

# CONNECTICUT PLANNING

Fall 2021

A publication of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association



American Planning Association  
**Connecticut Chapter**

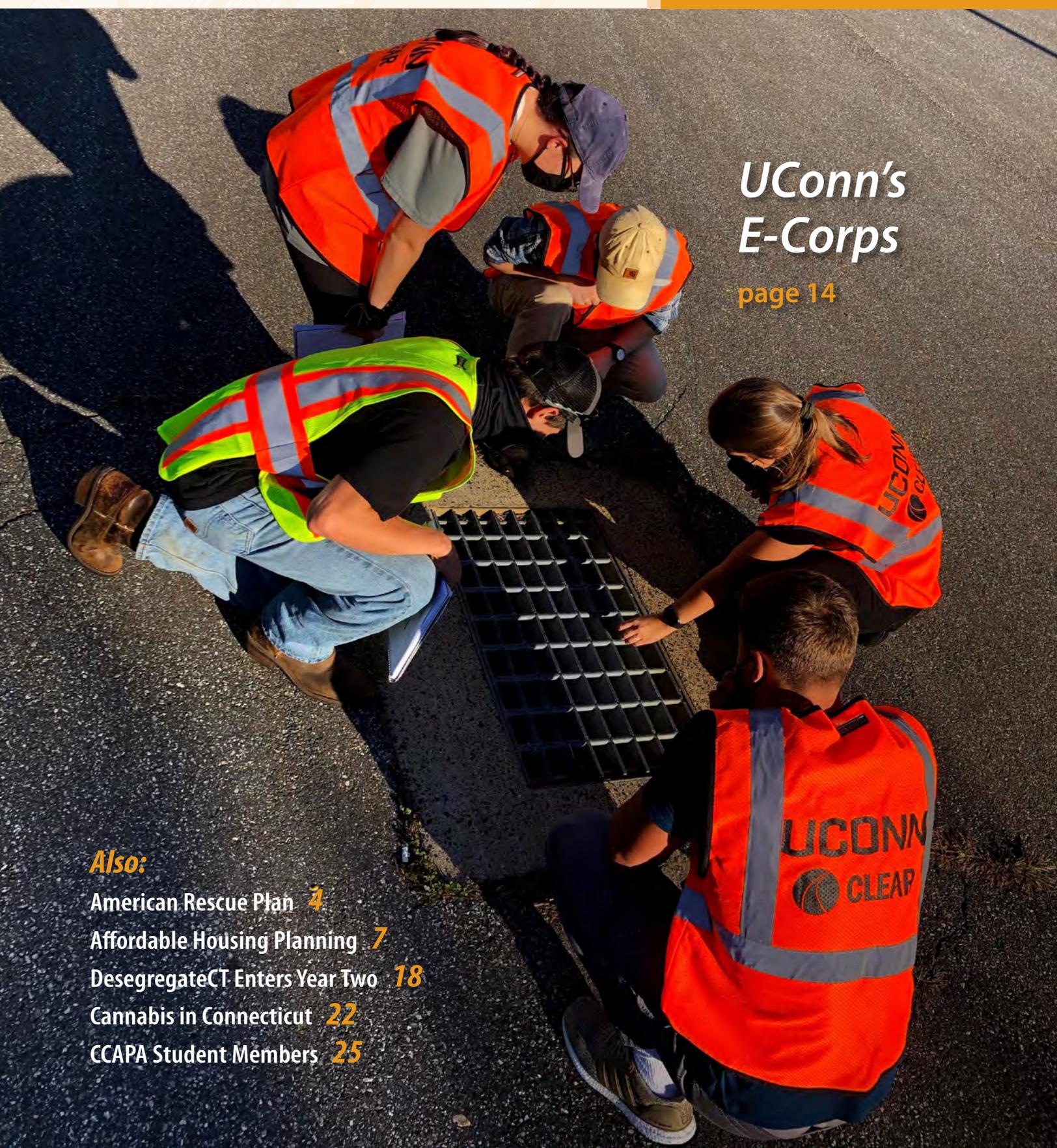
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## UConn's E-Corps

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



### The only constant is change. — Heraclites

As planners, we toil in change — guiding, managing, explaining, and sometimes preventing change, not just personally, but for whole communities. You would think that planners must lack the gene that causes resistance to change. But, I think as a group of people, we're probably no less averse to change than others, we just embrace Heraclites's tenet more willingly. That, or we all enjoy a good challenge.

I feel like change is everywhere in our world of Connecticut planning lately. From new legislation, to the many new names and faces among our ranks, to our ever-evolving responses to COVID. The Chapter's Executive Board has also continued to change. Over the past year, CCAPA has welcomed three new members to the Board: Meghan Sloane, Jeremy DeCarli and Evan Seeman. Jeanne Davies has stepped down as Program Committee Chair and interim Chapter Secretary; however, we are fortunate that she remains on the Board. Please join me in thanking Jeanne for conceiving, organizing, and managing our educational and other programming for years.

If you would like to be a part of further change within CCAPA and serving on the Executive Board interests you, I'd encourage you to get involved in one of our standing committees to get more familiar with what we do as an organization.

The Ad Hoc Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee is close to finalizing its recommendations for the Chapter. We look forward to sharing the Action Plan in October and getting started on implementing the changes it recommends.

Finally, the Chapter will be hosting a Service Day on October 16th in Norwich, in honor of Jason Vincent, where we'll help install landscaping at a newly-renovated Franklin Square just a block from Jason's office at Norwich Community Development Corporation and his brewery Epicure Brewing. I hope to see you there — in person, with shovels and spades, or just a smile and moral support. I think it fitting to get together in work and fun to contribute toward some of the positive changes that Jason helped to usher in.

Please feel free to reach out at any time at (860) 652-7515 or [rebecca.augur@glastonbury-ct.gov](mailto:rebecca.augur@glastonbury-ct.gov).

— Rebecca Augur, AICP

*On the cover: UConn Stormwater Corps students inspect the drainage on a town-owned property in Groton.*

## 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



One are the days when COVID-19 was an excuse to slow things down. In this strange, interim period between the Before Times and a full recovery from COVID-19, it feels like we're trying to catch up on work that fell behind in 2020 and carry out the usual level of work in 2021, all the while continuing to pivot our work and community engagement practices as the pandemic proceeds. And on top of this, federal funding initiatives such as the American Rescue Plan Act are presenting huge opportunities for implementing projects long planned for and providing services long needed, but create more responsibilities for planners to ensure that Connecticut takes advantage of these funding opportunities.

This issue provides a snapshot of how work has ramped up in 2021. CCAPA Past President **Mike Piscitelli** reviews how New Haven is approaching its American Rescue Plan funding decisions, and **Al Sylvestre** reports on progress made in the City of Hartford from that city's parking reforms. **Patrick Gallagher** describes his experience working with municipalities on developing local Affordable Housing Plans, work that many municipal planners are engaged with in advance of the June 2022 statutory deadline. Desegregate CT is developing its 2022 legislative platform, as you'll read in this issue's update by DesegregateCT Deputy Director **Nick Abbott**. For a second year, *Connecticut Planning* includes a spotlight of its student members, critical to the field of planning as so many long-time planners announce their retirement. Thank you to UConn CLEAR's leadership in developing the Climate Corps, Brownfields Corps, and Stormwater Corps, connecting UConn students to practical experiences and connecting municipalities to much-needed resources, and featured in this issue.

