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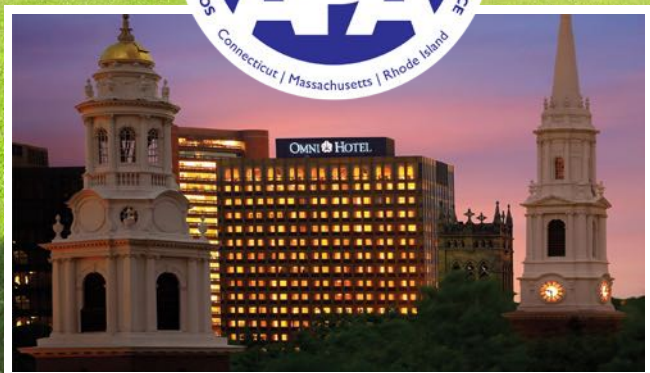
Summer 2023

A publication of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association



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Connecticut Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All



The Southern New England Planning Conference Comes to New Haven!

Session previews and sneak peeks!



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE




Greetings fellow planners!

As you know, the Connecticut Chapter is this year's host for the Southern New England American Planning Association Conference (SNEAPA) in October. I hope that you share in my excitement to show off Connecticut and our host city of New Haven to our colleagues in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and other nearby states.

Many of us know that good planning takes time to implement into actual physical projects. New Haven is a great example of a city that has reinvested and reinvented itself over several decades. Having grown up in Milford, my exposure to New Haven in the '80s included obligatory school visits to the Peabody Museum and the Shubert Theater; seeing hair-band concerts, Nighthawks hockey, and monster trucks at the New Haven Coliseum; and late-night showings of the Rocky Horror Picture show at the York Theater combined with a bonus visit to Cutler Records on Broadway. Nostalgia aside, the New Haven of my youth has radically transformed into a regional destination easily accessible by train that is walkable, bikeable, and full of diverse cultural and dining opportunities. It's not only a place for entertainment, but a world-renowned hub for medical care and research, driven in part by Yale, one of the nation's oldest universities and Connecticut's largest employer, nestled within its downtown streets.

From a planning perspective, New Haven provides great visual examples of middle housing, transit-oriented development, multi-modal infrastructure, pocket parks and placemaking, innovative storm-water management, and cutting-edge resiliency planning. There are so many exciting places to explore. Start with this article by *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine: www.cntraveler.com/story/the-best-things-to-do-in-new-haven-connecticut and try some of my new favorites with East Rock Brewing Company and Arethusa Farm Dairy.

See you in New Haven! 

— Emmeline Harrigan, AICP, CFM 

Cover image: New Haven Green (Farragutful/Wikimedia)

CONNECTICUT PLANNING

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FROM THE EDITOR



The biggest thanks to Christine O'Neill, guest editor for this issue of *Connecticut Planning*. CCAPA members never fail to disappoint in their willingness and enthusiasm to take on a project for the good of their peers and the profession.

This issue of *Connecticut Planning* is another step in our ongoing efforts to ensure that great CCAPA content is accessible across platforms. Don't forget that CCAPA programs (including commissioner training) are archived at <https://ct.planning.org/events/past-events>. As always, please reach out to me at akennedy@seccog.org with story ideas for future issues.

See you in New Haven! 📺

Amanda E. Kennedy, AICP



Right: Christine O'Neill, Guest Editor



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A Welcome Message from the SNEAPA 2023 Chair

by Marek Kozikowski, AICP, MPA, Conference Chair

On behalf of the SNEAPA 2023 Conference Committee, we invite you to explore this 2023 SNEAPA Conference edition of *Connecticut Planning*. The Connecticut Chapter of APA (CCAPA) has the pleasure of hosting our fellow chapters from Massachusetts (APA-MA) and Rhode Island (APA-RI), welcoming nearly 500 planners and allied professionals to the City of New Haven on October 5-6, 2023.

The SNEAPA 2023 Conference will feel like a new experience compared to what perennial conference attendees may expect. The conference returns to New Haven after a 17-year hiatus, representing the first time in nearly as long that it will not be held in a large convention center. The Omni Hotel will provide an intimate conference experience. The hotel has recently updated its conference space with a renovated ballroom, breakout rooms, and other common spaces. Hotel rooms are also

renovated and will be available on a first come, first serve basis.

The 2023 SNEAPA Conference will offer a program with an array of opportunities for attendees to undergo professional development and for certified planners to earn AICP continuing education credits. The conference will kick off with our keynote speaker, Rodney Harrell, PhD, Vice President for Home, Family and Community at AARP, who will discuss housing in an aging America. The regular program boasts breakout room sessions covering topics like housing, economic development, community engagement, placemaking, and much more. Additional sessions will satisfy the new-ish credit requirements covering the areas of equity, ethics, law, and sustainability and resilience. Many mobile workshop will serve as opportunities to visit

unique places within the city.

Beyond education opportunities, the conference offers time to network and socialize with fellow planners and other professionals. Long breaks between sessions and daily lunches permit attendees to both expand their networks by meeting new people and catch up with old friends.

The Thursday evening reception offers hours of socializing with food and drinks at the beautiful Boat-house at Canal Dock, with waterfront views of New Haven Harbor. Additional accommodations will be made for students and emerging professionals including a mentor lunch and a dedicated gathering space at the facility.

I would like to thank the Conference Committee for all its hard work and contributions towards planning a successful conference. See you all in October!



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An Interview with SNEAPA Keynote Speaker Dr. Rodney Harrell

We were pleased to sit down for an interview with this year's SNEAPA Keynote Speaker: Dr. Rodney Harrell, Vice President of Family, Home and Community for AARP. Dr. Harrell earned his doctorate in urban planning and design from the University of Maryland, where he subsequently worked as an instructor. He has also held positions in the Maryland Department of Housing, Coalition for Smarter Growth, and the American Planning Association.

At this year's conference, Dr. Harrell will discuss the intersection of housing, aging, and creating communities that are livable for all.

Why is housing a priority for AARP?

We know the vast majority of people want to stay in their homes as they age, but a very small percentage of homes have the features necessary to meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities. Few homes are in places that provide convenience and choices for how to get around, especially if you cannot or do not drive. Additionally, housing affordability is a long-standing challenge for millions of older adults, particularly as life circumstances change.

