



The CRCOG/CID Community Design Resource Project

PHASE ONE REPORT

Findings from the Community Design Seminars
held on June 5, 6 and 14, 2007

January 2008

This project was made possible by a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

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Section 1.0 Introduction

The University of Hartford's Center for Integrated Design (CID) and the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) realized through mutual discussions that they each have a strong interest and deep desire to encourage the use of Smart Growth principles and encourage the development of livable communities. They both wanted to create a method in which they could reach out to the greater Hartford communities and take an initial step in promoting these concepts and applications to the betterment of the towns.

The result is a collaborative outreach project of the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Center for Integrated Design funded by a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. The project's purpose is two-fold: first, to determine the level of understanding and knowledge of smart growth and livable communities in the 29 towns in the greater Hartford area and the resources currently available to these municipalities; and second, to work towards a more comprehensive resource base and network that can be used to assist towns in encouraging and working towards smart growth and more livable communities.

Bright Ideas on Community Design: An Interactive Dialogue is series of community dialogue workshops developed as the outreach component of the project to obtain qualitative data. The workshops consisted of an open discussion amongst representatives from the greater Hartford area, the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the University of Hartford's Center for Integrated Design. The project methodology, including the workshop process; the questionnaire used to collect the data and results of the survey including analysis of the data and preliminary "Bright Ideas" are presented in this report. These "Bright Ideas" are a starting point for further dialogue and, the identification and/or development of possible resources for the participants and communities.

Goals

The goals of the Community Dialogue workshops were to:

- Introduce commonly accepted concepts of Smart Growth and Livable Communities;
- Establish a level of understanding of Smart Growth and Livable Communities;
- Collect the participants' perception of Smart Growth and Livable Communities as they relate to their communities.

Following the workshops the Center for Integrated Design (CID) analyzed the responses to the survey used to collect the workshop participants' perceptions. The goal of the analysis was to:

- Assess the participants' perception and recognition of the characteristics of Livable Communities;
- Assess the participants' understanding of Smart Growth and Livable Communities;
- Assess the participants' perception of their own communities level of adoption of Smart Growth and Livable Communities principles;
- Assess the needs and resources, as expressed by the participants, to improve the communities and make them more inclusive of the principles and practices of Smart Growth and Livable Communities;

As a result of the analysis, the CID provided "Bright Ideas" for relevant survey questions in response to the expressed needs of the participants.

Section 2.0 Methodology

The methodology used to collect the necessary data on the level of knowledge and application of Smart Growth and Livable Communities principles was through interactive Community Dialogue sessions and a survey. The dialogue sessions and survey were conducted as Phase I of a two phase project process. Part II, to be conducted in early 2008, will include another interactive Community Dialogue with the same participants as Phase I as well as a broader spectrum of professionals involved in the Smart Growth/Livable Communities initiative.

Process

The goals listed above were achieved through two interactive Community Dialogue workshops conducted with representatives from towns in the Capitol Region. Each workshop followed the same format. One was held in the Konover Campus Center on the campus of the University of Hartford, West Hartford on June 5, 2007. This workshop started at 1:00pm and finished at 4:30pm. The second workshop was held at the East Hartford Community Center on June 6, 2007 from 8:30am until 12:00pm.

Prior to the start of the first workshop, on the campus of the University of Hartford, Gina McCarthy, the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, spoke on the goals and efforts of the State in responding to the livable community issues to be addressed at the workshop.

Each workshop, or dialogue session, began with a brief overview of the activities and goals of the session conducted by the Executive Director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and faculty from the University of Hartford's Center for Integrated Design (CID). Following this, Anthony Nelessen, noted expert on Smart Growth, presented a brief overview of the principles and practices of Smart Growth. Included in his presentation was an interactive survey with the participants using his Visual Preference Survey (VPS) process. The VPS process involved the display of images of possible development options for communities. Participants then rated each image based on a scale of preference. Participants completed the Visual Preference Survey through noting their choices on score sheets.

Following Mr. Nelessen's presentation and survey, faculty from the Center for Integrated Design conducted an interactive survey with participants. This survey, described in detail in the following section, sought to elicit responses on a range of issues centered on concepts of Smart Growth. To provide a more intimate and conducive atmosphere for this survey, it was conducted at tables of four to six participants. A representative from the CID, assigned to each table, acted as the moderator. As each page of the survey was completed the answers were grouped and tabulated by CID faculty to develop a preliminary understanding of the participants' responses. At the end of the session, the tabulated results were synthesized and presented to the participants as a preliminary overview of the day's efforts.

Concluding remarks, by faculty of the CID, thanked participants for their enthusiasm, engagement and commitment to the workshop and its goals. In addition, they were all invited to participate in a follow-up dialogue session to take place at a future date.

Additionally, there was a third workshop conducted at the June 14, 2007 CRCOG Community Development Committee meeting. Participants included Hartford-area Town Planners, Town Council members, and Board of Selectmen members. The workshop was facilitated by Terri-Ann P. Hahn ASLA, CPESC, Principal LADA PC Land Planners. There were 7 participants each from a different Hartford-area town. The workshop began just as the other two sessions had but did not include the interactive visual survey nor the lecture by Mr. Nelessen. This workshop did include a roundtable discussion utilizing the survey questions. All 7 participants responded to the survey questions and their answers were included in the compilation of data.

Questionnaire

The survey developed by the Center for Integrated Design, was the vehicle by which data was collected from the participants. The questions were designed to elicit responses that were specific yet provided latitude for participants to answer based on their individual experience, knowledge or feelings. The survey consisted of 17 questions. With the exception of the first question, *“What Town are you going to talk about today?”*, they were qualitative and subjective in nature, allowing all participants to answer based on their personal experience, whether they had extensive technical knowledge of the subject or were answering based on an individual or personal experience.

The questionnaire consisted of the following questions:

1. *What Town are you going to talk about today?*
2. *What is your favorite Town? / Place? / Downtown?*
3. *If you had to describe your Town to someone from across the country, how would you describe your Town?*
4. *What makes a community livable?*
5. *Is there an ideal livable community? Where?*
6. *What makes one livable community different from the other?*
7. *Is your community livable?*
8. *What specifically does your Town/City need to make it livable?*
9. *What elements of a livable community do you wish your Town/City had?*
10. *What aspects of your Town/City do you wish you could change?*
11. *Why would changing these things make the Town/City more livable?*
12. *What things can't be changed?*
13. *What do you need to accomplish the changes which make your Town/City more livable?*
14. *Do you have resources in place to ensure that your vision can be accomplished?*
15. *What are those resources?*
16. *What else do you need to accomplish this vision?*
17. *Any more thoughts?*

A compilation of all the survey results is included in Appendix A of this report.

The complete original surveys are available for review by contacting the Capitol Region Council of Governments (860.522.2212 ext 22) or the Center for Integrated Design (860.768.5137).

Section 3.0 Survey Premise

Fifty out of the 57 workshop attendees participated in the 19 question Community Information Survey. The participants were divided into groups of three to six people. Each group was assigned a workshop facilitator who conducted the survey and recorded the attendees' responses. Below is a summary of the responses to the survey, analysis of the similarities and differences between attendee responses, and "Bright Ideas" (recommended possible preliminary strategies) to reduce some of the road blocks in making a community more livable. A detailed summary of the responses is in Appendix A, and the responses as recorded by the facilitators can be requested from either CRCOG or the CID.

Results of Community Information Survey

3.1 What Town are you going to talk about today?

The attendees were requested to talk about either the town in which they live or work. All except three of the participants discussed towns that are in Hartford County with the most responses from Hartford (7), South Windsor (6), Simsbury (5), East Granby (4), East Hartford (3), and Vernon (3). The diversity of towns in Hartford County is shown in Figure 1.