As a Chapter, CCAPA has not let up its pace. CCAPA's new Programs Chair, **Evan Seeman**, has been busy developing webinar programs, many in partnership with CAZEO, that have expanded our programs' reach to non-members and students. Our webinar programs are available for viewing at [ct.planning.org/events/past-events](http://ct.planning.org/events/past-events). CCAPA's Government Relations Team has been busy in the off-season with parsing the many impacts of the past legislative season, packaging much of this information in a 14-page [2021 Guide to Legislation](#) which (in my opinion) is required reading for planners and planning and zoning commissioners. Last but definitely not least, CCAPA's Ad Hoc Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee is poised to complete an ED+I action plan for the chapter after several months of research and outreach. Thank you to **Evan, John, Emmeline, Jeanne, Savannah-Nicole, Chadwick, Deanna**, and all of my CCAPA colleagues for their relentless energy and enthusiasm.

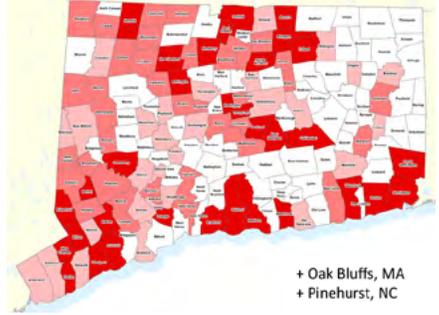
I hope to see you in Norwich on October 16th. 🍷

— Amanda E. Kennedy, AICP



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— Albert Einstein



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# The American Rescue Plan is for You *Building an Inclusive Community Through Recovery Programs*

by Michael Piscitelli, AICP

**The American Rescue Plan is a remarkably significant opportunity and a moment shared by the State and all of its cities and towns, which requires both strategic planning and timely implementation.**

While the COVID-19 pandemic is still very far from over, planners across Connecticut are working on recovery programs and, in turn, unlocking opportunities to better serve our communities through timely investments with a lens towards equity and inclusion.

The landmark \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, signed into law by President Biden in March, is the cornerstone of recovery initiatives. The American Rescue Plan allocated once-in-a-generation resources across a wide spectrum of initiatives. Federal agencies are launching new, bolder initiatives around housing and economic growth. The expansion of the Child Tax Credit is forecast to reduce the overall child poverty rate by 45%. Homeowner and rental assistance programs are suitably resourced to prevent evictions and further turmoil in the housing market. Small business assistance, including direct support to shuttered venues and restaurants, provides the needed cushion to bring back jobs.

And, of course, all of this additional investment is placing stress on monetary policy with resultant impacts on the labor force, supply chains and the consumer market basket. Expect to navigate a lot of turbulence in the months ahead and, at

the same time, plan for a stronger tomorrow. This includes a \$350 billion State and Local Recovery Fund (SLRF) for direct grants to eligible states, localities, and tribal governments.

The statutory guidance in the American Rescue Plan Act provides the framework to make investments in one of four categories, summarized as follows: (1) to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts; (2) to support workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay; (3) to cover the cost of government services, to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19 public health emergency; and (4) to make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure. While across most of the country, ARPA funds are being split between counties and municipalities, the lack of county government in Connecticut means that Connecticut municipalities are solely responsible for allocating twice as much funding as in most other states. This effort is happening in parallel with planning at the state level, with upcoming hearings in the General Assembly around Governor Lamont's proposed \$2.6B investment

*(continued on page 5)*

## American Rescue Plan, cont'd

plan. Transformative programs included in the state allocation include funding for innovation corridors, food incubators, workforce development and early childhood educations.

This is a remarkably significant opportunity and a moment shared by the State and all of its cities and towns, which requires both strategic planning and timely implementation. As a stimulus program, funding must be obligated no later than December 31, 2024, with all obligations incurred (spent down) by December 31, 2026.

Here in New Haven we are expected to receive \$115.8 million from the City's direct allocation and its share of the New Haven County allocation. For the Phase 1 program, our Board of Alders approved the "Summer Reset," \$6.3 million to fund community wellbeing programs. Some of the more notable programs include the Youth Ambassadors Corps, the EMERGE reentry neighborhood beautification team, and a crisis response program. We are looking to align the recovery program around community resilience with more traditional programs around social and economic recovery. Through [CivicSpaceNH](#), we have held community meetings over the course of the summer and over 300 residents to date are helping to inform the long-term program.

Through the CivicSpaceNH platform, we have discussed at length the unsettling disparities of the pandemic with a specific focus on the racial wealth gap. Our CivicSpace team includes two New Haven Promise scholars, and leading voices are coming out of neighborhood leadership, the New Haven Climate Movement, and the cultural equity space. These voices are informing a more inclusive strategy around recovery and wealth creation. You can follow progress at [Together New Haven](#).

The timing of the CivicSpace, occurring largely between the second and third wave of the pandemic, allowed for in-person meetings at a time of very visible economic growth. New Haven's overall recovery is very strong with ongoing expansion of the biotechnology sector, over



A poster for Civic Space Sessions. At the top is the CivicSpace logo, a grid of blue squares. Below it, the text reads "CIVIC SPACE" in a smaller font. The main title "CIVIC SPACE SESSIONS" is in large, bold, white letters. Below the title, it says "Join Mayor Elicker & your neighbors for a conversation on how the American Rescue Plan can achieve recovery and reconciliation!". The date "Thursday July 8" and location "Fair Haven Branch Library, 182 Grand Avenue" are listed. The time "6:00pm" is also included. At the bottom, it says "Visit the CivicSpaceNH.com for more information" and features a QR code. The background of the poster shows a group of people sitting around a table, some wearing face masks.

750 housing units under construction, and 90% occupancy of retail storefronts in our commercial districts. Still, approximately 5,000 New Haven residents are filing for continuing unemployment claims, in part due to the extended slow recovery  
*(continued on page 6)*

*New Haven's CivicSpace portal has facilitate community involvement in the City's long-term economic recovery planning.*



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It is important for all of us to look across the funding streams to reduce duplication of effort and gain access to all of the recovery opportunities.

## American Rescue Plan, cont'd

of hospitality and commercial office sectors. There are significant challenges in the early childhood sector, one of many reasons that over 1.8 million women have dropped out of the labor force.

The dynamics here will be familiar elsewhere in the state and across the nation, and it is encouraging to see that planners are part of a national movement focused both on the immediate need for recovery and the mandate for systemic change.

There are any number of innovative programs underway, and you can track progress on a [dashboard](#) administered by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the National League of Cities. Another great resource is the [Stimulus Command Center](#) led by Bruce Katz and Drexel University. In terms of planning around the country, have a look at the Detroit Future Fund, the 150+ ideas submitted to the City of Birmingham and the Recovery+Resilience plan in Milwaukee to get a sense for the variety and thought-

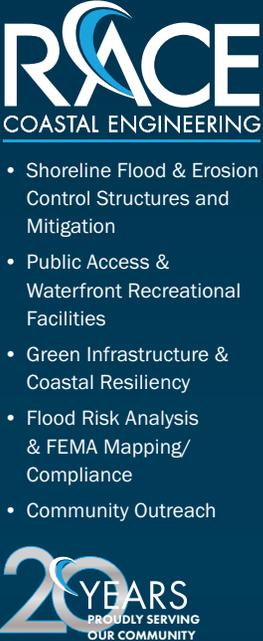
fulness of the planning process.

It is important for all of us to look across the funding streams to reduce duplication of effort and gain access to all of the recovery opportunities. With that in mind, planners are also moving forward with proposals for congressionally “directed spending” and applications for discretionary grants from federal agencies. The federal infrastructure bill will be under-funded relative to needs but will be another important opportunity to position major capital investments. Having a chart of the sources and uses of funds together with a strategy to be competitive is one way to track the notices of funding availability that are either released or planned.