As we look at trends and challenges that are impacting older adults for years to come, developers, policymakers and others have not yet met the needs of our aging population, and we are at a point where action is needed, and we are using our abilities to advocate, educate and influence to help support the change that is needed.

What is AARP's Livability Index, and how might a planner make use of it?

The Index was launched at the National Planning Conference in 2015, and I have called it "the planner's best friend" ever since. It is a nationwide, neighborhood-based index that provides a score for every community in the nation. It uses more than 50 national data sources



Dr. Rodney Harrell

to provide the clearest picture of how well a community meets the current and future needs of people of all ages, regardless of income, physical ability, ethnicity, or other factors. The Index measures 61 community characteristics across seven categories: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement and opportunity. By bringing those factors together, we are defining and measuring livability in a way that can help anyone understand the challenges and benefits of a community, whether that person is a resident, a homebuyer, a community leader, or a family caregiver.

It is a valuable ally for any efforts to improve a community, serving as a trusted resource for planners who are trying to expand housing options, improve transportation options, create more walkable communities, or make other improvements. The Index can help policymakers and the general public understand why changes might be needed to improve residents' quality of life so everyone can thrive as they age. I am proud that planners, educators, and others have used it to support community improvements. I've even used it to support livability improvements in my own community.

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As we look at trends and challenges that are impacting older adults for years to come, developers, policymakers and others have not yet met the needs of our aging population, and we are at a point where action is needed.

Editor's Note: AARP's Livability Index can be accessed at <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org>. New Haven, the host city for this year's SNEAPA conference, has a livability score of 56/100.

Keynote, cont'd

Why did you choose to study the intersection of aging and community planning? What fascinates you about this topic?

To put it simply: aging is the future. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, we'll see more people over the age of 65 than under 18 by 2034. When I started at AARP over 15 years ago, there were very few community leaders who were even thinking about this area, and now we are in a place where many leaders understand that demographic change is coming or it's already here — as is the case in many communities in New England. That means leaders are now looking for solutions to this challenge.

Older adults are a very diverse population in every sense of the word — this group includes people of every income level, ethnicity, location, etc. What they share is experience with all of the positives

Every planner's concept of walkability should include all members of the community, including those of different ages, those who use a mobility device to get around, or those who may cross a street more slowly than others.

and challenges that communities can provide. A key problem planners can help to solve is that far too many of them have had to compromise their living situation, instead of having options that meet their needs in the communities where they want to live. In talking to older adults, life stories tell a great deal. Far too often I've heard a version of the story where a house or neighborhood was great for them at the time, but years later, a shift happens — it may be

financial, physical, or family-related, but when that happens, their dream house or dream neighborhood no longer works for them, and they can't find another option to meet their current or future needs. If people can't find options in their neighborhood or community, this is something that planners can help to tackle.

Planners and urbanists often talk about “walkability” as an important feature of a livable neighborhood. How does the definition of that word change in the context of older adults — for instance, those who use walkers/wheelchairs, cannot walk long distances, or are slow to cross a street?

Walkability, along with other planning concepts, should incorporate the whole population. I don't think older adults need a different version of “walkability,” but instead,

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Keynote, cont'd

every planner's concept of walkability should include all members of the community, including those of different ages, those who use a mobility device to get around, or those who may cross a street more slowly than others. The concept of "universal design" is a powerful one for planners and helping people of all ages and ability levels so they can thrive in a community should be the goal. You'd be surprised how much a younger mother pushing a stroller has in common with an older adult who uses a mobility device to get around a community. Livable, walkable communities should be designed with all of us in mind.

What has your research found about the relationship between accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and aging-in-place?

ADUs are a great tool for communities that can improve housing

affordability, housing accessibility, or provide more options. By giving homeowners the freedom to use their properties more efficiently, ADU-friendly policies can help older adults in multiple ways. An ADU that is universally designed can be better than a main home with lots of barriers inside. Building one can also allow someone to have a family caregiver nearby, or perhaps generate some income that could allow an older adult to stay in their neighborhood of choice as needs change. There are also benefits for others who may suffer from a lack of housing options. There are not enough housing options in most communities, and especially in the places where lots of people want to be. While ADUs won't automatically solve the housing crisis, they are a key part of the puzzle.

You co-authored a report that found "People of color, people with disabilities, and people

There are not enough housing options in most communities, and especially in the places where lots of people want to be. While ADUs won't automatically solve the housing crisis, they are a key part of the puzzle.

with lower incomes may not have access to all of the amenities and services that support aging[-in-place]." How might planners work to minimize these disparities?

This is why considering all members and parts of a community is crucial. In many municipalities, people on one side of town face very different realities than the other side of town, and many of those places

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Keynote, cont'd

also have a history of racial or ethnic concentrations. Planners must keep in mind that community challenges are not evenly distributed.

It's not simply enough to say "our community has increased parkland by X acres" or "we have X new grocery stores in town" without considering where those things are concentrated. Are all those parks, grocery stores, libraries, etc. on one side of town? Are people on the other side of town isolated from those amenities? Are those isolated individuals facing other challenges, and are they of a particular age group, racial group, etc.?

This is part of the reason why it was so important to develop a Livability Index that measures

Policies that allow people to stay in homes and communities of their choice, policies that fight discrimination, and policies that support innovation in housing are some of the ones that can make key differences for people of all ages.

every neighborhood — it allows us to see those differences. Additionally, addressing obstacles across neighborhoods is the best approach to improving a community's score — not concentrating on an area that is already high-scoring on one metric or another. That is a purposeful part of our design. The study you reference demonstrated that municipal amenities are not evenly distributed. It's also important to note that — as is the case in all things livability, the story is a mixed one — there are advantages and challenges in every neighborhood, and when we look

at demographics, every racial group faces one kind of livability challenge or another. So the idea is that planners should consider the history of a community and how different groups within the community are impacted by planning decisions. No community starts with a clean slate, and some groups of older adults who have been in a community may have faced decades of community challenges, so planners must be aware of those issues and do what they can to ensure their efforts address problems rather than compound them.

What policies at the state (RI, CT, or MA) or federal levels have the biggest impact on housing, in your experience?

This is a very tough question, as the complexity of situations makes policy work so challenging: there are no "silver bullets." That said, policies that allow people to stay in homes and communities of their choice, policies that fight discrimination, and policies that support innovation in housing are some of the ones that can make key differences for people of all ages.

