

CONNECTICUT PLANNING

Summer 2024

A publication of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

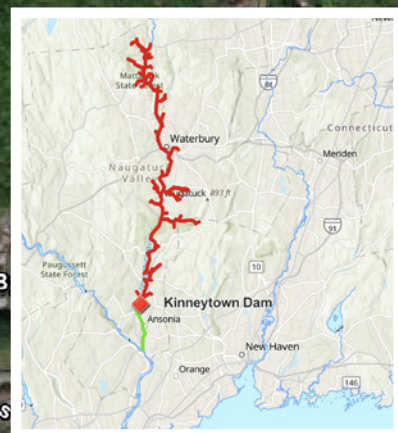
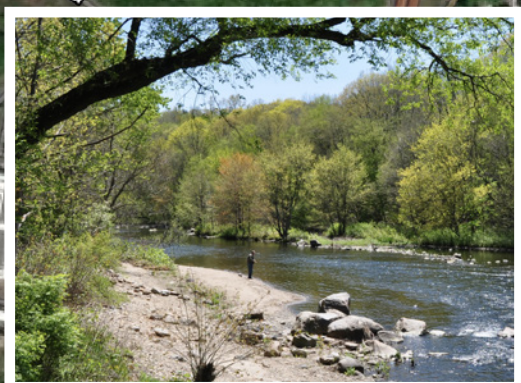


American Planning Association
Connecticut Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

2024 Awards

page 4



*Media Award: Kinneytown
Dam Removal StoryMap*



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings fellow planners!

It was so nice to see many of you at our recent annual Hot Topics event at the Mark Twain House in Hartford at the beginning of June. As mentioned at Hot Topics and in our prior issue of *Connecticut Planning* magazine, we are deep in the process of planning for the CCAPA Housing Forum as a collaborative event to review zoning initiatives appropriate to the size, infrastructure limits, and scale of local communities. Event details are as follows and we are inviting a planning staff member and planning commissioner from each municipality to attend.

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Hotel Marcel, 500 Sargent Drive, New Haven, CT

Free parking available

There is a nominal participation fee of \$20 per person to help defray costs, but all meals and costs are otherwise provided by CCAPA. This event is being specifically designed by planners, for planners and our commissioner partners. Breakfast is provided, followed by morning sessions related to the state of housing affordability in Connecticut, followed by a box lunch and working break-out sessions. The break-out rooms will include colleagues from communities that share similar size and other characteristics as yours to brainstorm and share best practices for housing solutions of similar scale and context. We envision that subject matter experts can be available as needed. For AICP planners, we are applying for Continuing Education Credits to be determined. For commissioners, this one-day event will count towards the state statute-required four hours of commissioner training.



(continued next page)

Cover image: Green infrastructure at the Northwest Science Quad, University of Connecticut, Storrs (Courtesy Towers|Golde, LLC)

CONNECTICUT PLANNING

is published quarterly by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association. Contributions are encouraged. Submissions must include the name and contact information of the contributor. Material may be edited to conform to space or style requirements. Please address submissions to Executive Editor Jeanne Davies, AICP (contact information below).

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President's Message, cont'd

Please RSVP at the [this link](#) or use the QR code, which will also bring you to some survey questions that will help in establishing the smaller afternoon working groups and allow us to be best prepared with the resources that can facilitate this work. Our initial response deadline has passed, but we are accepting replies on an ongoing basis, but please let us know as soon as possible. We really hope that all communities in Connecticut can participate in this important event. We are still waiting to hear from many of you!

In response to the request for more social events for planners, CCAPA is planning a day at the Hartford Yard Goats on Thursday, August 15th. We anticipate tickets will be approximately \$16. Be on the lookout for an event flyer soon!

Lastly, save the date for SNEAPA, hosted by Massachusetts this year in Springfield on November 7th and 8th.

Enjoy your summer and hope to see you soon! 

— Emmeline Harrigan, AICP, CFM 

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FROM THE EDITOR



Summer is upon us and as I write this, the fireflies, aka June Bugs, are lighting up my patio heralding hotter sultry evenings ahead. It seemed appropriate to include a wonderful article about the Dark Skies initiative as fireflies are disappearing from many areas due to the increased ambient evening light from development areas.

But the dominant theme of this issue is the awards presented this Spring in numerous categories. I won't spoil the fun of your discovering who did what and how they did it... suffice to say...there are a lot of talented planners, partners and residents in Connecticut...some who are recognized and those who have yet to be discovered. The fun part of this issue is getting to know your fellow planners in Connecticut.

CCAPA programs (including commissioner training) are archived at <https://ct.planning.org/events/past-events>. Please reach out to me at ctriverplanner@gmail.com with story ideas and updates on you (promotions, new job, retirement, awards or recent passings) for future issues. 

— Jeanne Davies, AICP 

CCAPA Announces 2024 Planning Awards

CCAPA's 2024 Awards banquet was held on Friday, March 22 at Testa's Banquet Facility in Southington. Congratulations to the following award recipients (see more about the awards on the following pages):

- **Kinneytown Story Media Award** — Aaron Budris
- **Citizen Group Planning Award** — “ALL IN” organization / David Morgan
- **Rising Star Award** — Savannah-Nicole Villalba
- **Innovative Plan** — Simsbury Plan of Conservation and Development / George McGregor
- **Chapter Award** — Yale Urban Design Workshop
- **Bruce Hoben Distinguished Planner Award** — Jeanne Davies
- **Special Acknowledgement for Newly Elected Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners** — Bill Voelker, FAICP
- **Retiring Planner Recognition** — Sharon Calitro, AICP, City of Danbury



The day also included a presentation on “Linking Sustainability and Equity — Climate Justice Principles for a Sustainable Connecticut” by Chadwick Schroeder, Sustainability Office for the City of Bridgeport. This talk focused on historical and current environmental and sustainability challenges, the roles planners have played historically, and the opportunity to address them going forward. The presentation focused on the idea of climate justice, the core principles as described by the Mary Robinson Foundation, and how these themes and principles relate to creating sustainable and equitable communities in Connecticut. With the abundance of federal funding available, these principles will help guide equitable sustainability and climate planning and development.

Left: The Awards Committee. Below left: The awards banquet. Below: Head table.



MEDIA AWARD

Kinneytown Storymap – Aaron Budris

Kinneytown Dam is a nonoperational hydroelectric facility spanning Seymour, CT and the environmental justice community of Ansonia, CT. Although it no longer produces electricity or provides any benefit to the communities in which it is situated, it remains a physical barrier to migratory fish and other wildlife seeking miles of remediated upstream habitat. A massive planning effort is underway to remove the dam, reconnect aquatic ecosystems, and restore public access to the Naugatuck River. The Kinneytown StoryMap uses a highly compelling, interactive format, with a focus on making this complex planning project accessible to the public.

The StoryMap contains four major narrative sections: the history of the Naugatuck River, background on the dam itself, why it is necessary to remove the dam, and the details of the removal project. The history section reviews the River's remarkable comeback story through the 20th century — from a waterbody so polluted it literally changed colors and caught on fire, to a beautiful and clean recreational destination. Next, we learn that Kinneytown Dam was erected in the 1840s, became a hydroelectric facility in the 1980s, and installed a fish ladder in the 1990s to open up miles of upstream spawning grounds and habitat. Unfortunately, the fish ladder never operated properly. Data demonstrating how few fish actually made it past the ladder is rendered even more powerful by clips of entire schools of shad and lamprey, disoriented and struggling at the foot of the dam. The narrative also touches upon the legal proceedings that were undertaken with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in an attempt to get the dam owner's permit revoked. In the next section, readers are taken on a virtual tour of all the benefits dam removal can provide: reducing flood risk, eliminating a public health and safety concern, restoring fish passage, offering access to the Naugatuck River, improving water quality, reestablishing natural sediment flow, and improving sportfishing for communities along the waterway. Finally, the StoryMap ties together the preceding pieces by announcing a \$15,000,000 grant from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the design and removal of Kinneytown Dam.

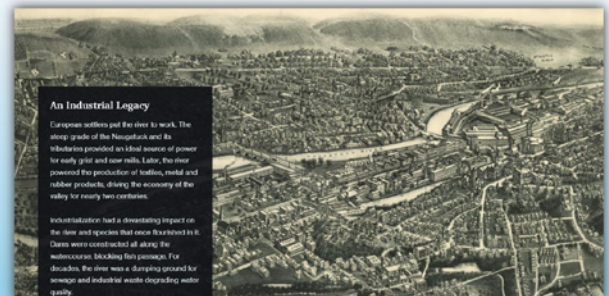
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Aaron Budris and Marty Connor.