From here forward even a successful approach to grant applications will not nearly address the longstanding and systemic inequities that are pervasive in Connecticut. The Department of Treasury has provided supplemental guidance for SLRF recipients to reinforce the President’s Executive Order 13985 and to ensure that the American Rescue Plan advances racial equity and support for underserved communities. Planners can also draw from community conversations, APA’s research and best practice guides, national experience, and other areas to fully integrate equity with recovery. ■

— *Mike Piscitelli is the City of New Haven’s Economic Development Administrator and the immediate Past President of CCAPA.*

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## American Rescue Plan Resources

**U.S Department of the Treasury**  
[State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#)

**Bloomberg Cities Network**  
[Federal Assistance e311 Knowledge Base](#)

**National League of Cities**  
[COVID-19 Local Action Tracker](#)

**Drexel University Nowak Metro Finance Lab**  
[Local American Recovery Resource Center](#)

# Affordable Housing Plan Lessons Learned: A Consultant's Perspective

by Patrick Gallagher, AICP

Twelve months ago, when many communities issued RFPs for Affordable Housing Plan, I felt a sense of excitement to work on a topic that I am passionate about, and also a sense of impending doom in navigating potentially contentious projects. Looking back over the last 12 months, I am heartened by the productive conversations that were had, the progress that was made, and the willingness of communities to move the needle on affordable housing. I credit much of that success to the strong leadership exhibited by my planning peers working in town government, the willingness of elected officials to have an open and honest dialogue on a controversial topic, and a little luck. I would also like to recognize the Connecticut Department of Housing's *Affordable Housing Plan and Process Guidebook*, prepared by Regional Plan Association, which provided a myriad of great tips, tricks, and best practices. This article is intended to provide a consultant's perspective on lessons learned over the last 12 months, with a focus on the approaches that worked best for our clients.

## Focus on People, Not Housing Types

Several years ago, I reviewed survey results for a Plan of Conservation and Development update for a client and stumbled upon an amusing and ironic set of responses. In one question, respondents were asked whether their community had too much, too little, or about the right amount of different housing types such as apartments, townhomes, and single-family homes. Most respondents felt their community had too many apartments. When asked a second question on housing options for different populations, most respondents said that their community did not have enough housing options for seniors, young adults, or single person households (groups that are most likely

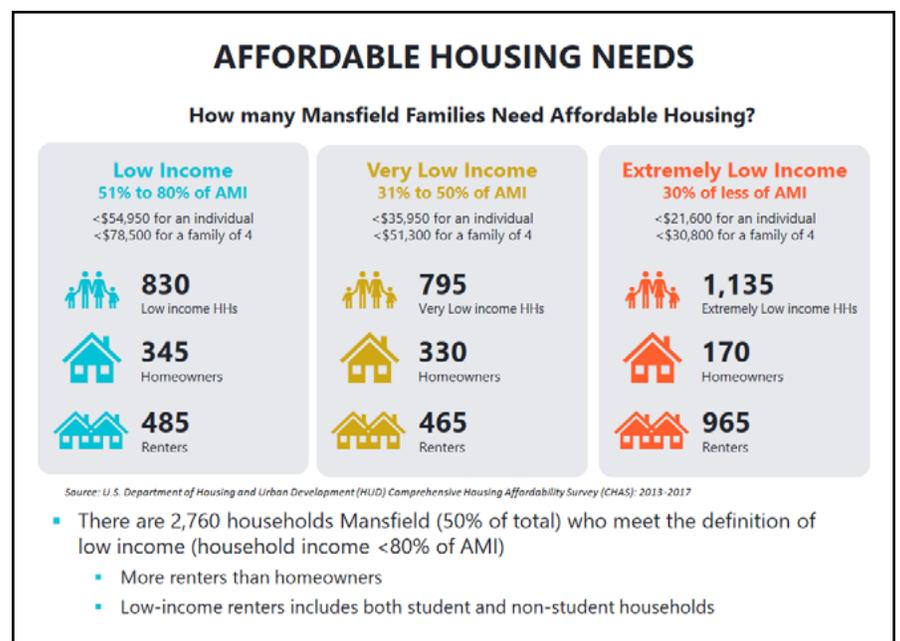
to live in apartments!). These conflicting responses led to an epiphany: housing issues are perceived differently when you focus on the people *living in* the housing. Focusing on housing types often generates a "fear of outsiders" response. Focusing on people makes the conversation much more personal.

Affordable Housing Plans are no different. Focusing first on the people that need affordable housing humanizes the process and helps keep the conversation positive and productive. Even in higher-income communities, almost everyone has a friend, family member, or neighbor who would benefit from affordable housing. Detractors can easily say that they "don't want apartments in their town," but it is much harder for them to say that they don't want seniors, young adults, lower-wage workers, or my grandma living in their community. The Housing Needs Assessment component of your plan should determine local needs as well

*(continued on page 8)*



Housing issues are perceived differently when you focus on the people *living in* the housing. Focusing on housing types often generates a "fear of outsiders" response. Focusing on people makes the conversation much more personal.



*The Housing Needs Assessment developed for the Town of Mansfield illustrates how high housing costs impact residents.*

There is an affordable housing type that is appropriate for every neighborhood.

### Lessons Learned, cont'd

as any demographic groups with disproportionate need. In the Town of Farmington, community members were surprised to learn that 28% of residents made less than 80% of Area Median Income and thus could qualify for affordable housing programs. This provided the rationale for the Plan's objectives and strategies, which were intended to help people that they know!

### Break Down Misconceptions

A cornerstone of SLR's approach to Affordable Housing Plans is to make sure that a two-way flow of information is maintained and that the process provides opportunities for both community input as well as education. As part of all of our Affordable Housing Plans, we leveraged the online ESRI *StoryMap* platform to educate members of the community as well as solicit feedback. The platform answered frequently asked questions, and helped break down common misconceptions around affordable housing, including:

- What is affordable housing?
- Who needs affordable housing in my community?
- What does affordable housing look like?

The last question was one of the key misconceptions going into the process. When you ask the average citizen to envision affordable housing, many think of the monolithic government-owned and operated public housing developments of the 1960s. Through the *StoryMap* platform, we were able to graphically communicate different types of affordable housing from across the state, including examples of single-family homes, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and apartments. This exercise showed that affordable housing can be provided in a range of densities, architectural styles, and ownership structures and that there is an affordable housing type that is appropriate for every neighborhood. After residents reviewed the educational materials on the *StoryMap* platform, they were asked to take an online survey to share their

*(continued on page 9)*

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## Lessons Learned, cont'd

thoughts on community values, housing needs, and potential strategies.

Visit <https://bit.ly/RCogAHP> to see an example of SLR's *StoryMap* platform.

