

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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AGENDA ITEM #2

TO: CRCOG REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: MARY ELLEN KOWALEWSKI, DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND PLANNING
SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE LAND USE CODE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION
DATE: JANUARY 11, 2012

At the January 19, 2012 Regional Planning Commission Meeting, the RPC will receive a presentation and participate in a discussion as stakeholders on the Sustainable Land Use Code Development Project. The model land use code development effort is a part of the larger Sustainable Knowledge Corridor project being undertaken by CRCOG stemming from the \$4.2 million Regional Sustainable Communities grant that CRCOG has received from HUD. Emily Moos, Senior Planner and Policy Analyst at CRCOG and project manager for this project, will provide an introductory presentation on the project. Three planners from Clarion Associates, the nationally acclaimed planning firm selected to lead this project, will present on the definition of sustainable codes and will engage in a discussion with commission members as stakeholders on key local sustainability issues, current local best sustainability practices in the Capitol Region and implementation issues.

Background Information on the Sustainable Land Use Code Development Project

Within the past three years, the Capitol Region Council of Governments has worked to create an entirely new initiative called Sustainable Capitol Region with the mission of developing and supporting integrated, regional approaches to planning, projects and investments that will promote vibrant, healthy communities, protected natural resources and open spaces, equitable access to opportunities and an economically competitive Capitol Region to serve all our citizens today, and in the future. This initiative has its roots in two major projects which produced two foundational documents for sustainability planning in the Capitol Region: Together We Can Grow Better: Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development, a result of a U.S. EPA Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Grant and Growing Economy, Shrinking Emissions, A Transit Oriented Future for Connecticut's Capitol Region, a result of the 2009 Redesigning the Edgeless City Course in the Capitol Region run by Regional Plan Association and Lincoln Institute for Land Policy. The report can be found at:

- [Together We Can Grow Better: Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development](http://www.crcog.org/publications/CommDevDocs/Sustainable%20Communities/EPA_SG_Guidelines_Finalism.pdf)
(http://www.crcog.org/publications/CommDevDocs/Sustainable%20Communities/EPA_SG_Guidelines_Finalism.pdf)
- [Growing Economy, Shrinking Emissions, A Transit Oriented Future for Connecticut's Capitol Region](http://www.crcog.org/publications/CommDevDocs/Sustainable%20Communities/GrowingEconomyShrinkingEmissions100324.pdf)
(<http://www.crcog.org/publications/CommDevDocs/Sustainable%20Communities/GrowingEconomyShrinkingEmissions100324.pdf>)

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Together, these reports demonstrate both the guidance to communities on how to grow sustainably and the regulatory challenges to sustainable development facing communities in the Capitol Region. For example, the Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development show communities the types of innovative site location, neighborhood design and building techniques that conserve land, lower carbon emissions, reduce both household and transportation energy use and create vibrant, livable communities; data in the Growing Economy, Shrinking Emissions report highlight the gaps, specifically along proposed and potential transit corridors, in regulatory frameworks which will allow for more sustainable development practices including transit oriented development.

The data present the pressing regional needs and opportunities to achieve a more sustainable development pattern in the Capitol Region. The guidelines highlight the most effective ways to fulfill these needs and leverage these opportunities. Now, through this project, 12 towns in the Capitol Region have volunteered to work toward implementation by building on the sustainable development guidelines to create regulatory models. The 12 participating communities are: Avon, Bloomfield, Ellington, Enfield, Farmington, Hartford, Manchester, Simsbury, Tolland, Vernon, Windsor and Windsor Locks. Part of the process will be to analyze existing codes, create energy efficient, sustainable development regulations and ordinances and utilize cutting edge techniques to involve the public and gain support. The 12 towns involved in this project represent a mix of community types – rural, suburban and urban which exhibit a wide array of assets and opportunities for sustainable development, some of which include proposed transit corridors, auto-oriented commercial strips, village centers and nodes of development and greenway trails.

The Sustainable Land Use Code Project will assist this group of communities with the analysis of existing regulatory frameworks and the creation of model sustainable land use codes, regulations, municipal policies and/or ordinances which integrate and incorporate the CRCOG/EPA Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development (2009) and that address not only the needs and characteristics of each community, but also the role that each community plays in a larger regional context and within regional systems (i.e. transit corridors, auto corridors, rail corridors, active transportation trails, village centers and development nodes). In keeping with the broad, national applicability of the CRCOG/EPA Sustainable Development Guidelines, model codes will also serve as solid examples for other communities throughout the Knowledge Corridor region and beyond.

A competitive selection process led us to choose Clarion Associates as the lead firm to work on this project. Clarion stood out as a national leader in code development having recently completed code audits and implementation in Washington D.C., Miami-Dade County, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, Tucson and Omaha among other places. Clarion recently drafted a groundbreaking model Sustainable Community Development Code in conjunction with the Rocky Mountain Institute and has led national sustainable development code workshops for the American Planning Association. They also had additional local experience working on sustainable code and smart growth audit training workshops for EPA's Sustainable Communities office in familiar areas such as Essex, CT, Shelburne, VT and Dover, NH.

We look forward to your participation in the January 19th RPC meeting. Please feel free to invite other members of your planning and zoning commission to join us.