

# CONNECTICUT PLANNING

Winter 2020

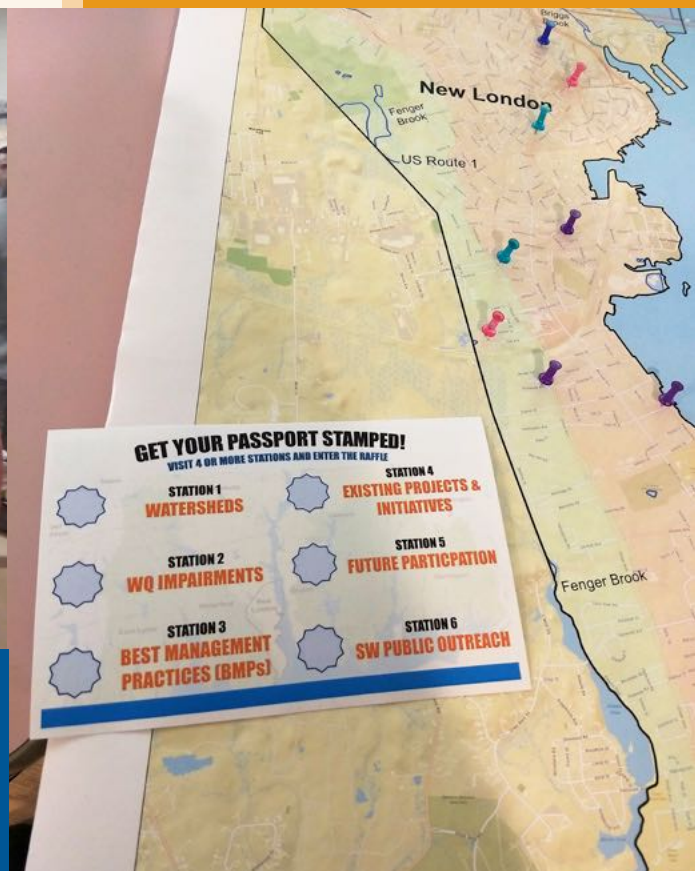
A publication of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association



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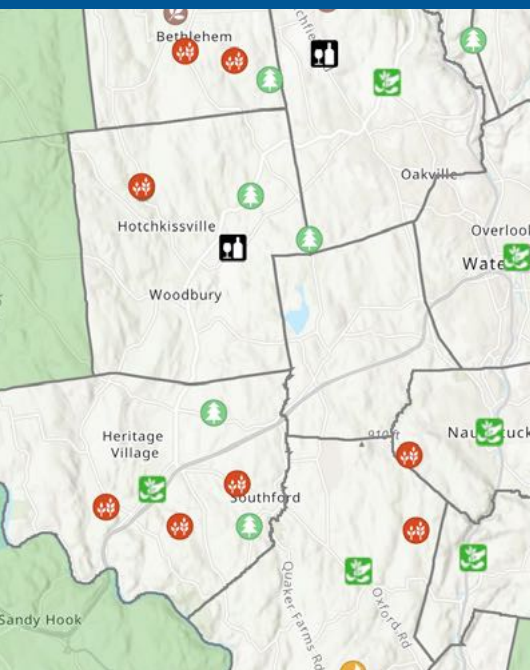
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Video for Public Engagement  
Podcasts  
Peer to Peer Participation



*Plus:*

Public Notification Requirements  
Chapter News

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MAKING  
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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Happy New Year! The Chapter is off to a busy start with several transitions to update you on. I would like first to extend our shared gratitude to Michael Piscitelli for his exceptional leadership as CCAPA President over the last three years. Mike's utmost professionalism and initiative elevated the stature of our organization and profession, and I hope to continue to build upon his good work in my term as President. Mike

remains on the Executive Board as Immediate Past President, so we can still take advantage of his passion for our state and dedication to our chapter.

I'd also like to extend thanks and appreciation to Alan Weiner, who is stepping down from Chairing the Member Services Committee. Alan's decades of work on behalf of all of us as Chapter members is nothing short of impressive. Emily Hultquist will be stepping in to chair the Member Services Committee, while she continues to lead the Chapter's efforts to explore opportunities for establishing a planning education program in our state.

We also welcome Jenna Montesano as our new Government Relations Committee Co-Chair. The Committee and Co-Chair John Guskowski along with previous Co-Chair Amanda Kennedy (now Communications Committee Chair) have established strong relationships with our legislators over the past few years that have enabled the Chapter and planners to have greater influence over planning law and practice in Connecticut.

The Executive Board recently held its annual retreat to formulate its 2020 work plan. Stay tuned for what looks to be an ambitious implementation agenda under our three strategic themes of creating the next generation of planners, facilitating the digital transition in

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advocating for planning in  
statewide governance.

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*On the cover: Manchester Community College (Matthew Robinson); New London Watershed Workshop (Amanda Kennedy), NVCOG Story Map, [Manchester Planning](#) on YouTube.*

## 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 Amanda Kennedy, AICP (contact information below).

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, cont'd

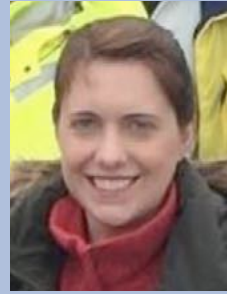
planning, and advocating for planning in statewide governance. In addition, we discussed ways to operationalize diversity, equity and inclusion as important overarching goals that impact almost all facets of our work. Anyone who is interested in helping out in any of these areas is welcome to get in touch with me.

Finally, as we enter this new decade, it's a great time to reflect on how the tools of our trade have changed and how they might continue to evolve during the 2020s. It's clear in my travels around the state and region that communities are demanding more information and access to decision-makers; however, the means of gaining that access have radically changed. This issue highlights where we are headed with community engagement tools and techniques to help ensure that we are as inclusive as we can be in planning for all.

I look forward to working with you all over the coming year, and welcome your thoughts, concerns and assistance. Please feel free to reach out at any time at (203) 271-1773 or [raugur@mminc.com](mailto:raugur@mminc.com). 📧

— Rebecca Augur 

## FROM THE EDITOR




This issue is about innovation in planning, but inspiration for it came from a source not known for its out-of-the-box thinking: the Federal Highway Administration, which in November 2019 sponsored a training course in New London on “Virtual Public Involve-

ment” that staff from a number of Connecticut's Councils of Governments and nearby towns were able to attend. At the training, we heard from planners from across the country who are broadening public participation and improving the quality of public outreach processes by using social media and other technologies like video and virtual reality. We all know what these new media are, and consume them daily, but still unclear is how to use them responsibly, given our ethical and legal obligations to the communities planners serve, and the reality of the time constraints that most planners operate under. This issue mines some of Connecticut's best for guidance. One message that came through to me from the FHWA training is that these practices are no longer optional — the public has come to expect

We all know what the new media are, and consume them daily, but still unclear is how to use them responsibly, given our ethical and legal obligations to the communities planners serve, and the reality of the time constraints that most planners operate under.

a level of transparency and consultation that goes beyond the occasional public meeting or notice in the newspaper.