I have paid a great deal of attention to accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and other policies that support the creation of more housing options in recent years. The zoning reform sessions are packed at the National Planning Conference for a reason: we just don't have enough options in many of our communities, and as I said earlier, ADUs allow us to tackle multiple challenges at one time. We need housing that is more affordable and accessible, and we need these options in the neighborhoods where people need or want them. States across this region have been looking at expanding ADUs and moving forward legislation to do so, and I appreciate my state-level AARP colleagues, planners, and others who have supported these policies in recent years. We worked

hard to update our AARP model on ADUs, and it makes me happy to think of the older adults and their families who could benefit from these policies in years to come.

If you could help New England planners understand one concept from your work, what would it be?

The bottom line of my approach to housing is this: we don't have enough options to meet our needs, and this community-wide challenge needs partnerships to address it. Policymakers need to set a framework that allows people to find the options they need; builders should be creating housing that incorporates the needs of the entire community, including people of all ages, abilities and incomes; and individuals need to make housing choices that take their potential future needs into account.

Planners are at the center of this effort and can bring together community members and work towards improving those options. It's crucial to know your communities, understand the people in them, and commit to making change happen in the long term. I have no doubt in my mind that planners in this region can make that happen. They have my support and appreciation for their commitment to improving communities. 🏡

Don't miss Dr. Rodney Harrell's keynote address, "Communities for All: Housing in an Aging America," Thursday October 5, 2023 (10:15-11:15 a.m.) at the Omni New Haven Hotel!

Making Connections Through Regenerative Planning in New Haven

by Esther Rose Wilen, Jacob Robison, Aly Frechette and Laura Brown, New Haven City Plan Department and Susan Godshall, New Haven Preservation Trust

The New Haven City Plan Department welcomes planners from across the region to our beautiful city for this year's SNEAPA conference. This article provides some context on the rich history of this land, its people, and the state of planning in the city. New Haven's academic legacy is just one chapter in our city's story, which can be read by experiencing its physical spaces; those that are cherished or abandoned; the smells, sights, and sounds; paths worn by the churn of day-to-day life; and the whispers of residents who trod lightly and left little evidence. We encourage you to explore New Haven on one of the mobile workshops offered through the conference, or simply by walking through the neighborhoods.

Land Use History

New Haven was built on the ancestral lands of the Quinnipiac People. For thousands of years, these Algonquian-speaking people stewarded the beautiful land with

its red rock formations to the east and three rivers flowing into Long Island Sound to the west. Their territory encompassed 300 square miles of the region. The Quinnipiac were skilled farmers and artisans who deeply valued the natural beauty of their land. European settler-colonists arrived in the area in the 1630s and killed up to 90% of the Indigenous population with violence and disease. With the settlement of New Haven in 1638, Puritans forced the Quinnipiac people onto the first Native American reservation in America located on what is now the East Shore neighborhood and East Haven area. They were continuously displaced in the decades to follow. The Quinnipiac Tribe is not currently a recognized tribe in Connecticut, but numerous descendants of the Quinnipiac still live in the state and across the country.¹

Forcing the Quinnipiac people onto a reservation created the space for the settler-colonists to lay out the “first
(continued on page 10)

We encourage you to explore New Haven on one of the mobile workshops offered through the conference, or simply by walking through the neighborhoods.



The Mill River runs through the center of New Haven, connecting East Rock to the Harbor on Long Island Sound. The Mill River Trail is envisioned to be a linear park that reconnects the city to its natural resources, improving resilience while providing a corridor for circulation, recreation, and wildlife habitat.



Addressing all aspects of land use planning, the 1910 Plan called for new arterial roadways and public parks, as well as impressive buildings on the Green that are still in operation today, such as the library and courthouse.

New Haven, cont'd

planned city.” In 1638, surveyor John Brockett created his Nine Square Grid Plan, bounded by George, York, Grove, and State Street today. Although other grid patterns existed in Spanish cities of the New World, New Haven’s plan was notable in that it was only about a 5-minute walk from the periphery of the original squares to the Green. Following the implementation of the Nine Square Plan, colonists began to build an agriculture-based economy. While they soon found that New Haven was not ideal for agriculture, it served as the perfect port city to fuel local manufacturing, bolstered by the transatlantic trade embargo during the War of 1812. Once railways were completed in 1872, New Haven found itself with efficient connections to Hartford and New York City.

New Haven grew rapidly in the decades after the Civil War, becoming an industrial hub that absorbed wave after wave of immigration. The city’s population increased about five-fold between

1850 and 1910, leading to a housing shortage and street congestion. The first modern land use plan for the city was submitted in 1910 by architects Cass Gilbert and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., based on the idealistic goals of the City Beautiful movement. The 1910 Plan is a seminal document in the history of American city planning. Addressing all aspects of land use planning, the 1910 Plan called for new arterial roadways and public parks, as well as impressive buildings on the Green that are still in operation today, such as the library and courthouse. Due to politics, Yankee cautiousness, and lack of capital, most of the 1910 Plan was not realized. However, it led to the establishment of the City Plan Commission in 1913 by City Charter. This was followed soon after by authority from the State legislature to establish zoning, only a few years after New York City’s ground-breaking zoning ordinance.

By 1910, the edges of the Green were defined by educational, civic, and commercial buildings and the rest of the

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New Haven, cont'd

Nine Squares had been solidly built up through waves of immigrant settlement. Irish and German immigrants settled in the Hill Neighborhood. Through the 1920s, Irish immigrants started to move further out from the downtown as they acquired wealth; notable enclaves of Polish immigrants emerged in Westville and Fairhaven; and an Italian community was established in Wooster Square. New Haven was a growing city, with lively neighborhoods featuring factories, shops, housing, numerous institutions, and a vibrant network of streetcars connecting economic centers.

After the New Deal from 1933-1939, public programs led to the reconstruction of Route 34 and the building of Wilbur Cross Parkway, heralding a new era of highway construction. While New Haven's historic planning efforts following the New Deal prioritized industrial development and car-centric transportation, the current and future visions focus on valuing history, rebuilding connections, and regenerating neighborhood networks. The Downtown Crossing project and the Mill River Trail, both visible amenities in the city, tell poignant stories of New Haven's planning history and decision-making in the modern era. Both of these projects are driving new forms of development and investment.