The StoryMap is a compelling, interactive online tool with images, text, videos, and links that explain a complex dam removal project.



Stunning aerial photography complements an in-depth look at the history of the Naugatuck River, the issues with the defunct dam, and the transformative solutions stakeholders are executing.

CCAPA 2024 Awards, cont'd

This massive effort came together thanks to an outstanding collaboration between the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, Save the Sound, NOAA, CT DEEP, elected officials, and citizen organizers. An ambitious project timeline lays out the next steps, and a list of resources furnishes readers with an opportunity to dig deeper.

A StoryMap is the best format to tell the tale of Kinneytown Dam. Stunning photos, sweeping aerial videos, and interactive maps paint a vibrant picture of a thriving river that is the cultural and ecological focal point of the region, yet is stunted by a defunct dam. The heartbreaking clips of fish trapped at the bottom of an inoperable fish ladder — the breathtaking views of fall foliage along the river — the map showing a dozen other upstream dam removals, that fish cannot access — all of these items are far more powerful in a visual format than written in an article or a report. The mix of visuals and text also keep the reader engaged, wanting to scroll to the next section. For those looking to research any particular matter further, the StoryMap is rich with links to articles, videos, websites, and even the FERC docket of legal filings.

Since the first version of the StoryMap was released in 2020, project partners have used it as an educational tool for the public, a way to orient new staff members, and as a touchstone and record of progress. The most recent version published this fall has been perfected with additional footage, even more links and resources, and updated narratives.

We could say so much more, but we believe the StoryMap speaks for itself. It can be viewed here: <https://arcg.is/5CTKe>.



American Planning Association
Connecticut Chapter

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CITIZEN GROUP PLANNING AWARD

ALL IN Organization – David Morgan

Recently, the *CT Mirror* featured an article about groups of civic-minded residents in several Connecticut towns who have banded together to raise awareness about the importance of local government and issues that affect people like housing affordability and food insecurity.

These groups, better known as “ALL IN,” aren’t just working at food banks and tending to community gardens. They are encouraging each other to speak out at public meetings and even run for local government positions on municipal and school boards. The movement, which began three years ago, has chapters in Ansonia-Derby, Oxford, Seymour and Milford.

No one person is credited for starting ALL IN, but a number of early volunteers have helped to grow this Citizen Planning Group into a recognized voice for the underdog. Many of the ALL IN chapters are working to advocate for an increased affordable housing stock in their towns. In particular, they have made their voices heard regarding the need to allow for accessory dwelling units.

The second cause that ALL IN is pursuing is assistance to tackle matters of food insecurity in CT. About one in ten Connecticut residents don’t have access to enough food, according to Feeding America’s “Map the Meal Gap Study.” ALL IN members are assisting food pantries and nonprofits that recover food waste, such as baked goods that don’t sell, to use at food pantries or shelters.

ALL IN has demonstrated that there is power in numbers by pulling together as a community to advocate for what they need and believe in.

It is our honor and pleasure to present ALL IN with the Citizen Planning Group Award in appreciation for their efforts and unified voice on the tremendously important matters of access to adequate shelter and sustenance.

Overview of Project

ALL IN began in the darkest days of the COVID-19 lockdown, when a community-based non-profit in the region, TEAM, Inc., recognized that solving its communities’ problems meant going beyond direct service. “We don’t want to just make poverty more livable,” says TEAM’s CEO David Morgan. “We want to end it. And for that to happen, those most affected by the problem actually have to have a seat at the table, to be meaningfully involved in the decisions that affect our lives. As we like to say, if you’re not at the table, you might be on the menu.”



Citizens from all walks of life, ages, faiths, races, sexual orientations, languages, cultural traditions, and political affiliations are coming together to share stories, build relationships, and take collective action to revitalize community life in Connecticut. ALL IN citizen groups in urban, suburban, exurban, and rural communities throughout the Naugatuck Valley region are building deep trust with their neighbors, working neighborhood by neighborhood, coming together across all manner of divides to address the urgent issues facing their communities, including the severe shortage of affordable, workforce opportunity housing as a priority issue impacting individuals and families throughout Connecticut — this has resulted in multiple initiatives focused on housing affordability, civic engagement, and community involvement.

Three years into the work, non-compensated residents are learning that only by listening and learning together will they be able to build the power and develop the creative solutions needed to address pressing community issues in a lasting way. As ALL IN local groups are gaining the skills and confidence they need to assert their growing power, they are stepping out together into active participation in the public arena to make positive change in community life and wellbeing — they have created the conditions for residents to organize themselves to build community solutions together based on community-defined priorities and serve as grassroots partners with all stakeholders and sectors to work proactively and create long-term systems change across multiple public and private sectors. Through this process, ALL IN citizens have engaged and developed more than 70 community leaders who remain heavily involved, and more than 80

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CCAPA 2024 Awards, cont'd

organizational allies and supporters, who remain involved on an ongoing basis. Working in collaboration with these leaders, allies, and supporters, ALL IN has hosted more than 400 meetings, from small-group story sharing and planning meetings to large-scale forums, panels, and community events; these have included more than 2000 person-appearances, including more than 500 BIPOC.

Solutions and meaningful community differences that have only been made possible by the growing ALL IN movement of uncompensated citizens includes but is not limited to:

- increased opportunity and supply of affordable housing units in targeted communities
- approval of ADUs (accessory dwelling units) in multiple municipalities
- creation/codifying of local town affordable housing committees, and the appointment of ALL IN citizens to those housing committees
- achievement of other appointments including Planning & Zoning, Finance, Alder, Board of Education, and other councils of government across multiple communities
- a catalyst for increasing sensitivity and understanding to the most complex issue facing Connecticut's overall wellbeing: affordable housing and what it actually means in the 21st century. As one elected chief-of-staff stated, we can now actually talk about housing
- lead-facilitation of mayoral and other elected-officials forums to drive community dialogue and solutions, including planning and housing — and home ownership
- standing engagements with key elected officials including Mayoral and other Commissioners
- collaborating across community organizing groups and multi-sector service providers
- strengthened landlord/tenant relationships, and tenant rights and rent commissions
- leading and facilitating municipal ARPA Forums
- coordinating systems of opportunity and response to address food insecurity and other food ecosystems
- unprecedented Juneteenth celebrations and recognitions in hard-to-reach towns

A strong and growing region-wide network of uncompensated citizens across all walks of life has emerged and stood the test of time for three years now, with community leaders providing direction and training, coaching, and support. The growing ALL IN movement has crafted a clear agenda: together, we will make it possible for everyone in our communities to have 1) a safe and affordable home to live; 2) food security; and 3) meaningful involvement in the decisions that affect all of our lives. This growing alliance of uncompensated citizens — ALL IN — of residents, organizations, and community leaders working together to build communities where everyone has a place — a place to live, a place where food



is secure, and a place at the table where decisions get made that affect our lives.

Residents and organizations interested in learning more and getting involved in ALL IN can contact Jennie Rice at TEAM, Inc. (skokoratpantry@gmail.com) or Jacquie Bayas at the Naugatuck Valley Project (gonyi1721@gmail.com) You may also visit the following websites:

- www.allinformilford.org
- www.allinforoxford.org
- www.allinforseymour.org
- www.nvpct.org

About ALL IN for Milford: ALL IN for Milford is an alliance of community leaders and neighborhood organizations that strive to make Milford a city where everyone has a place to live and food to eat, where everyone's voice is heard and we all can thrive!

RISING STAR AWARD

Savannah-Nicole Villalba

Savannah-Nicole Villalba, AICP, AZT — better known as SN to all who know her — is an exceptional young planner whose dedication, passion, and talent have set her apart. SN earned her Bachelors in Sociology and Urban & Community Studies from the University of Connecticut. SN went on to graduate from Tufts University with a Masters in Urban & Environmental Policy & Planning and is currently pursuing her J.D. at the UConn School of Law. Her professional accreditations also include the AICP and AZT.

SN has worked with several communities across the state and has served as an Assistant Planner for the Towns of Winchester, Enfield, and Simsbury. Joining the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments in 2021, SN quickly advanced within the organization starting as a Regional Municipal Planner, promoted to a Senior Regional Planner, then creating the new Community Planning Division in 2023 where she serves as the Director.

