First Capitol Region Roundtable Considers Future of Region

On September 11, 2008, nearly 80 individuals came together to share ideas about the Capitol Region’s present and future at the first Capitol Region Roundtable. Participants included municipal officials from 20 Capitol Region communities, as well as representatives from the State, regional agencies, universities, and other organizations with a stake in maintaining a strong greater-Hartford region. This meeting was held in response to Governor Rell’s Executive Order #15, which called on all of Connecticut’s Regional Planning Organizations to convene regional roundtables. The purpose of the roundtables is “to invite the ongoing participation of city and town officials, and foster the development of planning agendas in different parts of the state.” The roundtables are part of the Governor’s Responsible Growth Initiative. They are also intended to enhance communication between the local, regional, and state levels of government, and improve intergovernmental understanding and cooperation on a range of issues. This is the first of several roundtable discussions that CRCOG will host in the coming year. Through these roundtables, CRCOG will engage local and regional officials, organizations and residents in identifying the opportunities and challenges facing our region, and will begin to define our vision for the future. A summary of the September 11th roundtable discussion, as well as the results of an on-line survey conducted in conjunction with this event, will be posted on the CRCOG website in October.

Purchasing Council Saves 71 Members $2 Million This Year

Through 17 competitive bids and the Natural Gas Program, the Capitol Region Purchasing Council saved its 71 members more than $2 million in fiscal year 2007-2008. These savings represent an over 390% return for your CRCOG membership dues. Continued participation in this important program permits the addition of new commodities and services to be cooperatively bid to save our member towns and agencies even more in the coming year.

Ten Regional Service Sharing Projects Kick-off

The ten CRCOG Service Sharing projects have gotten off to a running start as project leaders and participants met over the summer to begin their work. Many of the projects have had notable progress. RFPs for the Digital Health Department system, engineering designs for the Regional EOC and a Municipal IT Consultant have been conducted or are underway. An RFI went out and was responded to for the GIS orthographic flight. Those results will help construct the RFP for a flight that will be
conducted next spring. The Farmington Trail group has met and is beginning to work out the details of equipment and an inter-local agreement. A building committee has been formed for the Regional Law Enforcement Training Center in Rocky Hill and their town engineer is developing a site plan. The Regional Traffic Team has created sub-groups and is compiling a list of equipment needs and costs as well as working with the CT DMV to schedule training for its members. We are very proud of our project leaders and CRCOG staff that have helped move these projects along so far. We are well on our way to proving real benefits to these types of grants!

**Vernon Safe Routes to Schools Program Recognized Nationally**

Safe Routes Matters, the electronic newsletter of the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools provides a profile of the Safe Routes program undertaken by Skinner Road School in Vernon. The profile noted: “The SRTS program began with the belief that healthier children learn better, and this belief turned into reality with the students' improved academic performance. Once among the poorest performing schools in the district, now Skinner Road School is among the best schools. From 2006 to 2007, the school demonstrated significant improvements in mathematics, reading and writing among students in the third, fourth and fifth grade. While walking and bicycling to school is not the only factor contributing to the improved fitness and academic scores, the administration at Skinner Road School believes the SRTS program is partly to thank.”

(Photo shows children participating in Walk to School Day at Skinner Road School.)

**CRCOG Encourages Communities to be Bicycle Friendly**

As part of the implementation of the new Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, CRCOG encourages the region’s towns to become bicycle friendly communities. A bicycle friendly community provides safe accommodation for bicycling and encourages its residents to bike for transportation and recreation. The League of American Bicyclists has established a national bicycle friendly recognition program which issues awards on an annual basis. Currently, 71 communities have been recognized at the bronze, silver, or gold level, and only one – Davis, California - has achieved platinum level recognition. CRCOG has supplied the chief elected official in each CRCOG municipality with a copy of the Bicycle Friendly Community Yearbook, which profiles each of the recognized communities. CRCOG staff is willing to assist towns that seek to apply for bicycle friendly status, by speaking at public meetings, serving as a technical adviser on bicycle task forces, or working with staff. For more information, contact Sandy Fry, sfry@crcog.org. (Photo shows CRCOG staff member Sandy Fry at a Board of Selectmen meeting in Simsbury to explain the program.)
Third Annual Connecticut Citizen Corps Council Conference

The third annual Connecticut Citizen Corps Council Conference was held on September 29th at the Mohegan Sun Conference Center in Uncasville. Officials, first responders and CERT team members from many Capitol Region towns attended. The event featured opening remarks from Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Commissioner James M. Thomas and a keynote presentation from Stephen F. Flynn, Jeane F. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow in National Security Studies and author of The Edge of Disaster. Chief William Austin is the Chairman of this Statewide Council and CRCOG and CREPC were event sponsors. (Photo shows the Manchester CERT team receiving an award for their rescue of a biker on Case Mountain in late May).

CRCOG Office Renovations Progress

This summer CRCOG completed an office space search process and will remain at 241 Main Street. To update the offices with more efficient space, three phases of renovation will be completed by October 2008. Phase I involved the Board room and about one third of the office space and has largely been completed. More staff can be accommodated within the current space with the renovations. Upgrades of information technology servers and a new telephone system will complement the new carpet, paint and refurbished office cubicles. An open house is planned to show off the renovations once completed.

CRCOG Planner Emily Moos Receives AICP Certification

Emily Moos, CRCOG Senior Community Development Planner, has received AICP certification. AICP is the American Planning Association's professional institute, providing leadership nationwide in the certification of professional planners, ethics, professional development, planning education, and the standards of planning practice. Certified planners use their skills to find solutions to community problems in ways that will carry the community toward its desired long-term goals. Emily received this certification after completing a course of study and passing a written examination. Certified planners commit to continuing education which helps them gain knowledge and skills necessary to remain current in the practice of planning. CRCOG congratulates Emily on this accomplishment.
Upcoming CRCOG Meetings

Executive Committee, Wednesday, October 8, Noon, CRCOG Board Room
Jobs Access, Thursday, October 16, 9:30 a.m., Greater Hartford Transit District
Regional Planning Commission, Thursday, October 16, 7:00 p.m., West Hartford Town Hall
Municipal Services Committee, Tuesday, October 21, Noon, CRRA
Transportation Committee, Monday, November 10, Noon, CRRA Trash Museum Board Room
Community Development Committee, Thursday, November 13, Noon, South Church
Policy Board, Wednesday, November 19, To Be Determined
Bike/Pedestrian Committee, Tuesday, December 9, Noon, CRRA
Public Safety Council, Thursday, December 11, Noon, South Church

Capitol Region Council of Governments
241 Main Street 4th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106
860-522-2217
www.crcog.org

Capitol Region Update is published ten times per year by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (www.crcog.org). The October 2008 issue is Volume 40 Number 8. CRCOG was formed January 28, 1968 and organized under the laws of the State of Connecticut. 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: Melody A. Currey, Chair, Mayor of East Hartford, Eddie Perez, Vice Chair, Mayor of Hartford, Vice Chair John Adams, First Selectman of Granby, Mary Glassman, Treasurer, First Selectman of Simsbury, and Susan Karp, Secretary, Chair, Glastonbury Town Council. Lyle D. Wray, PhD, Executive Director.