2012 CRCOG Annual Meeting Celebrates the Arts

CRCOG held its 54th Annual Meeting on June 6, 2012 at the Boathouse in Hartford. Greater Hartford Arts Council Executive Director and CT First Lady Cathy Malloy (at left in photo with CRCOG Chair and Simsbury First Selectman Mary Glassman at right) spoke the impact of the arts in the region. More than 100 attendees registered for the lunch meeting. Some of the highlights shared at the meeting included: Purchasing Council savings from the regular bid schedule was 1.3 million dollars over the past year. Online building permitting will grow to 16 member towns in July. The sustainable communities’ project includes a market study of development around the rail and rapid transit stations in the region. Almost 5 million dollars in homeland security was managed this year on behalf of the 41 towns in DEMHS Region 3. In 2011, CRCOG obligated over $9 million in federal transportation funds to start design, CRCOG Transportation also solicited for municipal transportation projects and recommended over $36 million.

Groundbreaking for First Rapid Transit in CT

Groundbreaking was held on May 22, 2012 in the Parkville neighborhood of Hartford for the first rapid transit line in CT. The line was branded by Connecticut Department of Transportation as CT Fastrak. A number of related activities are underway for transit enhancements and a market study for transit oriented development opportunities at 14 stations on the rail and rapid transit lines. This project, what might be called “Fastrak West” (Hartford to New Britain) is the first element of the CRCOG Regional Transit Strategy done more than a decade ago. The strategy calls for rapid transit linkages to Manchester and East Hartford to the east and the Griffin Office Center to the north, with continuing service to Bradley International Airport. The dedicated site on the Fastrak project may be found at: http://www.ctfastrak.com/index.php/en
Our Regional Future: MetroQuest Phase Two Input

The second phase of the MetroQuest survey tool for the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Project was launched at the June 19th, 2012 Knowledge Corridor Consortium meeting in Windsor, CT. While the first phase of MetroQuest asked respondents to rank their top five priorities for developing a more sustainable Knowledge Corridor, the second phase will also ask respondents to give input on the future growth of the region. Survey respondents will again be able to choose their top sustainability priorities and see how those priorities fair when different choices are made regarding future land use and transportation patterns. The first phase of the MetroQuest survey engaged about 1000 Knowledge Corridor residents, employees and students. CRCOG and PVPC staff generated interest in the survey tool through both face to face interactions at public meetings and by posting the survey link on social media and websites. Knowledge Corridor consortium members helped distribute the survey to their networks as well. It is hoped that the second phase of the survey will gather even more responses. All citizens and employees in the Knowledge Corridor are encouraged to participate in the survey by visiting skc.metroquest.org and to also stay tuned in the coming months for the third phase of the survey while help envision how potential policies addressing regional sustainability will look and feel at the neighborhood scale. To participate in MetroQuest for the sustainable knowledge corridor see: http://skc.metroquest.com/

Sustainable Knowledge Corridor Dashboard Launched

CRCOG, PVPC and CCRPA in consultation with the Knowledge Corridor Consortium, have developed an interactive set of data indicators that will help show how we’re doing on a variety of measures of sustainability in the region. This new project feature was officially launched at the Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership State of the Region Conference on June 5th, 2012. The set of twenty-nine indicators are associated with eight core goals for the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor project which span the range of issues from regional mobility to healthy communities. The dashboard can be found in the new “How are we doing?” section of the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor website at www.sustainableknowledgecorridor.org. Visitors to the page are able to drill down from a snapshot of how the indicator fairs at the regional level to an interactive comparison of each indicator at the municipal level through the use of a moving bubble chart. All charts associated with each indicator can be shared through social media. The data on this dashboard will be updated on an annual basis and throughout the year as data becomes available. We encourage you to visit this exciting new section of the Sustainable Knowledge Corridor website to see how we’re doing.

Green Infrastructure Field Trip to East Lyme

CRCOG organized a June 13, 2012 Green Infrastructure Field Trip to East Lyme’s Hole-in-the-Wall Outdoor Storm water Classroom. The trip included a guided tour of the Classroom followed by lunchtime discussions and vendor presentations on the latest in green infrastructure technologies. The event was attended by over 20 professionals from the Region’s Towns and ConnDOT, representing the fields of transportation planning and engineering, landscaping, and environmental sciences. The event showcased the latest technologies and techniques utilized to treat and reduce storm water runoff, including pervious pavements with varying components (e.g., crushed stone, rubber tires, recycled plastic), detention and infiltration basins, rain gardens,
tree boxes, and storm water monitoring systems. In addition to technical presentations, participants were able to observe many of the technologies in service at the classroom, which treats and reduces storm water associated with 23 acres of downtown Niantic prior to discharging it into Long Island Sound. CRCOG applauds East Lyme’s green infrastructure efforts and expresses our gratitude to Paul Formica, East Lyme First Selectman, for hosting the event; and Bill Scheer, East Lyme Town Engineer for providing a guided tour of the Outdoor Classroom. Hopefully the showcasing of these technologies will result in the realization of additional environmentally innovative projects in our region. For more information on East Lyme’s Outdoor Storm water Classroom please visit: http://www.eltownhall.com/ho1e-in-the-wall.