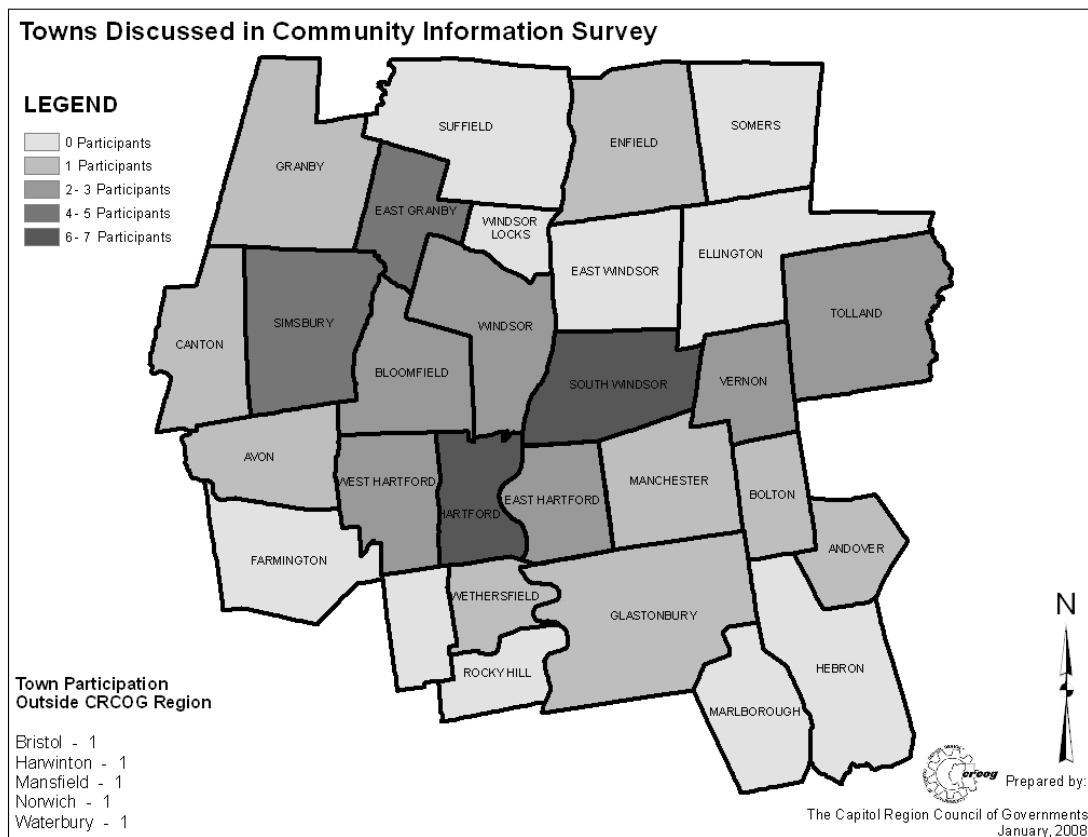


Figure 1. Distribution of Towns/Cities Represented in Community Information Survey

3.2 What is your favorite Town? / Place? / Downtown?

3.2.1 Favorite Town

The responses for favorite town ranged from as close to home as “My Town” to as far away as “Europe.” The break down by region is shown in Figure 2. Even with the diversity of responses, half of the respondents’ (26 out of 50) favorite town was in Central Connecticut, Coastal Connecticut, New England, or Upstate New York.

Analysis: This data is very encouraging because it exhibits that many of the attendees do not need to travel very far to get to their favorite town. Also, it is interesting that the respondents’ favorite towns are closely split between cities, resort towns, and towns. This provides one of the first indications that there is a large diversity of favorite towns and that there is not a “cookie cutter mold” that will work for every place—different places appeal to different people. However, as will be shown later, there are common features between these cities, towns, and resorts that make them more appealing to people.

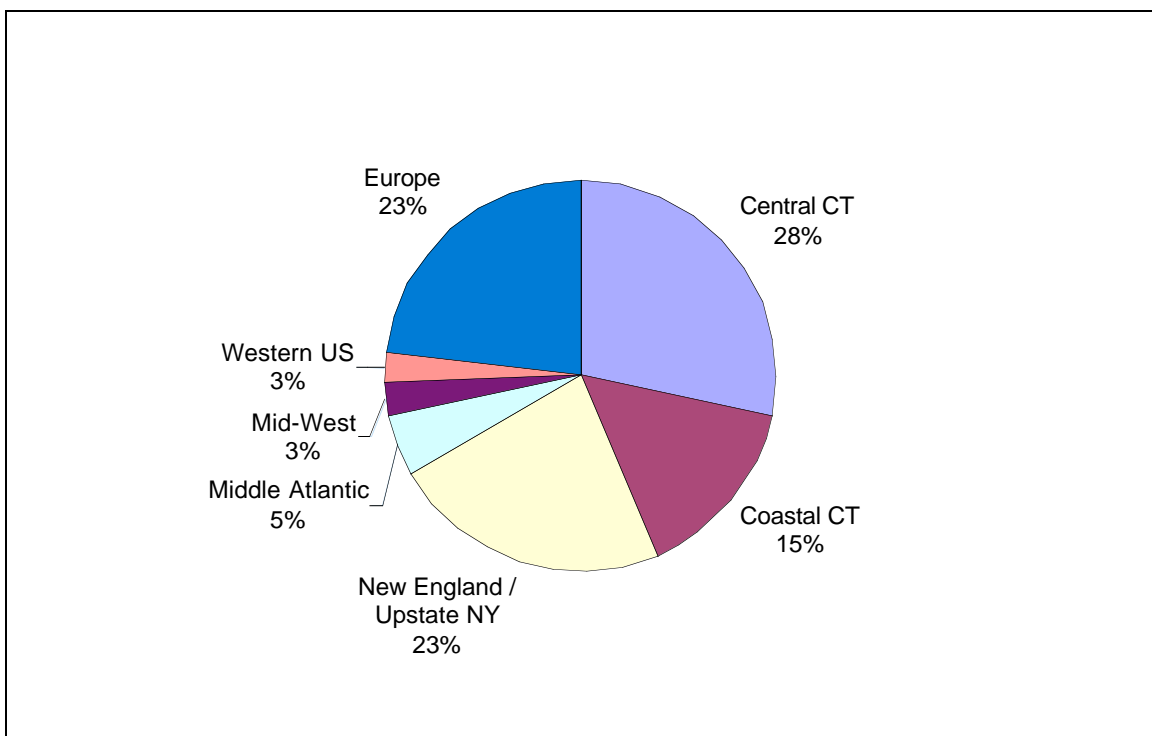


Figure 2. Favorite Town by Region (39 Responses)

3.2.2 Favorite Place

A sample of the responses for favorite place was “Pocahontas County, WV” (rural), “Watch Hill, RI” (coastal), and “Venice, Italy” (city). Overall, about half of the responses were rural places.

Analysis: While it was not asked of the respondents, it is thought that the large percentage of rural places may be due to their association with vacations, good memories, and a feeling of nostalgia for the respondent. In general terms, it appears that the most respondents value qualities that are associated with a rural place.

3.2.3 Favorite Downtown

The last part of the question was “your favorite downtown.” Once again, the responses varied from close to home “West Hartford” to New England cities “Boston” and “Portland” to US Cities “New York,” “Seattle,” “San Antonio” to foreign cities “Vancouver,” Amsterdam.”

Analysis: All of these choices have successful downtowns, defined by vibrant commercial, residential, community and entertainment components. The collected data exhibits that the attendees have an understanding of what typically defines a livable downtown. While these downtowns have many similarities, they also have unique architecture, culture, scale, and climatic conditions.

Bright Ideas: “Aesthetikos” is a Greek word pertaining to sensory perception. Aesthetics, in the English language, is a set of principles, or a view, that manifests itself through outward appearance or behavior. Philosopher George Santayana, lecturing at Harvard in 1891, speaks on aesthetics as a matter of pronouncing judgments according to our personal character, personal perceptions, enthusiasm and emotional state. (Bevlin 1991). We all develop personal aesthetics that guide our decision making as we mature. Our aesthetics are extremely powerful. They influence the choices we make in life from our clothing, cars, partners and vacations, to our choice in charitable giving or beliefs in community development. Although personal aesthetics can vary substantially, Nelessen’s UPS clearly shows the areas where, as a community, there is a consistent response. These areas included land use decisions related to streetscape and other livable communities values. Communities can also develop shared aesthetics that can guide future development. Those aesthetics do influence how communities design their own environments. The power of good design can add value to communities. The design process can help bring the community together with a focus on creating a cohesive whole. Good design can create economic, recreational, residential, and/or educational areas within a community. Overall, if design, with its inclusive processes and diverse but synergetic disciplines, is used as a conduit for change, growth and development the value of a community in most instances increases. As a community moves forward with any type of development project, it would be in their best interest to have their community aesthetics solidified and clearly stated. Well-defined and accepted community aesthetics provide a resource guide when design choices are made.

3.3 If you had to describe your Town to someone from across the country, how would you describe your Town?

There is a diversity of towns in Central Connecticut and likewise there was a variety of ways the respondents described their towns. Terms used were “population density,” “location related to highways,” “diversity,” “politics,” and “economic development.” For example, Newington was described as “well located, affordable range of housing, nationally recognized recreation program, schools, something for everyone” while Glastonbury was described as “great location, river/farmland, small town feel, nice land/vistas, schools, historic preservation district.”