Downtown Crossing

Connecticut Route 34, the "Oak Street Connector," was constructed in 1959 as a limited-access, 10-mile, four-lane highway linking I-91/I-95 and



litaez, Wikipedia

Downtown New Haven as part of a federally funded effort to address traffic issues and eliminate "slums." (The current CT-34 runs about 24 miles from Newtown and terminates in New Haven). The first one-mile section decimated the Oak Street Neighborhood, a poor but vibrant community of Black Americans and Jewish, Italian, and Puerto Rican immigrants. It is estimated that razing the Oak Street Neighborhood displaced about 3,000 people or 886 families. Although the additional nine miles of highway meant to connect with towns west of New Haven were never constructed, Route 34 and its 75,000 vehicles a day became a powerful physical and socioeconomic barrier between Downtown and the many low-income and ethnic minority residents who populated neighborhoods south of the Connector.²

In 2002, the City embarked on a community-driven planning initiative

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The Downtown Crossing project and the Mill River Trail, both visible amenities in the city, tell poignant stories of New Haven's planning history and decision-making in the modern era.



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Rendering of the new Orange Street intersection.

newly-opened pedestrian crossings, including bicycle amenities, signalization for active transportation, bioswales, and new landscaping along the Oak Street Connector and Orange Street.³

Mill River Trail

The Mill River Trail project is another example of how New Haven is collaborating with neighbors and volunteers to reclaim natural connections. The Mill River runs through the center of the city and defines one edge of the modern Fair Haven neighborhood, then snakes northwards into picturesque East Rock Park. Although New Haven is blessed with abundant freshwater and coastal resources, many neighborhoods are unable to access waterfronts like the Mill River due to infrastructure barriers or contamination.

Industrial development along the River, which began in the late 1700s with Eli Whitney's gun factory, bequeathed a troubling legacy of contamination to today's residents. The Mill River Trail project began with a group of volunteers working to counteract such pollution and clean up the riverbank. These efforts catalyzed a collaboration between local environmental groups, private property owners, and the City of New Haven to plan and build the Mill River Trail.

The envisioned multi-use trail will connect East Rock Park to New Haven Harbor, running over four miles largely along the Mill River waterfront. An important link in a larger trail network, the trail will provide alternative transportation opportunities as a bicycle and pedestrian pathway and improve public access to the water. Several sections of

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Yash Roy, New Haven Independent

Top: Orange Street in its prior condition, severed by the Rt. 34 corridor (left); and the new Orange Street intersection (right), providing a north-south connection across the Route 34 corridor, connecting city districts and providing direct access to Union Station and the Hill neighborhood.

Bottom: New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker bikes across Orange Street while U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, Alder Carmen Rodriguez, neighbor Thomasine Shaw, and Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz walk down the pedestrian crosswalk in a ceremonial grand opening of the new safe-streets intersection in June.

New Haven, cont'd

called "Downtown Crossing" that, in collaboration with state and federal officials, would reconnect Downtown, Union Station (the City's train station), the Hill Neighborhood, and amenities such as the nearby medical center. The goal was to remove Route 34, reconnecting the street network using Complete Streets principles and repurposing the highway right-of-way for new development. By turning the Connector into an urban boulevard rather than a limited access highway, multiple new development sites were created.

In the 20 years since the project's launch, both the public and private sectors have increased access to jobs and training for local residents including bioscience training and classrooms for New Haven Public School students. Thanks to Federal funding, the Downtown Crossing project continues to knit together portions of the city that were severed during the urban renewal era. Visitors can experience

New Haven, cont'd

the trail have been completed over the past ten years, and another is currently under construction. The last mile of the Mill River, however, runs through an industrial district with significant historic contamination. The City and its community partners are searching for a planning study grant to tie together existing pieces and extend the trail to connect East Rock Park, Criscuolo Park, and Quinnipiac River Park. The project includes planned native plantings, interpretive signage, and riverbank bio-stabilization to improve resilience and restore habitat. More information can be found on the Mill River Trail website.⁴

New Haven's Bright Future

These projects embody New Haven's efforts to uplift its past while envisioning an inclusive future. The City's Vision 2025 Plan of Conservation and Development calls for regenerative planning, a need made all the more urgent by economic shifts and the imminent impacts

of climate change. As a land-constrained city fronting Long Island Sound, New Haven needs more housing outside of coastal areas that are at increased risk for flooding. With almost no greenfields for development, New Haven relies on infill, environmental mitigation of post-industrial sites, redevelopment, and creative adaptive reuse to solve these problems. Regional strategies and policy, particularly in the areas of housing and climate resilience, will be essential. Fortunately, New Haven has a long tradition of ingenuity and adaptation. With the anticipated launch of the 2035 Plan of Conservation and Development process this year, there is a bright future ahead. ■■■

Footnotes

- ¹ connecticuthistory.org/the-people-of-the-long-water.
- ² www.newhavenindependent.org/article/oak_street_demolition from Ammon F. R. (2016). *Bulldozer: demolition and clearance of the postwar landscape*. Yale University Press.
- ³ www.newhavenindependent.org/article/rt_34_no_more.
- ⁴ www.millrivertrail.com.

The City's Vision 2025 Plan calls for regenerative planning, a need made all the more urgent by economic shifts and the imminent impacts of climate change.

Additional references:

- www.newhavenindependent.org/article/define_the_city
- www.amazon.com/Quinnipiac-Cultural-University-Publications-Archaeology/dp/0913516228
- newhavenurbanism.wordpress.com/new-haven-historyreview-a-new-haven-shorefront-masterplan-for-2038

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"The Essential Importance of Housing"

Friday, October 6
10:15-11:15 a.m.

"The Essential Importance of Housing" seeks to equip attendees with strategies to promote smart development in downtown centers, an understanding of the current housing market, and a perspective on the role of municipal planners.

What does smart housing policy look like in practice? LeFlore and Dixon cite Brockton, MA as an example of a city that is getting it right when it comes to unlocking the housing potential of downtowns. "They've made extraordinary strides in the last decade, revitalizing downtown vacancies," LeFlore points out.