Some of the topics we'd like to address in future issues of *Connecticut Planning* are the carrots and sticks associated with affordable housing, the challenges of planning in small towns, cultivating the next generation of planners, and non-traditional agriculture. Drop me a note ([akennedy@seccog.org](mailto:akennedy@seccog.org)) if you'd like to contribute, or have a tip on something great going on that Connecticut planners should know more about. 📧

— Amanda Kennedy, AICP 



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# Public Participation in the 2020s

by Marcy Miller, AICP, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

**In all professions, it is important to use current and relevant data, technologies, and best practices. In community planning, this can translate to using the latest socioeconomic forecasts to build a regional land use model. In traffic or air quality modeling, the most current and best software can be employed to get the most realistic forecasts. In public and community involvement, the same rules of innovative engagement apply.**

What are current best practices in community engagement? In an effort to shed light on this topic, this CCA-PA publication explores many emerging techniques and practices and highlights examples where they have been used with success.

The articles in this issue have one feature in common. They all provide guidance on innovative ways to successfully engage the public — scratch that, to **better** engage the public. As dedicated professionals, we must continue to evolve our practices to be compatible with peo-

ple, places, cultures, and how we communicate. Learning about these tools and techniques helps us be better planners, providing relevant and effective services to our clients and communities.

Tools such as mapping, video, and social media, if done well, can offer **additional transparency** to a project or study process. They are dynamic tools with a broader reach. The key to implementing innovative outreach techniques is understanding the stakeholder audience and looking for methodologies that will be inclusive and comprehensive to reach and hear from many voices.

Throughout this issue, you may conclude that the primary benefit of these tools is that they are **more effective** than many past and present methods. Like the broader U.S., Connecticut is changing demographically, and different people absorb information differently. Yes, some still prefer face-to-face information sharing at meetings, but others don't have the time, transportation, or willingness to travel to an off-site location at a static time. Others may have language, cultural, and/or citizenship barriers that make going to meetings sponsored by government agencies frightening and unrealistic. Those who speak another language may simply be more comfortable absorbing information about their community over their smart phone or computer. Google Translate is hardly perfect, but it and other online translation tools can provide better access to information than a conversation with a different language speaker in an unfamiliar place. If we planners

*(continued on page 5)*

## How to Do Social Media Well: A Primer

- 1) **Be nimble:** New content (e.g. relevant news articles) needs to be added as it becomes available. Content generation and approval processes need to be flexible and quick.
- 2) **Be responsive:** The sites need to be checked each day for comments and questions. A short quick response such as, "Interesting comment! Thanks for following the project," helps the post stay in feeds better than a long explanation 3-4 days later. Respond later if appropriate.
- 3) **Know your platforms and audiences:** Who are you trying to reach in your project area, and what are the best platforms to do so? Facebook Twitter, Instagram, YouTube (and tomorrow's social media platform) all attract different audiences and call for unique methods of engagement. It may make sense to tailor content accordingly if using more than one platform.
- 4) **Make it look good:** People look at graphics before words. If there are none of these, they may not read the content at all. A mix of pictures, simple maps, and word graphics work well. Use these tools to help convey your message.
- 5) **Get off topic:** You'll get more followers and stay in people's feeds longer if you can post and cross post other community events, pictures, attractions, holidays, etc.
- 6) **Consider paid advertising:** Here, you can select a dollar amount for as low as \$5 or 10, target audience (demographics, interests, education level, etc.), and duration of an ad. For example, FHI paid \$100 for 3 weeks of Facebook advertising to promote a public survey and charrette in an upper Fairfield County town with about 7,500 residents. The ad helped engage 1,900 users, a fantastic response for a community of that size.



## Public Participation, cont'd

aim for the right mix and variety of tools, we will get broader representation and viewpoints incorporated into our projects and studies.

Just because these tools are relatively new to the outreach planning toolkit doesn't mean they are more expensive. In fact, many of these tools can be **less expensive** to implement than some traditional outreach methods. These tools provide a virtual balance to traditional public meetings and round out a comprehensive public outreach plan.

Consider this — a good project social media feed can reach hundreds of people with each post. Some long-term high-profile projects may reach audiences in the thousands. Yes, some of the audience follows the project regularly, and some may even come to a public workshop or meeting. But successful social media sites have followers who are engaging with the project on regular basis. The conversations are often short, but the engagement is continuous if social media is done well (see sidebar, page 4, on **“How To Do Social Media Well”**).


The Facebook post shown here is from one of FHI's projects that is in a period of limited activity. This post, about a related but separate mini-project, keeps people interested and engaged in our project during this quiet time. When project activities ramp up again, engaged Facebook followers will be aware of the project's progress. They hopefully won't ask what where we've been and what we've been up to! And more than likely, they are sharing our progress with others if they like, comment on, or share our post. Setting up a social media feed site and connecting with local influencers costs about one day of staff time. Creating and sharing this post takes about one hour of staff time.

The articles in this issue explore other innovative ways to engage the public. Staff from the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments show us how they have used map-based web applications, including story maps, to communicate with stakeholders. In Manchester, planning staff have used informational videos to



promote understanding and support for local supports and drive engagement on social media. CCAPA's Government Relations Committee Co-Chair John Guskowski tells us about efforts to redefine public notice requirements to include more effective (and less costly) on-site or online media. And lastly, Communications professor Rebecca Townsend, PhD, reminds us that face-to-face engagement is still critical for planning, and that peer-to-peer outreach can be most effective in establishing a dialogue with citizens unaccustomed to participating in government processes. 🏠

—*Marcy Miller, AICP, Senior Project Manager, Associate is the New England Community Engagement Manager at Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI). She earned a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Colorado at Denver and a B.S in Environmental Conservation from the University of New Hampshire. She started her career at the Denver Regional Council of Governments before returning to her home state and beginning at FHI in 2006.*



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Connecticut Chapter  
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## What's going on?!

Stay current with CCAPA happenings! Bookmark our online events page at <https://ct.planning.org/conferences-and-meetings/> so you don't miss out!

