Summer 2013

# CONNECTICUT PLANNING

American Planning Association
Connecticut Chapter
*Making Great Communities Happen*

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## Resilience Planning

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MAKING GREAT COMMUNITIES HAPPEN

On the cover: Hurricne storm surge on Route 1 in Groton, CT. Photo: Poggiosantos, Wikimedia Commons.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Winters come and go around here, often with little fanfare; nonetheless us New Englanders love to talk (and complain) about them. It seems that more recently things have changed. Weather has started to make some noticeable impacts on the way we do business.

Of note, it seems to be causing some leaders to rethink some of the practices that we have developed over the past half century or so. As planners, it is important for us to be ahead of that curve. To recognize trends and to prepare decision-makers and the public for ideas that are likely not going to be well received. To that end, I hope this issue provides you with some food for thought. Some ideas can be further tested and developed, with the goal of enabling the communities that you work with to develop strategies that will return our discussions and fascinations with the weather to just a mere curiosity and five-second talking point.

Now for some housekeeping. The chapter's awards committee, led by Val Ferro and a talented squad of planners, will begin soliciting nominations for awards soon. Keep your eyes open for the notice and numerous reminders that are always sent along. Awards are an important part of the work we do. We need to celebrate the good work, the good plans, and implementation that are making Connecticut a better state. As always, I am reaching out to you here to compel you to find those candidates, those projects, ideas, and plans that need to be recognized and celebrated. Without your help they may never be discovered. So please take a moment to help us out.

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On a national perspective, many of our members have returned from the National Planning Conference in Chicago, Illinois. Chicago serves as the headquarters for the American Planning Association and I think that the conference lived up to, or exceeded, the expectations of those that were able to make the trip. It even snowed for a couple of minutes and a couple of major storms impacted people travelling to and from the conference.

(*continued on page 4*)


## 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 Rebecca Augur, AICP (contact information below).

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## FROM THE EDITOR

State and town crews have worked through the winter and spring to restore Connecticut's beaches following Irene and Sandy's pounding, and most are fully open and ready for summer. As the dust — or sand, as it were — continues to settle, many communities are beginning to shift their thoughts from disaster recovery to planning for resilience and sustainability in order to better withstand increasingly frequent and extreme climatic events. To that end, I hope this issue provides inspiration for ways to incorporate resilience planning ideas into ongoing community planning efforts. In some cases, it's not about employing new planning techniques; rather, it's about helping elected officials and the public understand the value of integrated planning efforts in building more sustainable and resilient communities.

This issue features articles that offer guiding principles for all communities in resilience planning, gleaned from the experience of the Town of Groton's climate adaptation planning and implementation efforts, The Nature Conservancy's work with coastal and inland communities, the Greater Bridgeport Regional Council's multi-faceted, regional approach to building resilience, and academic research on social and cultural traditions and the common-sense wisdom often embedded in them. In addition, you can learn about the Envision Rating System — a new tool for improving infrastructure sustainability — and find resources for other tools that may facilitate public education and/or adaptation planning in your community.

The theme for our fall issue will focus on Connecticut's changing demographics and their implications for land use and community planning. Please get in touch if you have ideas/suggestions for articles, especially if your community's demographic trends are bucking recent statewide trends.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy those beaches and your summer!

— Rebecca Augur

**In some cases, it's not about employing new planning techniques; rather, it's about helping elected officials and the public understand the value of integrated planning efforts in building more sustainable and resilient communities.**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, CONTINUED

I went to several good sessions, including one entitled "The Parking Revolution" that talked about large-scale changes to off-street parking standards across the U.S. Apparently my Bill Haase-inspired "Viva la Revolución!!" call to action fell on some deaf ears, but I say "here, here." My fixation with off-street parking is due to our profession's fixation with off-street parking. <begin rant> We need to get over it. </end rant>

I will note that I have now been to eight national conferences and this conference had the largest number of students and young professionals that I have ever seen attend. This has to bode well for a profession that has seen local graduate programs eliminated (URI) or fail to gain significant traction (UConn, CCSU). This also reaffirms my commitment to the Young Planners program that we have held, organized by Khara Dodds and Chris Canna, and integrated into the regional conference as a mentoring lunch program. These Young Planners programs are equally about matching new professionals with seasoned ones. If you are good at what you do, we need you to help these younger folks learn from you, so show up when you see them posted.

President-elect Emily Moos and I attended the leadership program that is required of all APA Chapters and Divisions. We are working to align the election processes of all of the different groups and agencies into one process. Sounds simple but is proving to be challenging. CCAPA is supporting this effort, which should reduce some confusion and save APA national some money. We will keep you informed as the process unfolds. Also, if you are in a division and are interested in a leadership role in the organization, then please let me or Emily know. APA national is trying to develop stronger partnerships between chapters and divisions and none of our members are in a division leadership position.

The Southern New England (SNEAPA) Planning Conference is gearing up again. This year the Massachusetts Chapter is hosting the conference in Worcester, Mass. Most of you probably already know how SNEAPA works, but here is a nickel overview: The conference rotates annually through the three southern New England states (CT, MA, RI). Each state forms a host committee when it is their turn, which is augmented with volunteers from the other chapters. Connecticut is fortunate to have the dynamic duo of Heidi Samokar and Dan Tuba working on these conferences. They did an awesome job with the Hartford Conference and I probably failed to recognize that in the last issue.

Dan has been at this a little longer than…well, he has been at this a while, and is always able to remind people about some of the sticky parts of this business operation (it costs about $100,000 to run the conference — without fruit for breakfast). Heidi brings a ton of creativity and stick-to-it-iveness that is no match for anyone else that I have seen involved in this program. Please do me two favors: 1) register early — they need to know how many people are coming to pull this off; and 2) thank Dan, Heidi, and the others that are involved when you see them.

Last, but not least, have you seen the new website? I think I stopped talking about it for a little while because doing it right took longer than we ever anticipated (plus the company we hired went out of business). I think it looks great, the user interface makes sense, and it has updated information. Special thanks to Rebecca Augur, our Communications Committee chair, and Emily Moos, the past chair, for making that happen, and to Shawna Kitzman and Ben Henson for their help in keeping the site current and evolving.

That's probably more of a message than Jeff Mills gave me room for, so I will bid you a good summer.

— Jason A. Vincent, AICP

# Community Resilience: Planning Wisely for the Future with Smart Decisions Today

*by Adam Whelchel, Ph.D., Director of Science, The Nature Conservancy in CT*

Change is inevitable; how we plan for it will make all the difference. This chestnut of wisdom is arguably the core tenet of how we as a civil society should and will eventually approach the very real challenges we face. As the series of unforgettable and regrettable extreme weather events in the United States continues to climb — 25 catastrophes with over $1 billion dollar in insured losses each in the last 3 years — there remains little doubt amongst those responsible for balancing economic growth, public safety and the environment with risk reduction and resilience that our actions today will define our legacy for future generations. A fundamental question therefore surfaces: what can we do collectively as a society, as a state, and as municipalities to adapt to this change in a sustainable manner that benefits those people we will never meet but are depending on our decisions today?


## Urgency and Need

While this is certainly a valid and poignant question there is a precursor that evokes centuries of previous planning decisions: what have we already done to adapt or not in our neighborhoods, towns and cities? Here in Connecticut we have experienced an unprecedented series of events in the last few years including the rains of March 2010, Tropical Storm Irene (2011), Halloween Nor'easter (2011), Winter Storm Nemo, and of course Storm Sandy (2012). This sequence of extreme events interspersed with alarming heat waves and droughts has provided a "stress test," if you will, on those centuries of decisions and has served to remind us that there is further need for creative and forward looking planning and design to reduce the risk from the next event and improve overall resilience in our communities. Let us not forget that 2013 is the 75th anniversary of the 1938 Long Island Express; a Category 3 hurricane with a 75 year reoccurrence frequency. It really isn't a question of "if," it is a question of how many and how frequent and what we do to prepare and mitigate.

## Solutions Framework

A logical solutions-framework to this on-going challenge in any community (inland to coastal, urban to rural) includes three key steps. First and foremost there is a critical need to conduct comprehensive assessments of the exposure and vulnerability (i.e., risk) for all hazards (i.e., wind, ice, heat, flooding, tornados, sea level rise, etc.) within a given community. Comprehensive in the sense that impacts — both positive and negative — be assessed for all planning sectors such as economic development and business stability, infrastructure, demographics and distribution, human health and safety, environmental viability, and conservation. This assessment should also catalogue all existing community strengths ranging from improved emergency operation centers and communication systems to low impact development and open space protection.

