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Connecticut Chapter

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A Publication of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

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A photograph of a person with long brown hair, wearing a light blue hoodie, sitting in a black and blue Quickie wheelchair. They are on a paved path in a forest, surrounded by tall trees and fallen leaves. The path is bordered by a wooden fence on the left and a wooden curb on the right. A small, illuminated wooden post is visible on the right side of the path.

Advocating for the Disabled in Planning

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hello Fellow Planners and Happy New Year!

I wish to thank all of our members who participated in chapter activities during a very busy fall and early winter of 2018. From another highly successful SNEAPA conference in Hartford, to our annual awards luncheon, to our Start with Planning presentation at CCM's annual conference, Connecticut's planners demonstrated true passion for our work and attention to craft. I continue to be inspired by your ability to connect with people and affect meaningful change.

I trust you also sense a renewed optimism as we head into the new year. According to the January 2019 edition of *Connecticut Economic Digest*, the state added 23,000 non-farm jobs over the past year. Together with a declining unemployment rate and strong sales in key basic industries, Connecticut is making its way back after many years of slow economic performance.

As planners, we are at the forefront of long-term strategy and the very underpinnings of responsible development. Through place-making, sustainable practice, infrastructure investments, and social equity, planners guide the physical development of the state and lay the groundwork for the indirect economic benefits that spin out from basic industrial growth. To give you a sense for our work in action, I would point to a couple of real-time examples — the Mill River Park in Stamford and the economic incentive program for Downtown Manchester.

In Stamford, CCAPA was honored to join local leaders in celebrating the Mill River Park as one of APA's Great Places in America for 2018. The outstanding efforts of the Mill River Partnership, the City of Stamford, and the community of stakeholders all led to the creation of Mill River Park as a distinctive asset for the downtown and the entire city. APA's Great Places in America recognizes unique and exemplary streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces — three essential components of all communities. These authentic places have been shaped by forward-thinking planning that show-

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Cover photo: *Accessibility in Design — Heritage Trail*

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cases affordable transportation options, promotes community involvement and accessibility, and fosters economic opportunity. New developments in Downtown Stamford include a 400-unit apartment building now under construction. For new residents, Mill River Park is their “backyard” and civic amenity.

In Manchester, the Planning and Economic Development team recognized the potential of a traditional center-of-town environment. With a cohesive streetscape and historically significant, multi-story buildings, Downtown Manchester is well-positioned to attract retail and other commercial tenancies as well as new housing for residents at all income levels. The new incentives not only support gap financing for growth, but also serve as a marketing platform to introduce Manchester to a wider audience. I would add that similar work is taking place in Hamden, where economic activity is (finally) spinning out from Quinnipiac University and supporting new retail, restaurants, and even a second hotel in the Centerville section of town; closer to campus, a local craft beer and restaurant relocated to an historic rail building adjacent to the Farmington Canal Greenway.

These efforts, together with many others around Connecticut, are consistent with CCAPA's value-of-place approach to economic growth and talent attraction. This strategy was one of the key takeaways from the 2018 Start with Planning initiative. Following a two-year effort of discovery and policy development, I am very pleased to report that five of our members participated in Governor Lamont's Transition Committee policy

working groups and many of the Start with Planning recommendations were also adopted as part of the final reports for housing, economic development, and transportation. These papers are one piece to the overall re-launch of state government and I strongly encourage all our members to play a meaningful role in the process. There will almost certainly be a call for structural change and bold pivots in our approach to planning at the municipal level. Let's not run from the challenge, but embrace it and then carry out the recommendations.

Change often starts at home and the chapter has some important housekeeping projects in 2019. For starters, we will be launching a new development plan. The plan focuses on many guiding principles. These include supporting the next generation of planners, facilitating the digital transition in planning, and introducing planning as a more central function in state governance. Likewise, we will be holding officer elections in the first part of the year and preparing for our milepost events: the Art of Planning, the Legislative Breakfast, and Hot Topics. I look forward to seeing you at these events and other CCAPA-sponsored activities throughout the year.

On that note, best wishes for 2019 with great planning, implementation, and passion at every step of the journey!

If you would like more information on the many ways CCAPA can assist you in professional practice, please do not hesitate to contact me at (203) 946-2867 or mpiscite@newhavenct.gov. 🏠

— Michael Piscitelli, AICP 

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FROM THE EDITOR

How accessible are your planning meetings to the hearing or visually impaired? How are you encouraging planning processes and development projects that meet the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act, not just the minimum requirements? We hope these are some of the things you ponder as you read this issue regarding planning and design for those with disabilities. Also in this issue are highlights of award-worthy projects, from the Mill River Park in Stamford (which won a Great Places in America award) to our own 2018 CCAPA Awards — please join us in congratulating all of Connecticut's winners on the work they have done to better our communities and state! Finally, our regular "From the Bench" column revisits what constitutes a subdivision.

Have you got an idea for an article? Want to read more about a particular topic? Please get in touch! All suggestions are welcomed. 