# Story Maps as Conversations

by Richard Crowther Jr. & Joanna Rogalski, NVCOG

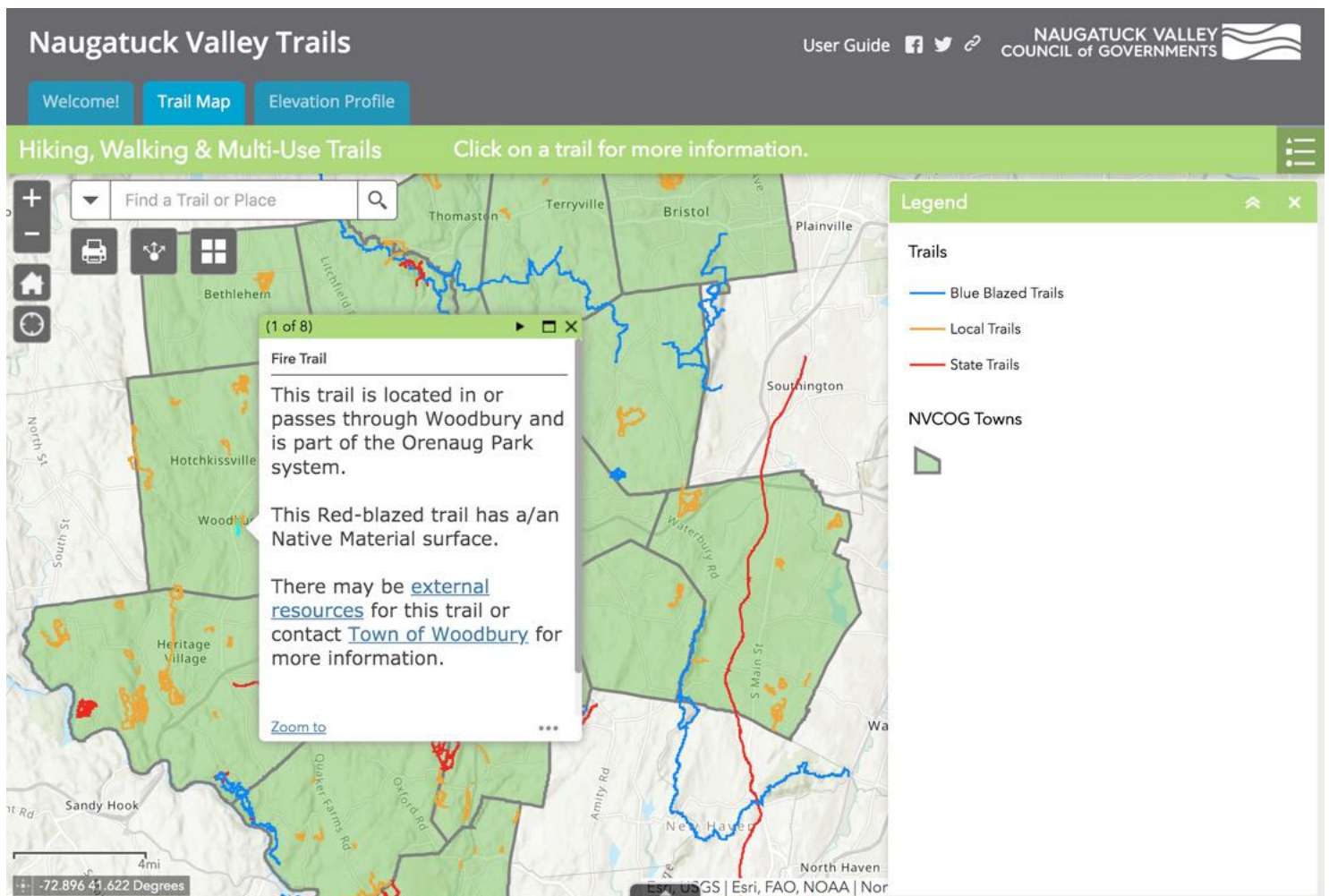
If a picture is meant to speak a thousand words, then a map starts a whole conversation. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) places information on a map as a narrative, but through its integration of visuals and text encourages a conversation for others to discover and join. Maps show where phenomena, organizational structure, or networks occur. This is just the beginning of the narrative; the questions “why” and “how” usually follow once “where” is revealed and the conversation continues. The question of “when” allows some conversations to never end.

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) staff is creating conversations with the public using a variety of online products from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri). Staff use story maps and map-based web applications to engage with the public we plan with and for, to present data in a way

that provides information and creates a forum for the public to incorporate their knowledge and perspectives. The heavily-visited Interactive Maps section of the [NVCOG website](#) includes story maps and web apps using data about the Naugatuck Valley region. On other NVCOG web

*(continued on page 7)*

*The Naugatuck Valley Trails web application shows all of the different trails by type. When users click on a trail, a pop-up provides useful information about that trail.*





## Story Maps as Conversations, cont'd

pages, visitors may see an embedded web map or a story map dedicated to just one transportation project. All maps and apps are free for public usage, designed for ease of use and include a user guide to help visitors navigate maps and find the information they need.

The online mapping products we use are easy to deploy and maintain, therefore the information is updated on a regular basis. Data on some maps is updated once a month and others are updated once a year. It depends on the manner of the product. We share public information on transportation improvement projects — a list that is updated monthly. Our Naugatuck Valley Trails story map is sporadically updated when we get new georeferenced trail data.

### What are Story Maps?

Story maps are a way for people from various backgrounds to better understand a featured narrative, such as a proposed project, or how a landscape has changed

over time. The geographic context helps people understand the big picture. Story maps are a grouping of online products from Esri, a company leading the way in GIS and the science of “where.” On the company’s website, story maps are a manner to “create inspiring, immersive stories by combining text, interactive maps, and other multimedia content.” There are different styles of story maps, so you may not even realize you have seen one before. For example, the newer ArcGIS StoryMaps is built to resemble a website.

### What is NVCOG working on? Why are those projects being completed?

The NVCOG staff is working on a variety of projects from traffic studies to trail planning to brownfield remediation. We use interactive maps to provide information about each project for the public to better understand what is currently happening or what will happen in the future.

Currently, the NVCOG is performing a study on the section of the Naugatuck

*(continued on page 8)*

**Story maps are a grouping of online products from Esri, a company leading the way in GIS and the science of “where.”**



## Story Maps as Conversations, cont'd

River Greenway from Thomaston to Torrington. This study includes public information sessions, along with periodic study updates. We use a “cascade” [story map](#) for the public to scroll through and see the different route options for different parts of this section of the greenway. Tensions that rose at one public information session cooled once staff used a story map to show attendees how their concerns were actually being taken into account.

