

# CONNECTICUT PLANNING

Spring 2021

A publication of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association



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## 2020 Planning Awards





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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to spring. I hope it feels a little brighter this year for everyone.

I wanted to first recognize Khara Dodds, AICP, who has relocated to Texas. Khara spent many years as Secretary then Treasurer of CCAPA, and was leading our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion efforts. Her contributions to our organization and

our state through the many communities she served and her involvement in Sustainable CT were invaluable and we miss her already.

Next, I want to bring you up to speed on Executive Board and Committee activities, as we have been hard at work. The Awards Committee recently held a virtual program honoring our 2020 award winners, which you will read about in this issue. I'd encourage you to start thinking now about 2021 nominations — it is important that we continue to celebrate good planning work in order to elevate the practice of planning in Connecticut's collective consciousness.

The Government Relations Committee has been extremely busy this session — monitoring and testifying on an unprecedented number of relevant bills. Please follow along on [CCAPA's Legislative Activity page](#) and reach out with any questions or comments.

Our Program Committee is putting together a comprehensive series of workshops for May and June offering a deep dive into housing issues. The sessions will be open to anyone and we hope that you will help to promote attendance within your communities and professional circles.

The Board continues to explore opportunities to honor Jason Vincent and hopes to make an announcement soon.

Finally, we are well underway with developing our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. Be on the lookout for a membership survey in the coming months and please help us out by completing it.

As always, I welcome your calls and [emails](#), and look forward to seeing you soon. 🍷

— Rebecca Augur

**I'd encourage you to start thinking now about 2021 (award) nominations — it is important that we continue to celebrate good planning work in order to elevate the practice of planning in Connecticut's collective consciousness.**

*On the cover: Resilient Bridgeport, Adaptation Planning Award winner*

## 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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## FROM THE EDITOR



What struck me about CCAPA's 2020 Planning Awards, presented via virtual ceremony on March 18th, was the variety of work that CCAPA members engage with in the planning profession. Planners are continually forced to reckon with change, and guide their communities through this change for the best possible outcome. In Windsor Locks, a long-obsolete factory became a model of transit-oriented development and adaptive reuse, bringing new residents to Montgomery Mill Apartments and to downtown Windsor Locks. Recipient Make the Road Connecticut was recognized for empowering Bridgeport youth to work with the City of Bridgeport to improve walking conditions to school, and engaging students in implementing improvements that make a difference in their lives. The City of Norwich addressed downtown deterioration and vacancies with a proactive investment in adapting their downtown for today's businesses, bringing buildings up to code and underwriting the cost of relocating to Norwich. In Torrington's Franklin Plaza, planners and city officials reimaged neglected streets in their downtown and turned the space into a destination for community events and recreation, as well as new development. The City of Bridgeport was recognized for its Resilient Bridgeport work, which has engaged the community to retrofit neighborhoods most vulnerable to a changing climate.

Three award recipients demonstrated the obligation planners have to respond to quickly changing conditions. The Western Connecticut Council of Governments responded to changes in technology, assessing the potential impact of 5G technology in their communities and issuing recommendations including a model right-of-way ordinance and improvements to land use controls. For the Northwest Hills Council of Governments and the Town of West Hartford, it was Covid-19 that prompted programmatic and policy shifts. West Hartford fast-tracked a process to enable outdoor dining, maintaining its place as a regional restaurant destination even during the pandemic. In northwestern Connecticut, the NHCOC updated its economic development strategies to address new distribution models necessitated by Covid-19, supporting a new farm share program and online resources.

Thank you to Jeanne Davies, Michele Lipe, and the Awards Committee for working diligently to ensure that planning's good work was recognized even during a bewildering year.

This issue also includes an update on 2021 legislation, insight on the legality of special permit conditions from CCAPA Executive Board member Chris Smith, and a column by CCAPA President Rebecca Augur highlighting Desegregate Connecticut's Zoning Atlas, a major research project informing current policy debates. And as part of our continued focus on supporting students and young planners, we hear from former Sustainable CT fellow Johnell Clarke on her experience with that excellent program.

As always, we welcome topic suggestions and submissions for future issues of Connecticut Planning. ■

— Amanda Kennedy, AICP

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# CCAPA Announces 2020 Planning Awards

Each year the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association invites nominations for its annual Planning Awards to showcase outstanding projects, people and places. CCAPA recognized its 2020 award recipients in a virtual ceremony on March 18th. Thank you to Michele Lipe, Jeanne Davies, and the members of the Awards Committee for their work selecting 2020's recipients and highlighting their achievement.

## TACTICAL URBANISM AWARD

### Town of West Hartford – Expansion of Outdoor Dining

The COVID-19 pandemic forced municipalities across Connecticut to consider ways to support local businesses forced to limit indoor activities. In West Hartford, an Outdoor Dining Task Force was convened under direction of the Town Manager, bringing together staff from West Hartford's Building Division, Corporation Counsel's Office, Economic Development, Engineering

**In total, the town approved 43 outdoor dining permits that added 1,500 seats for restaurants.**

Division, Fire Marshall's Office, Health District, Planning & Zoning Division, Police Department, Public Relations and Public Works Department. The Task Force issued a detailed online survey to local retailers and restaurateurs, finding overwhelming interest in expanded use of outdoor spaces for commercial activities. The Task Force developed an online expanded outdoor dining permitting process and an expanded outdoor dining plan for the Center.

Division, Fire Marshall's Office, Health District, Planning & Zoning Division, Police Department, Public Relations and Public Works Department. The Task Force issued a detailed online survey to local retailers and restaurateurs, finding overwhelming interest