SN has also volunteered her time and talents to CCAPA serving as on the Executive Board as Treasurer,



has assisted with organizing annual SNEAPA conferences, and frequently sits on panels in several sessions. SN's passion for social justice has led her to take a leadership role in developing the Chapter's first Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan, providing presentations on the EDI Plan at the 2023 National Planning Conference in Philadelphia. SN has also been a guest lecturer at UConn's School of Engineering, Trinity College, and served as an Adjunct Faculty Instructor teaching a seminar on "Sustainable Community Food Systems" at UConn in 2021.

SN is an outstanding young planner with a genuine love for Connecticut and for the planning profession. SN is a shining example of what can be achieved with hard work, dedication, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. As she continues to carve out her place in the field, there is no doubt she will leave her indelible mark and will inspire countless others to follow in her footsteps.



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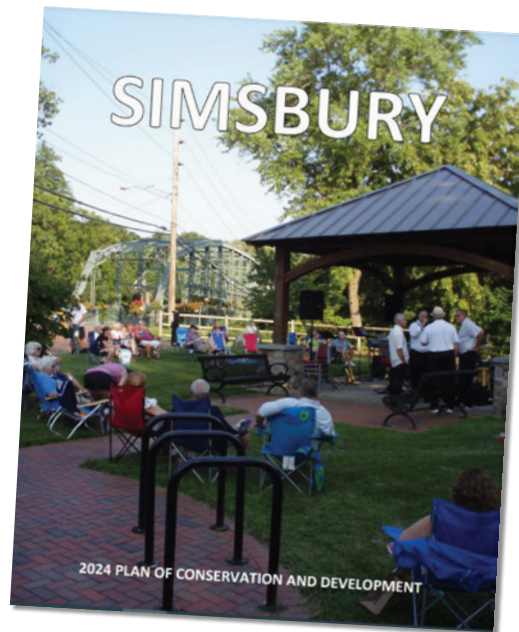
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INNOVATIVE PLAN AWARD

Simsbury Plan of Conservation and Development – George McGregor

The Town of Simsbury's Land Use and Planning Department is awarded the CCAPA Innovation Plan Award in recognition of its 2024 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The document, praised by the Capitol Region Council of Government as "an impressive update" in their October 2023 referral, was initiated by the Planning Commission in response to a changing community landscape in a post-pandemic world. The Commission felt that revisiting local strategies, sooner-rather-than-later, was critical when faced with new realities:

- a global pandemic changing how we live
- spiraling housing costs amidst limited local options
- fundamental changes in living, shopping, and working patterns
- transitions in the retail economy and purchasing habits



- evolving recognition of the concepts of social equity, diversity, and inclusion
- desire to expand a local approach to sustainability and resiliency
- identification of an improved, concentrated, and actionable approach to implementation.

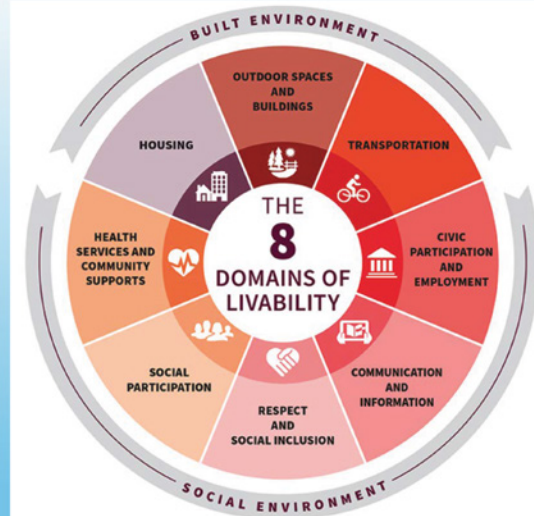
The POCD planning process was initiated in January 2023 after the publication of a 2022 community survey. Initially intended as a simple update, the community survey resulted in a such a robust public response that staff and the Planning Commission felt more significant revisions to the 2017 plan were warranted, especially related to the concepts of Livability; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Sustainability & Resiliency; Community Well Being; and Affordable Housing. It is Simsbury's approach and identification of these concepts that makes this 2024 Plan of Conservation and Development innovative. Throughout the Plan chapters, icons representing these important concepts are incorporated to bring attention to related goals and policies. What follows is a brief summary of these innovative

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Livability as an Over-Arching Theme

...Building off AARP's Eight Domain's of Livability



A Vision for the Future *...built on a sense of place*



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This element was not a significant part of the 2017 Plan. The 2024 Plan recognizes the growing awareness of equity, diversity, and inclusion issues and expresses Simsbury's commitment to addressing them. As an important stakeholder, the Simsbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, an advisory committee to the elected Town Board of Selectmen, offered its vision to be incorporated into the Plan: Simsbury is a Town that welcomes, celebrates, and takes action to support diversity and inclusion among current and future community members.

CCAPA 2024 Awards, cont'd

components. Livability Using AARP's expansion and development of the concept, the 2024 POCD incorporates "Livability" as an overarching principle. The concept of livability includes eight "Domains," or, elements of a quality built and social environment. They are:

- Outdoor Spaces and Building
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Inclusion
- Work and Civic Engagement
- Communication and Information
- Community Health Services.

Sustainability & Resiliency

The 2017 POCD contained a chapter on sustainability. In the years since then, the concepts of sustainability and resiliency have grown in visibility and stature and, perhaps more importantly, recognition of Simsbury and other jurisdictions that have roles to play in addressing them due to our changing climate. As a result, the Planning Commission chose to elevate the concepts of sustainability and resiliency as an overarching principle of this POCD. The concepts are integrated into chapters of the document as a part of this strategic update. Community Well-Being This concept hopes to provide a framework to balance the sometimes-competing community objectives related to Environmental, Social, and Economic elements in an effort to optimize these benefits for all.

(continued on page 12)

Affordable Housing

The Housing chapter of the 2024 Plan is greatly enhanced from the previous plans. Providing affordable and diverse housing opportunities in Simsbury represents a true challenge for the community and addressing these needs is a priority in the document. The new 2024 Plan incorporates and enhances significantly, the Town Affordable Housing Plan from 2021. The Plan clearly identifies new possible “Housing Opportunity Areas” designed to accommodate a wide range of housing choices for people of all ages and economic circumstances.

Summary

The 2024 Simsbury Plan of Conservation and Development process took place four years before the statutory requirement to update every ten years in order to address the rapidly changing environment the Town was facing post-pandemic. The Planning Commission recognized the challenges that the community was facing and developed a document that identified and incorporated solutions to address them. The inclusion of these modern concepts related to social, environmental, and economic forces represents an innovative approach to local comprehensive planning.

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SPECIAL CHAPTER AWARD

Yale Urban Design Workshop

The Yale Urban Design Workshop (YUDW, or Workshop) is a community design center affiliated with the Yale School of Architecture. Since its founding in 1992 by Professor Alan Plattus, it has provided a forum for faculty and students from the School of Architecture and other schools at Yale to engage with real-world projects and challenges in the fields of planning, community, and urban design. The Workshop has collaborated with more than 30 communities across Connecticut, and occasionally further afield, providing planning and design assistance on projects ranging from comprehensive plans, economic development strategies, and community visions to the design of public spaces, streetscapes, and individual community facilities.

Much of that work has focused on strategies for regeneration in Connecticut's small postindustrial towns and cities. Neighborhood and downtown plans developed for New London, West Haven, Bridgeport, New Haven, and others have addressed complex questions of preservation, redevelopment, and shifting demographics and identity, considered the changing economics of urban cores, and encouraged walkability, sustainability, and controlled, coordinated growth. Recent work of the YUDW has focused on developing and deploying strategies for coastal and neighborhood resilience and adaptation that

address the dual challenges of climate change and social and environmental equity. These projects include the *Resilient Bridgeport* strategy and pilot projects, funded by HUD under the *Rebuild by Design* and *National Disaster Resilience Competitions*, which directly resulted in more than \$65 million in federal support for resilience projects coming to Bridgeport and the Connecticut coast. And In 2023, the YUDW launched a new clinical course — *Housing Connecticut* — focused on addressing Connecticut's affordable housing crisis. The clinic is taught in conjunction with the Yale Law School and the Yale School of Management and is run in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Housing. In *Housing Connecticut*, multidisciplinary teams of graduate architecture, law and management students work together with local non-profit housing developers to propose innovative projects that address the need for affordable housing along with other neighborhood development issues. Integrated proposals prepared by the students include legal and planning framework, *pro formas*, and detailed project designs. One of three projects proposed in the first year is moving towards construction of eight units of housing. The clinic is now in its second cycle.