## Looking Ahead

As a believer in incrementalism, I am proud of the dialogue surrounding affordable housing and the many “small wins” that were achieved this year. I hope that affordable housing conversations continue to occur with our local and state elected officials over the coming years and that planners continue to serve key roles as analysts, educators, and advocates in that process. One of the key shortcomings of the current approach to municipal Affordable Housing Plans is that they focus on local needs, largely ignoring the regional economic and housing dynamics as well as the undue burden that our urban centers face when planning for and providing affordable housing. Several planning regions are currently undertaking affordable housing plans, which will have a regional component, as well as local annexes that meet 8-30j requirements for member municipalities. These plans will likely spark conversations on regional or inter-municipal approaches to affordable housing that should continue to be discussed and explored further. 🏠



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— *Pat Gallagher is the Director of Planning and Development for the Town of Hebron and until last month was a Planner with SLR Consulting (formerly known as Milone & MacBroom). SLR was the consultant for Affordable Housing Plan updates for the Town of Mansfield, Town of Farmington, and Town of Weston.*



About the Project | What is Affordable Housing? | What Does Affordable Housing L... | Get Involved

### Mixed-Income Housing

Some affordable housing developments contain a mix of affordable and market-rate units. Mixed-income developments come in a range of densities and housing types, ranging from apartments, to townhomes, to single-family subdivisions. Most of these developments are privately owned and operated.

This image shows the Saybrook Station development in downtown Old Saybrook. This mixed-income project contains 186 total units, 20% of which are set aside as affordable units. The remaining 80% of units are market rate.



*SLR's StoryMaps walk participants through examples of the different forms affordable housing can take.*

# 2021 CCAPA Planning Awards — Call For Nominations!

Each year the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association invites nominations for its Annual Planning Awards to showcase outstanding projects, people, and places.

**Nominations Due November 5, 2021**

## Nomination information should include:

- Project name and location
- Nominee's name, telephone number and email address
- A concise explanation of the project: what was accomplished, who was involved, and why you think it is worthy of recognition

Email nominations to Awards Chair Michele Lipe at: [Michele.Lipe@southwindsor-ct.gov](mailto:Michele.Lipe@southwindsor-ct.gov). A member of the Awards Committee will request additional information as necessary to aid the Awards Committee in evaluating the nomination. Awardees will be notified in December in advance of a virtual program anticipated for January 2021.

## Discretionary Awards

The Bruce Hoben Distinguished Service Award and Special Chapter Award are presented by CCAPA's Executive Board at their discretion. Nominees for discretionary awards should be **sent directly to CCAPA President Rebecca Augur by November 5, 2021:** [rebecca.augur@glastonbury-ct.gov](mailto:rebecca.augur@glastonbury-ct.gov)

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## ■ SPECIAL CHAPTER AWARD

*In recognition of an outstanding effort by a Chapter member or the accomplishments of a planning organization or effort.*

## Ground Rules

- Only projects and people located in Connecticut are eligible
- Projects must have commenced after January 1, 2020 and be completed by September 30, 2021
- Consultants can be recognized as an integral part of a team or project but will not be considered as the primary award recipient

**Questions?** Email Michele Lipe: [Michele.Lipe@southwindsor-ct.gov](mailto:Michele.Lipe@southwindsor-ct.gov)

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# Hartford Parking Reforms Enable New Life for Long-Vacant Parcels

by Al Sylvestre, AICP

With more parking space than public parkland in its downtown, Hartford's planners are considering the role parking plays in city life. The 435.2 acres of parking in downtown's two square miles would cover the University of Hartford campus, Bushnell Park, and the entire river-front park system in Hartford and East Hartford combined. Comparable cities such as Cambridge, MA and Arlington, VA dedicate 80% less land to parking than our capital city. This article looks at the challenges excess parking brings to Hartford; the audacious measure taken by the city to integrate parking with development

to attract new residents; and a new downtown development that applies design principles prioritizing vibrant street life over storing cars.

From 1960 to 2000, Hartford's parking-to-building-area ratio more than doubled because of its desire to emulate suburbs' easy access to parking. The map on the following page shows the results of this trend. The city's twenty-first-century development priorities are evolving from its pursuit of Class A office space<sup>1</sup> to adding housing that would transform downtown from briefcase town to a vibrant and diverse 24-hour community with active street life. Since 2014, 881 apartments have

been added downtown, with 477 more under construction, and 188 units in planning or design phases.

With the adoption of form-based zoning<sup>2</sup>, Hartford became the state's first municipality with no minimum parking requirement for downtown development. Factors contributing to the city's reconsideration of its parking requirements included:

- Increased per-unit housing costs on infill development<sup>3</sup>;
  - Small business opportunities lost to greater land-area requirements;
  - The heat-island effect of large surface parking lots;
  - The unsightliness of vast parking lagoons.
- (continued on page 12)*



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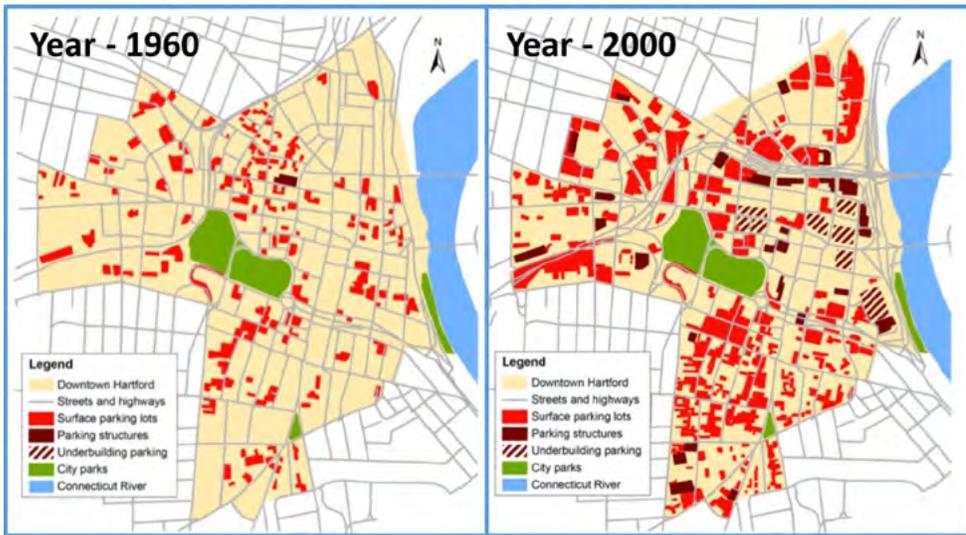


Figure 1. Graphics prepared by Norman Garrick at the University of Connecticut show how parking lots have eroded the City of Hartford’s urban fabric.

### Parking Reforms, cont’d

Hartford’s planning and zoning commission and city council also had to consider these areas of resistance to the no-minimum parking requirement:

- Individuals who want to keep the parking privilege;
- Planners that use parking as leverage to negotiate other public benefits; and
- Public works and police having less to manage with excess parking requirements.

A \$26 million infill project on downtown’s southern edge that is redeveloping two long-vacant parcels with 126 apartments, a rooftop lounge, 24,000 square feet of commercial space (Figure 2), and 125 parking spaces addresses several parking challenges. First, it brings the buildings close to the sidewalk where parking no longer acts as a barrier to the sidewalk and street-level activity. The parking lots feature plantings that minimize the expanse of paved surface reducing the heat-sink effect by which the dark surface absorbs heat by day and releases it at night. Further, the plantings trap carbon dioxide and introduce elements of nature that break up the concrete, pavement, and glass monolith of dense urban development.

Providing one parking space per residential unit rather than the one per bedroom (and one to four spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial development) typical of suburban development reduces the need for land dedicated to parking.

Demographic trends; technology; economics; space-use efficiency; multi-modal transportation integrating bicycling, walking, and transit use; shared parking; and pricing will have to be taken into account for cities and towns to responsibly allocate

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Class A office buildings are the newest in their market with central locations that fetch the highest rents. Class B buildings are older and can be returned to Class A status with some renovations. Class C are older still, in need of extensive renovation, command the lowest rental rates, and take the longest time to lease.