— Rebecca Augur



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Advocating for the Disabled in Planning

by Bill Voelker, AICP

During the past year, I've had the pleasure of working with a great group of people dedicated to making the world safer and more accessible for people faced with various physical challenges. We're hoping to increase awareness of accessibility issues among our peers and have spoken at national-, regional-, and chapter-level conferences to narrate our experiences and review the various barriers that limit our ability to fully participate in public life. These efforts are long overdue, especially at the level needed to truly make a difference. Planners are at first obligated by the standards stated within the Ethical Principles in Planning and the AICP Code of Ethics to recognize the rights of all citizens to participate in planning decisions; and while both of these documents speak to promoting "excellence in design," neither mentions accessibility or makes any specific mention of protecting the rights or needs of disabled persons. We can do better.

In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau counted about 56.7 million people — 19 percent of the population — with a disability, with more than half reporting the disability to be severe. These include various physical challenges to mobility,

hearing, sight, and other faculties. Disabled persons are a minority that covers all minorities, and it's actually been a privilege to be among them. Being disabled is part of our cultural identity, but it is a title

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For now, we'll be happy to increase each other's awareness of the various barriers that must be overcome for everyone to be able to share and enjoy the built environment with equal measure.

Advocating for the Disabled, cont'd

that is a miserable label and one that often results in pity, ignorance, segregation, or accommodations that are incomplete, inconvenient, or used by others who have no limitations. Anybody ever use that accessible parking spot for just a few minutes? Well...umm...we need it for the rest of our lives.

Some of us were born this way, some are victims of accidents or illness, and some are veterans wounded in the service of the nation. It is natural for us to strive to overcome the status problem which is a daily affliction for us, so we're trying to stimulate awareness of the multiple challenges which we face and advocate for their resolution. We are members of everyone's extended family, and some of us arrived here sooner than expected, so pay attention.

This journey has enabled me to meet some incredible people who may take longer to cross the street, won't be able to hear as well as everyone else at a public meeting, or be able to see the Powerpoint

presentation made at their local budget hearing. We all share membership of a very exclusive club which prefers to have no new members, but one which tries to welcome anyone needing to join with open arms.

So who remembers their course work in Planning Theory from so many lifetimes ago? You may recall the 1965 article by planning icon Paul Davidoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," in which he encouraged planners to be advocates whose role "would be more than a provider of information, an analyst of current trends, a simulator of future conditions, and a detailer of means. In addition to carrying out these necessary parts of planning, the planner would be a proponent of specific substantive solutions." Davidoff envisioned a process that he referred to as "plural planning" in which multiple parties would write individual plans to represent and argue for multiple points of view. For now, we'll be happy to

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Advocating for the Disabled, cont'd

increase each other's awareness of the various barriers that must be overcome for everyone to be able to share and enjoy the built environment with equal measure.

The Ethical Principles in Planning and the AICP Code of Ethics take from Davidoff and state that planners should be "conscious of the rights of others and give people the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs that may affect them. Participation should be enough to include those who lack formal organization or influence. We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged, and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs." This sounds great, but it doesn't take us close enough. Disability rights are civil rights. It's not likely that the priorities for social activism in 1965 encouraged Davidoff to

consider the needs of disabled persons, or when the original Ethical Principles in Planning was adopted in 1992 — which was translated into the AICP Code of Ethics in 2005 — that the authors considered these needs. The words "disabled" or "handicapped" do not appear in Davidoff or either ethics documents; however, these ethical principles have to be extended and applied to protect the rights of disabled persons.

There are some very practical applications for all of us. Here is the beginning of a checklist that may be helpful:

1. Become an activist during predevelopment discussions with applicants. Think practically and encourage designers to think of access throughout the projects they are presenting to you.
2. Reach beyond the minimum standards set forth within the Americans with Disabilities Act and try to convince an

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Advocating for the Disabled, cont'd

applicant that making their restaurant less noisy for people with hearing loss was their idea, or that the potential adaptive reuse of the former industrial building into a craft brewery with a tasting room really should have more than single-toilet restrooms.

3. Purchase hearing-assistance devices and wireless microphones for use at public meetings and make sure the speaker's platform is accessible.
4. Educate your Public Works Director that handicapped-access sidewalk ramps should never be confused with the removal of snow and stormwater from sidewalk areas. Look around your community and you'll see the obvious.
5. Promote accessibility within the Plan of Conservation and Development, especially for municipal projects which should be evaluated against recommendations within the Plan during the annual capital budget review required under CGS Section 8-24. The Plan is also a great place to promote diversity in parks and recreational facilities with recognition that not everyone's family member can participate in or may choose not to participate in active recreation or competitive sports. The use of public lands is essential to community health and there needs to be something for everyone, especially with the expenditure of public money.
6. Take the time to converse with people who display such limitations and you'll learn much and you'll likely be amazed at who you're going to meet.
7. Be careful with historic preservation: cobbled walks and uneven crushed stone drives have their charm, but they harken back to a time when accessibility was barely an afterthought. Today historic preservationists should include accessibility into their efforts, especially in projects that are also supported with public money.