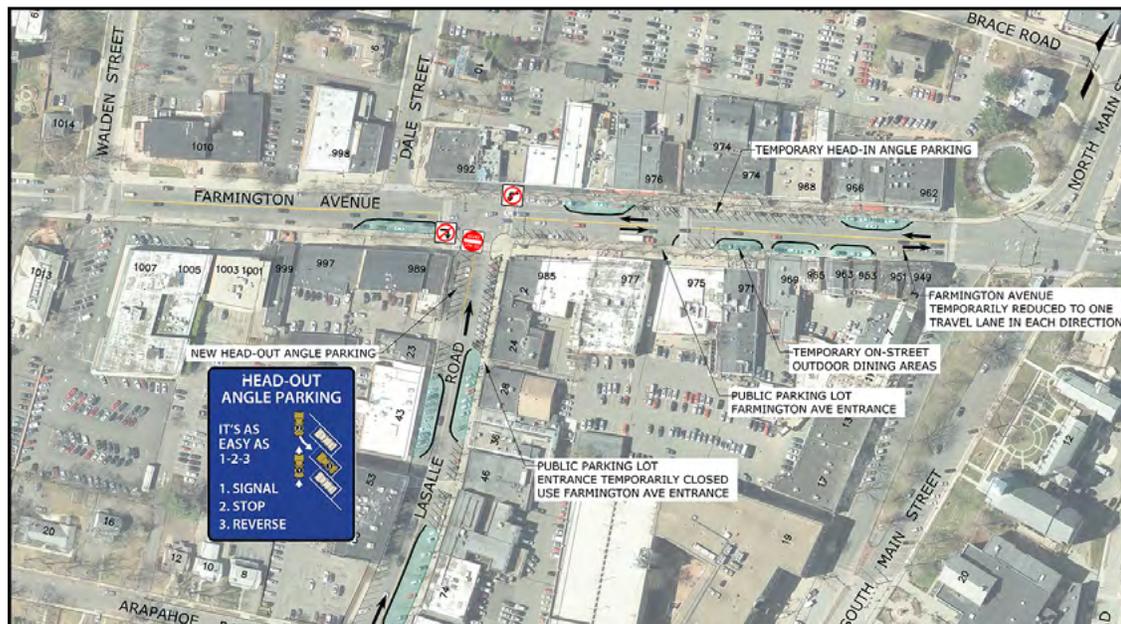
The Town's approach to accommodate restaurants was a notable example of community-led decision making. By inviting the public, businesses, and stakeholders to collaborate with multiple departments in the decision making process, the Town



*Protected Outdoor Dining in the Street.*  
Source: Town of West Hartford.

was able to successfully reconfigure public spaces and efficiently process outdoor dining permits. In the center of West Hartford, 67 on-street parking spaces were converted into outdoor dining spaces. In total, the town approved 43 outdoor dining permits that added 1,500 seats for restaurants. The town expediting the permitting process, with an average turn-around time of 2.8 days, which helped businesses to set up quickly and safely. The collaboration between departments, the engagement with the public in the decision-making process, and the

success of the outdoor dining permitting process are all exemplary. The efforts made by the Outdoor Dining Task Force have fostered community participation and transparency in the decision making process, and showed creativity in re-imagining public spaces. This committee and the successful implementation of outdoor dining serve as an example of how towns can serve their communities and support their local economies during a crisis.



*Plan to Accommodate Outdoor Dining.* Source: Town of West Hartford.

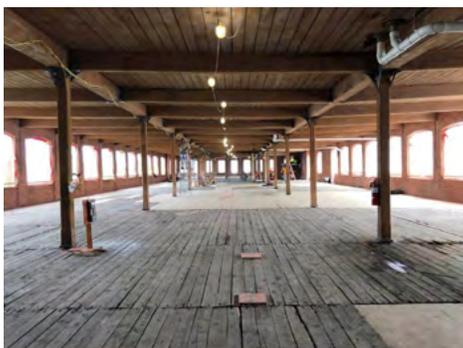
— Todd Sealy

**ADAPTIVE REUSE AWARD**

**Town of Windsor Locks –  
Montgomery Mill**

Persistent planning efforts paid off in Windsor Locks with the conversion and restoration of the as the long-abandoned J.R. Montgomery Company Industrial Complex into 160 one and two bedroom apartments, of which 51% are income-restricted. The 160 apartments are expected to generate almost \$1.2 million in operations expenditures and about \$16 million in resident spending, contributing to the local economy.

The award is made to the Town of Windsor Locks, and commends the contributions of First Selectman Chris Kervick, Town Planner Jennifer V. Rodriguez, planning and engineering firm Fuss and O’Neill, property owner Alhstrom Munksjo, mill developer Beacon Communities, Crosskey Architects, and Patrick McMahon, who served as economic development consultant. Other partners in this enormous effort included the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, Connecticut Department of Housing, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, Preservation Connecticut, National Park Service Historic Preservation.



Montgomery Mill’s 225,000 square feet was transformed into 160 new apartments. (Source: HazPros)



Montgomery Mill sits adjacent to downtown Windsor Locks separated by the Windsor Locks Canal (F). Image: Town of Windsor Locks.

Montgomery Mill was built in 1871 for the manufacturing of cotton yarn, and in later years produced decorative and electric tinsels. The very large structure (255,000 sf) at the gateway to the town overlooking the Connecticut River and Windsor Locks Canal stood blighted and unused since 1990. Several fires, the first in 2006, damaged and destroyed parts the complex. Vandals stole fixtures. Contamination was virtually everywhere. One could not find a more challenging adaptive reuse project.

The rebirth of the Montgomery Mill was driven by a Community Vision and a Redevelopment Toolkit, the foundation of which was five different plans and regulations. Through the untiring efforts of the many committed team members

and a creative and complex funding program of nearly \$63 million, the objectives were fully achieved, including:

1. Revitalizing Main Street with blight removal, new commercial uses, higher density residential development, and a palpable vibrancy.
2. Creating a welcoming gateway into town in removing a major eyesore.
3. Reconnecting to, and embracing, the Windsor Locks Canal, the majestic Connecticut River, and the adjacent 4.5-mile State of Connecticut Canal Trail, creating and enhancing cultural, economic, and environmental assets.
4. Preserving an historic site of significance and character, made even more imperative given the loss of most of the historic Main Street to misguided urban renewal.
5. Connecting people to places by realizing a catalyst project as part of successful Transit Oriented Development along the Hartford Springfield Rail line.



(Source: Montgomery Mill Apartments)

— Dwight Merriam, FAICP

PLACE MAKING AWARD

City of Torrington – Franklin Plaza

Franklin Plaza was a key component of work in Torrington that also made improvements to the Naugatuck River Greenway, Patterson Park, and Franklin Street, as well as parking and intersection improvements. Franklin Street was a one way street that was part of a five-way intersection that served as a gateway to downtown. This intersection made it difficult for pedestrians to cross and was considered an unattractive entrance to the downtown. Patterson Park had become an area known for illicit activities and was unsightly due to overgrown vegetation.

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association presents a Place Making Award to the City of Torrington for Franklin Plaza. The City of Torrington, in collaboration with BL Companies, developed plans to connect two halves of the downtown and provide a





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multifunctional public space. The plaza and Patterson Park were designed to be large enough to accommodate specific programming elements such as bands, pop up markets, and events. The design was able to create several inviting and interesting community spaces by incorporating design features such as a labyrinth, ample seating, and plantings. RJB Contracting and Zaharek’s Landscaping implemented the improvements.