The Yale Urban Design Workshop is currently led by architect Andrei Harwell, AIA, who is also Senior Critic at the Yale School of Architecture. Andrei is assisted by Founding Director and Professor of Architecture and Urbanism Alan Plattus. They are supported by assistant director Matthew Rosen, and a changing roster of student design assistants, fellows, and postgraduate associates.

Special Chapter Award: Yale Urban Design Workshop



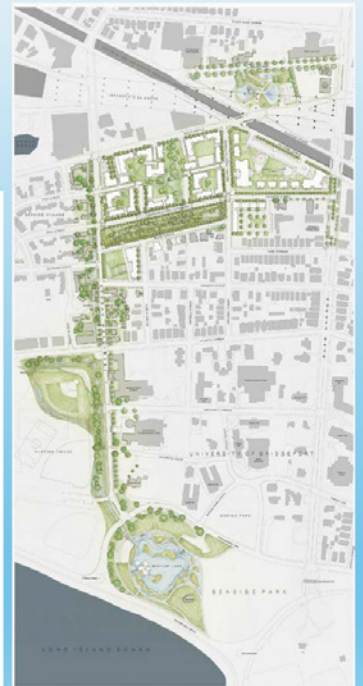
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Thames Heritage



Resilient Bridgeport

BRUCE HOBEN DISTINGUISHED PLANNER AWARD

Jeanne Davies

Jeanne has several decades of experience in local, regional, state, and federal planning processes, grant funding management and promoting collaboration. This includes working with a diverse population to create long-range plans for economic growth, housing and food security, emergency management, recreation projects such as the Niantic Bay Boardwalk, creative regulatory land use solutions, and transportation. During her planning career, she also was an active volunteer on the SNEAPA Committee and the Program Committee for six years, joining the CT Chapter of the American Planning Association Executive Committee where she served for six years as Program Chair, then at-large member, and now currently as Co-Chair of Communications.

During her 15-year career as Transportation Planner, Assistant Director, and Executive Director at the Lower CT River Valley Regional Planning Organization, Jeanne was instrumental in creating plans, obtaining grants, and leveraging funds to implement expansion of new permanent flex-routes to replace an incongruent rural dial-a-ride system that historically was underperforming for

residents of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Region. This plan and implementation of new routes increased reliable dependable service and increased regular demand for ridership over the next ten years, resulting in the growth and expansion of the Estuary Transit District. She also leveraged FHWA and FTA federal funds toward planning to improve mobility and access to housing, health services, food systems, and agriculture for the elderly, low-income and underserved populations, as well as other residents in the region, including leveraging regional, state, and federal resources to expand and support the Shoreline Basic Needs Task Force, the Regional Agriculture Council, and other organizations.

As Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development's first Executive Director, Jeanne created grassroots solutions to unite unlikely partners toward a planned strategy to improve economic, natural resource, and sustainable environmental and housing conditions in rural Connecticut, as well as supporting similar initiatives in suburban and urban areas of Connecticut. The Connecticut

(continued on page 15)

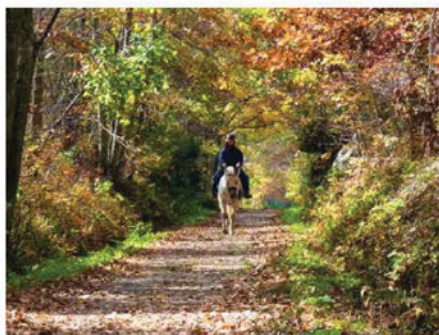
Bruce Hoben Distinguished Planner



Jeanne Davies, AICP



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CCAPA 2024 Awards, cont'd

cut River Coastal Conservation District recently acknowledged Jeanne's accomplishments with the Tom O'Dell Outstanding District Service Award for her significant contributions to conservation and planning during her time as Executive Director of CT Resource Conservation & Development, including enhancing the partnership with CT's Conservation Districts and strengthening and diversifying the organization's programs. Included with her nomination for the Bruce Hoben Award was a description of her work building regional collaboration between the 12 towns of the Air Line State Park Trail Region to create a comprehensive planning guidance document for the future economics of the towns abutting the trail system.

Jeanne served as founding Vice Chair of the CT Region 2 Emergency Management Steering Committee and served 12 years as well as serving as Co-Chair of the DEMHS Region 2 Transportation and Natural Resources and Agriculture Teams. She earned her undergraduate BA in Government from Clark University and her MS in Geography and Community Planning from Central Connecticut State University. She is an Accredited Planner with American Institutes of Certified Planners and a member of the American Planning Association.



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SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Bill Voelker Elected to the College of Fellows of AICP

William “Bill” Voelker, recently retired as the planning director in Cheshire, is the Connecticut Chapter’s most recent member to be elected to the College of Fellows.

He joins Connecticut Fellows Richard Erikson, Deb Lawlor, Peter Marcuse, Dwight Merriam, Rick Redniss, Jeff Taebel, and David Woods, and the late Horace Brown and Hyung Chung.

As aptly described in the nomination: “Bill...is one of the kindest, most generous colleagues in our Chapter. He is always willing to dialogue with other planners needing advice and offer his sage advice based on his personal and professional experience where needed.”

Bill has made many important contributions to planning, including as the principal drafter of legislation passed by the Connecticut General Assembly that enables mediation in land use disputes. He received the 2001 Distinguished Service Award from the Connecticut Growth Council and the 2001 Special Chapter Award from CCAPA for that work.

What distinguished him as a candidate for national recognition as a fellow is his aplomb and strength of character in handling personal adversity and his willingness to use this journey to help advocate and educate other planners — with classic Bill

Bill has made many important contributions to planning, including as the principal drafter of legislation passed by the Connecticut General Assembly that enables mediation in land use disputes. He received the 2001 Distinguished Service Award from the Connecticut Growth Council and the 2001 Special Chapter Award from CCAPA for that work.



Congratulations Bill!

humor and sass. Twenty-five years ago, at the age of 40, Bill Voelker began to experience problems walking. He was diagnosed with a degenerative nerve disease that as it has run its course has transitioned him from using a single cane, to two canes, a walker, and eventually a wheelchair.

As a planner, Bill experienced a metamorphosis of perspective that led him to understand first-hand what it means for an individual with a physical disability to navigate their way across the built environment. He became increasingly interested in focusing on accessibility, not to the exclusion of his other work, but in addition to it, integrating what he knew from his decades as a planner, with what he came to learn with each passing day as he slowly, inexorably, became more physically constrained. He teamed up with others who had spent their lifetime promoting accessibility as an advocate for better design and for better planning.

Perhaps the most astounding instance of how he came to be widely recognized for his advocacy is the way he handled himself in front of a large audience at the 2018 NPC in New Orleans when he and others were on a panel about accessibility. He rolled into the room to join the others assembling up on the podium for the presentation only to discover that no one had planned for or provided a ramp or any other means for him to get up onto the podium, and no lectern was provided from which he could speak as the others could. He gave his

(continued on page 17)



Bill Voelker celebrates his award with members of his family and members of the Chapter.

CCAPA 2024 Awards, cont'd

remarks from the floor that day to an awestruck audience, but he never complained about having been restricted in this way because of his physical disability. Instead, he seized the opportunity, almost as a sidebar to his principal remarks, to comment on the “micro aggressions” against people with disabilities.

His advocacy has included speaking on accessibility at the 2018 NPC in New Orleans, 2021 Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute Western Places/Western Spaces annual conference, twice at SNEAPA, and this last June at the annual Hot Topics in Land Use Law event. He authored an article in the Winter 2018 CCAPA newsletter entitled “Advocating for the Disabled in Planning.”

Bill has also had a real influence on the rewriting of the AICP ethics code. Working with one of the Fellows of this chapter, he developed amendments to the draft for the committee’s consideration which would broadly increase the ethical responsibilities of Certified Planners for people with all kinds of disabilities.

In his retirement (if you can call it that...he’s currently filling as the planner for Windsor Locks), Bill Voelker continues to advocate, educate, and benefit the members of the Connecticut Chapter.

— Dwight Merriam, FAICP

CCAPA 2024 Awards

RETIRING PLANNER RECOGNITION

Sharon Calitro, AICP from the City of Danbury – Retired February 2024

Having worked as deputy planner for nine years, Sharon Calitro was appointed Director of Planning in 2015. As Director, she has worked on a new Master Plan, new improvements for Downtown, cooperative arrangements for downtown growth with City Center Danbury, new City Green and sidewalk improvement projects.

