Towards a Sustainable CT Capital Region

By now, all of us have heard of the term “sustainability” in one way or another. Many buzz words exist such as “Green,” “Green Infrastructure,” “LEED Certified,” “Alternative Energy,” “Renewable Energy,” “Energy Efficient,” “TOD.” All of these terms fall under the umbrella of the term ‘sustainability’. The UN defined the term to mean meeting the needs the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. On September 23rd CRCOG’s Policy Board endorsed a Sustainable Communities Initiative stemming from recent work on two collaborative projects, one on producing regional guidelines for sustainable design and development and another on exploring regional carbon reduction through intensified transit oriented development investments. CRCOG would form a Capitol Region Committee on Sustainable Communities composed of experts in housing, transportation, the economy, infrastructure, the environment and public health and safety who would organize and mobilize the region in comprehensively promoting sustainability through existing and potential future initiatives. This effort will position the region well for future national investments through new Livable Communities Legislation proposed by Senator Chris Dodd. This proposed act suggests $8-9 billion be set aside for regions and municipalities to implement long-term plans that integrate transportation, housing, land use, and economic development. For updates please visit: http://www.crcog.org/community_dev/sustainable-dev.html. (Image above courtesy of http://www.wordle.net/create)

Ribbon Cut on Farmington Canal Trail Bridge

On September 20th over 200 attended the ribbon cutting for the Salmon Brook Bridge on the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in East Granby. Numerous individuals, including Simsbury First Selectwoman Mary Glassman and Town Engineer Richard Sawitzke, arrived at the ribbon cutting after biking from New Haven along the canal trail. This bridge represents one of the last missing links on the multi use path from Farmington to the Massachusetts border. Eventually the trail will link to New Haven and will be a part of the East Coast Greenway, a bike path that begins in Calais, Maine and ends in Key West, Florida. Construction of this bridge was delayed due to
high construction costs and many parties helped to close the funding gap. The Farmington Valley Trail Council (FVTC) developed a Salmon Brook Bridge Fund and also provided funding out of its own treasury. R. Bruce Donald, the President of the FVTC acknowledged CRCOG’s help with this project: “We are all indebted to Tom Maziarz from the Capitol Region Council of Governments, who was able to redirect unused dollars from other transportation projects to the cause.” The Town of East Granby including David Kilbon, former First Selectman, Jim Hayden, current First Selectman, and Charlie Francis, town engineer, worked tirelessly to make sure this bridge became a reality.

**CRCOG Work in APA Essential Info Packet**

The American Planning Association hosts a Planning Advisory Service to assist planners in their research needs. CRCOG work on Shared Parking, contained in our 2002 Livable Communities Toolkit—Tools for Towns (see [http://www.crcog.org/publications/tcsp.html](http://www.crcog.org/publications/tcsp.html)) was included in the PAS’s most recent Essential Info Packet on Parking Solutions. The Shared Parking Fact Sheet describes two approaches to promoting shared parking through contractual agreements between adjacent uses and through parking management districts. PAS Essential Info Packets offer valuable information on a variety of topics. The PAS researchers carefully develop each packet to ensure quality, relevance, and timeliness and had contacted CRCOG for permission to include our Shared Parking Fact Sheet in their most recent Info Packet. As a member of the APA Planning Advisory Service, CRCOG can utilize this service on behalf our municipal members to help meet your local planning research needs.

**Walking School Buses Implemented in Hartford**

Over the past few months, CRCOG has worked with the Hartford Public Schools as they developed a program for “walking school buses” at city elementary schools. A walking bus is a simple concept – children walk to school in a group, picking up additional kids along the way. Each walking school bus has at least one adult “driver” (usually a parent) who walks with the children. The walking bus provides parents with peace of mind – that their children are safe on their journey to school.