*(continued on page 6)*

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## Community Resilience, cont'd

Of critical importance is to accurately portray and communicate immediate and longer-term risks to your community.

These are the actions your community has already taken to increase resilience knowingly or not. Armed with this type of assessment, the second step is a systematic identification of choices available to address each of the challenges as well as the relative benefits and costs of that action or not. The third step is often the most challenging, but vital to ensure your community takes the "right" action. This, of course, is the prioritization of actions to reduce risk and improve resilience. These elements ideally involve a participatory, community-driven, facilitated process, such as the one available through The Nature Conservancy here in Connecticut, in short: risk/strength assessment, choice identification, prioritized actions.

Without a concerted commitment to all three steps there is a great propensity for an ongoing series of reactive and unconnected actions, after natural disasters versus before, that will likely "fix" singular issue (i.e., protect one house, intersection, culvert) but fail to address the larger community-wide issues (i.e., "at-risk" neighborhoods, transportation networks, business communications systems, business corridors, open space/park systems). As planners, this is a grave concern because it leaves much of the underlining threats to the longer term viability of the communities we serve unresolved. The great tragedy of course is that the existing risk in a community is often a legacy of previous reactive responses that have handicapped decision flexibility and deferred costs to today.

### Guiding Principles

In the current post-Irene and Sandy context here in Connecticut, The Nature Conservancy solidified a number of proactive risk reduction and resiliency principles to guide the three steps of the solutions-framework above.

Of critical importance is to **accurately portray and communicate immediate and longer-term risks to your community**. For inland communities and regional planning organizations here in Connecticut this will include accounting for the impacts of changing precipitation intensity and frequency, increased droughts, and extended heat waves. At a minimum this information should be factored into Plans of Conservation and Development, Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans, ordinances and other foundational, community documents, permit conditions, capital expenditures, and budget planning efforts.

**Consider and integrate knowledge of likely future impacts for new or rebuilt infrastructure.** Existing infrastructure that fails due to natural disasters or age should be rebuilt with measures in place to accommodate future risks. Most power plants, hospitals, bridges, roads, sewage treatment plants, pump stations, pipes, culverts and other critical infrastructure have design lifetimes of decades. According to a study by the Urban Lands Institute there is a staggering $2 trillion replacement cost in the U.S. for infrastructure reaching the end of planned life cycles. The best available science tells us that in the Northeast we should expect more extreme rain events (i.e., increased inches per 24 hours), severe heat waves (i.e., increased days over 90 and 100 degrees), and expansion of federal flood zones over those timeframes. These changes should be reflected in the design and siting of new and rebuilt infrastructure.

**Utilize natural infrastructure as an effective long-term solution to make people, infrastructure and natural systems less vulnerable.** While risk reduction actions will vary based on local situation, there is a growing recognition that natural infrastructure — wetlands, forests, floodplains — can provide a cost effective means of helping to reduce risk in communities. This can include augmenting existing natural resources and habitats to enhance flood mitigation and ecosystem services; creating new habitat such as larger artificial wetlands for onsite infiltration and storage; and integrating natural systems and low impact development techniques (i.e., porous pavement, stormwater gardens, bio-swales, etc.) into existing and future development and redevelopment. Economically important co-benefits from an emphasis on natural infrastructure include services such

(*continued on page 8)*

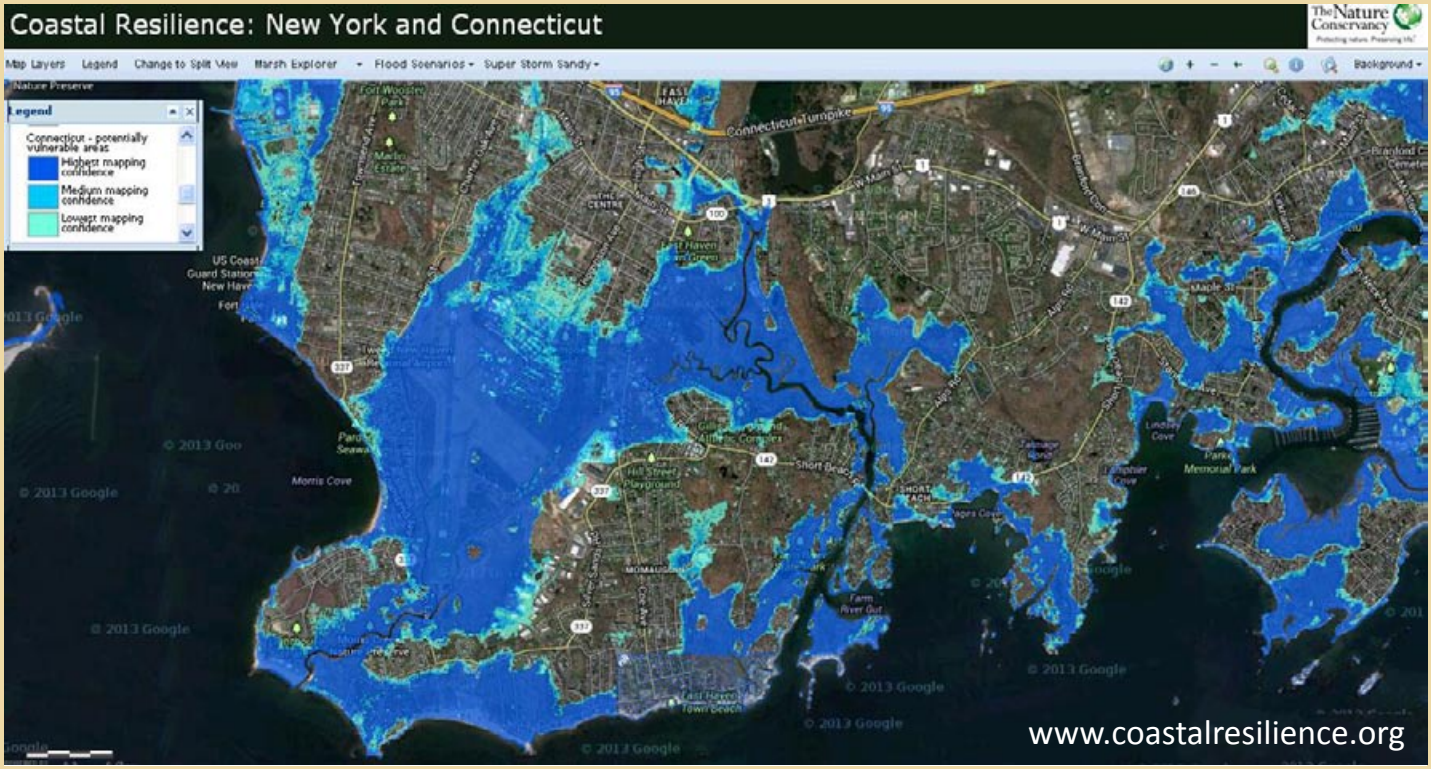
## The Nature Conservancy's Coastal Resilience Tool

The Coastal Resilience Tool (www.coastalresilience.org) can help you visualize impacts and plan wisely for your community's future. This free web-based mapping tool offers a way to explore sea-level rise and/or storm surge scenarios in specific places throughout coastal Connecticut and New York, equipping planners and other decision-makers with resources to:

- Better understand, visualize and project impacts
- Plan wisely for future growth and emergency management with impacts in mind
- Help protect and restore the natural benefits our coastal ecosystems provide

Developed by The Nature Conservancy, an internationally recognized leader in climate science and natural resource conservation, the Coastal Resilience Tool is helping decision-makers explore different flooding scenarios from sea-level rise and/or storm surge; analyze the potential ecological, social and economic impacts of each scenario at a local, state and regional scale; and, facilitate progressive solutions to address these issues today.

The tool's future coastline maps and related information allow for remarkably detailed analysis of ecological, social and economic impacts, costs and management considerations. The information and solutions generated are all developed from highly credible climate, hazard and resource migration models presented in an easy-to-use framework. Because the Tool is web-based, it can be used by anyone including those who live, work or invest near the coast and are concerned about our future there. Decision-makers and other leaders can routinely consult the Coastal Resilience Tool whenever faced with making tough choices about the coast or considering a project near the shore and along our major rivers.