Analysis: One of the more common terms the respondents used was “diversity.” This term diversity could be referencing economic, race, living style, and/or an industrial base. Furthermore, all the terms that were commonly used by the respondents could be divided into four categories: Positive, Negative, Potential, and Working At It. The specific terms and phrases used are shown in Table 1.

Positive	Negative	Potential	Working at It
Good Schools	Confused	Develop Financial Districts	Transition
Parks	No Sidewalks	Viable Mix of Communities	Employment Center
Better Than You Think	Needs to Reinvent Themselves		Town Center Needs Work
Typical New England			Loss of Farms – Changes Rural Character
Character			
Availability of Housing			

Table 1. Common Terms Used Describe Your Town

3.4 What makes a community livable?

The phrase and words the respondents used to describe a livable community fit into several categories: Pedestrian Friendly (walkable, green spaces, pedestrian friendly, sidewalks, and relationship to town); Ability to Live, Work, and Play in Same Place; Security/Community Services; Education; Transportation; and Character. The frequency that these terms were used is shown in Figure 3. Respondents also used more abstract and less specific responses to describe a livable community. These included “comfortable,” “wholeness,” “residents who want to be there” (i.e., pride), “exciting,” and “healthy.”

Analysis: Many of the favorite downtowns given by respondents (see 3.2) have these characteristics listed above. The respondents understand what a livable community is and made choices accordingly both in reference to their favorite downtown and their own desires when identifying characteristics of a livable community. Interestingly, the respondents also identified characteristics that would be exemplified through community aesthetics.

Characteristics that fall under the categories of Character and Pedestrian Friendly were both personal opinions exemplifying, first, what respondents believe to be beneficial when creating beauty, and second, a certain style they believe to be important. The other characteristics can be argued as beneficial too, but are more directly related to the respondents’ knowledge or perception of the towns’ economics, safety and services. The importance of community aesthetics and the strong desire to relate them to their own lives and beliefs should be seen as instrumental in creating citizen participation.

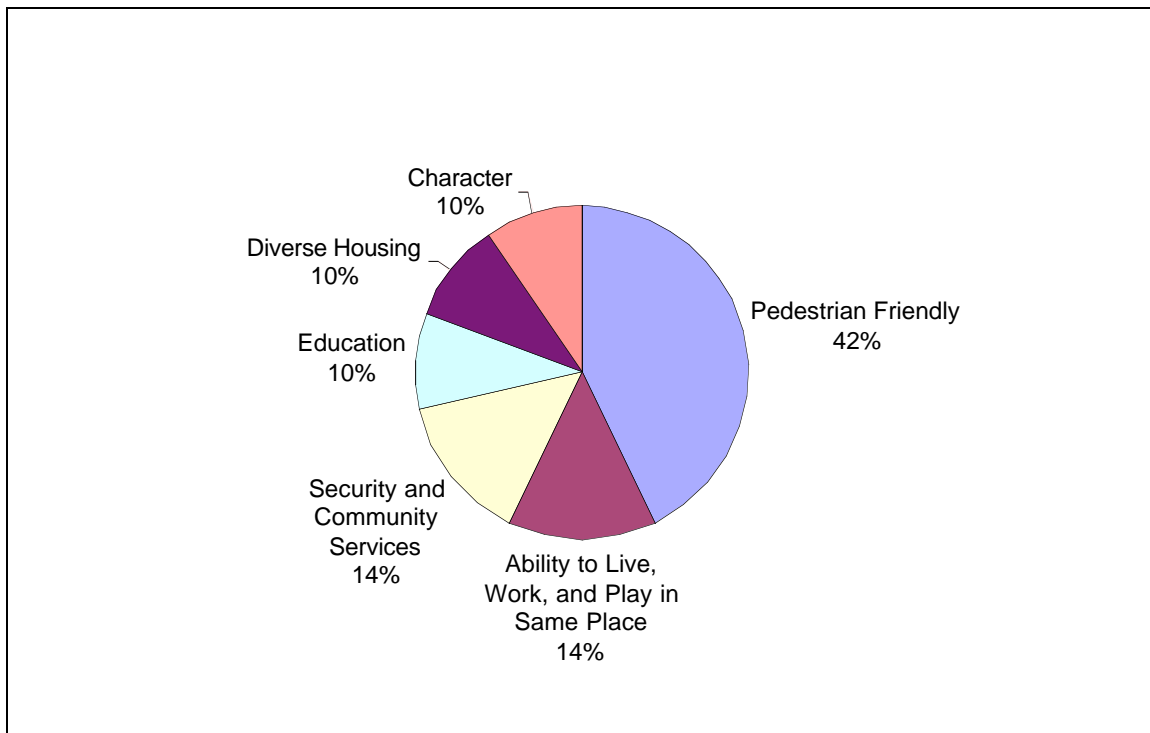


Figure 3. Terms Used to Describe Livable Communities

3.5 Is there an ideal livable community? Where?

The responses to the question “Is there an ideal livable community?” varied from cities such as “Portland, ME;” “Boston,” “Cambridge,” “New York City,” “Philadelphia,” “San Diego,” “Vancouver,” “European Cities” to “University Towns.” Also mentioned were less specific answers such as “every town in Connecticut is ideal for someone” to “no place is perfect” to “my town” to “in my mind.”

Analysis: Embedded in this question is the word “ideal.” 60% of the respondents did provide answers they believed to be an ideal livable community. As stated above, many of the answers are urban environments ranging from very large cities, such as New York City to smaller cities with a highly influential force, such as a University town. These respondents, again, chose places that contained many of the livable community elements previously mentioned in this report. Their answers further support the desire and need for future environments developed around livable community principles.

Bright Ideas: Other answers such as: “no place is perfect;” “is there such a place?” and “in my mind;” are answers that reflect personal beliefs about the word *ideal*; and/or a focused opinion that an ideal community can never exist. These answers are important to our conversation on livable communities. As a community moves forward, the type of language it uses, when trying to engage its citizenry, should be as inclusive as possible. Language that promotes clarity or control creates questions or negative responses. Every community would like to remain unique as they incorporate the various livable community elements. Therefore, a community should ask “What makes our community unique?” and then “How can we improve it?”

3.6 What makes one livable community different from the other?

Consistent with the responses to Question 3.2 (Favorite Town, Place, and Downtown) where the responses ranged from large cities to rural towns, there were a variety of characteristics given that would make one livable community different from another. These included:

- Architectural Character
- Cultural Character
- Diversity of Population
- Size
- Mass Transit
- Access to Water (i.e., Coastal Areas)
- Open Spaces
- Topography and Climate
- Community Spirit and Participation

As one participant stated, “Communities should be different.”

Analysis: This point about each community being unique is very important. It again demonstrates that the “one size fits all” or “cookie cutter mold” will likely lead to a community being less livable rather than achieving the objective of being more livable. The above answers reflect an analysis of environmental context. Each town analyzed did have unique elements. Identifying these elements should be at the beginning of the process as a community asks itself how it can become more livable.

3.7 Is your community livable?

About 50% of the attendees think their town is livable with an additional 30% feeling that their town is making progress but is not quite there. Only 20% of the respondents did not believe their town was livable. The breakdown of the results is also shown in Figure 4.

Analysis: The results indicate that the workshop attendees were very positive about the town they were representing. As a whole, the results exhibit that 66% (data from Figure 2) believe that New England and Connecticut are livable or becoming more livable.