### Which Web Apps does NVCOG use?

The other Esri product we use to provide information is the Web AppBuilder for ArcGIS, which includes more immersive mapping tools. According to Esri, “It’s user-friendly, flexible, and full of GIS

functionality. Display and analyze your data on any device without writing code.” We adapt this when showing data is not enough, so viewers become users, with the ability to use tools within the customized application.

### Answering “Where?”

The NVCOG has created story maps to act as online guides, helping to answer the question of “where” to help the public find places and events near them in the region. Our [Adventuring through the Region](#) story map focuses on tourism in the Naugatuck Valley region. We created the [Farmers’ Markets & Agri-Tourism](#) web application to highlight the rich agricultural background of the region that still exists today and seems to be growing. Users can find information on not only farmers’ markets, but also community supported agriculture (CSAs), “pick your own produce” farms, and country fairs.

The other link is to our [Naugatuck Valley Trails](#), a tabbed Story Map Series all about hiking, walking, and multi-use trails in the region. It consists of three tabs: the first tab is a welcome tab with a photo in the main body; a web application in the second tab so users can search for trails and see information on all the trails, trailheads, and parking; and a special Esri configurable application called Elevation Profile, which shows users the change in elevation over the course of a selected trail. Since this is a whole application and not a tool, it had to be separate from the main trail web app.

### Answering “When, Where and How?”

Every five years, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must fulfill federal requirements and create a plan for the future of transportation projects and related criteria. NVCOG’s 320-page *2019-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan* (MTP) explains in detail the variety of transportation, environmental, and economic development projects NVCOG is currently working on or plan to work on in the near future. To provide a more accessible version of this content for public review, we created a bulleted [Story Map Series](#) that highlights each chapter

*(continued on page 9)*

*NVCOG’s gallery of story maps and web applications on its website.*

The screenshot displays the 'Interactive Maps' section of the NVCOG website. It features a grid of six interactive map applications, each with a thumbnail image and a descriptive title and brief description.

- Regional Map Viewer**: Provides access to general parcel data, zoning, land use, and open space. It also includes FEMA flood data and environmental data from CTECO.
- Regional Trails**: This interactive map explores the trail network that is in or passes through the Naugatuck Valley Region. This includes walking, hiking, and multi-use trails.
- NVCOG Regional Profile – Maps**: This interactive storymap supplements the Naugatuck Valley Regional Profile 2019. The maps show demographics at the census block group or block level.
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**: See details about all the projects currently in NVCOG’s Transportation Improvement Program. This includes a project description and funding.
- Farmers’ Markets & Agri-Tourism**: Find local farmers’ markets, pick-your-own farms, community supported agriculture (CSA) farms or vineyards within the Naugatuck Valley region.
- Naugatuck Valley Region Historic Resources**: Explore the National Register of Historic Places or visit a history museum in the Naugatuck Valley. Includes links to the original NRHP submission material.



## Story Maps as Conversations, cont'd

to make the plan shorter and easier to understand. In each bullet is an embedded Story Map Journal for each chapter. Text, photos, and interactive maps run throughout the story, presenting the “why” and “how” for most projects. Other projects bring up “when” due to funding and various other reasons that are explained in the MTP’s narrative.

### Encouraging Conversations

Our MTP outreach material made use of Esri’s *Citizen Reporter* feature to collect public thoughts and opinions. The feedback we received from the public was that Citizen Reporter was hard to use, so to improve user friendliness we plan to use Esri’s new Survey123 application for future public outreach.

The NVCOG staff often assists non-profit organizations in their public involvement missions by creating story maps and web applications. We helped the Pomperaug River Coalition with an embedded online map on their website to display test results from around the Pomperaug River watershed. They are now obtaining their own Esri account and we are assisting them to create their own online maps to share their own narratives.

### Is the public using these maps and apps?

The NVCOG tracks the usage of most of our story maps and web application through ArcGIS Online, the home for all of the hosted online data, maps, and applications. Two of our most frequently visited story maps and applications are the Regional Viewer and Naugatuck River Greenway Thomaston to Torrington Routing Study story map. We also send usage reports to the non-profit organizations for which NVCOG hosts their maps and stories. It is a great way to see how the public is utilizing the tools we provide and that most story maps and web applications are used on a daily basis. NVCOG plans to keep creating more tools for the public to answer questions and create more narratives.

By using maps to tell a story, we hope more people can join in the conversations occurring in the Naugatuck Valley region.

So if you see one of our story maps or web applications, please don’t be intimidated, but instead, join in to continue the conversation. ■■■

—*Richard Crowther Jr. has a Masters of Science in Geographic Information Science and Technology from the University of Southern California and has six years experience in GIS. He worked for the City of Los Angeles before returning to his home state of Connecticut and recently became a GIS Analyst for NVCOG.*

—*Joanna Rogalski works as a Senior Regional Planner with the NVCOG. She graduated from the State University at New York at Buffalo with Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Master of Urban Planning and Master of Arts Geography degrees. She has worked as a product engineer, travelled the world, and currently pursues urban planning imbued with place-based storytelling, analytic thinking, and humane action.*



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Consider using video as a means to cut through the din and make sure your intended audience hears the story you're trying to tell.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE 2020s

# Like/Comment/Subscribe: Using Video for Public Engagement

by Kyle Shiel, AICP, Senior Planner, Town of Manchester

**A** consistent public engagement mantra asks planner to “meet people where they are.” Increasingly, one of those places is online video. If you’re not using video as part of your social media strategy, you’re missing an opportunity to reach a wider audience and show a different side of your organization. Don’t ignore it. Informational social media videos, when done well, are a useful tool for engaging people in an environment with shorter attention spans.

The social media giants have an audience of billions, with Facebook alone claiming two billion members. One billion hours of video is consumed on YouTube per day and is the second largest search engine in the world, often the first place many younger people go when seeking information, despite the (justified) anguish of teachers, librarians, and people who still like reading.<sup>1</sup> According to some projections, video accounts for over 80 percent of all Internet traffic.<sup>2</sup> Video is the best performing content on Facebook,

while video-oriented Twitter and LinkedIn posts see higher rates of engagement.<sup>3</sup>

As a planning professional, you are likely required to spend at least some of your time utilizing social media tools for public engagement and outreach, with outcomes ranging from inspiring to depressing. If you find yourself struggling to convey your organization’s message using your current social media toolkit, it’s worth considering using video as a means to cut through the din and make sure

*(continued on page 11)*



*Manchester Planning's Cheney Hall Renovations video includes user interviewers and takes the audience up to the roof.*



## Using Video, cont'd

your intended audience hears the story you're trying to tell.