**Envisionfest Launches in Hartford in September**

Connecticut’s industries and artists will celebrate their vision of the future through interactive displays, exhibits, performances and activities in open houses and public spaces throughout downtown, all connected through walking and biking routes. The iQuilt vision will be displayed along the GreenWalk, along with sidewalk activities and prototypes of seating, lighting and signage. Walking throughout downtown will bring you to various Hartford destinations connected with food, drink, music, artists and activities. For further information see: www.envisionfesthartford.com.

**Final Meetings for the Route 6 Hop River Corridor Study**

The Route 6 Hop River Corridor Study, a transportation study focusing on 11 miles of Route 6 in Bolton, Coventry, Andover, and Columbia and a 2 mile segment of Route 66 in Columbia, is in its final stages. The last public meetings were held in Andover and Columbia early in June. The recommendations will be fine tuned with the comments received and endorsements from each of the four participating towns, will be sought this summer. The study goals are to improve safety, accessibility, and mobility for all modes of transportation while also coordinating with the land use and economic development plans laid out in a previous study. The towns are working cooperatively on this effort and plan to share the benefits and costs of creating village destinations along a cohesive corridor. To view the draft report and to find the latest study information visit http://www.crcog.org/transportation/current_stud/Route6.html.
Hartford Awarded $10 Million in 2012 TIGER Funding

The City of Hartford has been awarded $10 million in federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant funding to be applied towards their Intermodal Transportation Triangle project. Competing against approximately 700 projects, Hartford is one of only 47 projects nationwide that will receive federal funding. The $21 million project consists of the following initiatives within the area generally bound by Bushnell Park, Main Street, Asylum Street, and Union Station: **Union Station:** Enhancements to solidify its role as the Region’s Intermodal Hub; **Bushnell Park North:** Green Infrastructure Improvements to create a vibrant, sustainable boulevard from Union Station to Main Street; **Asylum/Pearl:** Transit Priorities and Pedestrian Improvements; **Main Street:** Transit Enhancements and Complete Street Provisions and Traffic Signalization with Bus Prioritization

These initiatives aim to improve connectivity between historic Main Street and Union Station, incorporate complete streets elements, construct water infrastructure in Bushnell Park North, and re-design streets within the intermodal triangle for improved pedestrian and bus access. The project supports implementation of Hartford’s “One City, One Plan” vision focused on promoting job creation and economic revitalization in the city. In addition, the proposed enhanced transportation options will better connect Downtown Hartford’s economic centers to housing and recreation opportunities. The project is the result of a collaborative planning effort that includes the iQuilt Partnership (a private-public partnership), Connecticut Department of Transportation, Greater Hartford Transit District, CT Transit, CRCOG and others. It also leverages major federal investments such as a Federal Transit Administration FY11 Bus Livability grant, a HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant, the CTfastrak project, the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield high speed rail project, and various other state and local investments.

Sustainability Video Project Underway

A crew from the Corporate Media Center at Middlesex Community College was on location in several Capitol Region communities last month to begin capturing footage and conducting interviews for a series of Lead by Example videos that is being funded by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation. The project, which represents a partnership between CRCOG, the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority, will result in the production of five short video clips designed to “bring to life” the success stories of CT communities and their progressive work on energy and sustainability and hopefully inspire additional municipalities to reduce their energy use and create more sustainable communities. These videos will be used to support the DEEP’s Lead by Example municipal outreach and marketing campaign as well as CRCOG’s Sustainable Capitol Region and Sustainable Knowledge Corridor initiatives.

To kick off filming for a planned Healthy Communities segment, CRCOG and DEEP staff joined the crew on May 18th to track Commissioner Esty’s Bike to Work Day ride between West Hartford and the Old State House. On May 30th, the team travelled across the river to East Hartford to cover an exciting Healthy East Hartford event that was facilitated by Mark Fenton, a nationally-recognized public health, planning and transportation consultant. The East Hartford program included a walking audit of Main Street focusing on bikeability, walkability and the built environment, as well as a presentation on how to make communities more intrinsically active. Additional footage was taken on June 1st (National Trail Day) in Windsor to celebrate the completion of a new segment of the CT River Trail at the East Barber Street Boat Launch. Filming activities will continue this summer and into the fall. If your community has an upcoming event or project that would help us document
sustainable initiatives or specifically, a commitment to energy efficiency, please contact Hedy Ayers at hayers@crcog.org.