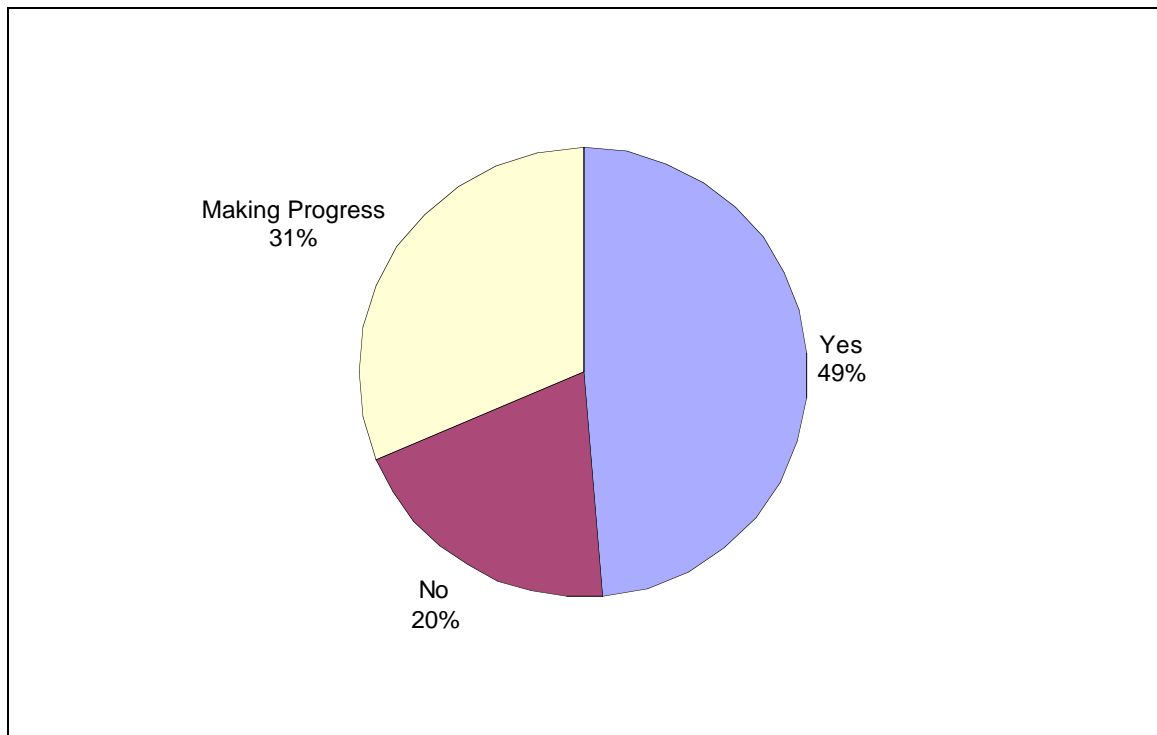


Figure 4. Responses to "Is your community livable?"

3.8 What specifically does your Town/City need to make it livable?

The responses to what their Towns needed to make them more livable were quite varied dependent on the Town that the attendee was representing. The needs that were stated most frequently were:

- Better education
- Mix of affordable residential housing
- Mix of residential and commercial uses
- Change of zoning codes
- Mass transportation
- Connections between towns
- Pedestrian friendly (pedestrian linkages, more sidewalks, and bike paths)
- Town center (define town center, bringing people back to the town, and improve village centers)

Other needs stated were:

- More local opportunities for work
- Visioning with community (community involvement)
- Implement the vision
- More neighborhood based services
- Reuse unused buildings
- Infrastructure (sewer/water)
- Open space

Analysis: To better understand how a Town could implement these needs, we grouped the ideas into broader categories. The categories were then assigned to the following: 1. Initiatives that Towns could accomplish on their own; and 2. Initiatives that require regional (i.e., multi-town) and/or State support (see Table 2). Needs that could be accomplished solely by a Town, but for which implementation would be accelerated by state funding, are noted by an asterisk.

Towns Can Accomplish on Their Own	Regional or State Support Required
Better Education*	Mass Transportation
Zoning changes to promote mix use and mix residential housing	Connections between Towns
Pedestrian Friendly Initiatives*	
Define / Improve Town Center*	
More local opportunities for work	
Implement community's vision	
More neighborhood based services*	
Reuse of unused buildings*	
Infrastructure*	
Open space*	

Table 2. Needs Identified to Make Their Town More Livable

Bright Ideas: As Towns begin their process of identifying needs that can help make their community more livable and then attempt implementation; we have provided some preliminary suggestions Towns should follow. (State funding would likely decrease the time required to implement many of these initiatives, but it is interesting to note that the Towns themselves, without the need for regional or State involvement, can accomplish the majority of these needs.)

- Pedestrian friendly initiatives require funds for developing and implementing a strategic plan. Even if State funding is not available or is limited to projects that have specific scope, Towns, if they have not already done so, need to start the discussion about sidewalk connections that will provide the most impact. In many cases, these are not the easiest sidewalks to construct. Creative and innovative thinking on how to make these difficult connections will provide significantly more benefit than adding sidewalks that are easy to construct but do not enhance the walkability of a Town. Charrettes are one technique of getting citizen involvement when developing creative ideas to make a Town more pedestrian friendly.
- A number of the needs such as the mix of residential / commercial uses, mix of residential housing options, more local opportunities for work, and reuse of unused buildings can be promoted through changes in zoning, permitting, and tax regulations. Examples of local or regional towns or cities that have successfully addressed these issues at various levels are West Hartford, Hartford, Essex (CT) and Katonah (NY).
- Improvement of town centers can also be encouraged through revised zoning regulations that promote quality design aesthetics, small-scale development, and the reuse of appropriate existing structures. In addition, town governments can promote and encourage village center improvements through incentives such as tax breaks and other programs for developers and current property owners.
- A number of bright ideas related to livable communities design, including transit oriented design principles and ideas to improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and connections are found on the Capitol Region Council of Governments web site—www.crcog.org. Examples are:
 1. www.crcog.org/community_dev/livable_toolkit.html
The **Livable Communities Toolkit: A Best Practices Manual for Metropolitan Regions** presents practical approaches to regional and local development. The toolkit has two sections: A Region in Balance and Tools for Towns. **A Region in Balance** describes actions taken by other regions around the country to encourage better growth and provides some steps we might take toward a broader statewide approach to building balanced, livable communities. **Tools for Towns** covers eight development topics from agricultural lands preservation to rethinking zoning. Also available from CRCOG are **Smart Growth Planning and Zoning Recommendations**. These recommendations are based on the results of Visual Preference Surveys and Community Workshops, and were prepared for CRCOG by A. Nelessen Associates, Inc. CRCOG's livable communities project also produced a 12-minute video "**Together We Can Grow Better**," which introduces topics associated with growth and livable communities. The final work product of this project was a **Regional Development Issues Survey**. This brief report presents the results of a survey on growth/conservation issues and policies conducted by the UConn Center for Survey Research and Analysis. It provides insight into the views of the region's citizens.
 2. For information on **Pedestrian, Bicycle and Livable Communities** see www.crcog.org/publications/transportation.html
 3. For information on **Transit Oriented Development (TOD) principles** see www.crcog.org/publications/community_dev.html

4. The publications page of the CRCOG website (www.crcog.org) contains many other documents relevant to municipal planning and community design, and the website is regularly updated with information on current projects.
 5. A preliminary design resource list containing useful website references was developed for the June 2007 Community Design workshops and has been expanded upon in *Appendix B* of this report.
- The State of Connecticut is beginning to develop capacity to address livable community issues through the newly-created office of responsible growth. For more information, see http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2990&q=385462&opmNav_GID=1807

3.9 What elements of a livable community do you wish your Town/City had?

Many of the wishes given by the workshop attendees were similar to the needs listed in the previous question. They include:

- Mix use in downtown
- Pedestrian friendly
- More local work opportunities
- Bike paths
- Reuse of unused buildings
- Infrastructure
- Improve village centers
- Implement community's vision

There were also several new ideas that were given as wishes. These were centralized services (i.e., "why should a community have all services if they are available regionally?"), "community pride," and "racial diversity."

Analysis: With regard to shared services, there appears to be a desire for Towns to want their own identity even when undertaking the development of a communal or regional identity. If communities can successfully balance these two desires, shared services can provide a win-win situation. For example, the goals and benefits of service sharing are:

1. Improved consistency;
2. Reduced cost;
3. Increased efficiency; and
4. Better services

During the 2007 regular session, the General Assembly passed Public Act 07-239, providing \$8.6 million in incentive grants to regional planning organizations for projects that involve shared services. This program offers an excellent opportunity for CRCOG member communities to obtain grant funding for a wide variety of projects. CRCOG has applied for a portion of those funds, for projects dealing with a wide range of topics, including information technology, animal control, public safety, public works, and recreational trails maintenance. A top CRCOG priority for the 2008 session of the Connecticut General Assembly legislative session is to advocate for continued funding of this incentive grant program.

For more information on CRCOG's service sharing initiative, see:

http://www.crcog.org/service_sharing/index.html#Documents

3.10 What aspects of your Town/City do you wish you could change?

In many instances, the changes desired for their community are consistent with the needs listed to make their Town/City more livable and the elements the attendees wished that their Town/City had. These common elements are:

- Mix use in downtown
- Visioning with community input
- Bike paths
- Improve town center (Improving town centers was a frequent response for Questions 8 through 10 of the questionnaire).

Analysis: The emphasis on change was related to the “elimination of strip malls,” while the wishes were “changing character of commercial streets”; “high end shops”; “specialty/local shops”; “downtown redevelopment”; and “changing building/street relationship.” Also, updating existing architecture or promoting innovative architecture was a common need, wish, and/or change expressed. Further study is necessary to cull the deeper thought behind this latter comment since, on first look, “promoting innovative architecture” seems counter to earlier participant responses relating to architectural style and the sense of place and aesthetics.