We assume that most of us were drawn to this profession to be advocates for the public good, and advocacy remains a hallmark of our profession. We hope you've been listening and will begin to prioritize advocacy for those among us who have to overcome various physical challenges each day of our lives. Remember, we are your mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers, and some of us got here sooner than some of you. 🏠

— *Bill Voelker is the Town Planner for the Town of Cheshire, and was previously Town Planner for the Town of Simsbury.*



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Accessible Design

by Phil Barlow, PLA, AICP, LEED AP

I recently had two experiences that drove home the need for universal (accessible) design. The first was spending time with my 85-year-old mother at a beach house in North Carolina. She is amazingly spry for a woman of her age, but nevertheless, mobility can be a challenge. The house we rented at first glance was well-equipped with railings and safety features, but upon helping my mom down the steps she encountered railings at uneven and changing heights and not enough room between the wall and rail to get a good grasp. A fall for an elderly person can be devastating and a life-changing experience; many never fully recover. So, it was terrifying each time we left the house. Little things can make a big difference.

I also was made very aware that for many, ramps are much easier to negotiate than steps. As able-bodied people we tend to think of ramps as solely for wheelchairs and baby carriages but for the elderly and anyone with mobility issues, a ramp is usually much safer and less exhausting to climb.

Stable walking surfaces cannot be taken for granted. Gravel, heaved pavers, bricks, cobbles, settled concrete walks, all are a challenge to negotiate and a slip can mean a trip to the emergency room. In addition, stamina in the elderly is greatly diminished. Those lovely benches that we show on site plans and specify now become a necessity when walking for any distance or duration as frequent rest stops are required.

My second experience was more personal. A bout with kidney stones had me on the way to the emergency room. Getting to the car and into the doctor's exam room was extremely uncomfortable. I could not walk 20 yards without resting and even lifting my feet beyond a shuffle was difficult. Stepping over a curb was like climbing a mountain and steps were almost insurmountable. In that short walk I found myself nervously scanning the route ahead for anything that might impede my progress or worse, lay me flat

out on the ground.

As my friend Bill DeMaio (Newton Parks Superintendent) often says, if we live long enough, each of us will experience mobility challenges in our lifetime. As landscape architects and planners, we have the ability to make the world a bit more accommodating for everyone, not just the young and spry.

Following are ten best practices and areas of accessible site design that are often overlooked:

1. A sloped walk or ramp should begin at the bottom of a set of steps and end at the top, so that a user is not inconvenienced.
2. Accessible parking spaces should be as close to the building entrance as possible. Walking with a mobility or visually impaired person is a challenge in any area, but walking through a busy parking lot where it's not unusual to have to avoid vehicles is dangerous.
3. Accessible routes should be constructed with a firm, stable material that will not heave or be displaced (not pavers!).

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Universal design has made great strides in the 27 years since the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is up to us as designers to make sure that sites comply with not only the requirements but the intent as well.

Accessible Design, cont'd

4. Some materials meet the standard for an accessible surface (firm, stable) when constructed but require a lot of maintenance to continue to be accessible over time. Stone dust walks, brick/paver plazas, and wood fiber playground surfacing certainly fall into this category.
5. Wheelchair spaces are required adjacent to benches and must have a clear, flat area. Best practices for benches are that they have a back and arms so that physically challenged individuals can easily sit and stand from a seated position.
6. If a drainage structure falls within an accessible path then the openings in the metal grate can be no larger than one half inch in width.
7. Any dropoff area must also have a designated passenger loading zone that is striped and is accessed via a curb ramp.
8. Tables must have a wheelchair space free of seating, so that a person in a wheelchair can access the table.
9. At least one accessible parking space on a site must be a van-accessible space. In other words, if only one space is required, it must be a van-accessible space.
10. All accessible paths and parking areas must have a clear vertical clearance of 98 inches.

Good intentions are one thing but reality can be quite different. With site accessibility we are typically dealing with concrete, asphalt, and other crude bulk materials. Often the greater challenge is insuring that the intent of the plans can be carried out. For instance, an accessible parking space has a maximum slope of 5 inches over 20 feet. This is almost imperceivable to the eye and not easy for a site contractor to achieve especially with asphalt (which is why more designers are specifying concrete). At this point there is no waiver for a slightly non-complying surface. It has to be removed and reconstructed, usually at great expense.

Universal design has made great strides in the 27 years since the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is up to us as designers to make sure that sites comply with not only the requirements but the intent as well. With Smart Levels, which can easily check the slope of a ramp, parking space etc., advocacy groups often review a completed site. We are increasingly being held accountable and rightly so. Thankfully the days of accessibility being considered a luxury are long gone and the needs of our mobility-challenged friends, neighbors, and colleagues are being addressed. ■

— Phil Barlow, ASLA is the founder and Principal of *To Design*. He is a licensed landscape architect and certified planner, and serves as the Chair of the Connecticut State Board of Landscape Architects.