Sharon is insightful and a problem solver — her positive attitude and design experience allow her to navigate daily the needs and wants of the City, business owners and residents. Danbury has very large shoes to fill!



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Join your colleagues at SNEAPA 2024! The Southern New England APA Conference (SNEAPA) will be held on Thursday, November 7th and Friday, November 8th at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield Massachusetts. Organized by the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island Chapters of the American Planning Association, more than 500 planners, engineers, architects, students, and other planning professionals in Southern New England will come together to share experiences, collaborate, network, and earn maintenance credits for AICP certification. Learn more at sneapa.org — including how your organization can sponsor and support SNEAPA. Registration will begin in August.





Bruce Hoben

Bruce Hoben *Remembered*

by Jeanne Davies, AICP

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the passing of Bruce Hoben. It seems appropriate to dedicate space in our June *Connecticut Planning* magazine edition to his life and laudable career as a planner in Connecticut, as well as his 23 years of leadership to CCAPA, including five years as Chapter president.

The Distinguished Service Award was renamed in 2009 as the Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award to honor Bruce for *his selfless involvement with and longtime leadership in the Connecticut APA Chapter. Along with his many contributions to the practice of planning in Connecticut, Bruce truly exemplifies the spirit of distinguished service.* Over the last eighteen years, there have been ten recipients selected for this award. This led me to an investigative mindset to learn more about Bruce and his work as a planner and his service to CCAPA.

I was more acquainted with Glenn Chalder through chapter events and through his work with municipalities. Connecticut, though a small state, bifurcates into collegial regions of planning awareness, both with projects and interactions with fellow planners. Throughout Connecticut, we each occasionally hear of other planners doing great work in other regions, but rarely do we meet them or fully understand their career achievements. Working as an eastern and central Connecticut planner, Bruce's leadership at CCAPA and his reputation as a planner were widely regarded throughout Connecticut, but I had never met Bruce.

So, I emailed Glenn Chalder, Bruce's long-time business partner, who invited Sue Hoben, Bruce's widow, to the conversation. On a sunny June day two weeks later, close to the fifteenth year and day of Bruce's death, we sat together and talked about what made Bruce unique. It was a

lovely hour listening to them reminisce about this dedicated, funny, and talented man.

Bruce and Glenn, from my point of view as a mid-career planner 20 years ago, were reputable in Connecticut as the penultimate planning duo, partners in business, owners of Planimetrics. They brought a fresh approach to town comprehensive and long-range planning as a streamlined and focused art.

Bruce's penchant for preferred planning services centered on assisting developers to navigate the town and city hallways toward approval of new site developments, commercial, residential, or a combination of the two. Glenn focused on town planning services and methods to analyze futuristic concepts through community outreach and mapping.

(continued on page 19)

The Distinguished Service Award was renamed in 2009 as the Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award to honor Bruce for his selfless involvement with and longtime leadership in the Connecticut APA Chapter.



Bruce at a conference.

Bruce Hoben Remembered, cont'd

The synergy and balance worked well. Their firm, the planners they hired, and Bruce and Glenn were highly respected throughout Connecticut.

The aspects of Bruce and his career as a planner came to the forefront of the conversation quickly. He was a very kind, humorous man, who liked to engage with people from all walks of life to better understand their point of view, ideas, and concepts. He was analytic, approachable and offered his perspective on the situation after careful listening and quick analysis. He was a problem solver of the first order. Bruce was particularly adept both as a town planner and as a consulting planner at steering a developer toward a proposal that would benefit the developer but also the town and residents impacted by the proposed changes in the community landscape. His ability to transcend the automated submittal and approval process with which we are all so familiar, to build a worthwhile project, was noteworthy.

As to the redesignation of CCAPA's Distinguish Service Award, what set Bruce apart from the many dedicated planning professionals in Connecticut was how he leveraged his strong and positive personal attributes and strengths to expand his professional career into one of added service to CCAPA as well as other volunteer boards and commissions. A snapshot of his life and service were eloquently described through excerpts from his obituary:

Bruce Hoben, 67, peacefully departed this world at home on June 15, 2009. He was born in Naugatuck and lived most of his life in Canton with his best friend, love of his life, and wife of 42 years Susan Ducharme Hoben. Bruce saw service as a 1st Lieutenant in the 82nd Airborne Division from 1964-1966 during which time he was stationed in the Dominican Republic. During Bruce's long and distinguished career as a leader and cheerleader for planning in Connecticut, he influenced the development, conservation

(continued on page 20)

He was analytic, approachable and offered his perspective on the situation after careful listening and quick analysis. He was a problem solver of the first order.

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Bruce and Planimetrics team members celebrate an anniversary.



Bruce Hoben Remembered, cont'd

and character of many towns across the state. His impact will be felt for many years to come. After receiving his Masters of City Planning from Georgia Institute of Technology, he worked for the Litchfield Hills Regional Planning Agency. He became the first Town Planner for Avon in 1975 and was the Planning Director

for Farmington from 1980-1987. After working as an independent consultant, he formed Planimetrics, a leader in comprehensive planning in the state, with his good friend and partner Glenn Chalder. He was very active in the American Planning Association, serving on the Connecticut Chapter's Executive Committee for 23 years, five of them as the chapter president. He served on the Canton Planning Commission from 1972-1975 and chaired the Canton Housing Authority from 1981-2008.

CCAPA Distinguished Service Award Recipients

2006 - Humbert V. Sacco, PE, AICP

2008 - Horace Brown, FAICP

Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award Recipients

2009 - Dwight Merriam, FAICP

2010 - John Pagini

2011 - Dan Tuba

2012 - Mark Pellegrini, Town of Manchester

2013 - Chris Wood, President, Woods Planning LLC

2016 - Glenn Chalder

2019 - Alan Weiner

2024 - Jeanne Davies

To understand the full nature of Bruce Hoben's life, recollections from his wife Sue Hoben are the optimal source. In her book, *Dying Well*, she wrote about the grace with which Bruce lived through his "third act of a play called life." The story provides a window on how to live an engaging life of service to our family, our friends, our planning career, colleagues, and to our communities.

Thank you, Sue and Glenn, for the time to help illuminate why CCAPA awards notable service to planning in CT in memory of Bruce, finding periodic moments to remember and celebrate his legacy and life. Visit Sue's website for more: susanducharmehoben.com. 

Hot Topics Program A Great Success

On June 7, 2024, CCAPA held its annual “Hot Topics in Land Use Law and Practice” event at the Mark Twain House Museum. The event, sponsored by TYCHE Planning & Policy Group and Robinson & Cole, LLP, is the seminal event each year for the Chapter. This year it was attended by approximately 100 planning professionals. The day began with a CCAPA chapter meeting and then offered 4.5 CM credits of programming, including law and ethics, with the following sessions: Annual Legal Update and Q&A Session; Legislative Front — Issues and Topics from 2024 CT General Assembly and Looking Ahead; How Zoning Can Improve Planning; and Planning Ethics in the Real World. Thank you to the many individuals who helped to make this event a success, especially those who helped to organize and participate in the sessions. If you are interested

