



Capitol Region Update

November 2008

Capitol Region Council of Governments

Serving the 29 Communities of Connecticut's Capital Region

www.crcog.org

EPA Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant Awarded



CRCOG's application to the EPA for technical assistance in developing model zoning regulations for affordable housing in a smart growth context has been granted. The CRCOG proposal was one of three selected in a group of 40 applications. In the coming months, CRCOG will partner with the Towns of Bloomfield, Manchester, South Windsor and Tolland as well as three other groups, the Partnership for Strong Communities, the University of Hartford Center for Integrated Design and the American Farmland Trust to work with the EPA's Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation on these

regulations.

This grant of assistance will bring nationally acclaimed experts in affordable housing and smart growth to the region to help put forth a three-tiered model of zoning regulations that address the location, design and form of compact, mixed-use, walkable developments. These regulations will also seek to address the fact that housing options take different shapes in urban, suburban and rural communities. Given the importance of affordable housing to overall smart growth and recent state actions to encourage the development of more affordable housing, CRCOG sees this effort as an opportunity to fulfill key regional housing and development goals by combining incentive housing zone regulations, as envisioned through the State Housing for Economic Growth initiative, with mixed-use regulations that adhere to responsible growth principles, in order to ensure that the region provides sustainable affordable housing.

CRCOG Safe Routes to Schools Efforts Gain Momentum



Walking and bicycling to school can be an important part of an active lifestyle, however most school children are not starting their day with these activities. There is a solution to this problem: the increasingly popular Safe Routes to Schools program. A Safe Routes Program diagnoses what keeps kids from making the choice to walk or bike and then develops strategies to change the culture or the environment. CRCOG is ready to help towns in the region to implement these programs: we will again offer our Safe Routes Workshop series in 2009. We would like to work with any towns that are interested in getting a program up and running.

Our first workshop series has already had an impact: A Safe Routes to School Committee, spearheaded by a dedicated parent volunteer, an assistant town planner, and a school

administrator, was formed in the town of South Windsor at Orchard Hill Elementary School. Orchard Hill took part in International Walk to School Day on October 8th with a very successful event. The Safe Routes Committee is currently finalizing its Safe Routes Plan in preparation for application for Safe Routes infrastructure funding as soon as Connecticut DOT puts out the request for projects. The first South Windsor walk to school event received local media attention and the town is committed to expanding the program to other schools in the community. By taking small steps to enhance the ability of children to walk or bicycle to school, this program could ultimately reduce traffic congestion, promote health and build a greater sense of community. For more information about the CRCOG Safe Routes to Schools workshop series, contact Sandy Fry at sfry@crcog.org or Brenda Watson at bwatson@crcog.org.

New Telephone System and Extensions at CRCOG



With the renovation of the CRCOG office, a new up to date phone system was installed on Wednesday, October 29. Please note that our phone extensions have changed. **New extension numbers add a 2 in front of each current extension number.**

CRCOG and CRCOG Foundation Host Journey Home



The new Journey Home initiative has taken residence in the CRCOG offices, a relationship made possible through a Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement between Journey Home and the



CRCOG Foundation, Inc. Journey Home was formed to combat homelessness in the region. The Connecticut nonprofit organization, established by Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez's Commission to End Chronic Homelessness and lead by Executive Director Sarah Gallagher, was recently established to implement the Capitol Region Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, a regional collaborative process engaging stakeholders from government, nonprofit, business and academia. Several CRCOG chief elected officials and staff participated in the planning process that led to the creation of Journey Home.

Journey Home is committed to breaking down barriers, streamlining services and implementing innovative solutions to end homelessness in the Capitol Region. Goals of the plan include: increase access to support services, provide housing to the chronic homeless, increase affordable housing, increase incomes of homeless and at-risk individuals, prevention, and create community awareness and a coordinated response.

Executive Director Sarah Gallagher, a Connecticut native, has dedicated her career to improving services and programs for some of society's most vulnerable populations. "Ending homelessness in our region will require the participation, commitment and collaboration of individuals from all sectors of our community," says Gallagher. "We are well poised to take on this challenge and I look forward to implementing strategies that will enhance the work that has already been completed."

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Bicycling Instructors Trained and Certified



CRCOG, working with the Central Connecticut Bicycle Alliance, who received grant funding from Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), sponsored a bicycle educator

training session over the weekend of October 24 to 26. This class resulted in the certification of 14 individuals as League of American Bicyclists (LAB) Instructors and they are authorized to offer a full range of education classes for bicyclists and non bicyclists of all ages and skill levels. This was an important first step for CRCOG to take to enable us to offer bicyclist education throughout the region. We expect to begin to offer classes in the spring and would like to partner with the region's towns as we set up our education schedule. Please contact Sandy Fry at (sfry@crcog.org or 522-2217 x220) if you would like to host a bicycle education program in your town.

Region Holds Tornado Table Top Exercise



On October 14 the Region conducted a Table Top Exercise (TTX) for the Region's Tactical Interoperability Communication Plan (TIC-P). As part of the 2007 Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program (PSIC) through the US DHS Office of Emergency Communications, Connecticut received \$12.9 million in grant funding for the development of its Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). Each of the five DEMHS Regions will be required to develop a sub-state regional plan. The TIC-P TTX was conducted through the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP). ICTAP provided direction and assistance in the development of the Region's TIC-P as well as facilitating the TTX and providing peer evaluators for the exercise. The Regional Incident Dispatch (RID) Team provided lead planning support through Chris Marvin from Manchester, and James Belanger from Rocky Hill.

There were a total of 65 participants and observers with representatives from CREPC local communities, the region, as well as state, and federal agencies. Also in attendance were representatives from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and the Western Massachusetts Fire Chiefs Association. The scenario for the TTX involved a large tornado touching down in the Enfield/Somers area heading into East Longmeadow, MA creating a devastating swath of ¼ mile wide by 6 ½ miles long. The path of the tornado heavily damaged the Carl Robinson Correctional Institute leaving 284 prisoners and staff unaccounted for. This was the first multi-state TIC-P table top exercise, and was also the first TIC-P exercise involving

a correctional facility or department in the U.S. The TIC-P planning team is to be commended on their aggressive scenario and inclusive approach. ICTAP will generate an After Action Report, which will lead the State and the Region implementing a Corrective Actions Plan.

Upcoming CRCOG Meetings

Transportation Committee, Monday, November 10, Noon, CRRRA Trash Museum Board Room
Community Development Committee, Thursday, November 13, Noon, South Church
Municipal Services Committee, Tuesday, November 18, Noon, CRCOG Board Room

Policy Board, Wednesday, November 19, South Church, Gray Hall

Jobs Access, Thursday, November 20, 9:30 a.m., Greater Hartford Transit District
Regional Planning Commission, Thursday, November 20, 7:00 p.m., West Hartford Town Hall
Bike/Pedestrian Committee, Tuesday, December 9, Noon, CRRRA
Public Safety Council, Thursday, December 11, Noon, South Church
Executive Committee, Wednesday, January 14, Noon, CRCOG Board Room



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