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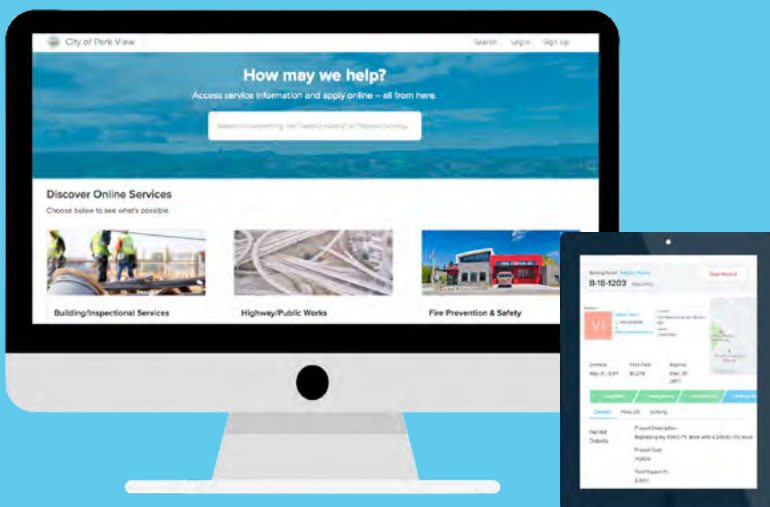
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Complete Streets and People with Disabilities

by Al Sylvestre, AICP

Walking or bicycling to work without competition from speeding motorists is just one benefit of the Complete Streets movement that is making its effects felt in Connecticut. Since the passage of 2009 legislation, the state Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) and its advisors continue working to bring safer commuting together with transit-oriented development (TOD) to Connecticut's cities and towns. This article takes a brief look at how two cities and one suburb applied Complete Streets principles that benefit residents, including people with disabilities. This approach to Complete Streets is essential because our streets cannot be complete unless everyone in the community is included.

Complete Streets means designing and operating streets that are safe for all users including pedestrians, people with disabilities, and public transit users, as well as motorized and non-motorized vehicle operators.



Complete Streets means designing and operating streets that are safe for all users, including pedestrians, people with disabilities, and public transit users, as well as motorized and non-motorized vehicle operators. Design elements that make streets safer for everyone include center medians with trees and vegetation that encourage motorists to travel at safe speeds; curb extensions to shorten crosswalk distances; and so-called road diets that reduce the number of travel lanes while adding parking or bicycle lanes to bring travel speeds closer together. Some

places in Britain and European countries even have streets with no sidewalks where design speeds for motor vehicles and pedestrians are very close to one another.

According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, universal access to safe movement through Complete Streets incorporates these elements:

- Community-based vision of what it wants Complete Streets to achieve;
- Inclusion of all users, human and motorized, regardless of age and ability;

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Complete Streets, cont'd

- A comprehensive and integrated street network for all transportation modes;
- The latest and best design standards with flexibility to balance user needs;
- Complete Streets that respect community character;
- Performance standards with measurable outcomes; and
- Inclusion of specific steps for policy implementation.

The Tri-State (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut) Transportation Campaign cites these examples of Complete Streets' benefits:

- **Support for improved quality of life in residential neighborhoods:** The New York City Department of Transportation's Complete Streets redesign of Prospect Park West in Brooklyn added a protected bike lane and pedestrian islands while removing one automobile lane (a road diet). Before the redesign,

74% of cars were speeding and 46% of cyclists were riding on the sidewalk. The redesign made for a 73% reduction in the number of speeding cars and 93.5% fewer cyclists using sidewalks.

- **Lower transportation costs:** According to Reconnecting America, the typical American household spends 19% of its income on transportation. In places with Complete Streets, these costs can be 9% of household income — a 53% reduction.
- **Improved mobility for older residents:** An analysis by the Tri-State Transportation Campaign finds that people older than 60 in Connecticut — who constitute 19% of its population — account for 36% of all pedestrian fatalities; Complete Streets can reduce that disparity.

With its compact downtown, New Britain is suited to Complete Streets design. The CTfastrak terminus on Columbus Boulevard motivates developers to bring residential and commercial land