The Hartford program has started up at 2 elementary schools, Betances and McDonough, with direct technical assistance from the Injury Free Coalition for Kids of Hartford (a program of the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center.) With funding from the Kohl’s TweenSafe Program, the Injury Free Coalition is able to assist other schools that want to establish walking school buses. If your town is interested in this program, contact Kevin Borrup of the Coalition at 545-9984 or kborrup@ccmckids.org.  You can also contact Sandy Fry at CRCOG (522-2217 x220 or sfry@crcog.org) for more information.
**State Launches Safe Routes to Schools Initiative**

The Connecticut Department of Transportation has launched a new program to encourage walking and bicycling to school: Walk It Bike It to School. This initiative encourages students to walk and bike to school through a statewide competition. Information on the program is available at [www.walkitbikeitct.org](http://www.walkitbikeitct.org). The program will be officially launched on International Walk to School Day, Wednesday October 7. If you are planning any events related to International Walk to School Day, your event could become a part of the statewide promotion! Contact Sandy Fry (sfry@crcog.org, 522-2217, x220) for more information.

**Autumn Storm Functional Exercise**

On July 15th, the region conducted its Functional Exercise (FE) as part of the process initiated to establish a Homeland Security consistent exercise program; the exercise was the second in the series of three exercises, dubbed Autumn Storm. The exercise cycle includes a Table Top Exercise (TTX) conducted in April, the just conducted Functional Exercise (FE), and a Full Scale Exercise (FSE) originally scheduled for September.

Both the TTX and FE were focused on a pandemic event, a crippling ice storm, as well as cascading events injected to stimulate overall exercise play. Exercise participants included, CREPC, the City of Hartford, the towns of Enfield, Southington, Suffield, and Windsor; North Central CMED; the CT-Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, St. Joseph College, University of Hartford, Trinity College, and Wesleyan University. Hospital participants included; Hartford Hospital, CCMC, St. Francis, John Dempsey/UConn Health Center, The Hospital of Central Connecticut, Bristol, and ECHN at Manchester Hospital. All exercise participants operated from their Emergency Operations Centers and CREPC operated from one of its three strategically located Regional Coordination Centers in New Britain City Hall. The goal of any exercise is to identify gaps and strengths associated with emergency preparedness plans, responses, and operations. This exercise can be deemed a success because it did that and now the Capitol Region will move forward with reinforcing the strengths, and closing the observed gaps. After the Functional Exercise consensus was developed, it was decided that the Full Scale Exercise should be postponed until after the first of the year to allow for implementation of any associated Improvement Plan as appropriate.

**Fourth Annual Citizen Corps Conference Held**

The Fourth Annual Citizen Corps Conference sponsored by DEMHS; the Connecticut Emergency Management Association; CREPC; CRCOG; and CNV COG was held on September 14-15 in Westbrook, CT. This is the first year for a two day conference and the CT Network as well as several additional local media outlets covered the event. Over 300 participants attended the educational conference which featured presentations by Peter J. Boynton, DEMHS Commissioner; Chief William Austin, Chairman of the Connecticut Citizen Corps Council; Dr. Joseph Klimek, Vice
President of Medical Affairs, Hartford Hospital; Dr. Mitchell D. Erickson, Director, Northeast Operations Interagency and First Responder Programs, DHS; and former DEMHS Commissioner James “Skip” Thomas. The educational tracks included presentations on animal protection, citizen preparedness, Medical Reserve Corps, adopting the CERT concept in the United Arab Emirate, the H1N1 virus, volunteer liability issues, incident management teams and the new in-school STEP Program. Photo shows an additional highlight with the first Citizen Corps Honor Roll Award presented by Chief Austin and Katherine McCormack to Don Janelle, leader of the Manchester CERT Team and CRCOG Citizen Corps Council founding member.

**Upcoming CRCOG Meetings**

- **CRCOG Executive Committee** – October 14, Noon, CRCOG Board Room
- **CT River Assembly** – October 8 – 7:00 p.m., Wethersfield Town Hall
- **Jobs Access** – November 19, 9:30 a.m., CRCOG
- **Bike/Pedestrian Committee** – December 8, Noon, CRCOG
- **Community Development Committee** — November 12, Noon, CRCOG
- **Public Safety** – December 10, Noon, South Church
- **Municipal Services Committee** – October 20, Noon, CRCOG
- **CREPC** –October 22, 9:30 a.m., South Church
- **Regional Planning Commission** – October 15, 7:00 p.m., West Hartford Town Hall
- **Transportation Committee** – October 19, Noon, CRRA Trash Museum Board Room
- **CRCOG Policy Board** – October 21, Noon, CRRA Trash Museum Board Room
Capitol Region Update is published ten times per year by of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (www.crcog.org). The September/October 2009 issue is Volume 41 Number 7. 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.