**Cyber Attack Exercise Held in Region**

The DEMHS Region 3 Incident Management Team (CT-IMT 3), which was developed with CRCOG’s Urban Area Security Initiative grant, was tasked with supporting this year’s National Level Exercise (NLE 12) on June 7, 2012. The scenario was based on a cyber-attack that compromised the communications infrastructure throughout the region and the nation. Photo above left shows an aerial view of communications units. Photo above right shows CTIMT-3 team briefing CTIMT-2. This full scale exercise culminated with over 59 federal, state, and local agencies, as well as private sector companies, participating with their various communications technologies. NLE 12 provided a valuable opportunity for CT-IMT 3 to gain experience in creating a plan for a large scale incident. In addition, under CT-IMT 3 guidance, NLE 12 brought together numerous IMTs, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and the Capitol Region Medical Reserve Corps to work together towards a common goal. CT-IMT 3 created an Incident Action Plan (IAP) to support the statewide operations dictated by the NLE 12 scenario. Participating agencies and their associated equipment staged at Rentschler Stadium and Bradley International Airport. The CT-IMT 3 Team will use this opportunity to further their technical knowledge and experience level to better support DEMHS Region-3 and the state during a time of need.

**National MMRS Caucus Held**

The Capitol Region Metropolitan Medical Response Program Director, Carmine Centrella, attended the National MMRS Caucus in Columbus Ohio as part of the week long National Homeland Security Conference. Carmine has been part of the MMRS National Leadership Group for the past two years as part of the Region’s efforts to retain MMRS grant funding from the US DHS/FEMA. The Caucus focused on the restructuring of the entire suite of Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) shifting the MMRS funds from a set aside program into a lump sum “block grant” with funding determination left at the discretion of the State Administrative Agent, in this instance the Department of Emergency Support and Public Protection (DESPP). Originally the HSGP contained 16 separate grant programs established to target specific initiatives, such as State Homeland Security, MMRS, Port Security, Urban Areas, etc. In essence MMRS is no longer a funded Federal program as of 2012/2013. In the past the MMRS program ($30 million nationally in 124 jurisdictions, $300,000 for the Capitol Region) has been zero funded in the President’s budget. However, MMRS cooperating with their federal legislative delegations have been able to restore funding up to this most recent budget where the entire federal grant program was restructured. In the Capitol Region MMRS funds have been used to acquire the Mobile Ambulatory Care Unit which is a 55 bed tent system with generators and HVAC systems. The MMRS provides medical countermeasures for first responders and other key resource personnel. This cache can be pushed out hours/days ahead of the material that will be delivered as part of the Strategic National Stockpile. The MMRS developed plans as part of their original deliverables which have subsequently been adopted as statewide plans. MMRS and Urban
Area funds are used for the Long Term Care Mutual Aid Plan for all 78 nursing/rehab centers in the Region. The value of the plan is that this specific community is learning to rely on itself without tapping into local municipal resources. As one example the system can currently move over 2,000 of its patients/clients without using outside resources. This is powerful and relieves a lot of stress off the healthcare system and local governments during an emergency. This plan is now being mirrored across the state. Additionally, 11 of the 12 acute care hospitals in the Region are building a Hospital Mutual Aid plan which will be partially funded with MMRS grant funds. These are just some of the critical programs which may suffer if the National MMRS Leadership Group cannot convince FEMA or Congress to restore specific funding to MMRS, health and medical, initiatives.

First Indefinite Quantity Construction Users Meeting

On Thursday, May 31, CRCOG hosted its inaugural ezIQC Users Group meeting and engaged municipal officials from thirteen communities in a lively discussion about the widespread use of ezIQC to complete repair, renovation and construction projects at town halls, garages, libraries, police and fire stations, parks and schools across the state and what steps CRCOG should take to make strategic improvements to the program moving forward. The morning featured an ezIQC overview by Paul Schreyer of The Gordian Group, the consulting firm that provides the competitively bid, on-call construction procurement system; a panel presentation of seasoned users including Lynn Sadosky, Public Works Director for the Town of North Haven, Cliff Gurnham, Director of Operations for Guilford Public Schools and Robert Korpak, Director of Facilities Management for the Town of Newington; an extensive brainstorming session on next steps as the agency prepares to roll out the fourth year of the initiative; and a question and answer period with three of the four companies that are currently under contract to perform the work. Based on participant feedback, CRCOG staff will be working to update and enhance the ezIQC portion of our website, produce additional program materials and beef up outreach efforts in order to bring additional towns and schools on board. To date, twenty-two members of the Capitol Region Purchasing Council (CRPC) have issued close to $5 million worth of purchase orders through the program, covering everything from roofing projects to bathroom renovations, trim painting work, carpet installations, door replacements and sidewalk improvements. For a full listing of CRPC projects, click here to access a copy of the latest Member Summary. For more information on ezIQC or to schedule a presentation on-site at your town hall or school, please contact Hedy Ayers, Special Projects Manager, at hayers@crcog.org.
Upcoming Meeting Dates

Connecticut River Assembly – July 12, 2012, Wethersfield Town Manager’s Conference Room, 7:00 p.m.
Transportation Committee – July 30, 2012, Noon, CRRA
Public Safety Committee – September 13, 2012, Noon, South Church
Municipal Services – July 17, 2012, Noon, CRCOG
CRCOG Policy Board – September 26, 2012, Noon, CRRA
Bike/Pedestrian Committee – September 11, 2012, Noon, TBD
CREPC – June 21, 2012, 9:30 a.m., South Church
Regional Planning Commission – July 19, 2012, 7:00 p.m., West Hartford Town Hall
Executive Committee – August 8, 2012, Noon, CRCOG

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