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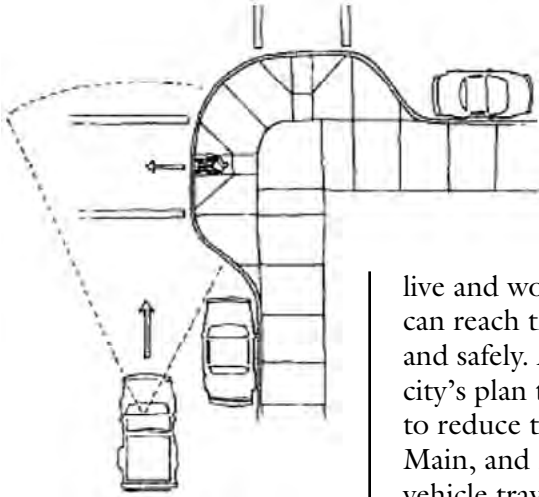
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Complete Streets, cont'd

uses to the city. Civic assets such as Central Park, Trinity on Main, City Hall, and Central Connecticut State University's Institute of Technology and Business Development Center are within

three blocks of one another, a human scale conducive to walking and cycling. With CTfastrak, CT Transit bus service, and nearby public parking as transportation options, people — with and without disabilities — who

live and work in downtown New Britain can reach their destinations conveniently and safely. An integral component of the city's plan to revitalize Central Park was to reduce the intersection of Main, West Main, and Bank Streets from five motor-vehicle travel lanes to three motor-vehicle and one bicycle travel lane. New Britain's downtown is benefiting from not only new development projects, but also from improved accessibility for current and future residents.



In New Haven, Transit-Oriented Development, along with medical science and technology, combine to provide economic development opportunities on the former Route 34 expressway right of way. Downtown Crossing is a three-phase infrastructure and development project to encourage new economic development as well as increase foot and bicycle traffic and reconnect neighborhoods through implementation of Complete Streets elements including wide sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signals, protected bike lanes, and landscaping.

West Hartford recently spent \$800,000 on bike lane pavement markings, including sharrows advising motorists that they are sharing the road on nine miles of town streets; installation of 98 textured sidewalk ramps for pedestrian safety and 1.6 miles of sidewalk; and, 64 crosswalk enhancements. Since 2003, West Hartford also installed dozens of miles of traffic-calming medians with trees and plantings as well as intersection-narrowing sidewalk curb extensions to reduce pedestrian crossing distances. These quality-of-life enhancements make West Hartford a safer place to live, work, and enjoy recreation for its residents and visitors.

In addition to the design, placement, and construction of Complete Streets elements, West Hartford has a robust method of engaging people with disabilities in the installation and adjustment of traffic signals, including their audible components. The department of public works recruits people with disabilities for the field-testing of audible signals for their intensity as well as their ability to stand out among the multiple sound sources present in the area. The public works director recently gave a presentation at the regular meeting of the West Hartford Commission on Persons With Disabilities in which he discussed traffic signal operation and planned audible signal upgrades as well as sidewalk construction materials and their maintenance (commission members brought up the subject of broken pavers as a nuisance and possible danger to wheelchair and cane users).

Transportation safety and economic development are the most significant

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Complete Streets, cont'd

benefits Complete Streets offer; however, the benefits to people with disabilities are also important. State agencies, regional planning organizations, and municipal officials play important roles in making Complete Streets work for everyone.

As the preceding examples show, Connecticut's municipalities offer a variety of contexts in which Complete Streets can lay the groundwork for economic vitality and accessible public realms. 🏡

— Al Sylvestre is a geographer with the Connecticut Department of Labor.

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Stamford's Mill River Park named one of the "Great Places in America"

by Vineeta Mathur



*Stamford Mill River Park
— Pizza in the Park*

Mill River Park in Stamford was among the recipients of the Great Places in America Award for the year 2018. The honor was well deserved for a public park which has become an indelible part of the urban life of Stamford. The park offers an incredible place for all of Stamford's residents and visitors to gather, play, and enjoy nature while being in the center of a thriving downtown. It has spurred investment in new housing, supported the expansion of the University of Connecticut, and connected Stamford's neighborhoods along and across the River.

The creation of the Park took a bold vision, innovative design, public-private collaboration, and environmental stewardship by Stamford's residents. The park epitomizes the power of good planning and collaboration and the impact of urban parks on the vitality of cities.

The park runs along the lower reaches of Rippowam River, also known as the Mill River, in southwest Connecticut. Historically the Mill River served as a freight conduit for a range of mills starting with the first grist mill established in 1641.

While the last mill closed in 1940, the waterway was still intercepted by several dams and caused widespread flooding over the years, particularly in 1955 and 1972. In 1997, under the leadership of then Mayor Dannell Malloy, the City began the process of reclaiming the river and the riparian land with a vision to restore environmental balance, prevent large economic losses due to flooding, and create a beautiful urban park.

The City collaborated with the Trust for Public Land for land acquisition and to engage with the community during the visioning process. The success of the implementation relied on multiple sources of financing including city funds, matching federal and state funds, a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, along with private and corporate donations. Thus the collective efforts of various organizations and individuals led to the change of the waterway from an industrial channel to an artery that is now breathing life into Stamford's downtown.