<sup>2</sup> Form-based zoning is a land development regulation to foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form rather than separation of uses as its organizing principle.

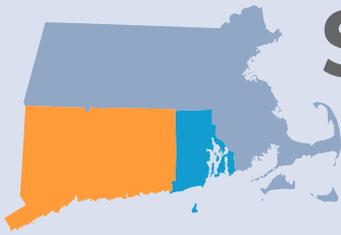
<sup>3</sup> Infill development revives vacant or under-used land, seeking to craft well-functioning neighborhoods with residential density supporting transportation choices, conveniences, and amenities.

land for storing our vehicles as we go about our daily business. With the 83% of the U.S. population living in urban areas — up from 64% in 1950 — expected to reach 89% by 2050, designing and applying parking solutions will determine the livability of our cities and suburbs. ■

— Al Sylvestre is a Research Analyst with the Connecticut Department of Labor. A version of this article originally appeared in the Connecticut Economic Digest.



Figure 2: Park & Main will fill long-vacant lots at the southern edge of Downtown Hartford with 126 apartments and 24,000 square feet of commercial space. Twenty percent of apartments will reserved for affordable, workforce housing.



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We're particularly excited about this year's Keynote Speaker, **Mary Means**. Widely known for leading the team that created the National Main Street Center, assisting more than 1,600 towns and historic neighborhood corridors in 40+ states, Mary Means has been honored by the American Planning Association with its national 2018 Planning Pioneer Award, and by the National Trust for Historic Preservation with the 2020 Louise de Pont Crowninshield Award, the

highest honor in historic preservation. Her talk is entitled "Main Street's Comeback and How It Can Come Back Again," the compelling story of a citizen-led movement that has brought the centers of hundreds of communities back to life again over the last four decades.



*Mary Means*

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Environment Corps provides students with “real world” experience, while the communities receive help in responding to environmental mandates that they sometimes lack the resources to address on their own.



*Above: Climate Corps role-playing exercise.  
Below: Brownfields Corps students visit a brownfields site with local experts.*

## Connecting Towns and UConn Students: The Environment Corps

*by Chet Arnold, Director, Center for Land Use Education and Research*



A UConn partnership led by the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) is connecting UConn undergrads with Connecticut municipalities, to the benefit of both parties. The program is called the [Environment Corps](#) and focuses on using STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) skills to address important environmental issues like climate adaptation, brownfields remediation, and stormwater management at the municipal level. Environment Corps combines the familiar elements of classroom instruction, service learning, and extension work in a way that allows students to develop STEM skills and get “real world” experience as preparation for the work force, while the communities, in turn, receive help in responding to environmental mandates that they sometimes lack the resources to address on their own.

The Environment Corps, or “E-Corps” for short, is built on an extensive part-

*(continued on page 15)*

## Environment Corps, cont'd

nership at UConn. It includes faculty from four schools and colleges in six departments: Natural Resources and the Environment, Extension, Geography, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Educational Curriculum and Instruction, and Plant Sciences/Landscape Architecture. In addition, the project involves four university centers, all three environmental major programs, and the Office of the Provost.

E-Corps came out of a three-year pilot project originally funded by the UConn Provost's Office in 2016. That project developed the **Climate Corps**, an undergraduate instructional effort focused on local, town-level impacts of, and responses to, climate change. Designed to draw students from the Environmental Studies, Environmental Sciences, and Environmental Engineering majors, the Climate Corps debuted in the fall of 2017. The program consists of a class in the fall with a strong focus on local challenges and issues, followed by a "practicum" spring semester during which students are formed into teams and matched with towns to work on projects. Partnerships with the towns are built on the long-term relationships that have developed between local officials and Extension educators from CLEAR and the Connecticut Sea Grant program.

Climate Corps was a hit with both students and towns, and in 2018 spun off a second STEM offering, this one focusing on brownfields (contaminated sites) redevelopment. The **Brownfields Corps**, taught by the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, debuted in the fall of 2018 and is now a part of the new Connecticut Brownfields Initiative. Brownfields Corps students undertake a number of types of projects, such as assisting towns with grant applications to the EPA, and helping with "Phase 1" site investigations. Bolstered by funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the **Stormwater Corps** was added as a third offering during the Spring semester of 2020. These students help towns deal with some of the requirements of the state's "MS4" general stormwater

*(continued on page 16)*

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## Environment Corps, cont'd

permit by conducting assessments of town properties, looking for opportunities to disconnect impervious surfaces from the stormwater system.

The NSF funding involves expansion and coordination of the three programs, but also has a major focus on studying

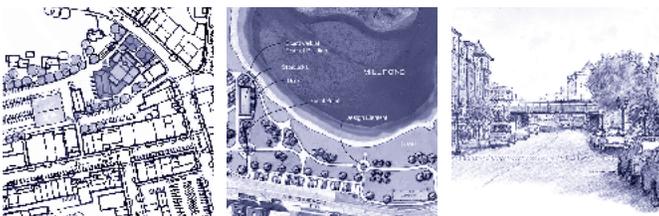
## Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development Tour.

the impact of the E-Corps approach on students, faculty, participating towns, and the UConn community. The research is conducted by faculty from the Neag School of Education. The Center for

*(continued on page 17)*

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## Environment Corps, cont'd

Excellence in Teaching and Learning is taking the lead in working with university administrators and faculty to promote further expansion of the model.

To date, E-Corps has enrolled 281 students, and student teams have completed 76 projects in over 50 communities. The local, real-world focus of the E-Corps model is getting an enthusiastic response from students. Fall classes are filled to capacity for the Climate and Brownfields Corps. One former student wrote: "Climate Corps had a huge influence on me, and for a while I wasn't super excited about the sorts of jobs I'd be qualified to do...but having this experience opened so many doors for me and exposed me to so many different things I could do. I'm really excited to start my new job because I've been able to combine a career with something I find super interesting." [See a lot more comments from students on our [Students page](#).]

And from the municipal side, here are the thoughts of one town collaborator: "I

think there's benefits for the town, certainly, you know, especially smaller towns like ours. We don't have a lot of money to get some of this work done...And so the idea that you could have somebody with scientific knowledge go through that [process] and summarize it is fabulous. It saves the town a lot of money and time."

Towns interested in connecting with the E-Corps can send an email to [bruce.hyde@uconn.edu](mailto:bruce.hyde@uconn.edu) (Climate Corps), [neferi.bompoti@uconn.edu](mailto:nefeli.bompoti@uconn.edu) (Brownfields Corps), or [david.dickson@uconn.edu](mailto:david.dickson@uconn.edu) (Stormwater Corps). E-Corps is supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation: Improving Undergraduate STEM Education program. 

— *Chet Arnold is an Extension Educator and CLEAR Director. As Director, Chet focuses on the integration and dissemination of CLEAR land use research, geospatial tools and training, and outreach programs to best serve CLEAR's municipal and other audiences.*

To date, E-Corps has enrolled 281 students, and student teams have completed 76 projects in over 50 communities.



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# DesegregateCT Enters Year Two

by Nick Abbott

As DesegregateCT enters its second year, the group is looking to build on its momentum and to continue its focus on land use reform.

In June of 2020, a coalition of non-profits, advocacy groups, and professional organizations — including CCAPA — came together to form DesegregateCT, a movement dedicated to reforming land use laws in Connecticut. In the year-plus since, the group has made tremendous progress. We created a first-of-its-kind Zoning Atlas, developed a public education and advocacy campaign around zoning, and together with CCAPA — who advised and supported this work from the beginning — we helped to achieve passage of HB 6107, Connecticut’s most significant zoning reform legislation in a generation.