The new ideas for changes to your Town/City were:

- Willingness to demand “better”
- Leadership
- Traffic
- Tax structure
- Politics (i.e., difficulty of getting things done)
- Geography

Analysis: Changes such as “tax structure” and the “determination of implementing livable design elements” are consistent with the “Bright Ideas” given in Section 3.8.

3.11 Why would changing these things make the Town/City more livable?

Many of the responses were related to improving the quality of life. The phrases used were:

- Improve health
- Enhance sense of community
- Reduce stress
- Improve safety
- Improve tolerance
- Improve image
- Reduce concentration of poverty
- Preserve quality of life
- Relate better to nature.

Other responses were similar to the answers given to the questions about the needs, wishes, and changes desired to make their community more livable. It was thought that these changes would provide the following benefits:

- Make moving around easier
- Attract business
- Bring people downtown
- Increase diversity
- More walkable town
- More green spaces
- Increase investment
- Better economic opportunities
- More focus on local flavor.

Analysis: All of these responses are positive. The respondents all believe that changing a community into a more livable community would bring about positive attitudes or feelings and develop positive attributes. The respondents believe that creating a more livable community is better for their economy, health, mobility, security and the overall cultural environment. It is important to note that some answers are related to personal aesthetics and community aesthetics, while others are related to economics and safety. The respondents believe that the above answers can bring beauty and comfort to their own lives as well as the community itself. Overall, they value a better designed, more diverse, and more equitable place.

3.12 What things can't be changed?

Taking the idea from one of the respondents that “anything can be overcome,” the responses were divided into items that could be changed, even if it required a fundamental paradigm change or enabling legislation, and those characteristics that are controlled by nature or have historical significance (see Table 3).

Items That Can Be Changed	Items That Can Not Be Changed
State Roads	Geography
Fear of Lower Property Values	Weather
Lack of Citizen Participation	CT River Flood Plains
CT Opposition to Regionalism	Historic Sites
Tax Structure	Human Nature
Lack of Funding	
Crime	
Lack of Time	
Municipal Boundaries (i.e., Town/Cities working together)	

Table 3. Items Identified by Respondents That Cannot Be Changed

Bright Ideas: The following are some preliminary ideas on ways of overcoming the hurdles in order to implement the items that were identified as “Things That Can’t Be Changed.” It is understood that this will not be a simple task because in many cases Town/Cities have been frustrated for many years in trying to overcome these obstacles.

- **State Roads:** Most Town “Main Streets” are State roads which are the jurisdiction of the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Historically, the role of most DOT’s has been to move vehicles safely from one place to another. Often, this has resulted in road configurations that are not pedestrian friendly or reflective of the image that a community wants for its downtown. Slowly, this is changing. Federal transportation legislation requires that “context sensitive design” be applied when federal funds are used in road improvements and reconstruction, meaning design that fits with the character of the neighborhoods in which a road is located. Many states have begun to take a more progressive stance with respect to the design of State Highways/Main Streets and such guidelines could be instituted in Connecticut. One excellent example is the Massachusetts Highway Department *Project Development & Design Guide* (see http://www.vhb.com/mhdGuide/mhd_GuideBook.asp)

Through the State Traffic Commission (STC) permit process, municipalities do have an opportunity to comment on projects large enough to require STC approval. One bright idea would be for towns to take advantage of these opportunities to comment, and make sure that municipal comments note the local context of the roadway improvements, and the need for walkability, etc.

A second bright idea would be for the legislature to adopt a “complete streets” policy, which requires that all road projects design for all users. Specifically, a complete street is defined as a street that works for motorists, for bus riders, for bicyclists, and for pedestrians, including people with disabilities. A complete streets policy is aimed at producing roads that are safe and convenient for all users.

- **Fear of Lower Property Values:** One aspect of “value added design” is enhancement of urban infrastructure. A study by Weinberger (2000) (see attached list of references) for Santa Clara, California, finds higher rents for commercial properties within a half mile of light-rail stations (after adjusting for other determinants of rent), implying these properties were worth more. Weinberger also found benefits accruing to nearby properties for transit systems that had “matured”. Cohen and Morrison Paul (2007) found increased property values in the manufacturing sector in states with improved highways and airports. The manufacturing sector is still strong in Greater Hartford, in particular in the East Hartford area. So “value added design” in the form of enhancements to highways, roads, as well as transit-oriented development, should lead to additional “value” in the region.
- **Lack of Citizen Partnership:** Messages communicating the ‘importance of being an active citizen bringing more meaning and pleasure to one’s life’ should be utilized when building citizen participation. Meaning and pleasure are two very important aspects of personal and communal aesthetics. Virginia Postrel, author of *The Substance of Style*, believes we have entered the “Age of Aesthetics.” She states we are living in a time where beauty and style are found everywhere. Every product, every place, and every experience now is supposed to embed some type of aesthetic. Daniel Pink’s book *A Whole New Mind* also highlights the “Age of Aesthetics” and places great importance on the need for meaningful work and beautifully designed products, places, and experiences.

Towns need to understand how marketing and design can produce campaigns around the concept of 'getting involved,' 'making a difference,' and 'being part of the change.' The idea of 'Participation' should become an essential activity that residents will desire to do because it will bring meaningful change and also make them feel good. Once people become more involved, traditional discussion groups, public forums, and/or virtual social networking circles should be used to generate more general participation or specific participation around an issue.

- *Tax Structure:* The most well-known and well-respected economic study on this issue was done by Oates and Schwab (1997) for the City of Pittsburgh (see attached list of references). They found that property tax reform in Pittsburgh that was intended to encourage development led to a significant increase in building activity in the city. There is reason to believe that similar outcomes would prevail in other urban areas throughout the country, based on the incentive structure of property tax reform. Kashian et. al. (2007) say that improper use of property tax reform can actually lower property values, based on their assessment of Wisconsin.
- *Lack of Funding:* With a Town's focus on the day-to-day fundamentals such as snowplowing and school buses, the complete implementation of livable communities' ideas is very difficult. Since these ideas include pedestrian enhancements; parking location and availability; streetscape enhancements; façade improvements; placement of uses and connections to other Towns or systems; most projects, grants, or state monies are targeted to specific tasks such as sidewalks connecting point A and B rather than link Area A to Area B. Pedestrian enhancements were popular in the 1990's, but were limited to the central business district and were not equitably distributed to all Towns. The suburban towns with significant distances between, say, Town Hall and the nearest stores, have a difficult time providing funding for such "luxuries." For this reason, we recommend that CRCOG work toward establishing Livable Communities Grant legislation and funding which would enable towns to fund improvements that focus specifically on what the Town's themselves define as needs to create a more livable community.

In addition, we recommend that local Chambers of Commerce, other civic organizations, and potential applicants for economic development grants that the municipalities might not otherwise qualify for be identified to help the Towns implement their vision. For this reason, we recommend that CRCOG work toward establishing Livable Communities Grant legislation and funding which would enable towns to fund improvements that focus specifically on what the Town's themselves define as needs to create a more livable community. Perhaps such a program could be funded through a 50/50 state/local match.

- *Lack of Time:* If this was a resource issue, we recommend that Towns establish a Design Committee. Several Capitol Region Communities have established Design Review Committees and Boards, which can serve as models for other towns. Information on these municipal efforts is available through CRCOG. Typically, the Design Committee should be comprised of 8 to 12 volunteer residents that either have expertise in community design (or other design fields) or persons that are extremely interested in the being part of the process. The Town should also consider if a Town official should be on the committee or if the Design Committee should be a sub set of the Planning and Zoning Committee. The Design Committee should reach out to organizations such as CRCOG and the CID for help in researching, analyzing, and implementing livable community design.

- *Municipal Boundaries:* Sharing information on what constitutes good community design, and strategies for implementing this design, is the first step in dissolving individual town approaches. Page 15 of this report provides information on resources already available on this topic through CROCOG and the State of Connecticut. Page 19 discusses some approaches related to the design, reconstruction and use of roads that can help create more livable communities. In the future, there may be interest and opportunity for multiple communities to join together to share professional services that can support better community design. CROCOG has an ongoing Shared Services Initiative that could help communities explore this idea. There may also be a role for the University of Hartford Center for Integrated Design in these new inter-municipal approaches to community design.