SESSION PREVIEW

The Essential Importance of Housing

by Christine O'Neill, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

No SNEAPA conference is complete without a session on housing. Planners across the region have been grappling with a sustained housing shortage that has only become more pronounced and complex post-COVID. "The Essential Importance of Housing" seeks to equip attendees with strategies to promote smart development in downtown centers, an understanding of the current housing market, and a perspective on the role of municipal planners.

Presenters David Dixon, Alison LeFlore, and Jan Brodie are each decorated planners with impressive portfolios of work throughout Southern New England. Dixon serves as Stantec's Urban Places Fellow and has worked on projects from waterfront development in Tampa to master planning in post-Katrina New Orleans. He's also an avid traveler who will be taking his grandson on a Percy

Jackson-themed tour of Greece this summer. LeFlore, a Senior Planner who works alongside Dixon at Stantec, is the President of the Massachusetts Chapter of the APA and serves on the Executive Committee of the Planners of Color Network. She also coaches figure skating in her (limited) free time. Jan Brodie directs the Pawtucket Foundation in Rhode Island and has made a name for herself as a leader in economic development throughout the Northeast. She holds three graduate degrees, including a Masters in Architecture from an Ivy League school.

The housing market of today is not what it was 20 years ago — nor what it will be 20 years in the future, Dixon says. This is in part due to the waning popularity of office buildings and the uptick in demand for multifamily housing. "We're seeing young graduates, childless couples, and empty nesters all gravitating towards

(continued on page 15)



Importance of Housing, cont'd

denser housing in downtown centers,” explains Dixon. These demographics crave the walkability, convenience, and sense of community that mixed-use downtowns offer. For younger renters, that might be because owning a car costs between \$10,000-\$15,000 a year whereas public transportation is far more affordable; for seniors, they may no longer be able to drive, but of course still need to remain connected to shops and society. LeFlore adds that this blend of ages and lifestyles naturally lends itself to what she calls mixed income housing — that is, the starving artist who rents a studio apartment living on the same block as the power couple execs in a four-bedroom condo. With Connecticut being “one of the most racially segregated states in the nation” according to the Commission on Human Rights & Opportunities, bringing together households from different economic backgrounds has the potential to address multiple issues.

(continued on page 16)

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Sneak Peek

Session title: ‘Seeing’ the Subliminal, Using new Biometric Tools to Understand the Human Experience + Improve Planning Outcomes

Session summary: Biometric tools, including eye tracking, help us ‘see’ how the brain subliminally, non-consciously directs our behavior in the built environment. This session reviews recent studies that reveal how significant non-conscious attachment to our surroundings is — it offers a new lens to ‘see’ the built environment and ourselves.

Why you should attend: Understand how 21st-century biometrics, including eye tracking, drive design in our world, particularly in advertising and the automotive industry — and why they’ll be game-changing for architecture and planning.

Session organizer: Ann Sussman, RA, an architect and researcher serves as president of the Human Architecture + Planning Institute, a non-profit dedicated to improving the design of the built environment through education and research; fellow speakers, Abigail Sekely and Hernan Rosas, are research associates at the Institute.

Find me at SNEAPA and we can geek out about: AI software that will change how you see the world and yourself.

When: Thursday, October 5 @ 3:00 p.m.

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Northland Development, Newton MA, a new 1.2M SF “Village Center,” passed a citywide referendum by a 2-to-1 margin.

Importance of Housing, cont’d

A municipality that builds a diverse, transit-oriented housing stock will enjoy other benefits as well. Walkability has a strong correlation with public health and mental health, Dixon attests, while LeFlore points to the economic advantages of main street shops having customers living right above or beside them. That financial piece could make all the difference for retailers, who are struggling



with the growing remote work phenomenon. Dixon sees this as an opportunity, though, as opposed to a loss — replace that office space with housing, and the customers will spend even more money than before. He points to a study that demonstrates a resident living within five minutes’ walk of a shop will spend two to four times more than an employee located the same distance away.

(continued on page 17)



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Importance of Housing, cont'd

Perhaps the most surprising housing trend that's emerging is that the same demand for residential growth in downtowns exists in both urban centers and suburbs...but because suburbs tend to have more owner-occupied units, they may also face more opposition to multi-family development in their backyards. Despite such challenges, LeFlore and Dixon believe that thoughtful, ongoing education from municipal planners can build support for these types of projects more effectively than a lone developer holding info sessions. "You can't wait until the application hits the zoning desk to start getting community members on board," LeFlore declares. Property owners need to feel like they are authoring the narrative of housing in their neighborhood — not having it dictated to them by developers. LeFlore, Dixon, and Brodie plan to deliver a session that furnishes planners with the tools they need to get the community on their side for smart and sustainable housing. 🏡

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND AMERICAN
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Sneak Peek

Session title: Developing Trail Projects from Concept to Construction

Session summary: This session will discuss the benefits of trails, lessons learned, community engagement to gain support, creative design criteria, and construction considerations for various trail types including multi-state, regional, and local trails and greenways.

Why you should attend: The audience should take away the benefits of trails in a community, why all trails are important, how to conduct meaningful community engagement when developing trails that cross municipal boundaries, and what technical and funding resources are available to communities who are in all stages of trail development from planning to construction.

Session organizer: Rista Malanca, AICP, is the Economic Development Director for the City of Torrington. She serves as the Vice-Chair of CT Greenways Council and Co-Chair of the Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee.

Find me at SNEAPA and we can geek out about: Creative placemaking!

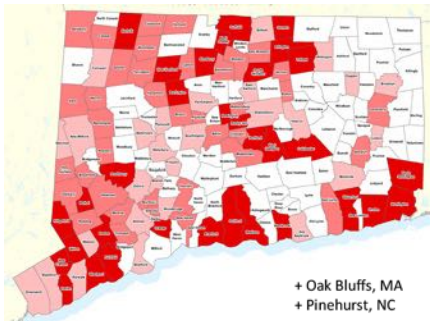
When: Friday, October 6 @ 10:15 a.m.



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"Introducing the Connecticut Environmental Justice Screening Tool"

Thursday, October 5
10:15-11:15 a.m.

The notion that all people are entitled to equitable health outcomes, regardless of where they live, is called environmental justice (EJ). Over the last several years, it has become a top priority for Connecticut.