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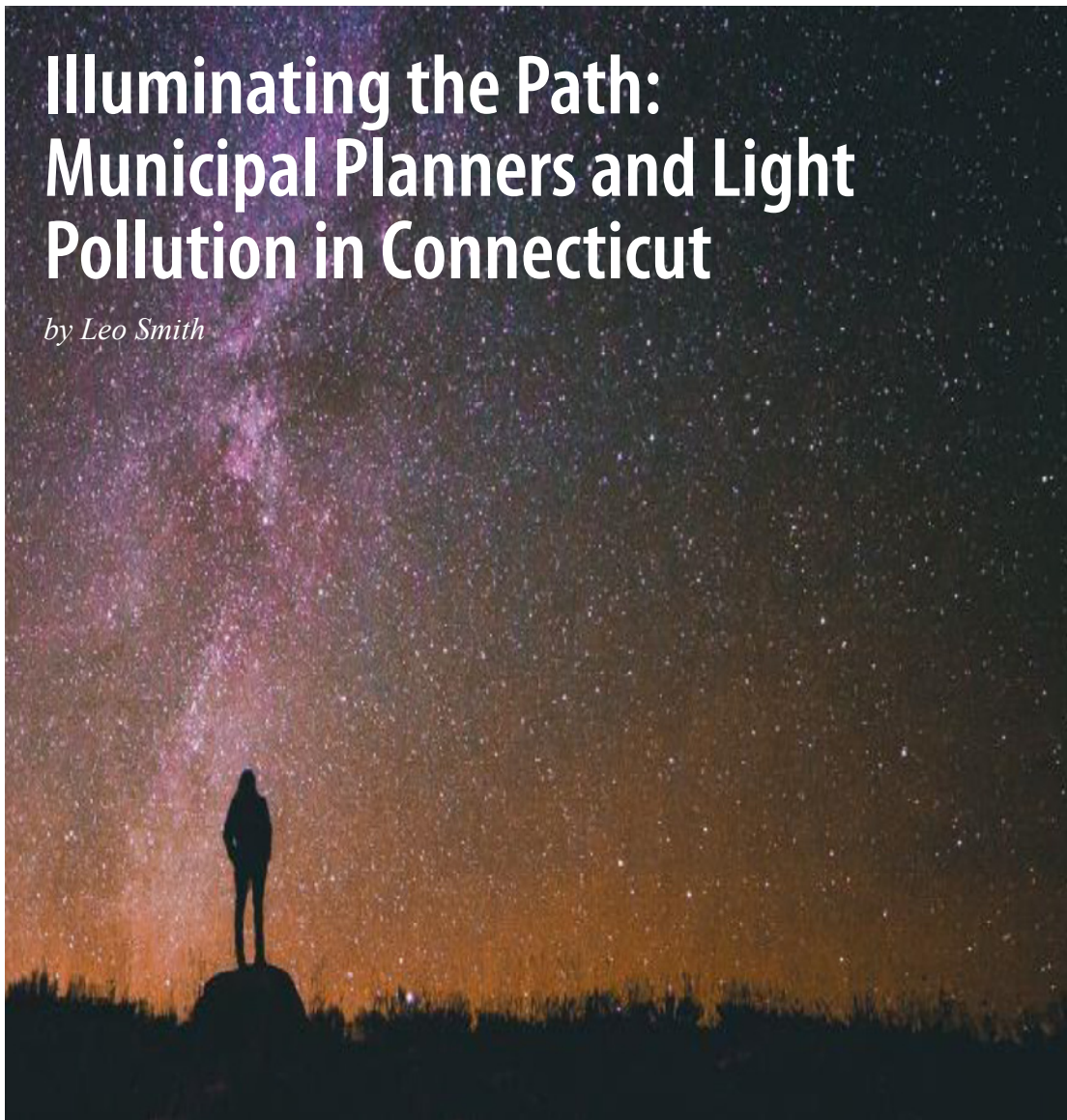
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Illuminating the Path: Municipal Planners and Light Pollution in Connecticut

by Leo Smith



Connecticut boasts a rich history, picturesque and biodiverse landscapes, and vibrant city and town centers. However, rapid development, energy incentives and the increasing use of more and brighter artificial light at night have given rise to a new and concerning issue across our state: light pollution and its many adverse consequences. As awareness grows about the detrimental impacts of excessive nighttime artificial illumination on human health, wildlife, and the environment, along with significant cost savings, some municipal planners in Connecticut are looking for ways to combat the problem. In this article, we will explore the important role of municipal planners in formulating effective light pollution control policies and the strides being made towards creating a more sustainable, safer noctur-

nal environment in the state for residents as well as wildlife and plant life.

1. Understanding Light Pollution and its Adverse Consequences

Before delving into municipal planners' efforts, it is essential to grasp the concept of light pollution and light trespass. As a first principle, outdoor lighting should only be used where and when it is needed. Light pollution refers to "excessive, misdirected, or poorly designed artificial lighting" that disrupts natural darkness and obscures celestial views. It adversely affects human sleep patterns, and circadian rhythms, damages ecosystems, disorients species like insects, bats, and migratory birds, and wastes energy. In 2009 and 2016 the American Medical Association recognized light pollution

(continued on page 23)

The logo for the American Planning Association Connecticut Chapter, featuring the letters "APA" above "CT" in a stylized font.

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Illuminating the Path, cont'd

as “a probable carcinogen” and adopted new policies recommending that outdoor lights be shielded and that the color temperature of LED lights not exceed 3000 degrees Kelvin. The lower the Kelvin the better, and 2000-3000k is considered a “warm white.” This color recommendation stems from the availability of many LED lights with high levels of blue wavelength light over 3000K, with increasingly negative impacts on ecosystems and human health. Recognizing these negative consequences, some municipalities in Connecticut have started to actively develop and implement solutions to control light pollution.

At the same time, affordable solutions are widely available. Technologies that help eliminate the problem include motion sensors, timers, lighting fixture shields, and warm-tinted LEDs.

2. CT State Laws and Building Code Rules on Light Pollution

In 2004, Connecticut amended the State Building Code with a Light Pollution Control amendment that requires all new construction and major retrofits of commercial buildings to use fully shielded outdoor lights. This regulation went into effect in 2004, before the intensive use of LED lighting at commercial buildings started in 2006. Every LED light on a commercial building must be fully shielded if there is to be compliance. Further, for new buildings and renovations, the State Building Code now requires all landscape and façade lighting to be extinguished one hour after the close of business. A law was also passed in 2023 requiring all state-owned buildings (except for the Capitol Building) to extinguish their outdoor lighting from 11 PM until 6 AM. The main rationale was to benefit migratory birds, but reducing light pollution also benefits the entire ecosystem and human health.

The Connecticut State Building Code was opened for submitting Code Change Proposals through April 15, 2024. **Audubon CT, Sierra Club, Lights Out Connecticut** and the **Connecticut Chapter of DarkSky International** have each sub-

mitted a Code Change Proposal to reduce light pollution in Connecticut. The narrative and a link to each Code Change Proposal can be reviewed online on the Connecticut Chapter of DarkSky International’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61550915213597&mibextid=LQQJ4d.

Planning and Zoning officials interested in sending a support letter can submit by email to the **Code Amendments Subcommittee** at DAS.CodesStandards@ct.gov. The support letter can also be cc’d to State Building Inspector Omarys Vasquez at Omarys.Vasquez@ct.gov. A template of a support letter from a Planning and Zoning official is available upon request to leo@smith.net.

3. Municipal Planners as Catalysts for Change

Municipal planners play a pivotal role in shaping the physical, social, and environmental development of our communities. Connecticut planners can become catalysts for change by incorporating strategies and promoting local regulations that prioritize responsible outdoor lighting, to combat light pollution and its widely recognized harms. This is already happening in several CT towns and cities that have passed light pollution controls,

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As a first principle, outdoor lighting should only be used where and when it is needed. Light pollution refers to “excessive, misdirected, or poorly designed artificial lighting” that disrupts natural darkness and obscures celestial views.



Branford Planner Shirley Rasmussen and ZEO Justine Gillen check a site plan for compliance with the town’s lighting regulations (2007).

Illuminating the Path, cont'd

like Newtown. Greenwich and Westport have dark sky regulations under review. The Town Code in Canton, for example, prohibits “light trespass,” when lighting from one property crosses property lines to shine on another property, causing glare and light pollution. This is an important lighting rule because light pollution and light trespass can cause increased glare when driving at night and easily become a neighborhood nuisance, leading to sleepless nights, insomnia, and even poor neighborly relations. As the negative impacts of light pollution become more understood, municipal planners should collaborate with stakeholders, such as local government agencies, businesses, and community groups, to evaluate existing lighting practices in their towns or cities, identify areas for improvement, and develop comprehensive policies for light-pollution



LIGHT TRESPASS

control. Planners play a key role in public education as well.

4. Encouraging Sustainable Outdoor Lighting Practices

Effective policies aim to promote sustainable outdoor lighting practices that reduce light pollution and light trespass, while maintaining safety and security. Municipal planners can encourage the use of motion sensors and timers and require shielded fixtures that direct light downward to illuminate spe-

cific areas rather than dispersing it in all directions. By adopting energy-efficient technologies like LED lights at the lowest Kelvin rating possible and implementing smart lighting controls and motion-activated lighting, municipal policies can set the standard for significantly controlling light pollution and light trespass while also protecting the community and lowering their energy costs and carbon footprint.

Some municipalities in Connecticut focus lighting regulations on the basics: shielding, light trespass restrictions and glare limits. More comprehensive regulations are coming to the fore, including the submission of a lighting plan at the time of permit application and using lights that emit warmer colors, under 3000K.