Until then, Phase II of this project can help towns reach beyond individual municipal boundaries to implement better design. Phase II will build on the assessment of current resources and interest in livable community design to list and evaluate a range of options for building livable community design capacity in the region. CROCOG and CID will work to define those structures and strategies that would advance the design of more livable communities in the region. A range of options for livable community design support could extend from a “virtual community of collaboration,” using both a website and face-to-face meetings to share ideas, practices and project information to more formalized structures to support livable community design. While it is not possible to anticipate the results of this process, some of the toolkit items likely to be included in a Phase II strategy for implementation would be: a dedicated website for livable community design support showing local and other successful examples of design projects; a set of workshop offerings on key aspects of livable community design for municipalities in the region; planning and design charettes for selected sites; and simulation software for “before” and “after” designs. In summary, Phase II will produce a resource digest of what is known about livable community design support, the needs and preferences of a variety of players, and preferred options for supporting and accelerating the use of livable community design approaches in the Capitol Region.

3.13 What do you need to accomplish the changes, which make your Town/City more livable?

The respondents focused on the frustration relating to government and government officials inconsistent public and financial support.

Analysis: Overall, one idea is clear regardless of what role in the community the respondents have. There is a need to establish a local-based community supported vision of the downtown area and town as a whole. Then implementing that vision is necessary. It is interesting to note that at no time did the respondents feel that the Town Plans of Conservation and Development (which are required by state statute) met the requirements of the vision identified as part of this discussion.

The second most important need is funding. Many times over the last 30+ years, municipalities have created plans with vision, but have been unable to find funding to implement them. This disappointment has led to disaffection amongst the public and is seen as a lack of leadership. Amongst government officials, past disappointments have led to diverting attention toward more certain projects.

The lesson to be learned from this discussion is that unless funding can be secured while there is interest and a willingness to commit to the work that needs to be done, the idea of livable communities will be one more trend, which sounded good on paper.

Bright Ideas: We recommend that the next phase of this project should include guidelines to change existing legislation; create new legislation; and expand the scope and kinds of applicants that might be eligible for non-municipal grants. Hopefully, these resources will result in monies that can be used to implement each individual town’s definition of what they need to make their community more livable.

3.14 Do you have resources in place to ensure that your vision can be accomplished?

The resources available vary considerably from town to town and the survey did not provide specific information to accurately assess the status of each of the 29 cities and towns on resources that they have to accomplish the goal of making their town more livable.

Analysis: In general, the survey results indicated that the resources available were town staff, some public support, geographic information system (GIS), and professional associations. From an overall analysis of the responses to the survey, it appears that towns value their “people resources” but that they may not necessarily have enough “people resources” to accomplish their goal of being a more livable community in a timely manner.

A more detailed analysis of the specific resources is discussed in the next section.

3.15 What are those resources?

The responses highlighted both what resources the town currently feels are supportive in building for the future, but they also highlighted what town’s felt they needed. Positive responses from Waterbury, West Hartford and South Windsor pointed to resources such as hospitals, universities, newspapers, and churches as being able to build community and keep neighborhoods together. In Harwinton, it was noted that “community circles” were being used to create dialogue. Some towns focused on a specific municipal improvement in connection to an adjacent town, such as Bolton’s water and sewer upgrades, for creating better livable communities. Overall, most respondents noted good town officials and staff, the use of GIS, and the importance of a plan/vision with a corresponding successful process as important resources they already have in place.

Interestingly, there was also a noted desire for “better politicians,” “more people to follow through,” “not enough public involvement in the process,” “lack of enough educated people,” and “overall not enough money to generate the resources needed.”

Analysis: Overall the respondents did identify resources, large or small, which they felt were important to the process of building livable communities. Many felt their community was doing a fair to good job working towards a better future. If they did not feel this way, most of the respondents would have answered negatively or just answered “none.” But they did not. The list of resources gathered function as a barometer, indicating that most, if not all, the communities felt they have a good foundation for building livable communities.

The responses noting the need for more public involvement in the process, better politicians, more education and more money overall should not be seen as negative. These types of responses point to the potentiality of a community. The respondents identified what they felt was not working by asking for more of what they felt would successfully build a better livable community.

Bright Ideas: A town should use its existing resources as a catalyst for creating education and change. Resources such as schools, chamber of commerce, community organizations, party affiliations, professional organizations, libraries, post offices, town hall, transfer stations, churches, hospitals, universities, businesses and other resources that engage people to congregate should be used to build a coalition of involvement and education. Discussion groups, survey questions on the web, and/or surveys distributed through the resource network can help to engage people that have not been engaged before. Survey results can be disseminated at town meetings, on public access TV and/or the web. Towns should conduct this type of information gathering and distribution if they believe public involvement and education is imperative and important to a town’s measure of livability.

CRCOG has conducted livability surveys in the past measuring the urban, suburban, and rural models. Since local government is important in Connecticut, each town should consider conducting their own survey to obtain specific data related to their town.

The Responsible Growth Interagency Steering Council of the Connecticut’s Office of Responsible Growth (created in October of 2006) should consider creating an overall livability survey with additional amendments from the individual towns if they desire. An overall state survey would build a database measuring the state’s livability and sustainability town-by-town, region-by-region. If done on a consistent basis, it could provide comprehensive data for the future of Connecticut towns.

3.16 What else do you need to accomplish this vision?

Many diverse responses were given for what else is needed to accomplish your town's vision. It is not surprising that "money" was the most frequent response to this question.

Analysis: Similar to the response to Question 8 (see 3.8), we divided the resource needs into two categories. Categories are "Items the towns could accomplish on their own" and "Items that need regional/state support." In two cases (enlightened leadership and more time to implement), the items are listed in both categories because they are pertinent to both towns and the state. The resource needs are presented in Table 4.

Towns Can Accomplish on Their Own	Regional or State Support Required
More planning, engineering, and technical support	Financial Assistance
Vision	Disconnect between Local, Regional, and State Governments
Implementation of the Vision	Better Connections Between People in Governments and Between Towns (relationship between master plans of neighboring towns)
Implementation of Master Plan	Regional Planning
Economic Development Personnel	Education (state support)
More Volunteers	Impact Fees (enabling legislation)
Create Professional Staff in Local Government	Enlightened Leadership & Leadership Training
Address Senior Life Without a Car	More Time to Implement (i.e., change of administration hampers efforts to implement change)
Multiuse Development	
Tax Rate	Tax Structure
Historic Preservation	
Enlightened Leadership & Leadership Training	
More Time to Implement (i.e., change of administration hampers efforts to implement change)	

Table 4. Resources Needed to Accomplish Town's Vision

Bright Ideas:

- Because of the small size and limited budgets of many of the towns, it is difficult to justify the expense of investing in additional staff members skilled in livable design. This need could be much better met by a regional design center or committee that can support the town's vision. In this way, professional staff could be requested as needed to assist the town with planning, engineering, technical support, economic development, and implementing their vision.
- In some situations, the Towns might need help in developing a vision that has buy-in from all of its constituents. A regional design center or other organization could also help fill this role by having a "traveling" charrette that brings town officials, town staff, and community members together to develop a unified vision for their town.
- Develop more efficient system for state funding of town's vision. (See section 3.12 Lack of Funding and Section 3.13 for further details)

3.17 Any more thoughts?

The final thoughts given by attendees are that more events like the "Bright Ideas Workshop" would be helpful in helping towns to become more livable. Also, there appears to be desire to have more collaboration between Universities and Towns.

Bright Ideas: The Center for Integrated Design welcomes opportunities to work with surrounding communities and organizations to assist them in reaching their goals. Engaging in further studies, dialogue and helping to develop recommendations regarding the built and visual environment is at the core of the mission of the CID.

Section 4.0 Compilation of Data for the Community Information Survey

What Town are you going to talk about today?

Hartford (7); South Windsor (6); Simsbury (5); East Granby (4); East Hartford (3); Vernon (3); Bloomfield (2); Tolland (2); West Hartford (2); Windsor (2); Windsor (2); Andover (1); Avon (1); Bristol (1); Bolton (1); Canton (1); Enfield (1); Glastonbury (1); Granby (1); Harwinton (1); Mansfield (1); Manchester (1); Norwich (1); Waterbury (1); Wethersfield (1).

What is your favorite Town? / Place? / Downtown?

Favorite Town: Amsterdam (3); "My Town"(3); Paris (3); Old Saybrook (2); Simsbury (2); New Canaan; Parkman, Ohio; Stonington Village; Burlington, VT; Renslerville, NY; Manchester; Madison; Norwich; West Hartford; Munich, Germany; Boston; Philadelphia; Newport, RI; Collinsville; Ann, MD; Lake Placid, NY; Venice, Italy; Zurmort, Switzerland; Wickord, RI; Seattle; Andover; Avon; "Our Town"; Old Lyme; Ogonquit, ME; Nantucket.

Place: Pocahontas Co., WV; Montreal, Canada; Chateau, MA; Low Country, SC; Riverside Park, CO; Watch Hill, RI; "Center"; "All of CT"; "Downtown"; Elizabeth Park (2); Cascades, WA; Mohegan Island, ME; Old Main Street, South Windsor; Miami, FL; "Upstate NY"; Barbados; St. Lucia; Florida; Amsterdam; Venice, Italy; Bermuda; Nantucket; New Hampshire.