SESSION PREVIEW

Introducing the Connecticut Environmental Justice Screening Tool

by Christine O'Neill, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

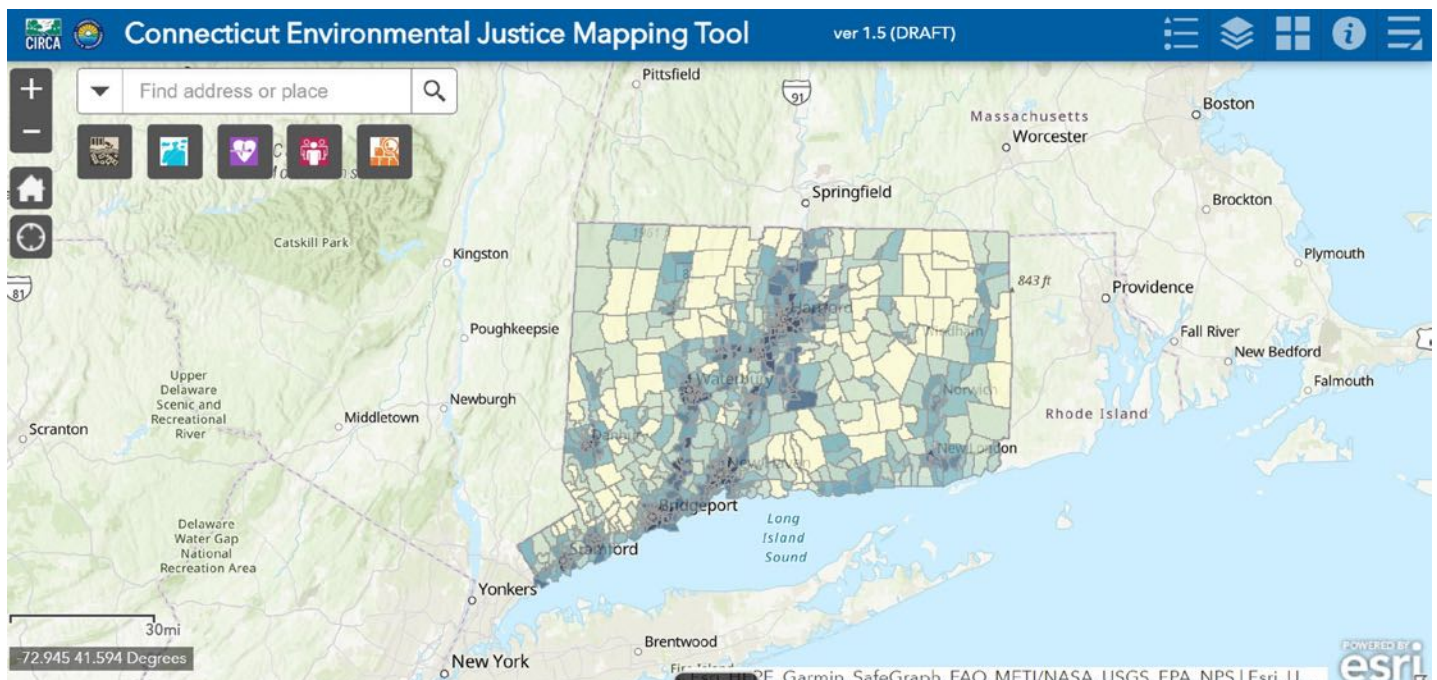
Let's start with a quiz. Which of the following factors has the biggest impact on an individual's health outcomes: income, race, education level, or zip code? We may be inclined to choose one of the first three, but according to Harvard research, it's actually the last. The notion that all people are entitled to equitable health outcomes, regardless of where they live, is called environmental justice (EJ). Over the last several years, it has become a top priority for Connecticut and for the Lamont administration.

In 2020, the Governor's Council on Climate Change put forth the following recommendation: "Develop, launch, maintain, and use a statewide environmental mapping tool that provides a visual representation of the spatial distribution of environmental and climate health vulnerabilities across Connecticut, taking into account the social determinants

of health." The State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) rose to this challenge, employing the help of the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA). Three years later, the final product is live at <https://connecticut-environmental-justice.circa.uconn.edu> in both English and Spanish. Project architects will explain and demonstrate the tool at SNEAPA during their session, "Empowering Environmental Justice through Geographic Insight: Introducing the Connecticut Environmental Justice Screening Tool (CT EJScreen)."

CIRCA scientists Dr. Yaprak Onat, Dr. Mary Buchanan, and Libbie Duskin will host the session this October. Onat, CIRCA Associate Director of Research, has a background in civil and ocean engineering, which she studied in Turkey and later Hawaii. When she isn't modeling

(continued on page 19)



"Maps appeal to people in a way that spreadsheets and tables just don't," Buchanan says. "We can reach more people with the data if we make it visually appealing and interactive."

Environmental Justice, cont'd

storm surges, you can find her dancing up a storm as a ballroom and salsa dancer. Buchanan serves as a Community Resilience Planner for CIRCA, a natural fit given her masters and doctorate degrees in Geography from the University of Connecticut. Her previous experience ranges from sustainable food systems work to bird conservation, although perhaps the item on her resume she is most proud of is being a caregiver to the two senior kitties she adopted this year. Duskin is CIRCA's Data Analyst & Programmer, and like her colleagues has studied environmental mapping extensively. Her studies in marine science have allowed her to fulfill the dream of every six-year-old: scuba diving alongside dolphins. This team of experts has been traveling around Connecticut to promote the launch of the screening tool and explain the story of its development.

Aggregating and processing the data that informs the mapper took a colossal

(continued on page 20)

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND AMERICAN
PLANNING ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
SNEAPA
Connecticut | Massachusetts | Rhode Island

Sneak Peek

Session title: To Plan is Human, To Implement...Divine!

Session summary: This session brings together four urban planners to expose different planning scales (building, corridor, neighborhood, and municipality/ region) in which a nuanced approach overcame polarization and enabled their communities to arrive at an acceptable compromise.

Why you should attend: Join this session to learn strategies for navigating conflict in project implementation and effecting change in your communities.

Session organizer: Kelly Lynema, AICP, is Deputy Director of North Middlesex Council of Governments and a lecturer at the International Development, Community, and Environment Department of Clark University with more than a decade of experience in planning consulting, municipal planning, and regional planning.

Find me at SNEAPA and we can geek out about: Surviving the lead-up to and local melodrama that is our very unique New England Town Meeting. I also love talking about the ins, outs, and development of ADUs.