The project was partially funded through a Brownfield Areawide Revitalization (BAR) Grant from the State of Connecticut. The City’s investment in these spaces has spurred development of a 60-unit mixed affordability development on a parcel near the plaza and extended the Naugatuck River Greenway.

— Todd Sealy

## CCAPA 2020 Awards

### PLANNING WITH FUTURE PLANNERS AWARD

#### Make the Road Connecticut – Bridgeport Youth Power Committee

Make the Road Connecticut is an organization that builds membership with low-income and working-class Latinos living in Bridgeport and Hartford. The organization has become a powerful voice on immigrant, worker,

and women's rights, education equality, LGBTQ justice, and more. Make the Road Connecticut's Youth Power Committee engaged its student members in assessing the quality of pedestrian routes and transit access to Bassick High School and Curiale Elementary School, both in Bridgeport, and advocating for improvements.

Starting in 2018, the organization's Youth Power Committee, made up of students from Warren Harding and Bassick schools in Bridgeport, began to evaluate the routes most used by students to get to school. Working with the Nature Conservancy and Sacred Heart University, students worked with walk audit data and listened to those in the community to determine the need for improving sidewalks and intersections in Bridgeport. In April 2019, students made history by assuring that their recommendations for the city's new Master Plan were approved by the City's Economic and Community Development Committee and the city's Planning and Zoning Commission. Wins included:



Members of the Youth Power Committee. Image: Make the Road Connecticut.

*(continued on page 8)*



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- Working with Greater Bridgeport Transportation and Board of Education to best support student transportation.
- Prioritizing safe routes to school for lighting improvements, sidewalk repair, streetscape, and other infrastructure improvements.
- Youth input in developing appropriate safe routes.

The Youth Power Committee's campaign culminated in real action when in September of 2020, permanent streetscape improvements were made to what was one of the most dilapidated and unsafe intersections in Bridgeport, the



*Intersection Improvement. Image source: Make the Road Connecticut.*

intersection of Laurel Avenue and Grove Street. Students were able to create a colorful new streetscape that boosted the appearance of the intersection and improved the safety of the intersection for pedestrians.

— Jonathan Cabral, AICP

### Make the Road CT Youth Power Committee

- Data based planning: walk audit data & listened to community.
- Strategic thinking: planned for improving sidewalks and intersections in the city to make the walk to Bassick High School and Curiale School safer.
- Facilitation: ensured plans were incorporated into Bridgeport's new Master Plan & approved by the City's Economic and Community Development Committee and the city's Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Implementation: repaving and installation of permanent streetscape improvements in one of the most dilapidated and unsafe intersections in Bridgeport.

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Photo by Ed Wonssek

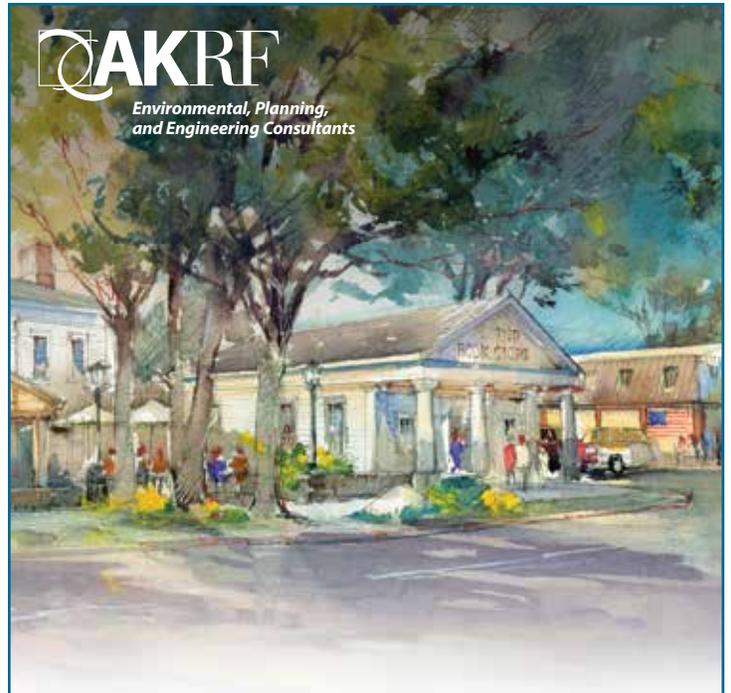


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## City of Bridgeport – Resilient Bridgeport

The Resilient Bridgeport project is a framework for implementing neighborhood scaled interventions to address climate change and sea level rise. This project began with HUD’s “Rebuild by Design” competition created in response to Hurricane Sandy. The team secured a \$10 million award from HUD to the State of Connecticut Department of Housing, and the State was then awarded \$56 million in the National Disaster Resilience Competition for a second pilot project. An additional \$250,000 in funding was allocated from the Long Island Sound Future fund for green infrastructure.

Resilient Bridgeport is setting a framework for Bridgeport to use infrastructure to address issues related to that storm such as flooding, power loss, and infrastructure damage from storm surges. The framework will focus on strategies for the form of streets, public spaces, infrastructure networks, and architecture. The Department of Housing engaged the design team of Waggoner & Ball (planning lead), Yale Urban Design Workshop, Arcadis (urban design), and Reed Hildebrand (landscape architecture) to develop resiliency strategies for the City of Bridgeport’s South End and Black Rock Harbor.