### Why You Should Use Video

In an era with less in-person social interaction than ever (and less trust in media and government), video provides a modicum of authentic exposure to your human side, something difficult to convey in standard written documents and press releases. Video is ideal for showing that planners and elected officials are real people, doing their jobs. Informality and a sense of humor often go a long way in making any video content you produce more engaging.

### Video in Manchester

In Manchester, we felt we needed another venue for talking about positive developments and initiatives, something hopefully a bit more interesting than a press release. We viewed video as an opportunity to show residents a different side of Manchester than what they otherwise might read in traditional local media or neighborhood Facebook groups. In 2017, we created a YouTube channel ([Manchester Planning](#)) as a repository for sharing videos to share across a variety of other Town social media accounts, including Facebook and Twitter.

The channel is a work in progress, but we are finding it useful as a means to tell our own story. We've highlighted Town projects such as a downtown loan incentive program, a theater renovation, and profiled local business owners opening a brewery, as well as Bob Kaufman of Bob's Discount Furniture discussing the new corporate headquarters in Manchester. The opportunity to have more expansive conversations with people investing their time and resources in Manchester has been an incredibly enjoyable aspect of this project.

There's still a gap between the aesthetic ideal in my head and what I'm currently capable of producing on a technical level, but I'm essentially a one-person crew with an extremely limited budget (i.e., almost nothing), and other primary job responsibilities require my attention.

Still, we view producing video content as a worthy endeavor and plan to continue producing content to highlight worthwhile stories as they arise. Producing a video not only forces you to learn more about the stories of individual stakeholders, but also encourages you to get out of the office and experience your community more intimately on the ground.

### Thinking About Adding Video to Your Outreach Activities? What You Should Know

#### ■ It Takes Time & It Takes Work

It's easier than ever to produce video content, but producing engaging, quality video is still time and labor-intensive. Peruse the credits of videos from organizations like Vox Media, the *New York Times*, and other high traffic YouTube channels and you'll see a team of dozens of professional media producers. Producing high-volumes of quality video content takes a great deal of time, labor and skill.

You will likely not have this support, so it's important to be realistic about the

*(continued on page 12)*

**Producing video encourages you to get out of the office and experience your community on the ground.**



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**Whether it's you, a colleague, or an interview subject, your videos should emphasize people in the community talking authentically about their project.**

## Using Video, cont'd

type of work you'll be available to generate with a limited budget and staff. You can still produce engaging content, but likely not in volume and likely not with cutting edge production values. That doesn't matter. More important is finding the right balance between the investment of time/labor and the length and style of video that conveys your message. It will likely take several videos before you hone your individual work flow.

### ■ Emphasize People

According to Twitter marketing research, putting people in the first three seconds increases the likelihood viewers will continue watching your video. YouTube preview thumbnails with people in the image often receive more views. Whether it's you, a colleague, or an interview subject, your videos should emphasize people in the community talking authentically about their project. If you're lucky enough to find someone charismatic and articulate, you're in great shape.

However, it's not necessary to have a slick, polished spokesman talking in perfectly crisp soundbites. In fact, it often backfires due to a perceived lack of authenticity. Instead, find people who are deeply knowledgeable about your subject, ask them smart questions, and build your

video around their answers. That's an excellent foundation for any video, regardless of topic.

### ■ Use B-Roll and Captions

B-roll is extra footage captured to enrich a story beyond simply having footage featuring only talking heads. Since you often need to edit your primary interviews for the sake of clarity and brevity, B-roll footage gives you greater flexibility, as it allows you to more artfully disguise edits to the primary main interview while showing other elements of visual interest. I recommend planning to shoot at least several minutes' worth of B-roll to give you options when editing.

Captions are another helpful tool. User statistics find many viewers watch video without the sound on. In this case, adding captions to what your interviewers say will provide potential viewers with more options and make them more likely to watch the entire video. Captioned videos improve accessibility for viewers with hearing impairments and captions in additional languages can also be included to reach a limited-English-speaking audience. It also improves accessibility for viewers with hearing impairments. Facebook and YouTube have built-in options to include captions, while other options include online resources like Amara.org or DotSub, or the iOS app Clipomatic.

### ■ Enlist Help

Acting as a one-man crew is doable, but challenging. Producing video content is more efficient with a partner. Tasks such as arranging or conducting interviews, checking audio levels during filming, filming B-roll, or any number of duties that arise during filming are much easier with a partner to assist. As with any collaboration, you'll often find better ideas are generated when working with others. If you have other people willing to serve as resources, enlist their help and creative input.

### ■ Start with the Tools You Have...

Don't worry too much about equipment. The photographer's cliché "The best camera is the one that's with you"

*(continued on page 13)*

*CCAPA's Facebook feed recently featured a 45-second snippet of December's CCAPA Awards Luncheon, filmed on a smartphone and trimmed and stabilized with Facebook's in-app functions. While other posts have had more views, this short video has had more likes and comments than any other CCAPA Facebook post in 2019.*





## Using Video, cont'd

has a great deal of truth. If you happen to have a professional-quality DSLR or mirrorless video camera, great. If not, your smartphone will get the job done. Widely available consumer-level video production tools in many ways surpass those used by professional filmmakers a generation or two ago. Academy Award winning director Steven Soderbergh (*Ocean's Eleven*, *Erin Brockovich*, *Traffic*) has made two well-received films (*High Flying Bird* and *Unsane*) solely with an iPhone.

### ■ ...But Be Prepared to Invest (A little)

Beyond a camera, there are a few additional items you'll need to make quality videos.

- **Microphones** — Poor audio quality is the most common way to make your videos unwatchable. The on-board microphone on a standard DSLR, mirrorless or smartphone is simply not good enough to record quality sound. A separate dedicated microphone is an absolute necessity. Companies such as Rode, Shure, and Zoom all produce excellent consumer-level products for a reasonable price, often less than \$100.

- **Tripod/Stabilizer** — Unless you're recording breaking news in the field, avoid hand-held recordings by using some sort of stabilizing device. A tripod is a minimal requirement and not costly, while a "gimbal" or other camera stabilizing device will help you record usable hand-held footage.

- **Lighting** — Recording in natural light will produce more appealing results and is the environment I aim for most of the time when filming. I prefer recording interviews either outdoors or by a window with natural daylight. If that's not an option for whatever reason, consider purchasing a small portable lighting rig to help illuminate your subject. At the very least, a small on-camera LED light can provide additional illumination if your environment is dimly lit.