*Projected flooding from a CAT-3 Hurricane with 9-inch rise in sea level for East Haven and Branford, Connecticut.* Source: The Nature Conservancy – www.coastalresilience.org. *Copyright Adam Whelchel/TNC*

**One city, Philadelphia, has negotiated an arrangement with the EPA to invest $2.5 billion in green infrastructure to mitigate storm water runoff versus a functionally equivalent estimated $10 billion investment in traditional "grey" infrastructure.**

## Community Resilience, cont'd

as improve filtering of pollutants from runoff, erosion control, and improved aesthetics and desirable public amenities. Moreover, natural infrastructure often has lower long-term maintenance costs than traditional hard or "grey" engineered approaches and in some case provides the same function.

### Examples from Connecticut

Many municipalities in the state of Connecticut are beginning to demonstrate remarkable leadership on issues of sustainability through increasing energy efficiency and reducing waste streams. Many of these actions have the proven ability to avoid immediate and future costs. In some cases, such as the Town of Mansfield, the term sustainability extends to the right of future generations to a "vital ecosystem" which includes among other considerations the impacts to the environment from storm water runoff and waste water discharge. However, in many cities and towns across the state, outdated infrastructure is inadequate to handle the vast volumes of water that inundate drainage systems following existing heavy precipitation events, not to mention expected future conditions here in the Northeast. As a result, untreated sewage is sent directly into surrounding waterways, polluting rivers and streams and impacting fish and wildlife. Over 700 cities in the United States are now legally obligated to reduce storm water runoff and comply with the Clean Water Act. One city, Philadelphia, has negotiated an arrangement with the EPA to invest $2.5 billion in green infrastructure to mitigate stormwater runoff versus a functionally equivalent estimated $10 billion investment in traditional "grey" infrastructure. While the impact to water quality can be very significant, a sustainable solution to this issue, if planned, can also serve to help a community become more resilient to future conditions. Arguably, sustainability is flexible enough to incorporate the principles of resiliency and effectively serve multiple purposes and provide multiple benefits

*(continued on page 9)*

## Community Resilience, cont'd

for the community. A good example of this again comes from Mansfield, among many other communities, where the town requires a focus on directing growth patterns towards existing infrastructure, dedicated open space in new developments, reduction of impervious surfaces, and the expansion of buffers around wetlands and stream courses. While helping to satisfy the Town's sustainable vision, these elements, if incorporated and strategically placed, will help to improve their resilience to future risks such as flooding, heat, and drought in Connecticut.

Examples of cities and towns taking steps to reduce risk and secure sustainable co-benefits are becoming more prevalent in Connecticut. At the neighborhood scale, Seaside Village in Bridgeport is completing a stormwater garden with the help of Yale University's Urban Ecology and Design Laboratory, City of Bridgeport, Groundwork Bridgeport, University of Connecticut, and The Nature Conservancy. Driven by Seaside Village's Sustainable Master Plan, this stormwater garden is converting routine flood waters from a costly liability into a community asset by channeling surface runoff into detention basins and bioswales vegetated with native plants that have become attractive amenities, as well as functional infrastructure for the Village. This community supported project has helped to reduce overall risk along with multiple co-benefits; on-site storage and pollutant absorption, native wetland habitat creation, and community meeting place.

## Conclusion

Undoubtedly, we will continue to hear more and more about approaches and on-the-ground projects as highlighted above that seek to advance more sustainable and resilient visions for communities in Connecticut. This is, and will continue to be, driven in part by the recognition that better planning and design is required to accommodate immediate and longer-term changes and extreme weather. Therefore, it will become even more imperative that a solutions-framework that incorporates these guiding principles are utilized to ensure our communities are proactively reducing risk in a comprehensive manner that involves an informed and prepared citizenry. Above all we must remain optimistic and realize that taking action to reduce risk in a strategic way will increase the flexibility of future decisions and more than likely avoid, versus delay, future costs. Future generations are counting on us to plan wisely and make those smart decisions today.

*Dr. Adam Whelchel's 22-year career has focused on ecological restoration and adaptation while with federal agencies, consulting firms, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations in the United States, Caribbean, and Africa. As the Director of Science for The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut, he is currently responsible for overseeing risk assessment and responses with municipalities and states in Southern New England via the Conservancy's Coastal Resilience Network (www.coastalresilience.org). Adam serves as a key advisor for Puerto Rico Climate Adaptation Project and a Lead Author on the Northeast section of the U.S. National Climate Assessment.*

**We must remain optimistic and realize that taking action to reduce risk in a strategic way will increase the flexibility of future decisions and more than likely avoid, versus delay, future costs.**

*Long Point Flooding During Irene*

# Climate Adaptation: The New City Planning

*by Michael J. Murphy, AICP, Director of Planning and Development, Town of Groton, CT*

City Planning is changing with the increasing needs of communities for resiliency as they recover from and react to climate activities on a more frequent basis. Recent storms have seriously exposed the antiquated physical form of our towns, and particularly our shorefront communities, challenging our traditional opinions about what land may be valuable or desirable and how our cities may look in the near and distant future. The heretofore model of comprehensive planning — focused on the ability to scan the environment, develop alternatives, select the chosen approach based on predicted rates of growth, and then implement the plan to create our community character — needs to be revisited to address uncertainties, alternative scenarios and possible futures.

The Town of Groton began its focus on climate preparedness as it relates to planning in the broader sense back in 2008 when it entered a partnership with UConn, NOAA and DEEP to develop scenario-based mapping for sea-level rise along its extensive coastline. That

(*continued on page 11*)

## Climate Adaptation, cont'd

coastline includes many significant assets, including a military base, submarine production facilities, a university campus, an airport, state and community parks, wastewater facilities, and historic and cultural centers like Mystic, Noank, and Poquonnock Bridge. This partnership opened our eyes to the future, its uncertainties, and what we need to anticipate and monitor to preserve vulnerable natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, and economic engines for the future.

In order to position Groton to adapt to and mitigate threats from increasing climate activities, new strategies were warranted that would go beyond the standard land use planning process and disaster recovery response. The Town Council joined the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) in 2009 and appointed a task force on Climate Change and Community Sustainability (now the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Committee). The Town's Office of Planning and Development Services (OPDS) worked with the Town Administration to develop a new position of Program/Project Manager that could further integrate sustainability planning initiatives from within the department to other departments throughout the Town. These actions and the capacity of the Town and OPDS led ICLEI and DEEP to select Groton as a model city for northeast communities looking to undertake a climate adaptation process, funded by a Climate Ready Estuary Partnership Grant.

Groton's adaptation planning process brought together an array of officials from local, state, and federal government and non-profits in a horizontal and vertical integration of functions and agencies to address the concept of coastal climate adaption for a small city. Town departments were also incorporated into the planning process. The process resulted in a preliminary vulnerability assessment along with development of a series of actions to be implemented, details of which can be found in the document "Preparing for Climate Change in Groton, CT." The process also led to an invitation from ICLEI to attend the June 2010 Resilient Cities Conference in Bonn, Germany to present our work and share international experiences in climate adaptation strategies with other cities from around the world.

We have learned that the challenge to making adaptation planning real in Connecticut lies in building a city's organizational and technical capacity, and communicating effectively to the public about this important component of the planning process. Lessons learned also include the need to leverage and coordinate with partners from academia, other municipal departments, state and federal agencies, non-profits and the public to move methodically toward measurable and realistic goals and objectives. It will also be important to make climate adaptation planning a mainstream component of the planning process — another element to be considered in the planning horizon view of the town and the community character that

**Groton's adaptation planning process brought together an array of officials from local, state, and federal government and non-profits in a horizontal and vertical integration of functions and agencies to address the concept of coastal climate adaption for a small city.**

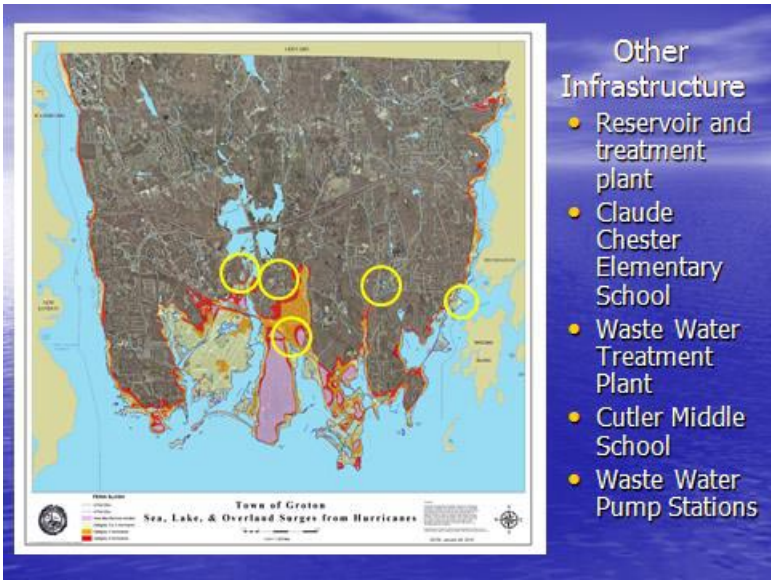
(*continued on page 12*)

## 2013-2018 State C&D Plan Adopted

In accordance with Section 16a-30 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), the General Assembly has formally adopted the 2013-2018 State C&D Plan via Senate Joint Resolution No. 58. Please note that the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development issued an endorsement letter on May 15th that provides a statement of legislative intent on the use of the State C&D Plan's Locational Guide Map. The endorsement letter appears on the first page of the Final C&D Plan.