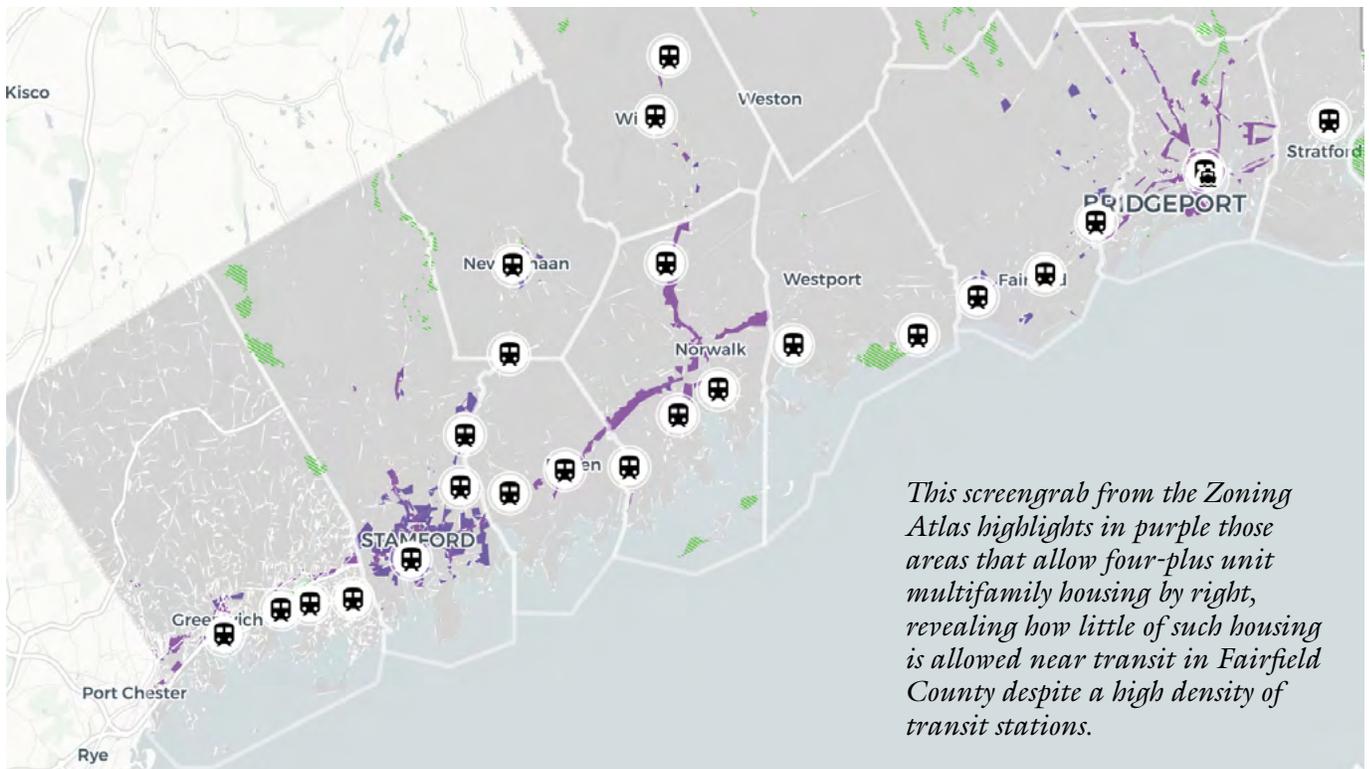
As DesegregateCT enters its second year, the group is looking to build on this momentum and to continue its focus on land use reform. In partnership with CCAPA, the group plans to focus on three priority areas: statewide advocacy, local organizing, and public engagement. Planners remain well-positioned to help their communities understand the need for continued engagement and progress.

## Statewide Advocacy

DesegregateCT’s focus continues to be at the state level, given the multi-jurisdictional impact of individual zoning decisions and the need for a coordinated effort to tackle Connecticut’s twin affordability and sustainability crises. Last session, the group advocated for a suite of diverse reforms — from sewer standards to commissioner training, parking requirements to minimum unit size regulations, and model form-based codes to eliminating the term “character” from state enabling legislation, among others. This year — given the passage of HB 6107 and the abbreviated legislative session — the group will take a narrower approach. In conjunction with our coalition members, the group is considering a focus on two distinct policy goals: transit-oriented development and minimum lot size reform.

Transit-oriented development (TOD) has been a priority in DesegregateCT’s advocacy and was struck from the 2021

*(continued on page 19)*



## DesegregateCT, cont'd

legislation as it emerged from committee. TODs improve affordability by adding to our housing supply and contributing sorely-needed housing diversity; they maximize the economic impact of our transit investments; and they promote sustainability by easing access to transit and getting residents out of their cars. According to a preliminary analysis based on the Zoning Atlas, four-plus unit multifamily housing is allowed by right on at least half the land within a half-mile radius for only 10 of Connecticut's 51 train stations. For 20 of these stations, such housing is banned entirely. Given the immense importance and multifaceted benefits of TODs, DesegregateCT will be forcefully pushing for a renewed commitment to TOD-enabling legislation, including inclusionary zoning mandates akin to the 10% for affordable units we recommended last year, in the coming year.

In addition to this commitment, the group is also interested in reforms to reduce minimum lot sizes. While we did

not tackle this issue last session because we had not yet fully analyzed Zoning Atlas data, we now know that over 80% of Connecticut's residentially zoned land requires at least 40,000 square feet (0.92 acres) to build a single-family home, and almost half (48.6%) of residential land requires 80,000 square feet (1.84 acres) or more. Even in our town centers and near transit, zoning rules regularly require lot sizes above 20,000 square feet (0.46 acres). These regulations make housing hopelessly unaffordable and obliterate any possibility of walkability. Moving forward, we will continue to liaise with coalition members and the public about possible reforms in this area and welcome feedback from planners on effective reform proposals.

### Local Advocacy

Beyond its statewide advocacy, DesegregateCT continues to support local decision-makers seeking to advance new housing and inclusive zoning laws.

The group is using its email distribution  
*(continued on page 20)*

**Beyond its state-wide advocacy, DesegregateCT continues to support local decision-makers seeking to advance new housing and inclusive zoning laws.**