When: Friday, October 6 @ 3:00 p.m.



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True environmental justice is about more than numbers — it is equally important to have input from the marginalized groups that are most impacted and least consulted.

Environmental Justice, cont'd

effort. “We benefited from at least 30 DEEP staff pulling data related to pollution,” Buchanan states. While most of the numbers came from the State, other metrics are informed by federal measurements from agencies like the Department of Transportation, the CDC, and even NASA. CIRCA also had support from a mapping technical advisory committee, comprised of individuals from four environmental justice municipalities and two nonprofits. Committee members were selected through an application process and were awarded grant funds for the time they committed to this project.

But true environmental justice is about more than numbers — it is equally important to have input from the marginalized groups that are most impacted and least consulted. That’s why CIRCA took special care to gather input from disadvantaged communities, holding public feedback sessions in Bridgeport, Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven, and Groton. “The feedback we received was extremely



valuable,” Buchanan recalls. “For instance, we hadn’t incorporated energy burden in the original mapper, but after hearing requests for it from multiple communities, we went back and added it.” Energy burden looks at the relationship between average income and average energy cost across the households in a community —

(continued on page 19)



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Environmental Justice, cont'd

in other words, how much of your paycheck goes to keeping the lights on and the house heated or cooled. The result is a tool that reflects the needs of the groups it is attempting to serve.

In practice, CT EJScreen is an impressive mapper with a plethora of metrics. Let's say a user wants to look at how pollution might be affecting a certain community. She has the ability not only to examine the broad category "pollution burden," but could drill down on specific factors like "lead risk at housing," "proximity to superfund sites," or "diesel particulate matter exposure." These layers can be examined in isolation or overlapping one another. Furthermore, socioeconomic factors like income, education level, race, and health insurance status are mappable as well, to help users identify which demographics are most impacted by a given issue. To quantify the results, CT EJScreen uses percentiles. Percentiles are a way to represent the data for a given census tract, compared to all the other

census tracts in the state. Onat illustrates this in an amusing way: "Imagine I have a hundred babies, and I line them up in order of chubbiness," she quips. "The chubbiest baby is in the 99th percentile, because their weight is above 99% of the babies in the room. The second chubbiest in the 98th percentile, and so on. It's about the relationship to the rest of the babies in the order." The tool converts percentiles into a 0-10 ranking scale to simplify the data for users.

For as much as the CT EJScreen does, there are some things it *doesn't* do: it is not meant to evaluate health risks or explain causes of health concerns among individuals. Rather, it characterizes the potential cumulative impact of multiple sources of pollution by census tract. This is still an incredibly valuable exercise, Onat points out. It creates "an ideal starting point for further testing and investigation." There is a lot of utility that the planning community can draw from this tool, especially regional organizations like Councils of Governments or regional nonprofits.

Participants are encouraged to bring along a phone, tablet, or laptop to this workshop presentation so that they can follow along with the CT EJScreen tutorial. We hope to see you there! 🖨️

Socioeconomic factors like income, education level, race, and health insurance status are mappable as well, to help users identify which demographics are most impacted by a given issue.



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SNEAPA

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Sneak Peek

Session title: Planning for the Waste Crisis

Session summary: New England is running out of places to put its trash, with detrimental implications for the environment, economy, and equity. Planners can unlock solutions with evidence-based strategies and community engagement.

Why you should attend: The waste crisis is an "everyone problem," and planners are uniquely positioned to incorporate waste reduction measures in their important work.

Session presenters: A recycling coordinator, a zero-waste consultant, and a waste authority director walk into a SNEAPA conference...

Find us at SNEAPA and we can geek out about: Let's talk trash, planners!

When: Thursday, October 5 @ 9:00 a.m.

"Centering People and Nature: Community-Focused Climate Resilience Planning and Nature-based Design Approaches"

Thursday, October 5
1:45-2:45 p.m.

SESSION PREVIEW

Centering People and Nature: Community-Focused Climate Resilience Planning and Nature-based Design Approaches

by Julianne Busa, PhD, CSE, PWS

For many municipalities, developing and implementing successful climate adaptation solutions can seem like an overwhelming task — Where do we start? How do we build community support? How will we fund both short-term and long-term actions? How do we prioritize our limited resources? Fortunately, as these efforts gain traction and funding support, we have a growing number of examples across Southern New England to reflect upon and learn from. Municipalities are taking a variety of approaches to make their communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change, including efforts to reduce flooding through green and grey infrastructure upgrades, tackling

extreme heat with projects to offset heat island effects, and mitigating degraded water quality (fueled by a warmer, wetter climate) to avoid ecosystem and human health impacts.

Some communities are focusing on adapting-in-place while others are considering planned retreat or other means of relocating people and infrastructure out of harm's way. Although there is no one-size-fits-all solution, as my colleagues and I work to support resilience planning and implementation efforts in communities from urban to rural, we have begun to see some key commonalities emerge. Here's what it looks like when a municipality is able to translate resilience planning and design efforts into successful implementation actions:

■ **Community-Focused Planning & Design.** It is imperative to get the community, especially the individuals and groups most impacted by climate change, engaged and involved in climate adapta-

(continued on page 23)



Above: The Town of South Hadley, MA has initiated a suite of restoration and resilience improvements in the upper watershed of Buttery Brook to reduce flood impacts and improve stormwater management and water quality. **Right:** The Town of Mashpee, MA and its partners have used nature-based solutions, watershed-based planning, strengthening of municipal bylaws, and local engagement to address harmful algal blooms in the severely impacted Santuit Pond.



Centering People and Nature, cont'd

tion planning and design. Members of the public need feel a sense of pride and ownership over the planning and design solutions that work for them. Outreach, engagement, honesty, and clear communication on how the potential design solutions function and what it feels like to be in these areas is the key to providing solutions that are supported by the community, evolve over time, and adapt to change for future generations. Empowering community champions throughout a planning project is central to its success and longevity.

■ **Nature-based Solutions.** Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) weave natural features and processes into a community's built environment to increase resilience. NBS may also provide numerous additional benefits to human and natural systems such as clean air and water, food security, economic development, outdoor recreation, physical health and well-being, and community assets. Climate adaptation planning and design that uses NBS generates support from municipal decision-makers, attracts grant funding, and results in multi-benefit implementation projects that are embraced by the community.