If you have any questions about the 2013-2018 State C&D Plan, do not hesitate to contact Daniel D. Morley, Policy Development Coordinator at the Office of Policy and Management, at (860) 418-6343.

*Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment*



## Climate Adaptation, cont'd

citizens desire. At the same time, we have also learned that the discussion needs to be understood by all citizens in the context of preparedness, and in response to threats to economic, cultural and environmental sectors that are real and already happening. Citizens and elected officials must perceive that adaptation efforts will be important in their lifetimes.

The Town has since incorporated substantial adaptation-related information into the Town's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, with OPDS as the annual reporting agency for the plan. We have also incorporated sea-level rise and resiliency scenario development into the consultant contract to update the Town's Municipal Coastal Program and 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development. These planning exercises will move us forward toward completing a vulnerability database for community assets that can be tied to Groton's GIS system, the framework for which has been identified through the department's creative leveraging of a local community college internship grant partnership.

On the mitigation side, Groton has moved aggressively to secure an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) and completed a greenhouse gas emissions study of Town and School facilities, implemented lighting retrofit projects with substantial payback, and completed an Energy Action Plan designed to identify municipal projects and

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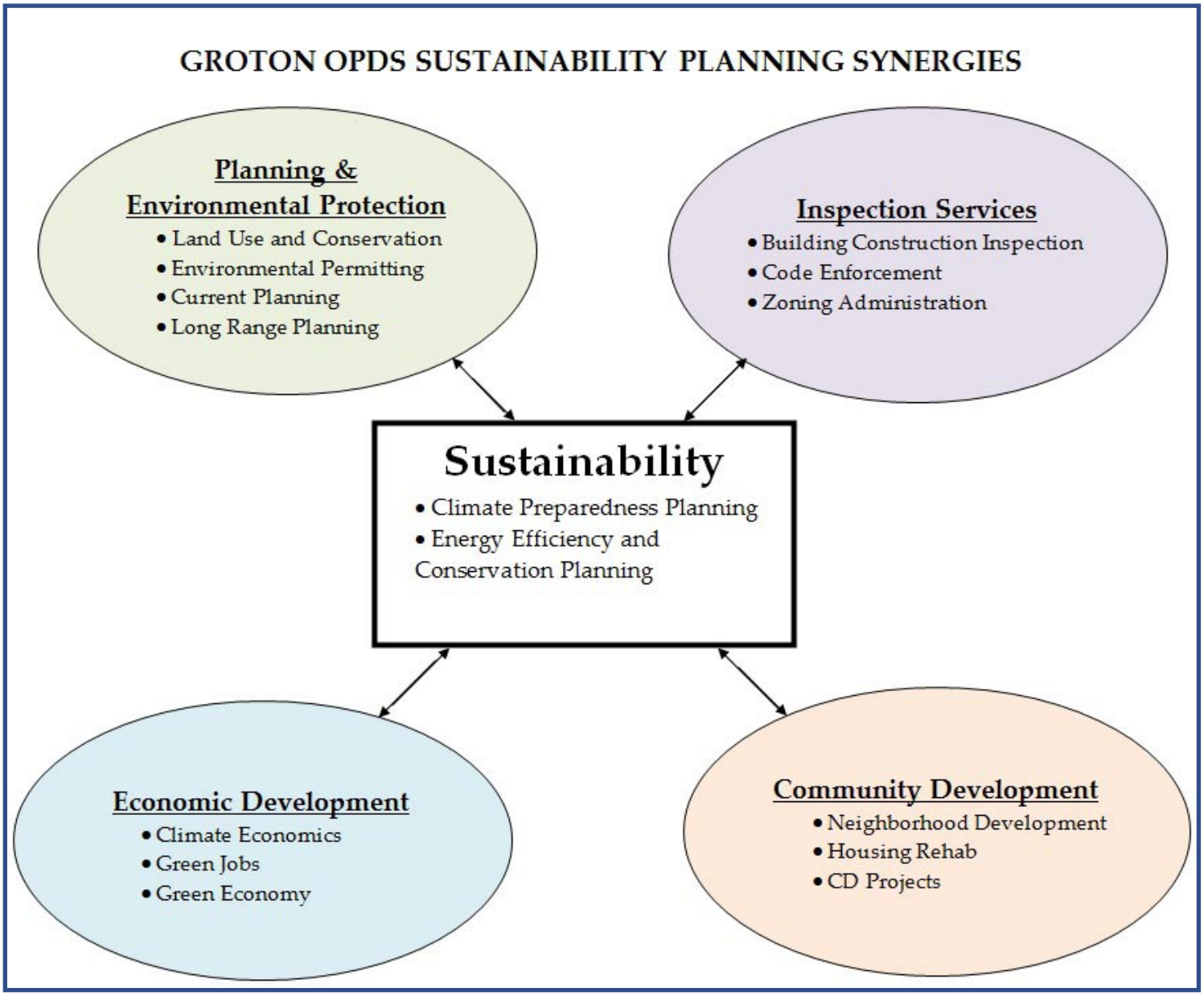
*OPDS Synergies*



## Climate Adaptation, cont'd

provide a blueprint for an internal energy management structure with town policies to coordinate Town energy purchases. OPDS will be a big part of this effort, along with several other key departments.

In summary, planners offer significant benefits to communities as an organizing element in the climate preparedness and mitigation function; however, we can't do it alone. The ability to bring together an interdisciplinary group of staff and stakeholders that can address preparedness in the practical context of common sense, risk management, public safety, community character and saving taxpayers money, will go a long way to getting our small towns and cities started on the new city planning.

*Michael J. Murphy, AICP, is Director of Planning and Development for the Town of Groton. His Department oversees Town and environmental planning functions, regulates development and enforces codes and ordinances.*



# Envision: The Pursuit of a Sustainable Infrastructure

*by John Guszkowski, AICP, LEED-AP, ENV-SP, CME Associates, Inc.*

The first analogy that comes to mind is a crossover vehicle. The too-small-to-be-an-SUV, too-funky-to-be-a-station-wagon class of cars seems to be everywhere these days. Auto manufacturers realized that there was a niche to be filled, filled it repeatedly, and here we are. In the world of "green" or "sustainable" rating systems, admittedly much newer than the advent of the automobile, there had been a similar missing niche. The US Green Building Council carved out a strong market position with its LEED rating systems nearly 15 years ago, focusing largely on individual buildings — though more recently including campuses and neighborhood design. At a larger scale, ICLEI unveiled its STAR Communities initiative and rating system several years ago, focusing on whole-community approaches to sustainability. Between buildings and municipalities, however, there was an important niche to be filled. Into that breach has stepped the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure, with the new Envision Rating System.