- **Editing Software** — Once you have your footage, you'll need some type of editing software to trim it down to the usable bits, add titles and some background music, and perhaps do some color correction/

image filtering if you're so inclined. If you're a Mac user, iMovie is a free editing application that is quite robust for a consumer level product. The closest analogue for PC users would be Adobe Premiere Elements, which typically costs around \$100. More advanced software includes professional quality packages such as Final Cut Pro or Adobe Premiere Pro, which are excellent products but certainly not a prerequisite for making quality videos. ■

— *Kyle Shiel is Senior Planner for Comprehensive and Long-Range Planning for the Town of Manchester, CT. Among his duties include implementing the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development, redevelopment planning, and staffing the Town's Economic Development and Housing & Fair Rent Commissions. He serves on the CT APA chapter's Government Relations committee and his research and writing have appeared in publications for the American Planning Association and HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research.*

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> 147+ Video Marketing Statistics, Aug 30, 2019. <https://review42.com/video-marketing-statistics/>.

<sup>2</sup> 17 Stats And Facts Every Marketer Should Know About Video Marketing, Sep 6, 2017. [www.forbes.com/sites/miketempleman/2017/09/06/17-stats-about-video-marketing/#2f26aab5567f](http://www.forbes.com/sites/miketempleman/2017/09/06/17-stats-about-video-marketing/#2f26aab5567f).

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# Podcasts

A Q&A with the Producers of **CERCONOMY**, a podcast of AdvanceCT (formerly CERC): Kristiana Sullivan, AdvanceCT's Vice President of Marketing; & Rebecca Mead, Principal, Rebecca Mead Communications (interviewed by *Connecticut Planning* Editor Amanda Kennedy)

## Why did AdvanceCT decide to start a podcast?

As a way to extend the AdvanceCT blog, to engage listeners vs. readers, and to capitalize on the popularity of podcasts, we started the CERCONOMY podcast to help share information, news, and insights into the topics of interest to clients, partners, and stakeholders — including economic development, real estate/site selection, municipal planning, economic development data and research, and for people seeking more information on how to start a business in Connecticut. We also saw the podcast as a way for the AdvanceCT staff to share their expertise with listeners.

## How has CERCONOMY contributed to AdvanceCT's effectiveness promoting economic development in Connecticut?

It has opened up the conversation to new audiences with subscribers via iTunes and Google Play, as well as the weekly listeners via our website. Additionally, our guests and partner organizations share the podcast with their audiences, so we've expanded the reach of the conversation on economic development in the state, and hopefully made the topics and guests more "accessible" to our listeners.

## What technical skills are necessary to produce a podcast?

Selecting and becoming fluent in the use of the recording hardware and software is the first step — getting the sound right on the way in saves a lot of time and effort in the editing process, and produces a much better listening experience in the end...And it takes a lot of experimentation and patience. In addition, put time into choosing your podcast host and distribution

channels. Just as important as the technical side of the podcast production are the decisions on the theme, style, and topics — to make your podcast attract the audience you seek.

## What has been the biggest challenge so far?

Remote recording sound quality. While Zoom and Skype have call recorders, a lot of post-production work needs to be put in so that the quality of the conversation doesn't overshadow the message of the podcast. You don't want your topic or guests to be lost in a poor recording.



## How do you see podcasts fitting into urban planning?

The democratization of information, best practices, and successful — and not so successful — outcomes... There are a number of podcasts focused on urban planning that share examples of positive change, interviews with experts, analysis of current systems, etc.

## Which episodes of CERCONOMY would be of most interest to Connecticut planners?

There are quite a few, but the first three that spring to mind are episode [#97: Tiny Houses and Granny Pods](#) with John Guskowski of CME Associates; episode [#40 Preparing for Opportunity Zone Investment](#) and episode [#76: The Growing Shortage of Affordable Housing](#) with Dr. Jeffrey Thompson, the Director of the New England Public Policy Center at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. 🏠



Kristi Sullivan



Rebecca Mead

**ABOUT THE PRODUCERS:** *Kristi Sullivan* joined AdvanceCT in 2000, and provides strategic direction to AdvanceCT and its marketing department and services for AdvanceCT's state, municipal and nonprofit clients. Kristi has a bachelor's degree in communications from Boston University and has completed executive courses at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. *Rebecca Mead* is the principal at Rebecca Mead Communications, specializing in marketing strategies, brand development, and website design for smaller organizations, non-profits, and individuals who value professional marketing and design but might not have the resources to hire a large traditional agency.

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# Peer-to-Peer Participation

by Rebecca M. Townsend, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Communication,  
University of Hartford

Studies of trust in government are common. Trust in the federal government is at historic lows, with rates as low as 12% among Hispanics and as high as 27% among whites. Trust in local government remains strong, with recent polls showing that about two-thirds of Americans trust their local governments.<sup>1,2</sup> Studies of government's trust in people, however, are like unicorns: while I want to believe they exist, I have never seen any.

Following the destruction caused after the Federal Highway Act of 1956, people fought for the right to be consulted. Protests over communities' needs and environmental impacts being overrun by highway expansion, combined with activists' protection of public parks, and civil and human rights activism, led to a quilt of legislation that now requires a public consultation process defined in statutes, regulations, and executive orders.<sup>3</sup> These requirements are in place to prevent the mistakes made by single-minded pursuit of a particular project while ignoring the impacts on people who live, work, and enjoy the places those projects sought to alter.<sup>4</sup> Yet, as research in public participation in environmental decision making has shown, engagement is still often too technical, late, adversarial, superficial, and inconsequential.<sup>5</sup>

As a Massachusetts resident, I have been a community representative at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and have been involved in town government in various appointed and elected capacities for over 15 years. I have also been a transportation advocate. My profession, however, is in education and research. While at the University of Hartford, University of Connecticut, and Manchester Community College, I have engaged in research on public engagement, especially in transportation planning. One of the studies



*Student Session at Manchester Community College  
(Photo credit: Rebecca Townsend)*

I am engaged in right now, with Carol Atkinson-Palombo and Norman Garrick of UConn, is about government officials' opinions about public deliberation on autonomous vehicles, a study being done as part of a research partnership with the Kettering Foundation. We're trying to learn what officials make of public opinion that is derived from deliberative engagement — engagement where regular people analyze the benefits and consequences of different approaches to a concern.