The City commissioned and adopted a Mill River Corridor Plan which would

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*Left: Inauguration of the Steve and Alexander Cohen Ice Skating Rink.
Above: The Playground at Mill River Park.*

Mill River Park, cont'd

guide the creation of the park. The plan for the Mill River Corridor, prepared by Sasaki Associates, laid out a vibrant vision for the river, the park, and the surrounding community. The creative park design allowed for a variety of experiences including large events, a quiet stroll on a path lined by cherry trees, a hike along the river, as well as many activities for kids. The landscape was carefully designed to foster diverse vegetation and restore the ecology of the river. One of the key recommendations of the Sasaki plan was to create a public-private partnership that could lead and manage this massive effort. This partnership was realized in the form of the Mill River Park Collaborative, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. The formation of the Mill River Park Collaborative facilitated a true public-private partnership which was critical to accomplish this monumental task. The Mill River Collaborative has since led the development and management of the Park, attracted funds to complete capital projects, and organized a plethora of multi-cultural events.

The first project within the Mill River Corridor Plan was the Mill River Playground, designed in collaboration with Olin Partnership and Leathers & Associ-

ates. The construction of the playground was a wonderful community effort completed over the course of a week with the help of 1,500 volunteers from across the city. A beautiful wildflower garden now invites visitors to the playground and is prominently visible from U.S. Route 1. A Milkweed waystation in the wildflower garden attracts flutters of Monarch butterflies on their migration to the South. The river and the park continue to serve as a lab for local students to learn about the river's ecology, vegetation, and wildlife through programs for all grade levels and a paid summer internship program for high school students called "Mill River Stewards." Other signature features of the park include a Carousel which opened in 2017 and a brand new ice-skating rink which will transform into a water fountain in warmer weather.

The park has been host to numerous well-attended events including the annual Halloween Party, Pizza in the Park, Oc-toBeerfest, Winter Wonderland & Holiday Market, Kite Festival, Food Festival, Corn-Hole League, movie nights, and weekly summer events for kids. These events serve as excellent melting pots for the community, local businesses, and

(continued on page 18)



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The park has been host to numerous well attended events including the annual Halloween Party, Pizza in the Park, OctoBeerfest, Winter Wonderland & Holiday Market, Kite Festival, Food Festival, Corn-Hole League, movie nights and weekly summer events for kids.

Mill River Park, cont'd

organizations, with each event raising more awareness for the incredible resources that the park and the river provide. Outdoor fitness classes during the summer months including Yoga, Zumba, and other fitness boot-camps, providing a fun way to mingle with fellow residents and stay fit. Year-round facilities and events managed by the Collaborative make the park a desirable destination for all ages and interests.

The development of the park was complemented by the creation of a "Mill River Design" Zoning District by the Zoning Board of the City. The Mill River Design district provides incentives to revitalize the privately held land located close to the river while dedicating public access when the property fronted on the river.

We remain enthusiastic as future phases of the Mill River Corridor Plan expand the park to a total of 31 acres and three miles, reinvigorate the land along the corridor with new development, and create even more amenities for Stamford

(continued on page 19)

CCAPA President Michael Piscitelli (far right) with local dignitaries at a ceremony celebrating the recognition of Mill River Park by APA as one of America's Great Places.



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Falling into Winter

Mill River Park, cont'd

residents to enjoy. The Great Places award reinforces the necessity of places where people can gather, recreate, and enjoy public life in our ever-segmented world, and inspires planners to keep investing in high quality public spaces to keep pace with our growing communities. ■

— *Vineeta Mathur is an Associate Planner for the City of Stamford and works on current and long-term planning and zoning initiatives.*

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CCAPA Mourns the Loss of Dan Tuba

It is with great sadness that we report on the passing of **Dan Tuba**. Dan was one of Connecticut's most accomplished municipal planners and a longstanding leader of our organization. A mentor to all of us, Dan's steady presence and professional work for the Chapter, and the Town of Monroe, will have a lasting impact. CCAPA extends its heartfelt sympathies to Susan Tuba and Dan's entire family.

Daniel Tuba was born on December 14, 1949 in Bridgeport, the son of Andrew and Irene Boros Tuba. He worked for many years as the town planner for the Town of Monroe. Dan was also active for many years in the leadership of the CT Chapter of the American Planning Association, and served as chairman of the Southern New England Planning Conference. In his spare time, Dan enjoying traveling with his wife, bowling, and playing softball. He was an avid New York Yankees, New York Giants, and UConn Huskies fan. Dan was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend who will be truly missed by all who knew him. In addition to his beloved wife Sue of 46 years, he is survived by his two adored sons, Chris Tuba and his wife Colleen of Milford, and Greg Tuba and his partner Sandi Dube of New Jersey; and his three cherished grandsons, Derek, Bryce, and Ethan. Memorial contributions can be made to either the Monroe Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 691, Monroe, CT 06029 or to the Diana Donald Scholarship Fund, 2 Jonathan Drive, Ellington, CT 06029 (checks made out to "Treasurer, CCAPA").

Knowing how much planning meant to Dan, all colleagues are encouraged to extend your personal condolences to the family. Online remembrances may be made at www.abriola.com.



CCAPA 2018 Awards

Every year CCAPA recognizes planning excellence through its awards program. This year's winners were celebrated in December at the Annual Awards Luncheon and are featured below.