Lest you dismiss this as some sort of LEED-knockoff, Johnny-come-lately rating system, let us start by understanding where Envision comes from. The Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure (ISI) is a nonprofit organization started by many of the world's leading public works, engi-

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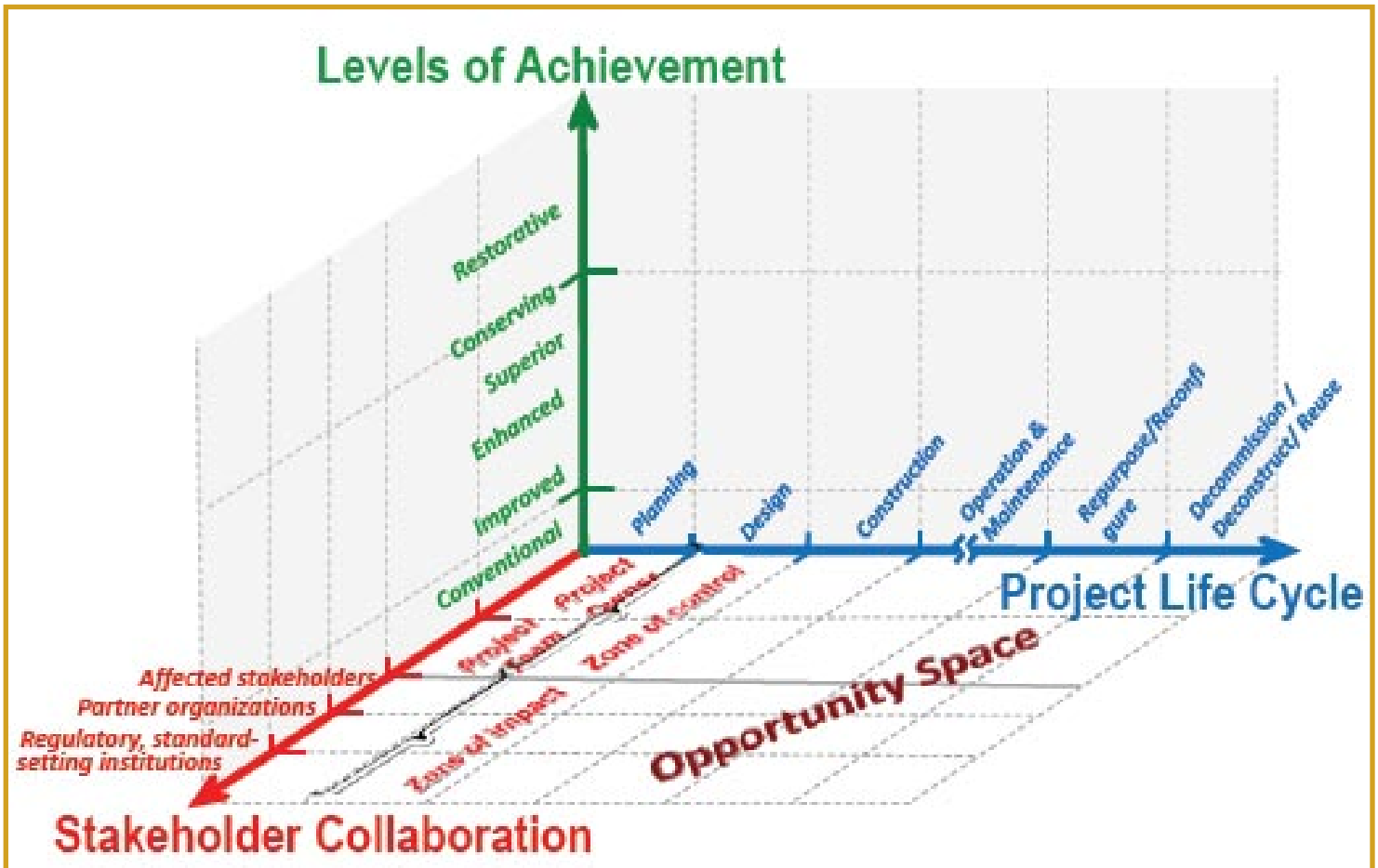



*Expanding opportunities and performance targets in three dimensions. Reprinted with permission from* Envision Guidance Manual, *ISI*

## Envision, cont'd

neering, and infrastructure organizations, including the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), the American Public Works Association (APWA), and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). Realizing that while we focused attention and resources on "green" buildings, large infrastructure projects, such as roads, bridges, sewer plants, public water systems, pipelines, airports, and electricity grids were given a pass. Working over several years with the Zofnass Program for Sustainable Infrastructure at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, the ISI developed the Envision Sustainable Infrastructure Rating System, a thoughtful system to address a serious problem.

How serious is the problem? Over the past few years, our infrastructure has been in the news — and mostly for bad reasons. The ASCE's grade of the country's infrastructure for 2013 was a D+, which is both shockingly bad, and a shocking *improvement* from the D we received in both 2009 and 2011. Not only is our infrastructure crumbling and well behind the funding curve for upgrade or replacement, our system for designing and building infrastructure has not evolved significantly with the changing context. Recognizing this situation, and the clear gap in rating and analysis systems for all aspects of infrastructure, ISI dedicated significant thought and resources.

The result, the Envision Rating System, attempts to place design, construction, operation, and ultimate decommissioning into the traditional triple bottom line context of "sustainability." Its purpose is to foster system-wide change and re-definition of the performance and resilience of physical infrastructure across economic, social, and environmental categories.

Just thinking about the complexity of this — the number of different infrastructure types multiplied by infrastructure's life cycle (planning, design, construction, operation, decommissioning) and then by the dimensions of sustainability — can tax even the best big-picture visionaries. Undaunted (or at least apparently so), the

(*continued on page 16*)

**Not only is our infrastructure crumbling and well behind the funding curve for upgrade or replacement, our system for designing and building infrastructure has not evolved**

## Envision, cont'd

first release of Envision takes this on, and starts with the design and planning phases for infrastructure projects.

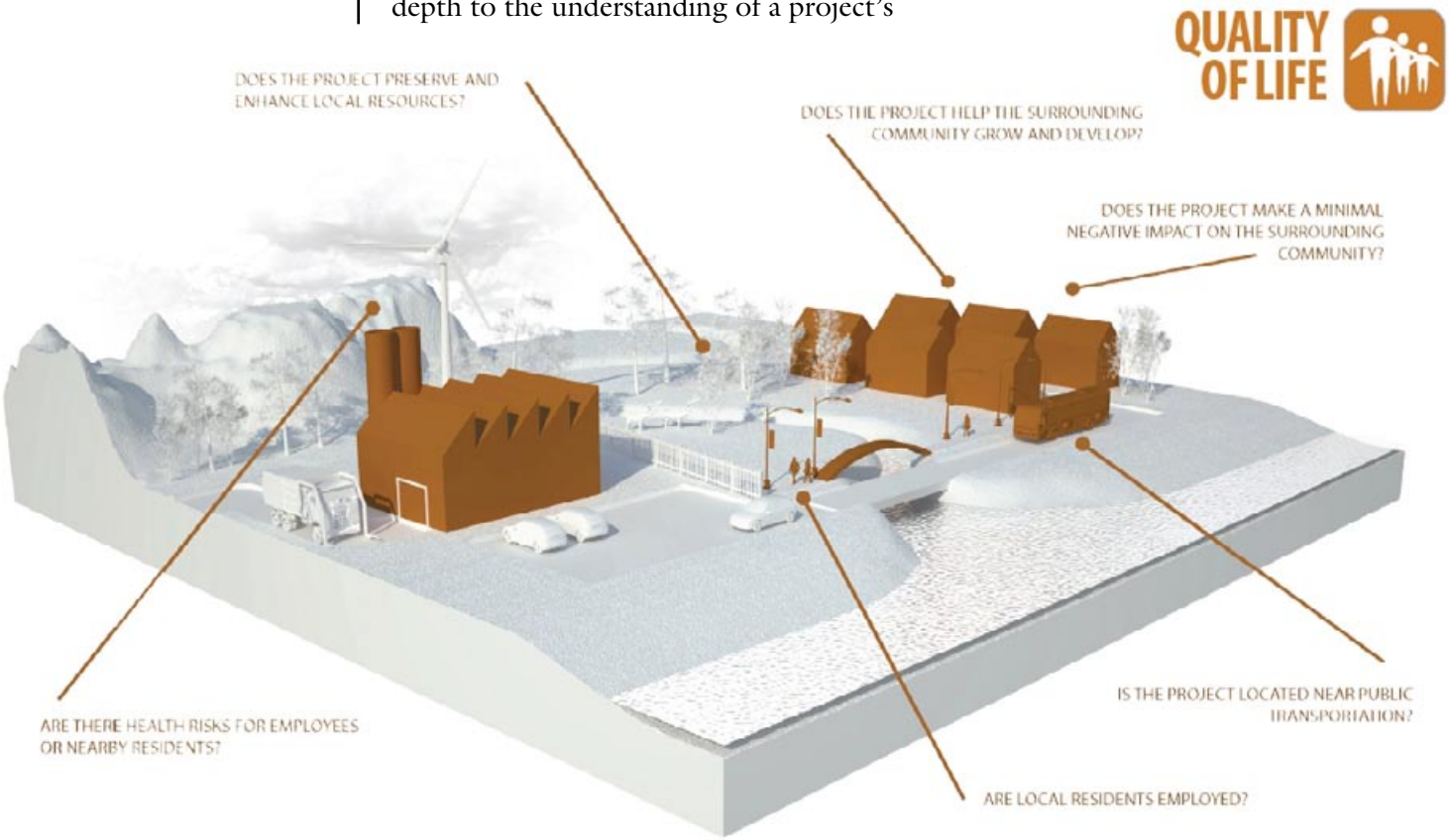
Envision breaks down a project's contribution to sustainability into two major areas, described as "Performance Contribution" and "Pathway Contribution." Performance Contribution involves asking questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of a project, and seeks to improve performance in areas such as energy efficiency, water consumption, materials use, etc. Collectively the points of analysis on Performance Contribution attempt to address the question "*Are we doing the project right*?"