When I have spoken with others in local and state government, whether elected officials or appointed officials or administration or staff, perspectives vary on the importance and values of engaging the public. Among those who are generally supportive, some have come to this position usually from seeing a successful effort; others know it can save time and money. Many, however, see the public as an obstacle to the goals they have. While

*(continued on page 18)*

**While our project with CRCOG was primarily face-to-face, generating awareness about projects is most effectively accomplished through the use social media.**

## Peer-to-Peer Participation, cont'd

their goals may be in the public interest, their view of involvement is skeptical. Some are downright afraid, of critique that might lead to compromise, or of encountering flat-out opposition. And some, as Nabatchi observed, suggest that it can undermine representative government.<sup>6</sup> Yet research in “constructive controversy” shows that resolutions are possible when participants engage in discussion that analyzes varying approaches to a problem.<sup>7</sup> A meaningful public engagement process helps build the public’s trust in projects, people, and processes.

In my research involving public transportation needs assessment, we used a collaborative approach with a community college in partnership with the Capitol Region Council of Governments to conduct public engagement in transportation planning.<sup>8</sup> Evaluation of the effort found the project enabled a significant level of engagement: “More than 500 students and community members participated in the project, which was notable for its

success at engaging transit-dependent people and others who are traditionally underrepresented in transportation planning processes.”<sup>9</sup> Our approach involved students taking college classes to learn public engagement strategies, and then conducting deliberative forums in community members’ preferred, regular meeting places. Students, who were themselves members of these communities, used communication styles and strategies that worked with their peers. Community partner groups (e.g., Spanish-speaking church congregations, clubs, self-help groups, recreation-based organizations) welcomed the chance to talk about their transportation needs and preferences in discussions led by their peers. They trusted the peers would relay the messages back to planners.

Students learned generally about the planning processes from guest experts; they had no prior knowledge of it. Students and participants in the study both had not been in contact with the government on a subject that concerned them

*(continued on page 19)*

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## Peer-to-Peer Participation, cont'd

prior to this project, and survey data and students' written and oral reports afterward indicated a desire to continue being involved. Indeed, one student came to me the following semester, concerned about the lack of a bus shelter at the college — a concern a study participant shared in the deliberation session. The student was really troubled by this and wanted to get one created, so he began the process that would ultimately lead to the creation of a shelter. The evaluation report for this project found that it “helped foster new professional partnerships among the community college, transportation planners and community leaders.” Indeed, the relationships help lead to other benefits, like employment and wider networks for future engagement, and trust. The project revealed a great amount of cynicism borne of frustrating or humiliating interactions. When I worked with students during the project with CRCOG, and since, I have learned that their perspectives at the outset were due to the kinds of interactions

they had previously had with government officials. Some of those interactions had been antagonistic, or ones in which they had to prove themselves worthy of being heard.

While our project with CRCOG was primarily face-to-face, generating awareness about projects is most effectively accomplished through the use of social media. Online public engagement has the benefit of reaching a large number of people quickly, and potentially soliciting a large quantity of feedback, often from those who would not participate in face-to-face meetings. A 2019 National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Synthesis reviewed the use of online public involvement tools by state departments of transportation and reviewed existing literature on engagement practices.<sup>10</sup> A key finding was that “While social media is a well-utilized tool, it may be more effective when combined with offline or traditional public involvement rather than as a stand-alone tool.”

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## Peer-to-Peer Participation, cont'd

Not every project must have the same levels of involvement. The 2019 Kettering Foundation's annual journal, *Connections*, focuses on exploring the relationship between the public and the government. Included in the report is the advice from European participatory democracy expert Antonella Valmorbida, who says that governments should “‘monitor the sparkle’ to determine where citizens are putting their energy and then support those efforts.”<sup>11</sup> When governments see the public as sources of inspiration and invention of new possibilities, rather than as roadblocks to avoid or obstacles to overcome, collaborative relationships develop.

To find those moments of “sparkle,” good public engagement determines what the issues are, and who is affected. Engagement identifies the thorny issues, and discovers when constituents need

customized approaches. Non-technical materials and creative use of visualizations helps participants get a sense of a project and their role in it. Advisory meetings, public meetings, stakeholder meetings, and community events need communicatively competent and sensitive personnel conducting them. Of course, they should be publicized in places where people go: salons and barber shops, grocery stores, via media (newspaper, radio, tv, social media), with adequate notice, and in times and places that are part of the community already. Participants whose perspectives are underheard may react with more trust if planners use intermediaries for initial contacts. Community members who are part of any kind of group may have ideas that could inspire a substantive change or adaptation.

The design of communities involves the physical infrastructure, natural

*(continued on page 21)*

*A student researcher presents his findings to community members.  
(Photo: Matthew Robinson)*





## Peer-to-Peer Participation, cont'd

resources, as well as the social systems in an interconnected way; viewing the public as an asset is more likely to generate a solution that provides for a sustainable future.<sup>12</sup> Social diversity has numerous benefits to communities. People are assets. They have ideas, histories and perspectives that enrich any plan. When planners work with local ambassadors to review a plan to see if it needs to be modified to better reach the people you need to reach, it sends the message to the community that their expertise is valuable. It conveys respect. That earns trust. ■

— *Rebecca M. Townsend, Ph.D. is an assistant professor of Communication in the Humanities Department, Hillyer College, at the University of Hartford. Her scholarship was awarded a White House Champion of Change for Transportation Innovation in 2012. She is also the Moderator in Longmeadow, MA.*

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> McCarthy, Justin. 2018. "Americans Still More Trusting of Local than State Government." Gallup.com. 8 Oct 2018.

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<sup>3</sup> The Civil Rights Act 1964 Title VI, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 1969, Clean Air Act 1970, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, Rehabilitation Act 1973, Age Discrimination Act 1975, Americans with Disabilities Act 1990, USC Title 23 Section 109(h), Code of Federal Regulations, Executive Orders (Environmental Justice EO 12898), or Limited English Proficiency Executive Order 13166), state laws, regulations, and guidance.

<sup>4</sup> For more, see Ted Grossardt and Keiron Bailey, *Transportation Planning and Public Participation: Theory, Process, and Practice*, Elsevier, 2018.

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Willis, Wendy, "Felt Democracy." *Connections*. Kettering Foundation, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Whitman, Steve, "Seeing Our Communities as Thriving Ecosystems: A Permaculture Approach to Community Planning," *Resilience.org*, 24 Mar 2014.

When governments see the public as sources of inspiration and invention of new possibilities, rather than as roadblocks to avoid or obstacles to overcome, collaborative relationships develop.



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While planners are obviously supportive of the public's right to be informed about important topics on the agenda of land use boards, this legal notice requirement has become increasingly farcical.

