>
<td>1,676,859</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,065,985</strong></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect Costs</td>
<td>242,771</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct Expenses</td>
<td>353,010</td>
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<td>Contractual</td>
<td>1,923,432</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,880,543</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Excess of Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures: $185,442

Fund/Project Balance – July 1: $1,878,703

Fund/Project Balance – June 30: $2,064,145