Pathway Contribution addresses the similarly important question, "*Are we doing the right project*?" This area of analysis looks at the manner in which the subject project is aligned with a community's needs, goals, and plans. It seeks to understand how a project supports sustainable development and integrates with the existing resources and the systems in place in a community.

It is the interplay of the Pathway and Performance Contributions that gives depth to the understanding of a project's impact on sustainability. An example given in the Envision Rating System guide describes a roadway project. If the project uses recycled materials and low-energy construction methods, it contributes well to the Performance criteria. If, on the other hand, the result of the project increases traffic congestion, sprawl, or air pollution, it has failed in the Pathway criteria.

Across these areas of Contribution, the Envision system is divided into five categories of analysis and six "Levels of Achievement" by which to gauge accomplishment and earn rating system points. The categories of analysis are *Quality of Life, Leadership, Resource Allocation, Natural World,* and *Climate & Risk*. The Levels of Achievement, listed from lowest to highest, are *Conventional, Improved, Enhanced, Superior, Conserving,* and *Restorative*. The last of these, *Restorative*, recognizes that while improving short-term efficiencies and sustainable practices are of importance, true long-term restoration should be the goal. The system attempts to reward progressive steps toward sustainability, but a holistic contribution to the economy, society, and

(*continued on page 17)*

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## Envision, cont'd

environment is more important than simply "doing no harm."

One of the more compelling elements of the Envision Rating System is the consideration of a project's resilience and adaptability to changing conditions. Perhaps more so than other elements of the built environment, infrastructure projects are constructed with the expectation of a long lifespan of active, continual use. Changes in the natural environment (like flood frequency, temperature, snow loads, or hurricane intensity) and in the regulatory environment (use of certain materials or technology) could make a project obsolete or even dangerous over its projected lifespan. The focus on developing projects that truly "look around the corner" at long-term resilience is striking.

As anyone who has worked with LEED, STAR, or other similar rating system knows, the details of the scoring system are dense, fine-grained, and tightly inter-related. It is not necessary to go further into Envision's details in this space. From a project planner's perspective, however, attempting a full understanding of the system itself leaves one in awe of the initial undertaking. This is a daunting approach that could easily dissuade project planners and designers from pursuing it just by virtue of its breadth and detail. Unfortunately, the challenge of sustainability and preparedness for environmentally and socially responsible growth is even more complicated and daunting. By facing down these complicated questions with a thoughtful and broad approach to infrastructure sustainability, Envision has done the hard work of starting the conversation and establishing a strong framework for project review. Several projects are already in the planning phases that use the Envision framework, and a few municipal and county governments have adopted it as advisory documents for infrastructure projects. It is up to us to carry it forward, apply its analysis, and make it, and the built environment, better.

Information on the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure and the Envision Rating System can be found on their website.

*John Guszkowski, AICP, LEED-AP, ENV-SP is a partner and Director of Planning at CME Associates, Inc. in Woodstock. He is the first planner in Connecticut to have received the Envision Sustainability Professional credential.*

**Changes in the natural environment (like flood frequency, temperature, snow loads, or hurricane intensity) and in the regulatory environment (use of certain materials or technology) could make a project obsolete or even dangerous over its projected lifespan.**

# Building a Foundation for Resiliency

*by Meghan A. Sloane and Brian Bidolli, Greater Bridgeport Regional Council*

**Supporting the public outreach and stakeholder engagement necessary for successful implementation of all these overlapping initiatives is the strong partnership between the GBRC and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and a recently awarded FEMA Community Resilience Innovation Challenge Grant.**

*Parlor Rock Park, Trumbull*

Residents, business owners and community stakeholders throughout the state have been significantly impacted by Tropical Storm Irene, Winter Storm Alfred, Superstorm Sandy and Winter Storm Nemo. Flooding, wind and storm surges have caused destruction of and damages to homes, businesses and infrastructure. Changes to FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are anticipated in the near future — with the result of increases in the number of properties that will be required to purchase flood insurance. In an effort to address related economic and environmental challenges a variety of programs are underway in the Greater Bridgeport Region to build resiliency and help local communities prepare for future hazards.

The rivers and streams of the Greater Bridgeport Region's inland communities flow through its coastal communities and into Long Island Sound. Stormwater and the pollutants from water runoff degrade local water resources and cause flooding throughout the Region's communities. Stormwater runoff and combined sewer overflows have severely limited the recreational opportunities (such as swimming and fishing) that Long Island Sound provides to the residents of Bridgeport and neighboring communities. Reducing the amount of stormwater and runoff that enter local waterways is crucial in the restoration of Long Island Sound and impaired waterways.

Storm surges, flooding and degraded water quality are not governed by political boundaries — and can be more comprehensively and effectively addressed and mitigated through a regional approach. The Greater Bridgeport Regional Council (GBRC) has developed a set of integrated projects to leverage investment so as to address these hazards in a holistic manner. The update of the Region's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) has coincided with a high degree of interest among elected officials in application to FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) Program.

(*continued on page 19*)

## Foundation for Resiliency, cont'd

Detailed, parcel level maps and a publicly accessible webviewer will be developed through a Regional GIS Project, and will provide current and historic FIRMs, base flood elevations, future sea level rise and flooding projections, conservation information, evacuation routes and other hazard data. Supporting the public outreach and stakeholder engagement necessary for successful implementation of all these overlapping initiatives is the strong partnership between the GBRC and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and a recently awarded FEMA Community Resilience Innovation Challenge Grant.

The primary goal of planning for Natural Hazard Mitigation is to reduce the loss of life, personal injury and damage to property, infrastructure and natural, cultural and economic resources from a natural disaster. A valid plan also makes a community eligible for certain funding opportunities offered by FEMA, such as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Since local officials have expressed interest in application to FEMA's CRS Program, the NHMP update comes at an opportune time for the Greater Bridgeport Region. CRS is a voluntary program that offers discounts on flood insurance premiums to communities that undertake and document certain activities that go beyond the minimum standards of the National Flood Insurance Program. Activities include public outreach and information on flood protection, open space protection, stormwater management and floodplain mitigation. The GBRC has identified several activities eligible for credit in the CRS Program that are part of the NHMP update process and Regional GIS Project.

Stakeholder outreach and public participation are required in the NHMP

(*continued on page 20)*

*Twin Brooks Park, Trumbull*

## Foundation for Resiliency, cont'd

update and application to the CRS Program. TNC has developed an innovative model for engaging with stakeholders about the risks associated with extreme weather and natural and climate-related hazards, assessing the risks, strengths and vulnerabilities of the community today, and advancing priority actions for greater resilience tomorrow. This engagement process will provide a strong foundation for the NHMP update and CRS Program application.

The FEMA Community Resilience Innovation Challenge Grant will provide the GBRC with the necessary capacity to solicit public feedback on the Plan and to facilitate a broader discussion among residents, business owners and stakeholders on community needs, available resources and developing greater resiliency to natural disasters. Public awareness of local flood hazards and the risks to a specific neighborhood, property or structure will be strengthened through the availability of GIS data via the webviewer. In addition to a public meeting for comments on the draft plan and to announce the webviewer, innovative methods of public participation that are less time intensive will also provide opportunities for diverse members of each Greater Bridgeport Region community to play a role in the plan's development. These methods include a regularly updated website, greater use of social media and web-based surveys.