## CCAPA Legislative Update: Taking Another Run at Public Notification Requirements

by John Guskowski, AICP, LEED-AP, ENV-SP  
Co-Chair, CCAPA Government Relations Committee

For years, municipal planners and zoning enforcement officers have bemoaned the requirements of CGS §8-7d that force the publication of public notice in a "newspaper having general circulation" in the subject municipality twice in advance of a public hearing. While planners are obviously supportive of the public's right to be informed about important topics on the agenda of land use boards, this legal notice requirement has become increasingly farcical. On one hand, both local and regional newspapers, fully aware that state law requires these publications and pressed for revenue, have

been charging increasingly exorbitant fees for legal notices. On the other hand, an increasingly digital world has made newspaper publication of legal notices all but obsolete. Several municipalities report publication bills running well into thousands of dollars every year. The state statutes essentially mandate that municipalities subsidize struggling print media companies with very little demonstrated community benefit.

CCAPA and several partner organizations, including CAZEO, have long sought to scale back or eliminate this

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## Legislative Update, cont'd

newspaper notification requirement in favor of a more effective substitute. In early 2018, CCAPA ran a quick snapshot poll, asking its member planners to ask attendees at public hearings how they learned of the hearing. Seven towns responded, polling nearly 150 attendees at public hearings. Fewer than 5% of hearing attendees had read about the public hearing in the paper, and many of those read articles about the applications, not the actual legal notices. Direct mailings to abutters, signs posted on the property, social media, and word of mouth were far more influential for communicating with a public hearing's target audience. Every municipality in the state has its own website. Most have well-subscribed Facebook or Twitter accounts. Who is the legal notice requirement serving?

With new, thoughtful leadership on the Planning & Development Committee in the General Assembly and the once-strong newspaper lobby weakened due to corporate consolidations, the 2020

legislative session may present the best opportunity in years to make some progress on this issue. CCAPA's Government Relations Committee will be submitting a proposed change to §8-7d that would dial back the newspaper notification requirement. In our proposed bill, a municipality would be required to post legal notice of the public hearing on the municipal website at least 10 days prior to the hearing. In addition, municipalities will be required to *either* post a traditional newspaper public notice *or* post a physical sign at the subject property at least 10 days prior in a way that is visible to the public. The intent is to safeguard the public's right to be informed, reduce cost, take advantage of available technology, and provide some flexibility to municipalities.

While we believe our argument is strong and the politics for this issue have improved in Hartford, we fully recognize that this is Connecticut, and nothing is ever certain at the legislature. As ever, we welcome input from our membership, and if anyone wishes to become more involved with the Government Relations Committee, we can be contacted at [ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com](mailto:ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com). 

The intent of our proposed bill is to safeguard the public's right to be informed, reduce cost, take advantage of available technology, and provide some flexibility to municipalities.



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— John Guskowski is Lead Planner in the Community Development Group of the consulting firm CME Associates, Inc., a CHA Company, based in Storrs, CT. John's work has spanned numerous sectors of planning, including work as a regional planner with CRCOG, a full-time staff planning director in Woodstock and Thompson, a consulting planner for the Towns of Essex, Clinton, and Hampton, lead planner for special studies in Wethersfield, Manchester, Derby, Brooklyn, and Putnam, and a project manager for numerous private development projects across southern New England.

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# Chapter News

## 2019 CCAPA Planning Awards

CCAPA members gathered in Middletown on December 5th to recognize excellent people, plans, and projects with CCAPA Planning Awards.

The 2019 Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award was presented to long-time CCAPA Membership Chair **Alan Weiner**, who retired as the City of Bristol's planner after 30+ years of service. This award is given in memo-



Past President Mike Piscitelli (left) congratulates Alan Weiner, recipient of the Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award.

ry of Bruce Hoben, whose selfless involvement and longtime leadership in the Chapter, along with his many contributions to the practice of planning in Connecticut, exemplify the spirit of distinguished service. CCAPA Past President **Mike Piscitelli** received a Special Chapter Award thanking him for his outstanding leadership with the Start With Planning initiative, which produced

policy guidance for the last gubernatorial race and Lamont's incoming administration, and continues to direct CCAPA's legislative and advocacy activities.

The **City of Bridgeport's PLAN Bridgeport** was recognized for its ambitious, effective and inclusive comprehensive plan and planning process. The **Town of Canton** was recognized for its sustained commitment to implementing the recommendations of its 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The success Canton has had in implementing its POCD is a direct result of the Town's early focus on writing a plan that has broad support and clear implementation pathways. The **Hamden Economic Development Corporation** received an award for BOROUGH 496, Hamden's new business incubator. With BOROUGH496, Hamden restored a 42,000 sf historic structure and transformed it into a small business incubator that is focused on innovation and inclusivity in three main focus areas: sustainability, workforce development and micro-enterprise entrepreneurship. Lastly, CCAPA presented an award to the **Global City Norwich** initiative, a unique, multi-year project focused on enlivening downtown Norwich with strategies that engages Norwich's diverse multi-cultural population and cultivates entrepreneurship while enabling re-investment and re-tenanting of downtown retail

spaces. More information about 2019's award winners is available at [ct.planning.org/community-outreach/awards](http://ct.planning.org/community-outreach/awards) and on [CCAPA's Facebook page](#).

## Historic and Green: A New Climate Agenda

On January 24th, CCAPA co-sponsored the UConn Law School Center for Energy & Environmental Law's conference *Historic and Green: A New Climate Agenda*. The conference asked and answered questions about how preserving our historic resources can be accomplished in an environment that prioritizes sustainability and resilience.

## Building the Next Generation of Urban Planners: A Forum on the Future of Planning Education in Connecticut

On January 15th, staff from the **Planning Accreditation Board** spent the morning in Hartford for a roundtable discussion with CCAPA members, legislators, and representatives from many of Connecticut's colleges and universities exploring the whys and hows of instituting a fully-accredited undergraduate or graduate program in urban planning. An accredited program in Connecticut would enable new planners to receive training specific to their profession without leaving the state. It could also play a role in increasing the value of planning in public policy and administration in Connecticut's state governments, regions, and municipalities. CCAPA Membership Chair **Emily Hultquist** has been spearheading the Chapter's efforts on this issue, which are in line with the Chapter's strategic goal of supporting the next generation of planners.

## AICP Certification

Speaking of new planners...congratulations to Connecticut's newest crop of AICP planners, who passed the exam in November: **Christopher Schaut, Michael D'amato, Caitlin Palmer, Ryan Dolan, Elizabeth Esposito, and Jennifer Pacacha**. CCAPA's Professional Development Officer Steve Sadlowski will hold 2020's AICP review session on March 21st. What better way to celebrate the first day of spring?

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