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Illuminating the Path, cont'd

An effective enforcement mechanism is to simply require that any building permit application be accompanied by a detailed lighting plan that shows all outdoor lighting fixtures, and the cutoff classification, lumen output and correlated color temperature for each — and ensure that before issuing a certificate of occupancy, building inspections confirm the proper lighting was used.

5. Collaborating with Local Groups and Experts

As the negative impacts of light pollution become more understood, municipal planners should collaborate with local stakeholders, such as government agencies, businesses, and community

(continued on page 26)

Five Lighting Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting



Responsible outdoor lighting is

1 Useful

Use light only if it is needed

All light should have a clear purpose. Consider how the use of light will impact the area, including wildlife and their habitats.



2 Targeted

Direct light so it falls only where it is needed

Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.



3 Low Level

Light should be no brighter than necessary

Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions, as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than intended.



4 Controlled

Use light only when it is needed

Use controls such as timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.



5 Warm-colored

Use warmer color lights where possible

Limit the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed.



The Illuminating Engineering Society and DarkSky International jointly have adopted five principles to control light pollution caused by outdoor lighting. The principles can be used to guide municipal planners in developing light pollution control standards. The Illuminating Engineering Society and DarkSky International jointly have adopted five principles to control light pollution caused by outdoor lighting. The principles can be used to guide municipal planners in developing light pollution control standards.

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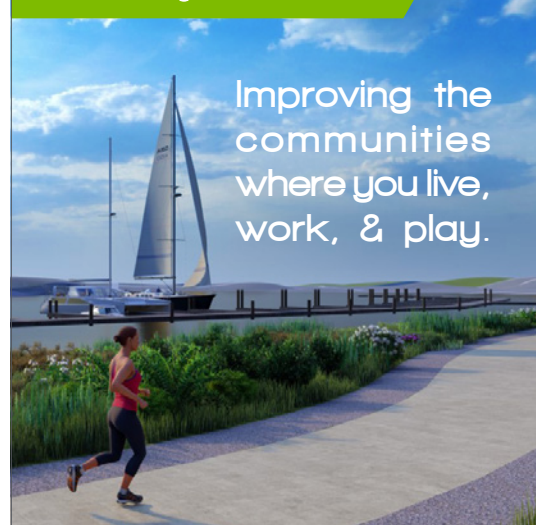
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Illuminating the Path, cont'd

groups, to evaluate existing lighting practices in their towns or cities, identify areas for improvement, and develop comprehensive policies for light-pollution control. In particular, the issue of light pollution is gaining traction with local conservation groups, including local land trusts, Audubon centers, pollinator pathway groups, and garden clubs that advocate on behalf of bird, pollinator, and fish populations that make up our state's healthy ecosystems. Our state also benefits from an active chapter of DarkSky International and also Lights Out Connecticut, a statewide nonprofit project of the Menunkatuck Audubon Society. These groups will be important collaborators and public awareness campaigners in developing local policies.

6. Balancing Safety and Aesthetics

While addressing light pollution, municipal planners recognize the importance of balancing safety and aesthetics. Adequate outdoor lighting ensures public safety, enhances visibility in critical areas, and reduces the risk of accidents. However, planners can strive consistently for lighting designs that are mindful of surroundings and minimize glare, light trespass, and skyglow. This delicate balance ensures safe environments while preserving the tranquil beauty of Connecticut's night skies. Simply being a good role model will help to disseminate these principles to the general public. Nobody would recommend turning off all lights at night. That is not a safe approach to municipal lighting. The right approach is to use modern technologies and available science to install nighttime lighting only where it is needed and only use it when it is needed.

7. Public Awareness and Community Engagement

Municipal planners may also realize that addressing light pollution

requires collective efforts. They may engage in public awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and community involvement programs to foster a better understanding of the problems from light pollution and gain public support. The municipal website is a useful place to provide information even if the municipality does not have a light pollution control policy in place. By actively involving citizens, planners create a shared vision for sustainable outdoor lighting, encouraging residents and businesses to adopt responsible lighting practices. Planners play a key role in public education as well.

8. Developing and Sharing Best Practices

Connecticut's municipalities can also work together and learn from one another's experiences to develop best practices for managing light pollution. Networking platforms, conferences, and workshops facilitate collaboration between planners and conservation organizations. These shared resources help create a framework for comprehensive policies that consider the diverse needs and unique characteristics of each community.

Conclusion

Some municipal planners in Connecticut have started taking significant steps to address light

pollution by participating in DarkSky zoning changes and recognizing light pollution's impact on the environment, wildlife, and human well-being. By promoting sustainable outdoor lighting practices, engaging the public, and collaborating with various stakeholders, they are instrumental in shaping policies that strike a balance between functionality and preserving the beauty of the night sky.

As efforts to minimize light pollution and its harms move forward, there is an important role to be played by municipal planners in creating a future where our nights are not only safer and more beautiful for people but also where are our birds and other nocturnal creatures are able to use darkness for navigation and safety. A vision for the future is one where the night sky is filled with the enchantment of natural darkness. 🌌

— *Leo Smith is Chair of the Connecticut Chapter of DarkSky International; he was a voting member of the Model Outdoor Lighting Task Force jointly sponsored by the Illuminating Engineering Society and DarkSky. He has received the President's Award from the IES and the Lifetime Achievement Award from DarkSky International. He can be reached at leo@smith.net.*

Resources

DarkSky Connecticut Chapter – Chapter Chair Leo Smith: leo@smith.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61550915213597&mibextid=LQQJ4d

Twitter (X): <https://twitter.com/DarkSkyCT>

Instagram: https://instagram.com/darkskyct?igshid=NGVhN2U2NjQ0Yg%3D%3D&utm_source=qr

Lights Out Connecticut: www.lightsoutct.org – Chapter Co-Chair, Craig Repasz: info@lightsoutct.org

DarkSky International: www.darksky.org

Sustainable CT on Promoting Dark Skies: https://sustainablect.org/fileadmin/Random_PDF_Files/Archived_Actions/2022_Actions/3.13_Promote_Dark_Skies.pdf

DarkSky Connecticut – 10-Point Checklist for Outdoor Lighting: www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=122119771934030507&set=a.122105635976030507

Model Municipal Dark Sky Lighting Regulations for Connecticut Developed by Lights Out Connecticut

Connecticut towns and cities now have a model to follow to regulate light pollution and increase energy efficiency in their jurisdictions, thanks to a new template developed by Lights Out Connecticut. The [Model Municipal Dark Sky Lighting Regulations for Connecticut](#), if adopted, would help local governments set comprehensive, up-to-the-minute standards to reduce unnecessary lighting across zones and districts and protect the night sky.

The general standards include, aiming light fixtures exclusively downward, automating lights with timers and motion sensors, and using warm-colored bulbs to minimize harmful blue light emissions. Additionally, certain types of potentially dangerous outdoor lights, like lasers and strobe lights, would be prohibited.

Light pollution in North America is growing more than 10 percent each year, according to a 2023 study. This has led to increased public concern in Connecticut and other states about current light pollution levels and the risks that can come with too much nighttime lighting, such as sleep disturbances, increased disease burdens, and unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions linked to wasted energy.

“We created this model lighting policy because advocates and town officials have been asking us for a draft local law like this one that they could bring to their planning department or town council for adoption,” said **Meredith Barges**, co-chair of Lights Out Connecticut, who co-authored the model. “We’re seeing more and more communities in Connecticut reevaluating the importance of the nighttime environment, both for human health and for biodiversity.”

In March, the Town of Greenwich passed a comprehensive outdoor lighting law that resulted from an advocacy effort to amend the town’s Zoning Code, led by local leaders from Lights Out Greenwich and the Greenwich Sustainability Committee. This was part of a growing trend of towns and cities in

Connecticut passing more rigorous laws to regulate the sources and amounts of artificial lighting at night.

Using simple-to-understand language, the model policy provides basic standards for businesses, residents, and municipalities to follow when installing and replacing outdoor lighting. The policy is designed to be adaptable, allowing municipalities to tailor them to their specific needs. It follows the “Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting”

created by DarkSky International and the Illuminating Engineering Society, two nonprofit organizations working to improve the lighted environment. Some of the model’s provisions were also inspired by existing outdoor lighting regulations in Connecticut, including in Southbury and New Haven.