Each of these projects encourages resilience to natural hazards in the Greater Bridgeport Region. By coordinating tasks and finding areas of overlap among projects, funding may be more effectively utilized and time spent more efficiently. This holistic effort, combined with a regional approach, will play a crucial part in building social, ecological and economic resilience in the Greater Bridgeport Region.

*Brian Bidolli is the Executive Director of the Greater Bridgeport Regional Council. Meghan A. Sloan is a Transportation Planner with the Greater Bridgeport Regional Council.*

# Resilient Environments: A Study About the Resilience of People and Place

*by Rory Fitzgerald – Excerpts from a final Masters Project for completion of a Masters in Regional Planning*

The world in which we live is ever changing and complex. Weather patterns, natural disasters, social and political unrest, and the ever pressing threat of climate change make it necessary to adapt to these uncertainties. This variability makes resiliency so important and vital to a continued existence. Both the landscapes and the people that inhabit them have to be as fluid as the change itself.

Managing for resilience enhances the likelihood of sustaining development in changing environments where the future is unpredictable and surprise is likely. When a massive change is inevitable, resilient systems contain the components needed for renewal and reorganization. Recent research indicates that we will have to increase the resilience of our social-ecological systems considerably if we are to cope with future climate change and other components of global change.[1]

In order to accomplish this increased resilience, it is important to analyze resilience based on two criteria, ecosystem and cultural resilience. The layering of frameworks promotes strong communities and strong environments which can thrive and prosper despite varying conditions. Two distinct measures of resilience — ecosystem and social resilience — are discussed in this article to show the correlation between the two systems as well as the opportunity to use these systems in order to establish effective approaches to Climate Change adaptation.

Ecosystem resilience is defined as the capacity of an ecosystem to cope with disturbances, such as storms, fire and pollution, without shifting into a qualitatively different state. A resilient ecosystem has the capacity to withstand shocks and surprises, and, if damaged, to rebuild itself.[2] Social resilience is described as the ability of human communities to withstand and recover from stresses, such as environmental change or social, economic or political upheaval.[3] Resiliency is progressively shifting to include a wider context in the social realm.

Although different in scope and nature; both ecosystem and social resiliency traits impact the cultural settings that encompass them. The two elements work together to create a vibrant, thriving system that has the capability to withstand climate stressors and cultural changes. It is able to evolve. A resilient system is not just discovered through good science; it emerges as a community debates and defines ecological and social features of the system and appropriate scales of activity.[4]

In recent years there has been a growing awareness that scientific knowledge alone is inadequate for solving the climate crisis.[5] In particular, the knowledge of local and indigenous peoples — often referred to as local, indigenous or traditional knowledge — is increasingly recognized as an important adaptation technique for resilient development. Traditional knowledge generally refers to the long-standing traditions and practices of certain regional, indigenous, or local communities. This information encompasses the wisdom, knowledge, and teachings of

(*continued on page 22*)

## Additional Planning for Climate Change Resources

**Climate Change Wizard, The Nature Conservancy**

**Policy Guide on Planning and Climate Change (updated 2011), American Planning Association**

**Facing Our Future: Adapting to Connecticut's Changing Climate (March 2009), CT DEEP**

**The Energy & Climate Change Handbook for Connecticut Towns, Version 2.0: A Resource for Municipalities on Local Energy and Climate Action (October 2010), Clean Air-Cool Planet**

## Resilient Environments, cont'd

these communities. Indigenous knowledge relating to climate change, whether it concerns agricultural techniques, biodiversity, indicators of change, or weather prediction and response, provides the basis for many successful and cost effective adaptation measures.[6]

Adaptation strategies utilized by traditional indigenous cultures act as natural buffers against the changing climate while also emboldening the social customs and values of local populations. By learning from their techniques such as sustainable pest management practices, native plantings, coastal buffer zones, and companion planting techniques, we can strengthen both our cultural and ecological resources. These strategies rely on "soft" approaches to development practices rather than more invasive methods such as hard infrastructure techniques and traditional farming methods.

Other social contributions that foster resilient ecosystems include movements like Fair Trade and the Grow Local Food Campaign. These practices focus on local production of crafts and food systems. Local artisans and indigenous groups can showcase their wares and the traditions of their communities while engaging in practices that enliven the economic sustainability of communities. Transportation costs are also lessened as regional materials are often used. Through this "live local" campaign, heritage is preserved as craftsmanship is nurtured and farming practices are maintained.

These agricultural practices are fascinating examples of the mutually beneficial relationship between culture and the environment. This relationship can be capitalized on when planning for climate change adaptation. There is a lot of valuable information that can be learned from social groups, especially indigenous cultures with respect to sustainable practices.

Resilient cultures sustain resilient ecosystems through a multifaceted relationship. Coined as biocultural diversity, this relationship is best described as the interrelationship between biological, cultural, and linguistic diversity.[7] The relationship can be reciprocally beneficial or detrimental as changes and stressors affect a system. Those events or changes that affect cultures are often the same fluctuations that affect ecosystems.

Indigenous knowledge should be promoted and supported if resiliency to climate change is a common goal for both ecological systems and cultures. These knowledge systems empower communities to establish resilience while also maintaining their diverse cultural heritage because the strategies utilized are often ones that have been passed down through generations of the community. They are often lessons, practices, and values that will enable these communities to thrive through adapting to our changing environmental conditions as well as changing social structures.

An integrated approach to adaptation will only help establish the community and environmental resilience that is necessary for our societies and landscapes to survive and flourish. In order to establish and embolden resilient ecosystems and cultures, a wide variety of methods and a diversified approach needs to be employed. There is no "one size fits all" set of guidelines which will work for every landscape or culture. Practices and recommendations need to be site specific and directed towards the necessities of the local community group.

Traditional indigenous cultures, especially in ocean-locked low lying countries, do comparatively well both coping and adapting to climate stressors like flooding and erosion. Although often very physically vulnerable, these groups have found successful ways to adapt to climate change. Indigenous societies have elaborated coping strategies to deal with unstable environments, and in some cases, are already actively adapting to early climate change impacts.[8] By learning from their techniques, we can not only strengthen our own coastlines for the changes ahead, but we can promote the customs and traditions of indigenous communities.

*Rory Fitzgerald is a Planner at Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc. She recently completed her Masters of Regional Planning at UMass Amherst.*

### Footnotes

[1] Resilience and Sustainable Development. A Report for the Swedish Environmental Advisory Council. 2012.

[2] Resilience and Sustainable Development. A Report for the Swedish Environmental Advisory Council. 2012.

[3] Berenfeld. Climate Change and Cultural Heritage: Local Evidence, Global Responses. 2008.

[4] Kronik, J and Verner, D. Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change in Latin America and the Caribbean. Washington, DC: World Bank. 2010.

[5] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — Response Strategies Working Group, 1990. Strategies for Adaptation to Sea Level Rise. 58 (1): 58-71.

[6] Nakashima, D.J., Galloway McLean, K., Thulstrup, H.D., Ramos Castillo, A. and Rubis, J.T. 2012. Weathering Uncertainty: Traditional Knowledge for Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation. Paris, UNESCO, and Darwin, UNU, 120 pp.

[7] UNESCO/UNEP 2002 Cultural Diversity and Biological Diversity for Sustainable Development. (pp. 7-15).

[8] Nakashima, D.J., Galloway McLean, K., Thulstrup, H.D., Ramos Castillo, A. and Rubis, J.T. 2012. Weathering Uncertainty: Traditional Knowledge for Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation. Paris, UNESCO, and Darwin, UNU, 120 pp.

# From the Bench

## *Abandoned Nonconforming Uses*

*by Christopher J. Smith, Esquire, Shipman & Goodwin, LLP*

## Don't Turn Off That Copy Machine

Most people know that the municipal land use process is subject to the State's Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"). For example, email correspondence between commissioners or between the town zoning enforcement officer and planner constitute public documents, and copies must be provided to a citizen if properly requested under FOIA.

However, what happens when a citizen stands up at an evening public hearing on a land use application, and requests copies of the town planner's report or other documents relating to the application? This is what occurred in *Planning & Zoning Commission v. Freedom of Information Commission*, 130 Conn. App. 448 (2011), a State Appellate Court decision that appears to have flown under the radar for many people.