PHYSICAL PLANNING AWARD

Town of Manchester Center Springs Park Master Plan

Center Springs Park is a critical node and an important element of revitalization efforts for central Manchester. However, lack of visibility, poor physical connectivity to adjacent districts, and limited internal park amenities and programming hinder the park's use. The Master Plan for Center Springs Park was a physical planning project that addressed challenges and identified physical enhancements to improve park connectivity, visibility, amenities, and core programming to attract users to the Park. In addition, the Plan provided Town policy makers and staff with a blueprint for implementing various enhancements in an efficient, equitable, and cost-effective manner so that the Park may continue its legacy as an important Town asset and destination.



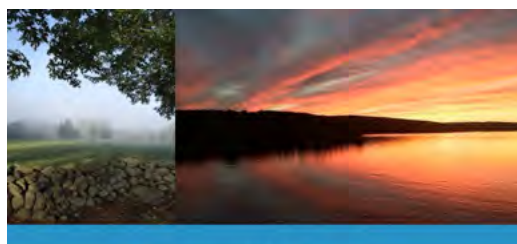
CENTER SPRINGS PARK MASTER PLAN 2018



MEDIA AWARD

Catherine Hewitt, *Westerly Sun*

Over the past two years, Catherine Hewitt of the *Westerly Sun* has done an amazing job of covering implementation actions within the POCD and planning-related issues primarily in Pawcatuck, one of Stonington's villages. Through the *Sun's* thorough coverage and focused editorials, the community was informed and engaged to influence community leaders in making public policy decisions. Her ability to present complex zoning topics in simple terms is unquestionably an incredible asset to the community. In addition, her skills in telling the story within the appropriate context and from the perspective of her readership — devoid of sensationalism, drama or bias — demonstrate the depth of her commitment to journalism and the media.



Town of Haddam Plan of Conservation and Development

Adopted December 7, 2017
Effective January 23, 2018



PLANNING AWARD

Town of Haddam POCD Planning Committee

The Town of Haddam POCD Planning Committee aimed to create a [Plan](#) that the community would identify with on many levels by being easy to read and navigate, meaningful and useful to Haddam's residents, and straightforward to implement. To accomplish this, the Committee created a plan structured around the "places of Haddam," focusing on the village centers and surrounding rural areas and the role these areas would



play in the future development of the Town. In addition to an implementation plan calling out specific action items, the POCD included a framework for governance and implementation by establishing a specific process for annual reviews and public reporting on progress made toward implementation. Furthermore, the layout, graphics, and presentation of the POCD were distinctive and intuitively easy to follow.



REVITALIZATION PLANNING AWARD

City of Meriden for the Meriden Downtown

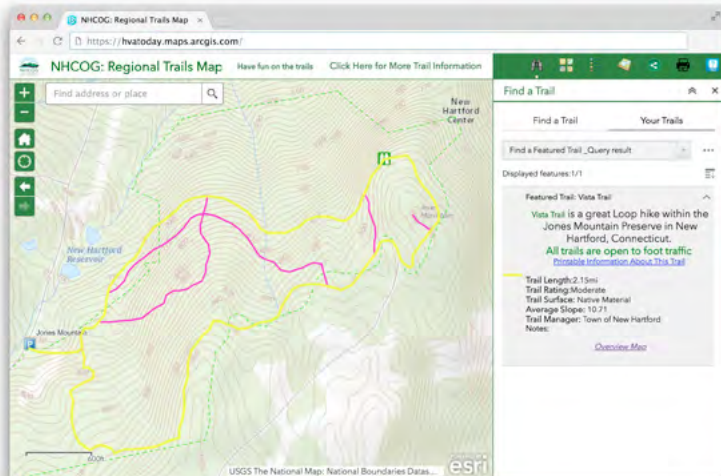
Meriden's downtown is experiencing a renaissance thanks to persistence and a commitment by its leaders and the community over many decades. While numerous downtown plans have developed, the "Meriden 2020" initiative has resulted in recent success. The Meriden Green, completed in 2016, transformed a former brownfield site into a 14-acre park and flood detention basin located in the heart of downtown. One of the primary reasons for



REGIONAL PLANNING AWARD

Northwest Hills Council of Governments

The Northwest COG's innovative and interactive Regional Trail Map is an excellent example of a successful planning process. Using ConnDOT funds and collaborating with numerous partners through a broad-based Regional Trail Committee, the project resulted in an innovative and useful online Regional Trail Map, related planning resources to promote regional economic devel-



the success of this \$14 million project was the public engagement in plans for the site, which also freed up new land for mixed-use economic development. In addition, the City successfully collaborated with local, state, and federal investors to develop a new multi-modal transit center along the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail corridor. As commuter rail service expanded, three downtown mixed-use development projects were under construction or completed in 2018, with over 230 mixed-income housing units and 8,000 square feet of commercial space.