Downtown: West Hartford (3); "New England (2)"; Portland, ME (2); Amsterdam; Bolton; Pittsburgh; Seattle; Burlington, VT; Boston (2); NYC (2); San Antonio, TX; Vancouver; Newport, RI; Essex.

If you had to describe your Town to someone from across the country, how would you describe your Town?

AVON: Small Town; Government is Accountable; Rural Parts; "Not So Defined Parts"; "Not So Many Politics."

CANTON: Dem/Rep Not Defined; Eclectic; Economically Diverse; Natural Resources—Farmington River;

GLASTONBURY: Great Location!; River/Farmland—still has small town feel; Nice Land/Vistas; Schools; Historic Preservation District.

BLOOMFIELD: Diversity (Economics, Race, Living Style, Industrial Base).

GRANBY: Open Space; Quality Town Center.

NEWINGTON: Well Located—Highways 84/9/91/5/15; Housing Styles; Affordable Range of Housing; Nationally Recognized Recreation Program; Schools; Something for Everyone.

ENFIELD: Blue Collar; Some Parts Community Dreads; Regional Employment Center (Mall/Retail/Industrial); Would be Great Rail Lines have Come Through; Need to Plan Ahead to Control Future.

POSITIVE: Good Schools; Parks; "Better than you Think"; Typical New England; Good Schools; Character; Availability of Housing.

NEGATIVE: Reinvent Themselves; Confused; No Sidewalks; In-hospitable to the Wealthy.

POTENTIAL: Develop Financial Districts; Viable Mix of Communities.

WORKING AT IT: Transition; Employment Center; Town Center Needs Work; Loss of Farms-Changes Rural Character.

What makes a community livable?

Walkable (3); Education (2); Green Spaces/Parks (2); Pedestrian Friendly (2); Transportation (2); Sidewalks (1); Diverse Affordable Housing; Life Cycle Housing Opportunities; Relationship to Town Center; Rural Character; Town Character; Ability to Live/Work/Play in the Same Place; Sense of Security; Sense of Community; Low Taxes; Services; Amenities; Supermarkets.

Abstract/Less Specific Responses: Comfortable; Wholeness; Places to go; Residents Who Want to be There; Exciting; Healthy; Safe; Things to Do.

Is there an ideal livable community? Where?

Day 1: San Diego; Cambridge, MA; Vancouver, Canada; Europe; “No Place is Perfect—Exists Only in Our Heads.”

Day 2: Niantic of the Past; European Cities; Portland, ME; Boston; Downtown Philadelphia; University Towns; “Is There Such a Place as the Perfect Place?”; “In Progress.”

Day 3: “NYC/Boston—But Urban Problems are Different”; “In My Mind”; Land/Quiet; “My Town—Quiet but close to stuff (NYC)”; “May be Age Specific”; “Every town in Connecticut is Ideal for Some one.”

GLASTONBURY: Education; Recreation; Access to Cultural Activities; Transportation; Retains Character and Identity.

BLOOMFIELD: Commercial Services; Recreation; Cultural Activities; Schools; Health Care; Employment.

GRANBY: Security (Safe—Leave Doors Open); Quiet; Comfortable—Neighbors Close but Not Too Close; Helpful.

NEWINGTON: Something Different to Everyone; Don’t need to go far to get What You Need/Want; Transportation.

ENFIELD: Amenities; Schools; Places to Go to by Quick Jump in the Car; Traditional Downtown vs. Mall—UGH!; Need to Slow Life Down.

What makes one livable community different from the other?

Architectural Character; Diversity of Population; Cultural Character; Climate; Unique Personalities/Characters (2); Open Spaces; Communities Should be DIFFERENT; Topography; Access to Water; Size; Mass Transit; Community Spirit; Citizen Participation.

Is your community livable?

Yes - 17

No - 7

Not Yet - 11

What specifically does your Town/City need to make it livable?

Better Education (3+); Mix of Residential Affordable Housing(3+); Change Zoning Codes (2); Connections Between Towns (2); Mass Transportation (2); More Sidewalks; Mix of Residential and Commercial; “Implement the Vision”; Define Town Center; Pedestrian Friendly/Sidewalks; Bringing People Back to the Town; More Local Opportunities for Work; Visioning with Community (Community Involvement); Bike Paths; More Neighborhood Based Services; Reuse Unused Buildings; Infrastructure (Sewer/Water); Open Space; Focus on the Little (Small) Things in Life; Pedestrian Linkages; Improve Village Centers.

What elements of a livable community do you wish your Town/City had?

Mass Transportation (3); Diverse Housing (2); Mixed Used (2); Employment; Incentives for Reuse, Vision; Change the Character of Commercial Streets; Higher end Shops; Specialty Shops/Local; Local Employment Downtown; Infrastructure; Affordable Housing; Downtown Redevelopment; Trolley to the Airport; Centralized Services; Bikes/Walks; Community Pride; Pedestrian Connection—To the River, Sound, City...etc.; Architectural Updates; Change Building/Street Relationship.

If the Service/Amenity is Missing in Town/Available Regionally?; If Not Available...Why Should Every Community Have Everything?; Racial Diversity; Bike Access—GET OUT OF THE CAR! PEDESTRIANS!

What aspects of your Town/City do you wish you could change?

Communication With Citizens; Willingness to Demand “Better”; Get Rid of “Strip Malls”; Need Bike Trails; Leadership; Location of Highways/Outlying Commercial Roads Affect Character; Geography; Traffic; Innovative Architecture; Diverse Housing Choices; Citizen Involvement; Tax Structure; Public Input; Politics and Difficulty of Getting Things Done.

Why would changing these things make the Town/City more livable?

Improve Quality of life; Improve Health; Enhance Sense of Community; Make Moving Around Easier; Reduce Stress; Improve Safety; Improve Tolerance; Attract Businesses; Bring People Downtown; Increase Diversity; Improve Image; Give Us What We Want; More Walkable; More People Walking Around; More Green Space; Reduce Concentration of Poverty; Preserve Quality of Life, Relate Better to Nature; Increase Investment; Better Economic Opportunities; More Focus on Local Flavor.

What things can't be changed?

Human Nature (Opinions) (2); “In Theory, Anything Can Be Changed” (2); Geography; Weather; CT River Flood Plain; State Roads (DOT); Historic Sites; Fear of Lower Property Values; Lack of Citizen Participation; CT Opposition to Regionalism; Tax Structure; Lack of Funding; Crime; Lack of Time; Municipal Boundaries; Geography; “No Limitations, Anything Can Be Overcome.”

What do you need to accomplish the changes, which make your Town/City more livable?

Money (3); Have a Vision (2); Time (2); New Sewer Systems; Citizen Participation; Regional Government; More Direction/Certainty/Clarity for Developers; Fix Zoning; Demand a Different City; Commitment; Community Support; Leadership; Sidewalks.

Do you have resources in place to ensure that your vision can be accomplished?

Staff; Some Public Support, but NOT Consistent; GIS.

What are those resources?

“Don't Have Resources Because They Do Not Have Support of People and Politics.”

What else do you need to accomplish this vision?

More Engineering/Planning/Technical Support; Vision; Implementation of Vision; Economic Development Personnel; More Time to Implement; Positive Case Studies; More Volunteers; Create a Better System for Going After State Money; Create Professional Staff in Local Government; Disconnect Between Local and Regional Government; State Leadership; Technical and Financial Assistance; Better Connections Between People in Government Between Towns; Implementation of Master Plans; Money (3).

How To Address Senior Life Without a Car: Local Food/Pharmacy/Post Office/ Accessibility/Foot Bus Assistance; Regional Planning; Multi-Use; Support at State Level for Education; Impact Fees (Enabling Legislation); Enlightened Leadership—Education and Participation of Members—Leadership Training; Adopt Unique Regulations/ Issues—Source and Extent of Power; Tax Structure; “All of the Above”; Historical Preservation.

Any more thoughts?

More Events Like This One; Collaboration Between Universities and Towns; Provide Funding for Downtown Revitalization (Money and Energy).

Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing Design Advisor

<http://www.designadvisor.org/>

This site serves as a tool, resource, idea bank, and step-by-step guide to design in affordable housing. It brings together experience and ideas from successful affordable housing projects all over the country, and the people who developed, designed and built them. The site is developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in cooperation with the American Institute of Architects, the Enterprise Foundation, The Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, The National Congress for Community Economic Development, and the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation. The site includes “Steps to Design Quality” and a “Design Considerations Checklist.”