The case involved verbal requests by two citizens during an evening public hearing for copies of a draft memorandum by the town planner, and a letter from town counsel, addressing certain proposed zone text amendments. The planning and zoning commission ("commission") offered one of its copies for the citizens to borrow for the hearing, but the citizens declined. Approximately two weeks later, the citizens, joined by a third member of the public, filed two complaints with the Freedom of Information Commission ("FOIC") alleging that the commission's denial of their verbal requests for copies of the documents during the hearing violated FOIA.

The FOIC determined that the commission violated FOIA by not providing the citizens with copies of the requested documents during the public hearing. The FOIC rejected the commission's arguments that it had three to four days to provide the copies, that copies were only available from the town clerk during regular office and business hours, and that the documents were merely drafts and subject to change. The FOIC also dismissed the commission's argument that the commission didn't have to provide the documents because the requests were not in writing as required by FOIA, since the commission didn't advise the citizens of this requirement. The FOIC found that the commission could have easily provided the copies when requested and that the commission's excuses were not legally valid. The FOIC concluded that the commission's failure to produce copies of the documents at the public hearing violated the "promptness requirement" of FOIA.

The commission appealed the two FOIC rulings to the Superior Court, which, in separate decisions, held that FOIA requires agencies to respond to requests made during regular business hours and "not during evening meetings [public hearings] in progress." Therefore, the commission didn't violate the "promptness requirement" of FOIA. The FOIC appealed the Superior Court's decisions to the Appellate Court.

The Appellate Court upheld the Superior Court's decisions, but on an alternate ground (not because the requests were made outside of regular business hours at an evening public hearing). The Appellate Court ruled that any request for copies of documents under FOIA must be made in writing. Since the citizens didn't request the documents in writing, the commission didn't violate the "promptness requirement" of FOIA by not providing copies of the documents to the citizens at the hearing.

The Appellate Court explicitly left undecided for another day the question of whether FOIA requires a land use commission to respond to written requests for copies of public documents made outside of regular business hours, such as during an evening zoning hearing. One has to think that if the Appellate Court felt that the commission didn't have to provide the requested copies during the evening public hearing as the Superior Court held, then the Appellate Court would simply have upheld the Superior Court's decisions for that reason. However, the Appellate Court may have provided a subtle hint as to how it may rule on this unresolved question in the future when stating: "[i]t is undisputed that there was a functioning copy machine in the building during [the subject] meetings."

After *Planning & Zoning Commission v. Freedom of Information Commission*, what should a land use commission do when during an evening public hearing a citizen makes a request in writing for copies of

(*continued on page 24)*

## From the Bench, continued

documents that are part of the proceeding? The short answer: if the documents are not privileged or otherwise exempt under FOIA, have someone walk down the hall to warm up the copy machine, make copies of the requested documents, and provide the copies to the citizen during the hearing. If a copy machine is not available, state such on the record and offer the citizen an extra copy of any requested document, if available.

In conclusion, when holding a public hearing on a land use application have extra copies available for the public of all documents prepared by a municipal official, consultant or legal counsel that are not privileged or otherwise exempt under FOIA. Try to ensure that the applicant and any other party have extra copies of their documents, as well. Most importantly, don't turn off that copy machine until after the public hearing!

## CMs for CD-ROMs

The APA has stopped making training and education CD-ROM's in favor of these new-fangled "Streaming Education Products" (www.planning.org/store/streaming). However, you can still get CM credit for most of the CD-ROMs in the Chapter's lending library. These are:

- Maintaining Neighborhood Character
- Ethics in Planning
- Renewable Local Energy
- Designing for Water Conservation
- Informed Decisions: A Guide to Gathering Facts and Evidence
- Performance Measurement in Transportation Planning
- Creating Successful Meetings
- 2010 Planning Law Review 2010

Contact Craig Minor at cminor@newingtonct.gov for more information or to check out one of these titles.

# Connecticut Planner Profile: David Elder, AICP, GISP

**Current Position:** Planner in the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Office of Strategic Planning and Projects
**Hometown:** Pittsburgh, PA
**Favorite Places:** Pittsburgh, PA…Portland, ME…Santa Cruz, CA…Millerton, NY…the woods of the Appalachian Mountains…Stoystown, PA…Farmington, CT; and 44.163489328121294, -74.102783203125

**What made you decide on a career in planning?**
An interest in geography and the natural landscape led me to a career in planning. I was able to travel to east Africa, Asia, and Alaska during college and gained an appreciation for the variety and beauty of the natural world. I also learned to appreciate the things that many of us take for granted like healthcare, grocery stores, running water, sewers, and other public infrastructure. These experiences instilled an interest in urban planning, resource management, and human settlement behavior. I pursued these interests in graduate school with a concentration in applied GIS in Resource Management and Environmental Planning. I was primarily interested in policy related to natural resources. I became very interested in fresh water resources, forest management, and fisheries management. Sometime during that period I realized that most of our property laws and policies are implemented through local regulatory agencies and processes. One of the lectures that always resonated with me was on the foundations of private property as presented in The Tragedy of the Commons. Simply put, people will always compete for more until the resource is depleted. As I learned more about land use law, state and federal policy I realized that the opportunity to impact our natural environment and preserve public health and quality of life at the local level is abundant, particularly in the field of planning, more so than at the federal level. This translated into a career in planning. Good policy gets established though data collection, research, and consensus, which is at its foundation, planning. I firmly believe that effective policy has its roots in good planning.

*David Elder*

**Why did you decide to be a planner in Connecticut?**
Mainly the choice was made after graduate school when I was still completing my thesis. I had a few job offers in the New England area but still had to finish my thesis and I wanted to be near my professors and academic resources. And, Connecticut is nice place to live for a number of reasons. Growing up in an urban environment like Pittsburgh, where the remnants of a booming steel industry still dominated the landscape in the form of steel mills and factories, you come to appreciate the rare treasure that Connecticut and much of New England is to the rest of the country. It is a beautiful part of the country with its small villages, rolling hills, picket fences, and general quaintness. As a transplant, it sometimes seems that those qualities go unnoticed or taken for granted in new development and design. I also enjoy being so close to New York and the ability to be at the beach in the morning and hiking in the afternoon.

**What projects/initiatives are you currently working on as a planner?**
I am working on some very interesting projects. It is an exciting time to work for the Department of

(*continued on page 26*)

## Planner Profile, cont'd

Transportation. We are fully engaged with our sister state, federal, and local agencies to bring transportation planning, land use planning, economic development, housing, and energy into a cohesive and comprehensive strategy towards a more sustainable state. We are working on several Transit-Oriented Development projects throughout the state. We are working closely with the Federal Transit Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development with their sustainable community challenge grantees, and on a FHWA funded climate change pilot project. We are also developing an asset management plan for the Department as part of the current Federal Transportation Legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century. It is a significant planning effort for the Department and involves the evaluation of existing national highway and transit systems and the development of performance measures.

**Why did you join CCAPA? What do you like about being a member?**

I always enjoyed participating in the Government Relations Committee and receiving information about upcoming continuing education opportunities.

**How is your agency working to incorporate climate change into its planning activities?**

The Department as a whole is looking to assess the vulnerability of and ways to harden our assets where possible from all types of weather events including extreme heat, flooding, coastal surge, and winter storms. On a more project or systems level, we were fortunate to be awarded an FHWA funded Extreme Weather and Climate Change Pilot project. We are going to conduct hydraulic evaluations on a sample of structures less than 20 feet in length in terms of their capacity to accommodate the recent and projected increases in rainfall intensities. People do not consider these smaller structures as essential parts of the roadway system when looking at extreme weather events but these smaller structures can have large impacts on the system performance and cause significant disruption in rural areas. We are concentrating our first analyses in the northwest corner of the state. The project will be used as a pilot by the FHWA to include in their framework for the nation for these size structures.

**Do you have favorite websites/tools/blogs that relate to planning and/or your job that you'd like to share?**

The website that I rely most heavily on is Thomas, the Library of Congress' website. It is the best tool I have found for tracking and finding federal legislation. And there are two very cool websites that were recently released related to statewide transportation funding and tax structures. One was created by Connecticut's Comptroller Kevin Lembo called the "revenue calculator" and Colorado DOT's website that translates an individual's mileage to transportation investment. Both are relevant to Electric Vehicles, gas tax, and transportation investment scenario planning. I am also partial to the two websites that my unit at the CTDOT maintains: one on the state's performance measures and one for MAP-21 as it relates to Connecticut's programs.