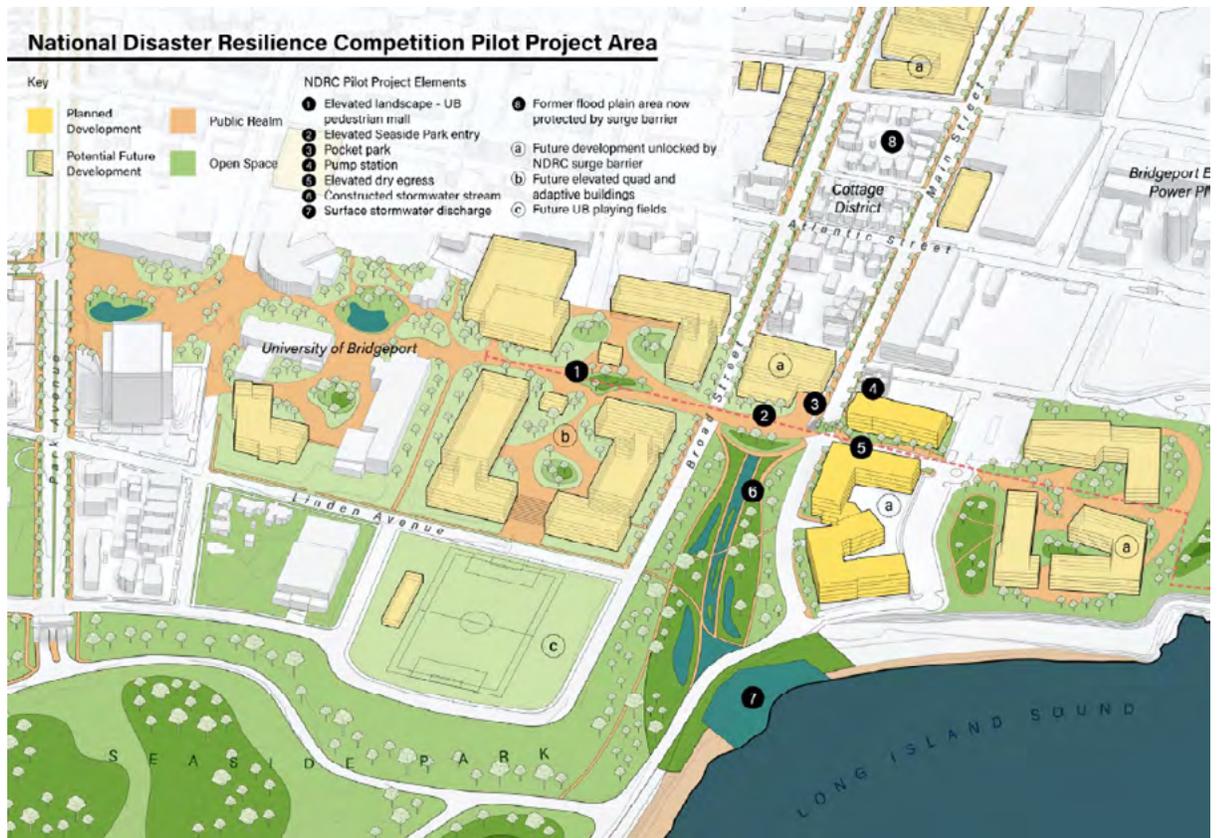
The project involved extensive collaboration between the client, consultants and extensive public and stakeholder consultation. Hundreds of residents and stakeholders participated in the planning process. Major stakeholders included University of Bridgeport, Seaside Village, PSEG Power, UI, Emera, and JHM. Public education and outreach was conducted through meetings and workshops, along with the establishment of a Resilient Bridgeport design center to host events and exhibits. Two pilot



*The Resilient Bridgeport project included extensive consultation with stakeholders and the public.*

projects were developed, including a new storm water park to be built adjacent to a public housing project, and a surge protection barrier surrounding critical infrastructure and a historic neighborhood. These two projects will demonstrate how the framework can take physical form. This project has the potential to radically transform the aesthetic and function of Bridgeport’s infrastructure and serve as a framework for other coastal cities to address climate change and sea level rise.

— Todd Sealy



*Phase 2 Pilot Project Area included parts of Seaside Park, the University of Bridgeport campus, and adjacent neighborhoods. Source: City of Bridgeport.*

## Western Connecticut Council of Governments – Telecom Task Force

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments authorized the creation of a task force to develop a coordinated telecommunications strategy to address the emergence of fifth generation broadband, a key recommendation in its recently adopted Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. This is the first study conducted of its kind in the state that comprehensively addresses the municipal challenges and opportunities offered by fifth generation broadband services. The work conducted by the task force is a wonderful example of planning for the future and providing recommendations and a framework planners throughout the state may utilize.

Because of the range of complex issues associated with siting, public safety, land use and regulations at both the state and federal level for the telecommunications industry, the report provides an in-depth analysis of the scope of municipal authority to regulate telecommunications systems in the state of Connecticut, including small cell wireless facilities associated with fifth generation broadband. The task force met with numerous subject matter experts and reviewed hundreds of regulations and alternate strategies across the country and state to identify six major strategies that will enable municipalities to develop customized regulatory and business approaches to develop 21st-century wireless services in their communities. The final recommendations report summarizes the benefits and elements of each strategy and provides a model right of way ordinance, a model municipal ordinance, identified resources and recommended improvements to land use controls based on a comprehensive review of all the state’s municipal zoning regulations. To complement the regulatory strategies mentioned above, the group also identified best practices for the development of licensing strategies aimed at ensuring that public safety, environmental protection and siting decisions are balanced with the region’s desperate need for improved high-speed telecommunications services to meet the need of the businesses, residents and local governments.

The importance of this work has been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, making our dependence on high-speed telecommunications for remote learning, work, and social life even more critical than when the taskforce first convened in March of 2020. It is a blueprint for municipal action consistent with the Federal Communications Commissions’ small cell wireless facilities mandate and should be of statewide value to all 169 municipalities concerned with the deployment of fifth generation broadband.

— Jonathan Cabral, AICP



Top: Incorporation of Wireless Facilities in Sonoma, CA. Bottom: WestCOG staff evaluated issues around municipal regulation of wireless facilities and developed a model municipal ordinance.

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## CCAPA 2020 Awards

### RURAL REGION ECONOMIC STRATEGY AWARD

#### Northwest Hills Council of Governments – Annual CEDS Update and Performance Report

In the midst of the pandemic, the Northwest Hills Council of Governments prepared its “Annual CEDS Update and Performance Report,” which highlighted the adjustments that were being made to the region’s goals in response to the pandemic. Prepared by Jocelyn Ayer, the NHCOC’s Community and Economic Development Director, the NHCOC report illustrates what planning can do in a rural region to develop, promote, and implement economic development priorities. More importantly, the document highlights how many partners in the region working collaboratively strengthen their regional economy as they work towards common goals.

The report was timely as it not only reported on the progress being made in the region towards existing goals, but adjusted strategies while reevaluating and setting new goals for the next year.

The following are a couple of examples of adjustments made as a direct response to the pandemic:

- The NWCT Food Hub launched a **new “farm share” program** partnered with local restaurants who offered curbside pickup of fresh, locally grown produce to support these small businesses as well as meet residents’ needs.
- [DiscoverLitchfieldHills.com](https://www.discoverlitchfieldhills.com) quickly transformed into a platform to help residents find services during COVID-19 and support local businesses adding new features allowing businesses to list whether they were of-

fering curbside pick-up, gift certificates online, or virtual events or services. The site also added a resource directory for businesses and residents.