## Serving the Land Use Legal Needs of Connecticut

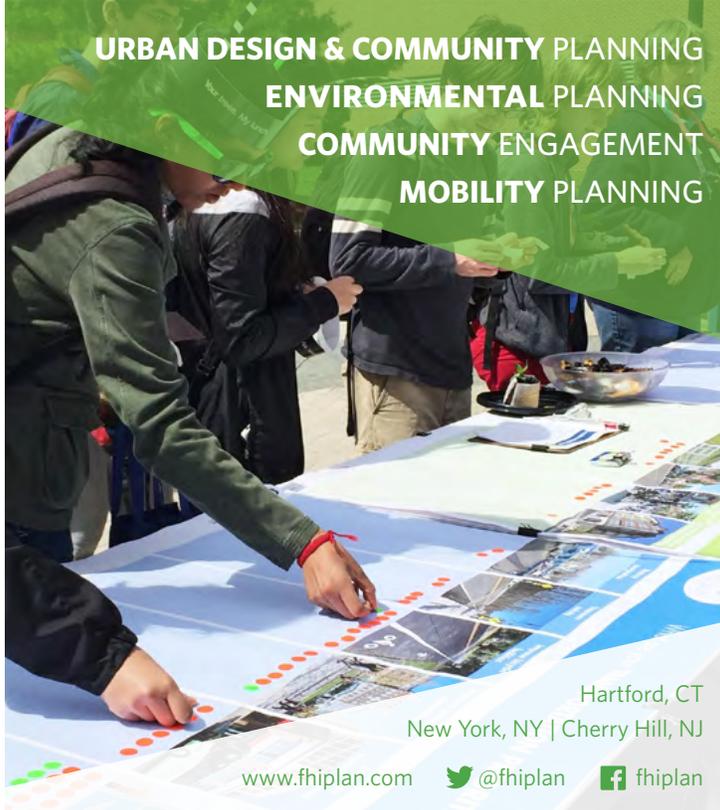
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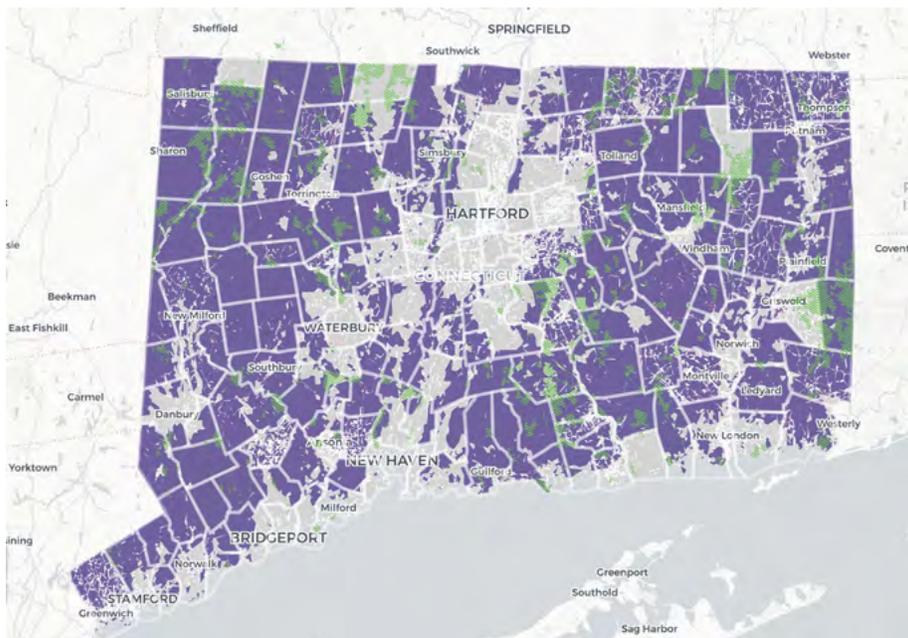
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*This screengrab from the Zoning Atlas highlights in purple those areas that have a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet (0.92 acres) or more for single-family homes, area that covers over 80% of land zoned for primarily residential use.*

*Desegregate CT has formed a broad coalition with over 70 member organizations, recruiting new advocates to housing issues in Connecticut.*

### DesegregateCT, cont'd

list, a [dedicated page](#) on its website, and its connections with advocates across the state to collect and share information on local meetings and initiatives. We have also [produced materials](#) and helped individual town leaders and advocates develop responses to ensure towns embrace (and do not opt out of) the HB 6107 provisions on accessory apartments.

Allies and coalition members have been integral to DesegregateCT's efforts at the local level, especially when it comes to tracking important developments and determining how the group can most effectively uplift local voices and encourage pro-housing advocacy. If readers are familiar with matters in their towns — individual development projects, affordable

housing plans, plans of conservation and development — and would be interested in soliciting involvement and publicizing to the group's affiliates, they are highly encouraged to email [info@desegregatect.org](mailto:info@desegregatect.org) to start the conversation.

### Public Engagement

Arguably DesegregateCT's biggest success over the past year has been its impact on conversations around zoning, housing, and segregation in Connecticut. This impact has only been possible thanks to the hard work of supporters and coalition members who have held events, spread the word through traditional and social media, and had individual conversations with their neighbors across Connecticut. In Year Two, the group is eager to continue to spur, amplify, and participate in efforts to increase progressive public engagement around zoning.

Among other initiatives, DesegregateCT hosted dozens of virtual events, held a 100-person strong rally in Deep River, facilitated a zoning workshop for Hartford residents, and accrued thousands of followers on social media. Additionally, team members have been collaborating with organizations in Connecticut holding their own events, whether on land use specifically, or on related topics like climate change, racial equity, and economic development. We welcome readers organizing such events to reach out about collaborating or publicizing them to our network.

While there is much to celebrate about DesegregateCT's first year, the team understands there is a steep climb ahead: Connecticut remains highly segregated by race and income, in part because its land use laws are among the most restrictive in the country. As the group looks to Year Two, we are excited to take on the challenges ahead and welcome input and contributions from all those in the planning community who support a more affordable, integrated, and sustainable Connecticut. 🏡

*— Nicholas Abbott is the Deputy Director of DesegregateCT and the APA Planning and Law Division's Daniel J. Curtin fellow. Originally from Greenwich, he is currently a third-year student at Harvard Law School.*



# CCAPA Legislative Update

by John Guskowski, AICP

While everything seems to slow down in the summer — particularly during one of the hottest and most humid summers on record — we have nevertheless seen some forward progress following up a busy legislative session. A few key pieces of legislation — PA 21-29 and SS PA 21-1, to be specific — have created the need for Connecticut’s planning community and its municipalities to begin to take action. Some of the changes created by these laws will begin to affect communities immediately, and others will not take full effect for another 16 months or so. CCAPA, led by its Programs, Communications, and Government Relations Committee, have been working with partner organizations to keep its members informed of these changes. If you haven’t already, please do check out CCAPA’s [2021 Guide to Legislation](#).

High-profile public acts include the legalization of recreational cannabis for adults, which will force town-by-town decisions, with both local Zoning Commissions and Town Council/Town Meeting entities having some authority to prohibit, regulate, or allow both growing and retailing of these products. Several of the elements of this new law, including rollout, timeframes, and local control, are detailed elsewhere in this issue of CT Planning, and were the subject of a recent presentation co-sponsored by CCAPA and CAZEO.

Several of the provisions of PA 21-29, which made numerous updates to the State’s Zoning Enabling Act (CGS §8-2) will not take effect until January 1, 2023, giving Connecticut’s towns and cities some time to consider how they wish to modify their regulations that deal with issues of accessory apartments, multi-family development parking standards, and their affirmative promotion of fair housing. With the legislative clarification that the first deadline for the five-year Affordable Housing Plan (CGS §8-30j) will be June 1, 2022, the next eight months are likely to be a bit of a scramble as municipalities seek compliance with this requirement.

Finally, Section 13 of PA 21-29 requires the formation of a Commission on Connecticut’s Development and Future, which will be a large, multi-year legislative effort to move Connecticut into more of a comprehensive planning mindset. The Commission requires participation from planning, zoning, community development, and municipal experts, in addition to housing developers and environmental experts. CCAPA’s Government Relations Committee has been active in discussions with legislative leaders to ensure that the Commission is populated with thoughtful appointees.