Affordable Housing: Madison Area Community Land Trust

<http://www.affordablehome.org/about/index.html>

The Community Land Trust model helps keep housing affordable for future generations. Under the model Community Land Trust homeowners purchase their house but not the land (this lowers the purchase price). The land is leased from the land trust. When Community Land Trust homeowners sell their home, 75% of the appreciated value stays with the house, so it's more affordable for the next buyer. Madison Area Community Land Trust is located in Madison, WI.

Community Design

Bebbington, Anthony. (2007). “Social Dimensions of Rural Resource Sustainability.” Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, working paper.

The Congress for the New Urbanism

<http://cnu.org/>

The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) is the leading organization promoting walkable, neighborhood-based development as an alternative to sprawl. CNU takes a proactive, multi-disciplinary approach to restoring our communities. Members are the life of the organization—they are the planners, developers, architects, engineers, public officials, investors, and community activists who create and influence our built environment, transforming growth patterns from the inside out. Whether it's bringing restorative plans to hurricane-battered communities in the Gulf Coast, turning dying malls into vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods, or reconnecting isolated public housing projects to the surrounding fabric, new urbanists are providing leadership in community building.

CollegeTown at West End

<http://www.collegetownwe.com/home.htm>

A website resource that highlights a community development outside of Atlanta, Georgia, which emphasizes quality of life issues designed to promote and sustain upward mobility, increase productivity and create wealth. CollegeTown at West End features quality housing for rent and ownership for families with a broad range of incomes.

(2000). “Do States Optimize? Public Capital and Economic Growth.” *Annals of Regional Science*. August 2000a, 34(3), pp. 343-63.

Knaap, G.J. and D. Schmidt-Perkins. (2006). “Smart Growth in Maryland: Facing a New Reality”, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy working paper.

New Urbanism

<http://www.newurbanism.org/newurbanism/principles.html>

NewUrbanism.org was started in 1998, and has since grown to become a leading and well respected informational website promoting good urbanism, smart transportation, transit oriented development, and sustainability. NewUrbanism.org is independently owned and operated and has no connection to any other organization, corporation, or public entity. The site includes the principles of new urbanism, and SmartCode, a comprehensive form-based planning ordinance.

Postrel, Virginia. (2003). *The Age of Look and Feel*, Published by Harper Collins. Ms. Postrel comes to this subject from an economic, social and political background. A lot of what designers execute is not what the public wants. It is a new notion to get designers to think in terms of basic research, but a lot of important work in any field comes from pushing the envelope. Specific case studies clearly demonstrate that for small companies exceptional design is less costly than advertising and people are willing to pay more for the well-designed product or packaging solely based on appeal. Designers must consider what the value is to the audience or end-user.

(2000). "Public Capital and Economic Growth: Issues of Quantity, Finance, and Efficiency." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, January 2000b, 48(2), pp. 391-406.

Smart Growth Network

<http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/default.asp>

In 1996, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency joined with several non-profit and government organizations to form the Smart Growth Network (SGN). The Network was formed in response to increasing community concerns about the need for new ways to grow that boost the economy, protect the environment, and enhance community vitality. The Network's partners include environmental groups, historic preservation organizations, professional organizations, developers, real estate interests, and local and state governmental entities. The website includes a discussion of the principles of smart growth, with resource links on how to implement those principles. Free smart growth guides are available through the web site.

Connecticut Professional Organizations

Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)

Livable Communities Resources

http://www.crcog.org/community_dev/livable_toolkit.html

The Livable Communities Toolkit: A Best Practices Manual for Metropolitan Regions presents practical approaches to regional and local development. The toolkit has two sections: A Region in Balance and Tools for Towns. A Region in Balance describes actions taken by other regions around the country to encourage better growth and provides some steps we might take toward a broader statewide approach to building balanced, livable communities. Tools for Towns covers eight development topics from agricultural lands preservation to rethinking zoning.

Also available from CRCOG are Smart Growth Planning and Zoning Recommendations. These recommendations are based on the results of Visual Preference Surveys and Community Workshops, and were prepared for CRCOG by A. Nelessen Associates, Inc.

CRCOG's livable communities project also produced a 12-minute video "Together We Can Grow Better," which introduces topics associated with growth and livable communities. The final work product of this project was a Regional Development Issues Survey. This brief report presents the results of a survey on growth/conservation issues and policies conducted by the UConn Center for Survey Research and Analysis. It provides insight into the views of the region's citizens.

For information on Pedestrian, Bicycle and Livable Communities see www.crcog.org/publications/transportation.html

For information on Transit Oriented Development principles see www.crcog.org/publications/community_dev.html

The publications page of the CRCOG website (www.crcog.org) contains many other documents relevant to municipal planning and community design.

Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA)

<http://www.ccapa.org/>

This is the official website of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association. It contains the Chapter's quarterly newsletters, information on training opportunities on planning topics, and links to other sites dedicated to planning and community development issues.

The Connecticut Main Street Center

<http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/default.asp>

The Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) is the state's leading resource for cities and towns seeking to comprehensively revitalize their main street districts. It provides solutions to help Connecticut's main streets once more become thriving centers of commercial and social activity. The Connecticut Main Street Center helps communities analyze core issues and set attainable objectives. It provides education and training, resources and tools, and advocacy. Their organized yet flexible approach allows communities to identify and develop their unique assets in an integrated and comprehensive way. The Connecticut Main Street Center is sponsored by The Connecticut Light and Power Company and the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.

Town of Simsbury Guidelines for Community Design

http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/public_documents/simsburyCT_Downloads/community_design/DesignGu.pdf

This excellent publication presents guidelines for evaluating future development, which are a basis for interpreting design in the context of Simsbury's unique character. The guidelines are intended to stimulate creativity and, through the design review process, help the applicant pursue designs that complement, and are compatible with, the existing fabric of site and building design in Simsbury.

Professional Organizations

AIGA: the professional association for design

Sustainable Design Practices

http://sustainability.aiga.org/sus_resources/sus_about/sus_mission

The AIGA Center for Sustainable Design is dedicated to providing designers with practical information regarding sustainable business practice. Through case studies, interviews, answers and discourse the Center will encourage and support designers as they incorporate sustainable thinking into their professional lives.

Sustainability is a growing concern for many designers. Accordingly, it will be examined from a wide range of perspectives: from the nuts and bolts of daily studio life to the larger marketplace dynamics and global concerns within which designers operate. This will be accomplished primarily through the community website, conferences and an online forum.

American Institute of Architects

<http://www.aia.org/>

Since 1857, the AIA has represented the professional interests of America's architects. As AIA members, over 80,000 licensed architects, emerging professionals, and allied partners express their commitment to excellence in design and livability in our nation's buildings and communities. Members adhere to a code of ethics and professional conduct that assures the client, the public, and colleagues of an AIA-member architect's dedication to the highest standards in professional practice. For 150 years, members of the American Institute of Architects have worked with each other and their communities to create more valuable, healthy, secure, and sustainable buildings and cityscapes.

American Planning Association (APA)

<http://www.planning.org/>

This is the official website of the American Planning Association. It offers research, case studies, publications and news on a wide range of community planning topics. The website includes resources available to the public at large, and members only services. The Capitol Region Council of Governments subscribes to the APA Planners Advisory Service (PAS) and can assist CROG municipalities with research on specific topics through PAS.

American Society of Landscape Architects

<http://www.asla.org/>

Founded in 1899, the American Society of Landscape Architects is the national professional association representing landscape architects. Beginning with 11 original members, ASLA has grown to more than 16,200 members and 48 chapters, representing all 50 states, US territories, and 42 countries around the world. ASLA promotes the landscape architecture profession and advances the practice through advocacy, education, communication, and fellowship.

Regional Plan Association

<http://www.rpa.org/>

The Regional Plan Association (RPA) is an independent, not-for-profit regional planning organization that improves the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the 31-county New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning, and advocacy. For more than 80 years, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region's continued growth. RPA anticipates the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and mobilizes the region's civic, business, and government sectors to take action. This site includes a publications page, and information on current community design projects.

Green Design**American Institute of Architects Committee on the Environment**

http://www.aia.org/cote3_template.cfm?pagename=cote_default

The Committee on the Environment (COTE) works to advance, disseminate, and advocate—to the profession, the building industry, the academy, and the public—design practices that integrate built and natural systems and enhance both the design quality and environmental performance of the built environment.

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Connecticut Green Building Council

<http://www.ctgbc.org/>

The Connecticut Green Building Council is a non-profit 501(c3) organization that seeks to improve the quality of life in Connecticut through the promotion of intelligently designed and constructed high performance energy efficient buildings.

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