- Plans for a 2020 **Visitor’s Guide** were put on hold, but the experience of the past year, bringing new residents into the area, has impacted the resources and plans for a 2021 Visitor’s Guide and a guide for new residents is also being considered.
- Life during the pandemic has highlighted how close the rural region’s broadband network was operating to its maximum capacity and the need for infrastructure upgrade to **update fiber-to-the-home network to serve every home and business** in the region. This priority will continue to be pursued with partners at Northwest Connect.

*(continued on page 13)*



*The NHCOC region’s economy includes a mix of rural and small city activities. (Source: NHCOC)*



## CCAPA 2020 Awards

This well-written, concise report is being recognized for its exceptional timeliness and readability. So often plans are drafted with goals and workplans, and never really measure results. The real benefit of this annual report is the recognition of the need to revisit our plans and implement new strategies to react to our ever-changing environment. It is planning in action!

— Michele Lipe, AICP



*In response to COVID-19, a New “Farm Share” Program partnered with local restaurants to offer curbside pickup of fresh, locally grown produce to support these small businesses as well as meet residents’ needs. Source: NW Hills COG.*

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## CCAPA 2020 Awards

### DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AWARD

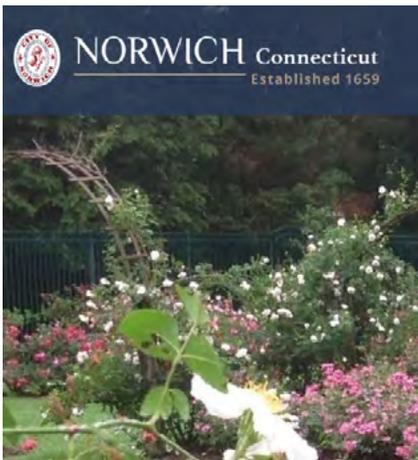
#### City of Norwich

Norwich's Downtown Revitalization Initiative began in late 2010 as an effort to bring businesses, commerce, and employment opportunities to historic downtown Norwich, Connecticut. The goals of these programs were designed to achieve the following:

- Provide funds to enable downtown building owners to bring their buildings to code,
- Encourage businesses to occupy spaces downtown
- Attract more housing and residents to downtown
- Increase marketing for properties.

In 2011, Norwich voters approved \$3.38 million for the program. The funds supported reuse of existing spaces in downtown Norwich and bringing new businesses to the downtown. With the support of \$1.8 million in funding, vacant upper floors were renovated to comply with building codes for use as commercial or residential space. New downtown leases were subsidized up to \$5 per square foot to incentivize new businesses to locate in Norwich, drawing on a \$0.5 million allocation for this purchase. Lastly, a \$1 million revolving loan fund will fund up to 40 businesses over ten years.

In a November 2020 report to the Norwich Council, Norwich Community Development Corporation Presi-



dent Jason Vincent reported on the success of the program. Vincent reported that the \$3.3 million has leveraged \$35 million in private investment and has “activated” 150,000 sq. ft. of downtown Norwich, bringing downtown occupancy rates from about 57% in 2011 to 78% in 2020. Since

2010, downtown Norwich has seen a net increase of 41 new businesses, including the Royal Punjabi restaurant, Rose City Fitness, and the beauty salon Bling It On. Jason Vincent's award nomination material asked that the award be presented to “the Citizens of Norwich.” CCA-PA congratulates the Citizens of Norwich, Mayor Peter Nystrom, and the Norwich City Council for their unique initiative that has brought new life into their historic downtown. 📍

— Martin Connor, AICP



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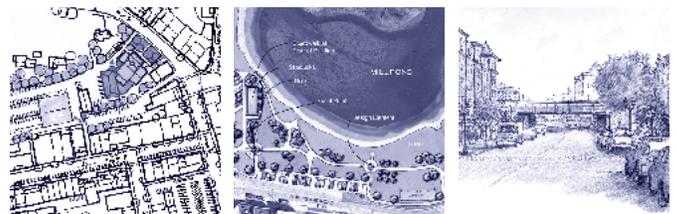
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# Member News

CCAPA's Chapter President, **Rebecca Augur, AICP** is the new Director of Planning and Land Use Services for the Town of Glastonbury, filling the shoes of departing planner **Khara Dodds, AICP**, who also served on CCAPA's Executive Board as Treasurer. Rebecca was formerly a Principal Planner with SLR Consulting. Khara has moved to Texas and is now the Development Services Director for the Town of Prosper in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metro.

**Kathryn Kramer, AICP** has joined the Town of Farmington as their Town Planner. Kathryn formerly worked as an urban designer with Perkins Eastman and is a 2017 graduate of UPenn's City and Regional Planning program.



**Carey Duques, AICP** is now the Land Use Official for the Town of Essex. Carey was formerly Town Planner for the Town of North Branford.



**Tabitha Harkin** has joined the Town of Groton's Planning Department. Tabitha was formerly with the City of New Bedford, MA.

**Savannah-Nicole Villalba** served on APA's 2021 Student Project Jury to select recipients of APA's Student Project awards. Savannah-Nicole is a 2020 graduate of Tufts' Urban and Environmental Policy Planning and formerly held assistant planner positions in Enfield and Winchester.

**Clark Chapin** is the new Director of Planning and Community Development for the Town of East Windsor. Clark has helped previous positions with the USDA and Working Lands Alliance, and was a member of the Connecticut General Assembly from 2001 to 2016.

The Town of Tolland has announced that **David Corcoran, AICP** has been hired as the town's new director of planning and community development. David was most recently a community and regional

planner with Ada County, Idaho, and was based in Boise.

After 16 years with the Connecticut Housing Finance Agency, **Diane Smith** has joined Way Finders as Chief Real Estate Development Officer. Way Finders is a community development organization based in western Massachusetts with a focus on housing, real estate, employment support and community services.

**John Guszkowski, AICP**, and **Mike D'Amato, AICP**, formerly of CHA Companies (née CME Associates), announced the founding of their new community planning and public policy company **Tyche Planning & Policy Group**.

Congratulations to **Joseph Samolis, Robin Newton, Bruce Lofgren, Matthew Tyksinski, Savannah-Nicole Villalba**, who all passed their AICP exams in 2020.