■ **Watershed Approach.** Climate adaptation solutions often require coordinated planning and implementation at multiple scales (regional down to the site scale) and involve various partners. Many communities and regional organizations are taking a watershed-based approach by looking at climate impacts and adaptation solutions across an entire watershed. This approach allows stakeholders to address flooding and related water quality issues (e.g., excess nutrient loadings and harmful algal blooms) holistically, using NBS techniques such as green stormwater infrastructure, dam removal, floodplain restoration, and land conservation.

Within Southern New England, Massachusetts municipalities have been particularly fortunate that the

(continued on page 24)



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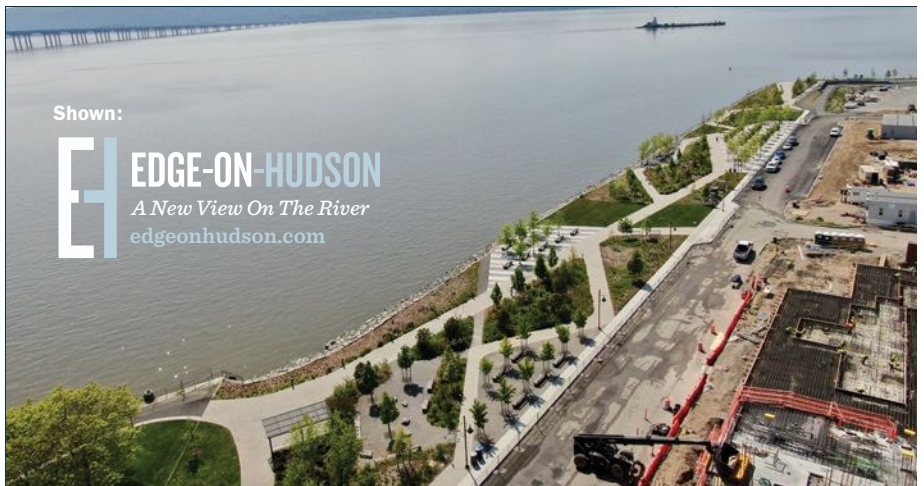
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Using citizen science and engaging a wide range of stakeholders, the Town of Andover, MA has initiated a watershed-scale planning approach to preserve open space and restore the river and floodplain along the Shawsheen corridor.

Centering People and Nature, cont'd

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has been leading the way — and putting substantial financial support behind their policy — with the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program. In fact, the MVP Program codifies two of the three above-mentioned themes into their “Core Principles”: robust community

engagement and employing nature-based solutions. MVP also recognizes the value of regional approaches at the watershed scale, offering extra points and higher funding caps for communities applying to work in tandem on adaptation actions. At SNEAPA 2023, we will bring together representatives from three Massachusetts municipalities to discuss their own experiences with planning and implementation of climate resilience efforts in their communities using these approaches. They will discuss planning and design process, community engagement, partnerships, funding sources, outcomes, and more. The session will culminate in a panel discussion with interactive Q&A focused on relevant challenges and lessons learned applicable to other municipalities. Here is a preview of the three projects:

1) Buttery Brook Watershed Improvements, South Hadley, MA — Municipal planning staff will describe a suite of restoration and resilience improvements in the upper watershed of Buttery Brook,

(continued on page 25)

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND AMERICAN
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SNEAPA

Sneak Peek

Connecticut | Massachusetts | Rhode Island

Session title: Tools, Tips, and Tricks: Best Practices in Land Use

Summary: This session will provide five tools, tips, or tricks that our presenters have found helpful in their land use work. The goal of this session is to provide fast and fun suggestions you can bring back to your departments.

Why you should attend: Are you a land use planner looking for new ways to refresh your processes or department? Look no further than this session!

Session presenters: This session will highlight the work of three AICP Certified Planners and two Certified Zoning Enforcement Officers (CZEO) from across the State of Connecticut that have decades of experience in land use matters.

Find us at SNEAPA and we can geek out about: Housing!

When: Thursday, October 5 @ 1:45 p.m.

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Centering People and Nature, cont'd

including restoring an existing pond to diverse wetlands, right-sizing a stream crossing, and using simple large wood features to re-engage the floodplain. These efforts aimed to reduce flood impacts and improve water quality and stormwater management in the watershed. Creative, on-site neighborhood engagement and community science efforts with the schools at multiple steps along the design process were crucial to establishing buy-in.

2) Shawsheen River Land Conservation Planning and Nature-Based Flood Resilience, Andover, MA — Andover's Sustainability Director will discuss two years of planning efforts centered around building resilience in the Shawsheen River watershed, where flooding caused millions of dollars in damages in 2006. Using citizen science and engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including youth, in a regional Climate Summit, Andover is building a watershed-scale planning approach to preserve open space and conduct active river and floodplain restoration projects along the Shawsheen corridor.

3) Municipal-Tribal Partnership: Increasing Resilience to Harmful Algal Blooms in Santuit Pond, Mashpee, MA — The Town of Mashpee's Natural Resources Director will describe their ongoing efforts working with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and other partners to reduce the occurrence of harmful algal blooms in the severely impacted Santuit Pond. The solutions include a combination of NBS, watershed-based planning, strengthening of municipal bylaws, and comprehensive community engagement involving local residents, municipal officials, and the tribe. 



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The Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA) will host its **2023 Conference** on **November 6-8** at **Wentworth by the Sea** in **New Castle, New Hampshire**. Like the SNEAPA conference, this event provides opportunities for engagement, collaboration, and (re)establishing partnerships with your colleagues, new and old, throughout New England. More information: <https://nne.planning.org/meetings/2023-nnecapa-planning-conference>.

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Sneak Peek

Session title: Zoning for Equity in Action: How Modifications Can Make the Difference

Session summary: Learn how modifications to underlying zoning conditions can be the key difference to encourage mixed-income and diverse forms of homes.

Why you should attend: Participants will gain a solid understanding of the variety and types of zoning relief needed to accommodate affordability and a diversity of housing options.

Session presenters: Presenters include a planning consultant who specializes in housing, Judi Barrett, Principal of Barrett Planning LLC, and two outstanding developers, Andrew Consigli of Civico Development and Sharon Morris of Omni Development.

Find us at SNEAPA and we can geek out about: Single-family zoning!

When: Thursday, October 5 @ 9:00 a.m.