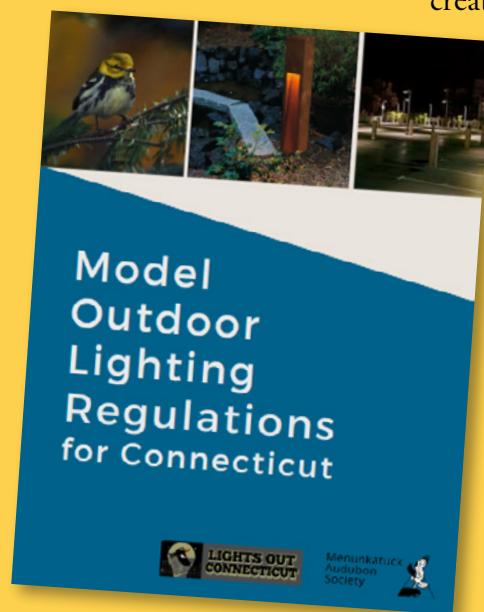
In many cases, the sources of increased light pollution in Connecticut, and elsewhere, are intense all night streetlights and floodlights, together with porch lights that shine from one neighbor’s property into another’s — what is known as “light trespass.” This problem has magnified in

recent decades with sales of so many different types of low-cost, outdoor LED lights, including solar-powered lights.

Because the regulations will most likely become part of a town or city’s zoning code, the lighting regulations would only apply to lighting at new buildings and renovations, not existing lighting, unless and until it is replaced. Barges explained further: “Over time, municipalities that adopt this model policy will see decreases in light pollution. At a minimum, it will help slow the increase in light pollution that communities have seen over the last 15 years.”

You can download Lights Out Connecticut’s Model Municipal Lighting Regulations for free at www.lightsoutct.org/model-municipal-lighting-policy-for-connecticut.

— Leo Smith, Chair
Connecticut Chapter, DarkSky International



CCAPA Legislative Update

Make No Little Plans

by John Guskowski, AICP, CZEO, CCAPA Government Relations Co-Chair

Despite the lack of dramatic change, we are grateful to our active Government Relations Committee membership and the team at TCORS Capitol Group for their engagement and assistance throughout the session.

In the biennial short session of the Connecticut General Assembly, like the one that ended in early May, there is always a mismatch between expectations and results. Most advocacy groups and Committee chairs do their best to set modest goals, identifying just a very short list of priorities. The fact that this session is in a (local and national) election year that seems like a complete toss-up also discourages bold (read: controversial) action. Finally, crush of the shortened timeframes and the very human tendency to focus 80% of energy on 20% of the issues means that we once again emerged from the legislative session with very few major steps forward.



The focus of the legislative session was on issues surrounding higher education, social services, mental health, child care, paid leave, and nursing home care. A late bill reallocated unspent American Rescue Plan funds among municipal aid, higher education, early voting, school meals, and nonprofit groups. These are all worthy targets, and some important investments and philosophical statements. But for practicing planners looking for continued progress on important housing, economic development, transportation, or zoning issues, the session was underwhelming.

Entering the session, CCAPA's focus was directed on a few high-priority topics. Our eternal quest to allow municipalities to publish legal notices of hearings and decisions on their websites fell short, as did attempts to redefine "hardships" and the decision-making process for Zoning Boards of Appeals. Issues we promoted, including allowing fee-in-lieu of sidewalks and providing municipalities with local match support for infrastructure investments, did not get much traction this time around. Most significantly, the "new

and improved" Work/Live/Ride bill (HB 5278) providing significant incentives for communities that adopt Transit Oriented Communities principles into zoning regulations fell short of House approval after making it through the Senate. One seemingly small technical change to the State Building Code – allowing three- and four-unit residential structures to have a single stairway, as is the case in many American and European cities, has the potential to reduce construction costs for these middle-housing opportunities.

On the other hand, this bottleneck of legislation prevented several bills CCAPA testified against from advancing too far, including proposals allowing municipalities to bypass local wetlands review under certain circumstances and allowing as-of-right conversions of any and all vacant commercial buildings to residential use. There were numerous other proposals to either incentivize or require expansion of housing opportunities, both good and bad, that also fell by the wayside.

In the end, only one significant piece of legislation was passed that was flagged by CCAPA for significant engagement. Bill 5474, formally called "An Act Requiring Municipal Reports Concerning Residential Construction Approval to the Office of Responsible Growth" became the vessel for advancing some of the housing and zoning initiatives promoted and supported by House Majority Leader Jason Rojas (D-East Hartford). While the original bill merely required all municipalities to track and report to the State the number of residential building permits approved (and proposed units denied) annually, several floor amendments added a variety of provisions, including:

- A study, convened by the Majority Leader's Roundtable Group, of municipal design review processes for their effect on residential development;

(continued on page 29)



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Legislative Update, cont'd

- Requiring local zoning to allow “as of right” conversion of vacant nursing homes to multifamily housing, subject to public health and safety regulations;
- Requiring OPM to consider the disposition of surplus state land for development of low- and moderate-income housing;
- Changing municipal blight penalties to be based on a property’s square footage rather than a flat amount;
- More explicitly authorizing municipalities to adopt ordinances to regulate the licensing, use, and operation of short-term rental properties;
- Allowing unpaid zoning penalties to be attached to real estate as a lien;
- Awarding 8-30g moratorium points for dwelling units created in response to zoning regulations allowing as-of-right middle housing developments;
- Allowing municipalities to use tax-increment district funding to renovate 8-30g properties in exchange for extension of affordability restrictions;
- Exempting certain vacant lots created by subdivision from subsequent changes to zoning regulations and maps; and
- Specifying that eligible housing units completed before an 8-30g moratorium begins but that were not counted toward moratorium eligibility may be counted toward a subsequent moratorium.

It’s not yet clear precisely how the “as of right” conversions of vacant nursing homes will play out within local regulations, nor has OPM created the reporting document that they will use to track municipal housing permitting. These exciting details will be revealed in the fullness of time, we trust.

Despite the lack of dramatic change, we are grateful to our active Government Relations Committee membership and the team at TCORS Capitol Group for their engagement and assistance throughout the session. As always, if you have questions about CCAPA’s Government Relations Committee or our involvement with the State’s legislative processes (including offering your help or support), please reach out to us by email at ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com. 📧

— *John Guskowski, AICP, is Principal of Tyche Planning & Policy Group, LLC and Co-Chair of CCAPA’s Government Relations Committee.*

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For practicing planners looking for continued progress on important housing, economic development, transportation, or zoning issues, the session was underwhelming.

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Planning Magazine Time Machine

A few years ago, Alan Weiner and I met in Unionville. Alan brought precious cargo...a folder that he had maintained of old *Connecticut Planning* newsletters and the beginnings of what now is the *Connecticut Planning* magazine. Thought it

would be fun to take a peek at some of the things happening around 20 years ago. How times, ideas, and perspectives change! And we continually adapt. Take a look at President Len's message. Our Mike Piscitelli was a student rep. In another issue, the President references a Connecticut planner's camping trip. Something to think about. — Jeanne Davies, AICP



President's Message

My apologies for missing the Foxwoods meeting. While you were enjoying that most amazing facility I was canoeing in northern Maine. Many thanks to Bob Birmingham and Marcia Banach and everyone else who helped organize the meeting. And yes, it is true that Marian Staye and Bruce Hoben have joined Gamblers Anonymous. I also want to thank Bill Voelker, Tom Hooper and Mark Pellegrini for arranging the professional development meeting in Berlin. Everyone who attended received two and onehalf hours of credit toward the AICP Continuing Professional Development Program. If you haven't enrolled yet contact Tom Hooper for more information.

Summer is nearly over and the committees of CCAPA are already working on the coming year's activities. The Legislative and Executive Committees are developing their annual work programs and are anxious to here from the membership. Contact Wendy Johnson if you'd like the chapter involved in any new activities. Ideas regarding state legislation should be directed to Glenn Chalder or Brian Miller.

At the national level, there will be a new executive director due to the retirement of Is Stollman. Rumor has it that at least one candidate is from Connecticut and one used to reside in state.

Mike Piscitelli, our student representative, has graduated and found a job as a planner! Good luck to Mike and congratulations from CCAPA. Mike will be replaced by Jim Barry, who is currently enrolled at CCSU. Jim will work to increase student involvement in the chapter and will be working with the Executive Committee on some new programs.

Don't forget to clear your canaders for this year's New England conference, scheduled for September 30th through October 1st in Burlington, VT. This should be a great conference and I hope to see you there.

Leonard D. Tolsano



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