**David Sousa, AICP**, formerly of CDM Smith, announced the formation of his planning consultation company **Blackledge Consultants, LLC**, based in Hebron, CT. 🏡



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# The Zoning Atlas – An Important Resource as Connecticut Rethinks Housing Policies

by Rebecca Augur, AICP

Recently a coalition of zoning reform advocates, DesegregateCT, released the first interactive map in the country to document how all zoning districts in a single state treat housing. The groundbreaking Connecticut Zoning Atlas is likely to be one of the most important tools for planning our communities our state has ever seen.

Zoning is important, because it affects all of our lives. Through zoning, public officials decide where you can live, open a business, or even grab a cup of coffee before work. Yet while the impact of zoning is clear, for most people, reading the zoning code itself is not. According to law professor and architect Sara Bronin, who led the research team for the Zoning Atlas, the average length of zoning text in our state is 180 pages, and several zoning codes are not even available online. Most of these codes are filled with planning terms and can even sometimes be difficult for attorneys and planners to interpret.

The Zoning Atlas helps people see how their town treats housing, without having to sift through the zoning codes themselves. It clearly depicts how local zoning regulations allow or restrict different housing types across the state. The data can be viewed on a town-by-town basis or at a regional and statewide level. Given the number of different zoning districts across the state (more than 2,600) and the lack of a central clearinghouse for local zoning information, the new Atlas provides unique insights for anyone interested in housing policy and in creating more sustainable and equitable communities.

The members of the organization I lead, the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association, hope that state legislators, local land use officials, and residents will use

Given the number of different zoning districts across the state (more than 2,600) and the lack of a central clearinghouse for local zoning information, the new Atlas provides unique insights for anyone interested in housing policy and in creating more sustainable and equitable communities.

*(continued on page 17)*

Sound planning connects data analysis with consensus building around a vision for a more affordable Connecticut. Take a look for yourself at the Connecticut Zoning Atlas and start a conversation in your community.

*A peek at the Connecticut Zoning Atlas.*



## Zoning Atlas, cont'd

the Zoning Atlas to answer some critical questions. Does your community allow duplexes, three- and four-or-more family units?

Does it encourage walkable neighborhoods, and neighborhoods centered around public transit? Does your zoning permit accessory dwelling units, an important economic tool for both homeowners and renters alike, without a public hearing? Comparing your community to others around the state — how, and more importantly, why, is it different? And together, we should all consider the impacts of limited housing diversity on Connecticut's economic and social future.

It is important to acknowledge the depth of research that went into this effort. Bronin and her volunteer team painstakingly collected about 70 different housing-related characteristics for each zoning code. They confirmed its accuracy in several ways, including by asking town planners to review it. Cary Chadwick, a geospatial educator, led the effort to collect GIS layers showing zoning districts. In some cases, particularly after finding a few hand-drawn town zoning maps, she ended up digitizing the zoning districts herself. The [Connecticut Data Collaborative](#) put the code research and maps together into an impressive and easy-to-use public interface.

Sound planning connects data analysis with consensus building around a vision for a more affordable Connecticut. Take a look for yourself at the [Connecticut Zoning Atlas](#) and start a conversation in your community. Together, let's use this new information to help build a more inclusive and sustainable Connecticut. 🇺🇸

— *Rebecca Augur, AICP is the President of CCAPA and recently joined the Town of Glastonbury as the Director of Planning and Land Use Services. She was formerly a Principal Planner with SLR Consulting. This article originally appeared in the February 3, 2021 edition of the CT Mirror.*



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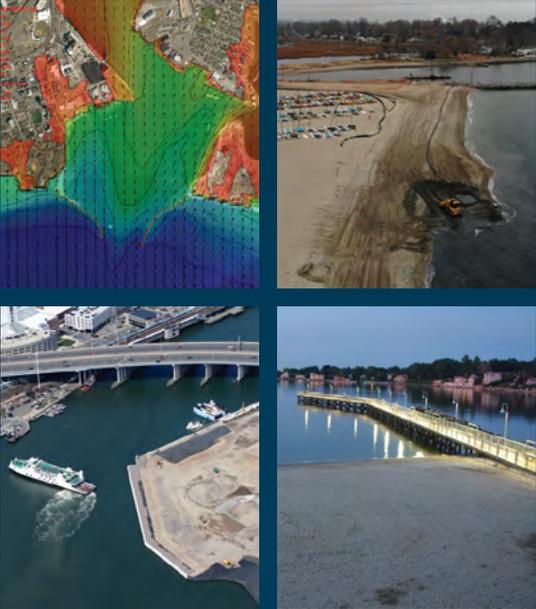
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## AICP Diversity Scholarship Applications are due May 28, 2021

# Happy Spring and Congratulations to the CCAPA Members who Passed the November AICP Exam!

*Update from CCAPA's Professional Development Officer by Jeremy DeCarli, AICP*

On Saturday March 20, CCAPA hosted a virtual AICP Classroom review which was well attended. About thirty planners, most from CT with a few out of state participants, spent the better part of the day reviewing topics for the upcoming AICP Exam. Topics covered included ethics, public participation, social justice, planning law and legal principles, areas of practice, planning history and theory, and plan-making and implementation. We also had a good conversation with a recent exam taker. Our many thanks to Robert Flanagan, Mike Pisicelli, Chris Smith, Don Poland, Rista Malanca, and Patrick Carleton for giving up a portion of their weekends to help out with the Classroom.

AICP Diversity Scholarships are available for those who are planning to take the November 2021 AICP exam with applications due on May 28, 2021. AICP

scholarships help make the planning profession more diverse and accessible to those with financial need. Diversity is an inclusive concept which encompasses, but not is not limited to: race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality, ability, educational attainment, spiritual beliefs, creed, culture, tribal affiliation, nationality, immigration status, political beliefs, and veteran status. Visit <https://ct.planning.org/aicp-certification> for scholarship information.

If you haven't already discovered it, the Certification Maintenance log has been updated to reflect the new mandatory credits. As of January 1, 2022, two new mandatory credits will become effective. The first new required credit is Equity. Planners have a special responsibility to serve the public interest, expand choice and opportunity for all persons, and to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged, as asserted in the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. The equity mandatory credit provides the opportunity for planners to expand their equity toolkit, leading to more equitable outcomes in communities. The second new credit is a targeted topic, which allows the AICP Commission to rotate the topic as they deem appropriate to reflect the professional development needs of planners in a rapidly changing world. The 2021 targeted credit requirement is in the field of Sustainability and Resilience. Planners must pay special attention to the long-term and interrelated consequences of their actions. Planning actions may have potentially detrimental long-term consequences, especially on their most vulnerable people, places, and systems. The sustainability and resilience credit will help planners better plan for sustainable and resilient outcomes.