opment and public health, and a vision for developing a statewide Trailfinder website. In addition to the map of 540 miles of public walking trails in the region, a trail connectivity assessment was performed and future trail network priorities were identified. As noted in its Regional Transportation Plan, the Northwest COG understands it is in the collective best interest of the Region to enhance awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities for residents, businesses, and visitors not just for the benefits to quality of life, but for direct economic benefits.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD

City of Norwich and Uncas Leap Steering Committee

Legend has it that the Mohegan Sachem Uncas successfully leapt across the rocky gorge over the Yantic River in Downtown Norwich, while the pursuing Narragansett warriors fell to their deaths on the jagged rocks below. The grassroots effort to preserve the Uncas Leap battle site began ten years ago, when a local real estate agent and former state representative recognized the historical value and significance of what was then a blighted



property in the Downtown. They formed the Uncas Leap Steering Committee with collaboration from the Mohegan Tribe, City representatives, neighbors, and the Norwich Historical society. With assistance from a series of grants, the Committee studied the property, conducted a very successful charrette, and won the commitment of additional partners. After the City purchased the property for back taxes in 2010, the Committee developed the Uncas Leap Heritage Park Master Plan, which secured state bond funding for implementation. With its observation decks, kayak dock, trails, story-telling amphitheater, mill ruins and other features, the Uncas Leap Heritage Park is a new significant heritage tourism destination in Connecticut. 

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From the Bench



by Christopher J. Smith, Esquire, Alter & Pearson, LLC

Revisiting What Constitutes a “Subdivision” Under Section 8-18

The last time that the Connecticut Supreme Court had occasion to interpret the definition of “subdivision” in Section 8-18 of the Connecticut General Statutes was in 1971 with *McCann v. Town Plan & Zoning Commission*, 161 Conn. 65 (1971). In 1971, many of those reading this column, as my father liked to say, “weren’t even a thought yet.” The rest of us were probably struggling in math class with “long division.”



Almost 50 years after *McCann*, we have a decision by the Court in *Cady v. Zoning Board of Appeals of the Town of Burlington*, 330 Conn. 502 (2018), revisiting this definition as applied to a fairly involved lot line reconfiguration concerning three existing lots.

Section 8-18 provides that “‘subdivision’ means the division of a tract or parcel of land into three or more parts or lots made subsequent to the adoption of subdivision regulations... for the purpose, whether immediate or future, of sale or building development...” In *McCann*, the Court held that combining (i.e., merging) two lots into one lot does not constitute a “subdivision” under this definition. Three lots weren’t created; therefore, no “subdivision” — fairly straightforward.

In *Cady* and an earlier decision by our Appellate Court in *Goodridge v. Zoning Board of Appeals*, 58 Conn. App. 760; cert. denied, 254 Conn.

930 (2000), the Courts were confronted with whether reconfiguring lot lines associated with existing lots, where no new lots are created, qualifies as a “subdivision” under Section 8-18. In both cases the trial courts held that the lot line adjustments constituted a “subdivision.” In both cases, the trial courts were reversed.

In *Goodridge*, the trial court held that the transfer of 0.005 acres from one lot to another lot was a “subdivision.” The Appellate Court reversed, holding “[a] minor lot line adjustment between two existing lots, whereby no new lot is created, does not constitute a ‘subdivision’ as defined by Section 8-18 and, thus, does not require municipal approval.” *Id.*, at pp. 765-766. (Remember the phrase, “minor lot line adjustment.”)

Fast forward to *Cady* where, commencing in 1959, four conforming lots were subject to various takings, conveyances, and acquisitions by the State and between the lot owners. The result was that the four conforming lots were reduced to three conforming lots. By 2014, title to the three lots was vested in one owner. This owner sought to file a map whereby the lot lines associated with the three lots would be significantly (my word) adjusted. (See map that the Court published with the decision.) The proposed lot line modifications did not result in the creation of any new lot.

The Zoning Enforcement Officer determined that since the three lots were conforming lots and no new

lots were created, the proposed map did not constitute a “subdivision.” A neighbor appealed the ZEO’s decision to the Zoning Board of Appeals, which upheld the ZEO’s determination.

On appeal, the trial court reversed the ZBA’s decision. The trial court held that the lot line modifications were not “minor” as in *Goodridge*, and that three new lots were created. Therefore, the proposal was not a minor lot line adjustment, but a “subdivision” under Section 8-18.

The Supreme Court reversed, holding that the substantial evidence of the record supported the ZBA’s decision that the proposed lot line adjustments to the existing three lots didn’t create any new lot. The Court further held that whether the lot line adjustments were minor or not is not relevant. The sole question is: does the proposal result in the division of a “tract or parcel of land” into three or more new “parts or lots”? If not, then there is no “subdivision” under Section 8-18 requiring municipal approval.

In conclusion, a lot line adjustment proposal may be fairly convoluted and appear to require some sort of review and approval. However, unless three new “parts or lots” result from the lot line adjustment, then you don’t have a “subdivision” under Section 8-18. ■

— Christopher Smith is an attorney with Alter & Pearson, LLC. He can be reached at (860) 652-4020 or csmith@alterpearson.com.