Enjoy the better weather and feel free to reach out to me with any questions at [jdecarli@easthamptonct.gov](mailto:jdecarli@easthamptonct.gov). 📧

— *Jeremy DeCarli, AICP, is CCAPA's Professional Development Officer and the Planning and Zoning Official for the Town of East Hampton.*



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The graphic features a stylized city skyline with various buildings in shades of teal and green, set against a white background.

# CCAPA Legislative Update

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

Two months is a long time to hold your breath and keep your fingers crossed. I hope we can make it to June. And I hope good things happen.

At the beginning of this very unusual legislative session, we were promised (by the Chairs of key committees!) that this was going to be a quiet session. COVID, social distancing, virtual meetings, budget concerns, a limited appetite for big-change legislation...it all pointed to a tranquil few months in the annals of Connecticut legislature. Nope.

The events of 2020 — the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, the national election upheaval, the focus on housing, zoning, and inequality in our own communities — have seemingly created an urgent environment to do something to move Connecticut forward. The result of this, as far as CCAPA is concerned, has been the busiest and most fraught legislative session in memory. And we're only halfway there.

The CCAPA Government Relations Committee, assuming a tight, limited session, set only a few key goals. We wanted to bring the unfinished business of the 8-2 zoning enabling act re-write (HB 6107) across the finish line. We wanted to get a statewide GIS system moved forward. We wanted to support the various goals of the Desegregate CT agenda to make our housing systems fairer. Simple, right? Nope.

Within the few weeks devoted to Committee public hearings, CCAPA submitted and delivered twenty pieces of testimony on legislation before the Planning & Development, Housing, Transportation, and Government Administration & Elections Committees. Thanks to outstanding work from my GRC Co-Chair Emmeline Harrigan, we have established a reputation for thoughtful, incisive testimony that have contributed significantly to the consideration of a number of key bills. The Governor has already signed one of these, HB 6610, which extends through March of 2022 the outdoor dining provisions originally covered by an Executive Order.

This session has been highlighted by the epic, 24-hour public hearing of the Planning & Development Committee at which several key bills, including SB 1024 (Desegregate CT bill) and HB 6611 ("fair share" bill), motivated nearly 350 people to sign up for testimony. The following week, the same Committee's hearing extended well over 16 more hours and included a focus on HB 6647. This bill, for which CCAPA provided strong leadership, would create an office and a mechanism for statewide GIS coordination, with positive impacts on everything from public health preparedness and response to economic development competitiveness.

All of these priority bills, supported by CCAPA, have advanced out of Committee, some with modifications, and will be brought up on the floor of the House and Senate between now and the end of the session on June 9th. We will continue to work with legislators on the final wording of some of these bills and will seek to organize our membership to support their passage. Without having the legislators and lobbyists roaming the halls of the legislative office building this spring, this process is going to be even more mysterious.

The [Government Relations Committee's testimony](#) can be found on the CCAPA website. As always, we welcome your comments and participation. Please contact us at [ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com](mailto:ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com).

— *John Guskowski is a Principal and Co-Founder of Tyche Planning & Policy Group, based in Vernon, CT, and chairs CCAPA's Government Relations Committee with Emmeline Harrigan.*



The events of 2020 — the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, the national election upheaval, the focus on housing, zoning, and inequality in our own communities — have seemingly created an urgent environment to do something to move Connecticut forward.



## 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!

# Student Experiences

by Sustainable Connecticut Fellow Johnel Clarke

**“Sustainable CT communities strive to be thriving, resilient, collaborative, and forward-looking. They build community and local economy. They equitably promote the health and well-being of current and future residents, and they respect the finite capacity of the natural environment.”**

When I came across the Sustainable CT vision statement, my eagerness to pursue my dreams as an aspiring environmentalist peaked. I was a senior at St. John’s University and sought an opportunity to kick-start my journey towards advocating for the preservation the Earth’s natural resources. As an Environmental Studies major and Anthropology minor, I had many career options and a hunger to explore them. My experience as a Sustainable CT Fellow allowed me to do that while simultaneously making a meaningful impact.



The Sustainable CT team was well prepared for the arrival of its yearly cohort of Fellows, which since 2018 has brought together about a dozen students each summer to assist Connecticut municipalities pursuing Sustainable CT certification. Each fellow is placed with a Council of Governments to facilitate work with their member municipalities. The welcome I received to the program was warm and hearty. I was met with a plethora of introductory materials that allowed me to familiarize myself with sustainability as well as the significance of Council of Governments and their collaboration with the state’s 169 municipalities. This was extremely comforting for me, as many of my questions were answered before my first official day as a Fellow. Pre-recorded trainings detailed the intricacies of Sustainable CT, precisely defined sustainability goals in terms of the organization, and illustrated how Connecticut municipalities can meet Sustainable CT certification criteria. Then, I was assigned a Council of Governments (COG) supervisor who I grew close with throughout the summer as we collaborated on projects and she

conveyed key knowledge to me.

I was assigned to the Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments for the term and would spend much of my time assisting their member municipalities with earning and recording action points throughout the certification process. I was then introduced to the staff at MetroCOG and provided with a description of the excellent work the organization has done and continues to do within their planning region. This sparked my admiration for local government structures and gave me insight into the commitment and diligence civil servants exhibit in improving the community and the lives of town residents. Considering the unfortunate circumstances of being amid a global pandemic due to COVID-19, my Fellowship would be entirely remote.

Nonetheless, I felt well primed to aid Sustainable CT and town officials through the process of highlighting the progressive efforts and achievements of the municipalities seeking certification this cycle. During this time, I closely studied Sustainable CT’s comprehensive breakdown of its action categories and marveled at how they were organized. Municipalities had opportunities to highlight their Thriving Local Economies, Dynamic and Resilient Planning, and even Inclusive Engagement, Communication and Education among many other actions. It was done meticulously so that the overarching themes considered essential to executing best sustainable practices could be achieved through a multitude of actions. I admire how the program has made applying for certification distinctive and unique for each municipality.

Over the course of my time as a Fellow, I became familiar with a community of passionate citizens who ensure Connecticut’s participation in the movement  
*(continued on page 21)*

**Over the course of my time as a Fellow, I became familiar with a community of passionate citizens who ensure Connecticut’s participation in the movement towards a viably sustainable future.**

## Student Experiences, cont'd

towards a viably sustainable future. Weekly discussions allowed Fellows, including myself, to have memorable and impactful conversations with a number of stakeholders, some of which included elected officials, municipal staff members, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) representatives, former Fellows, lobbyists, equity coaches and many others. The conversations spanned from general descriptions of duties and daily tasks of their respective jobs, to the different journeys that had led to a plethora of career paths. These dialogues gave me a glimpse into the varying organizations, jobs and career paths of each professional that participated in these discussions.

Routine check-in calls kept me up to date with my colleague's experiences. We prompted each other on our respective COG's progressing projects and different methods of community outreach we used to connect with municipalities not yet registered in Sustainable CT. Halfway

through our term, two Fellows presented their thoughts to the group on a collaborative effort to formulate a presentation on A Young Vision for Future Connecticut Communities. Our varying interests allowed us to conduct research and a survey to present our findings on topics young people consider significant in the fields of sustainability and conservation. We arranged numerous subject areas, held brainstorming sessions, and perfected our pitch.

Being able to connect with such a large group of citizens across the state who are passionate about improving our communities was inspiring and the perfect conclusion to my Fellowship experience. It validated my decision to pursue a career in sustainability and revealed to me the community of fervent environmentalists working hard behind the scenes. Most importantly, it gave me a new outlook on navigating environmental sustainability on a local level and provided me with the inspiration to keep going. I got an inside look of how the citizens of Connecticut are striving to make it the best it can be.

*(continued on page 23)*

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# From the Bench

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



## Special Permits and Temporal Conditions — Permissible?

Readers of this column may recall a discussion concerning a Superior Court decision from February of 2019 holding that special permits are use permits that run with the land; therefore, absent explicit statutory authority, special permits cannot be “limited as to time, or personalized to any individual.” In that matter, the Superior Court reviewed the applicable State statutes, Sections 8-2 (our zoning enabling legislation) and Section 8-3c (governing special permits), and held that there is no explicit statutory authority for a zoning commission to impose temporal conditions on a special permit approval. The particular special permit imposed a time limitation within which to construct an approved 36,000 square foot retail building.



This Superior Court decision was appealed to the Appellate Court. In *International Investors v. Town Plan and Zoning Commission of the Town of Fairfield, et al.*, 202 Conn. App. 582 (2021) [released on February 16, 2021], the Appellate Court reversed the Superior Court on this issue. Specifically, the Appellate Court held that Section 8-2(a) “empowers a zoning authority to impose a temporal condition on a special permit, in this instance, by requiring the completion of development attendant to the permitted use within a set time frame.” *Id.*, at p. 599.

The Appellate Court first noted that Section 8-2(a) provides, in pertinent part, that zoning “regulations in one district may differ from those in another district, and may provide that certain classes or kinds of buildings,

structures or uses of land are permitted only after obtaining a special permit or special exception from a zoning commission, planning commission, combined planning and zoning commission or zoning board of appeals, whichever commission or board the regulations may, notwithstanding any special act to the contrary, designate, subject to standards set forth in the regulations and to *conditions necessary to protect the public health, safety, convenience and property values...* [Footnote omitted.]” (Emphasis added.) *Id.*, at pp. 595-596.

The Appellate Court found this statutory authority to impose conditions on special permits and special exceptions that are “necessary to protect the public health, safety, convenience and property values,” to authorize “a zoning authority to condition, by regulatory fiat, its approval of a special permit on the completion of development related to the permitted use within a set time frame. [Footnote omitted.]” In support of this conclusion, the Appellate Court stated that the “basic rationale” for a special permit is that generally special permit uses may be compatible with “as of right” uses in a particular zone district, but “their nature is such that their precise location and mode of operation must be regulated because of the topography, traffic problems, neighboring uses, etc., of the site.... [Internal quotations and citation omitted.]” *Id.*, at p. 596.

Putting on its “planners’ hat,” the Appellate Court continued: “The approval of a special permit on the condition that development attendant to the permitted use is finished by a date certain prevents the permit holder from unduly delaying the

commencement of the permitted use to a time when the surrounding circumstances may no longer support it. [Footnote omitted.]” *Id.*, at pp. 596-597. The Appellate Court provided an example of an approved crematorium, without a temporal condition, where the owner waits thirty years before constructing the crematorium, and during the interim two other crematoriums are approved and built where “the lapse of time has diminished the need for such a use. A durational limit on the special permit granted to the individual would have prevented such a circumstance. [Footnote omitted.]” *Id.*, at p. 598.

Based upon the aforementioned, the Appellate Court concluded that a condition limiting the duration of a special permit is authorized by Section 8-2(a).

A takeaway is that this statutory authorization to impose temporal conditions applies to special permits and special exceptions. The language also applies to zoning commissions, planning commissions, combined zoning and planning commissions, and zoning boards of appeals. Therefore, the decision appears to hold that the provision of time limit conditions on these two types of land use approvals by these various zoning authorities is authorized by Section 8-2(a).

However, don’t file this decision away yet. A petition for certification requesting permission to appeal the Appellate Court’s decision to the State Supreme Court was granted on March 30, 2021. Will keep you advised.

In the interim, stay safe and enjoy your summer. 🍷

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

## Student Experiences, cont'd

My time spent as a Sustainable CT Fellow is unforgettable. The program provides the opportunity for each municipality to gain recognition in various ways. It does this by showcasing the substantial progress being made towards an ecologically sound and socially just future. Prior to my Fellowship with Sustainable CT, I considered seeking opportunities to delve into sustainability elsewhere, but with the exposure I got from this experience I am confident and aware of the many opportunities that are available in this state. 🏡

— *Johneil Clarke is 2020 graduate of St. John's University, where she majored in Environmental Studies. She recently joined the Town of Westbrook as Zoning Technician.*

### Federal Housing Bill Creates New Support and Incentives For Planning

by Emily Pasi, APA Public Affairs Manager

A bipartisan bill that would empower planners to reform zoning and development codes, create housing action plans, and modernize regulatory structures has been introduced in Congress.

The [Housing Supply and Affordability Act](#) would create a powerful new grant program inside the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that gives planners and cities, counties, and regional coalitions access to \$1.5 billion in new funding and technical assistance to overhaul local rules that continue to stymie housing supply and availability and drive up housing costs.

Importantly, the bill provides both dedicated planning grants to help communities build out housing action plans and implementation grants to help them put plans into action. APA worked closely with Members of Congress from both parties to ensure that new funds for planning were included. Pushing for federal incentives and assistance for code and zoning reform is a top priority for APA in 2021.

## Employment Opportunities

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