As always, if you have questions about CCAPA’s Government Relations Committee or our involvement with the State’s legislative processes (including offering your help or support), please reach out to us at [ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com](mailto:ctplannersgovrel@gmail.com). ■



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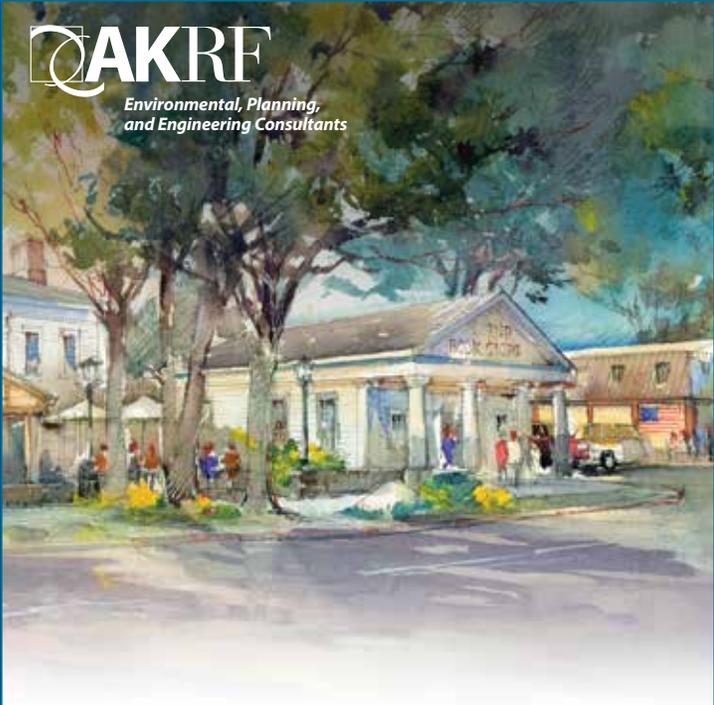
## What's going on?!

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

— 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.



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One of the benefits of virtual programs is that they can be easily recorded. If you missed any recent programming (or want to watch it again!), check out CCAPA's YouTube channel or visit our website!

## PROGRAMS UPDATE

by *Evan Seeman, Program Committee Chair*

It has been a busy Spring/Summer for CCAPA's Program Committee. Since May, CCAPA has hosted (or co-hosted) six separate virtual programs. Although the past year and a half of the pandemic has proven challenging, there has been no shortage of topics deserving of educational content.

CCAPA's programming focused on two areas during this time. First, how zoning and other land use processes affect housing equity and accessibility. This is a topic that has not only dominated headlines nationally but has also taken center stage in Connecticut. And, second, an overview of the wave of land use and zoning-related legislation that was passed in one of the busiest legislative sessions in recent memory.

In May and June, CCAPA put together a comprehensive series of workshops to assist and educate stakeholders to plan for and improve access to attainable and affordable housing with an added goal of fostering diversity and equitable opportunities. The four-part housing series was a tour de force. The 90-minute educational forums for planners, policymakers, and stakeholders considered the data and issues of affordable housing, desegregation, fair housing, and equity opportunities in Connecticut. It brought together nearly 20 experts including planners, architects, housing advocates, lawyers, engineers, scientists, data analysts, and others, and it was attended by hundreds of planning professionals.

In July, CCAPA co-hosted a two-part legislative wrap-up covering recent changes to municipal land use law. In the first session, held on July 1, CCAPA partnered with CAZEO and DesegregateCT to discuss new legislation regarding virtual meetings, GIS, land use approval extensions, and an overview of HB 6107's provisions regarding accessory apartments, commissioner training, municipal land use fees, and affordable housing plans.

In the second session, CCAPA again partnered with CAZEO to get into the weeds of the new recreational cannabis

legislation, SB 1201 (An Act Concerning Responsible and Equitable Regulation of Adult-Use Cannabis). What became clear through the session is that there is much with this legislation that remains unclear — from the scope of the legislation to what steps municipalities can take now to regulate cannabis. It appears that recreational cannabis regulation will be a budding issue for years to come with the opportunity for more programming.

We all look forward to getting back together again in-person sometime soon. Until then, we will forge onward with virtual programming. One of the benefits of virtual programs is that they can be easily recorded. If you missed any recent programming (or want to watch it again!), check out CCAPA's YouTube channel (<https://bit.ly/YoutubeCTPlanning>) or visit [ct.planning.org/events/past-events](https://ct.planning.org/events/past-events). Another benefit is, of course, a matter of convenience, there is nothing quite like tumbling out of bed in your pajamas, cup of coffee in-hand, and “attending” a CM-credit session. Joking aside, we hope that members will continue to find the virtual programming to be a valuable resource.

Finally, we want to hear from you. What are the issues affecting your communities? Do you have ideas for new content or events? Would you feel comfortable attending an in-person program? Do you want to learn more about the Program Committee and how you can become involved? If so, please contact me at [eseeman@rc.com](mailto:eseeman@rc.com). 🍃

— *Evan Seeman is an attorney with Robinson & Cole LLP's Real Estate + Development Group, where he concentrates his practice in land use and zoning, real property litigation, and municipal law. He is the immediate Past Chair of APA's Planning and Law Division.*



CCAPA again partnered with CAZEO to get into the weeds of the new recreational cannabis legislation.



## CCAPA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan — Coming Fall 2021

by Savannah-Nicole Villalba, Chair of CCAPA's Ad Hoc Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee

In 2020, the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association established an ad hoc Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED+I) Committee. The goal in creating the ED+I Committee was to meaningfully participate in the growing conversation about how equity, diversity, and inclusion can be advanced within the planning profession and by the institutions that support practicing planners.

The AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct states that there is a special responsibility in the planning profession to serve the public interest.<sup>1</sup> When serving the public interest, professional planners are encouraged to consider how the short- and long-range results of present actions are interrelated to the equity of outcomes (A.1.(b)(c)).<sup>2</sup> We are also called upon to make a commitment to facilitate inclusive environments where all community members have the access and ability to engage in the public decision-making processes (A.1).<sup>3</sup> Inclusive and accessible environments foster opportunities for diverse people, opinions, and experiences to be heard and included in the planning process. Equity, diversity, and inclusion are integral principles that are necessary for establishing policies and practices that create great communities for all.

The CCAPA established their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee with

these responsibilities in mind. The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association believes that chapters can and should play a role in supporting practicing planners as they serve the public interest. Additionally, state chapters can work as entities that advocate for policies and practices that advance equity, diversity, and inclusion within the profession and the state's larger policies and practices.

Over the last few years, the American Planning Association has undertaken a review of the national organization with the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion at the forefront. Through this review, the American Planning Association has drafted revisions to the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, provided resources including the Equity Policy Guide, and created a variety of educational opportunities to support planners engaging with these efforts. These resources and programs have provided support to members to advocate for equitable policies and inclusive practices in the diverse communities we serve.

One way that the American Planning Association has formalized their commitment to these principles has been through the adoption of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Mission and Vision Statements.<sup>4</sup> The APA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Mission Statement is *"To promote more*  
*(continued on page 24)*

The American Planning Association has drafted revisions to the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, provided resources including the Equity Policy Guide, and created a variety of educational opportunities to support planners engaging with these efforts. These resources and programs have provided support to members to advocate for equitable policies and inclusive practices in the diverse communities we serve.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> [www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode/](http://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode/)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> <https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/document/APA-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy-2020.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> <https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/document/APA-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy-2020.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

## ED&I Action Plan, cont'd

*inclusive, just, and equitable communities through a planning profession as diverse and inclusive as the many communities we serve. To equip planners to perform inclusive and equitable planning and work effectively across diverse communities.*<sup>5</sup>

The APA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Vision Statement is that the "American Planning Association is committed to providing opportunities for all to achieve excellence in planning by fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion in the organization and in the planning profession. The American Planning Association is committed to being responsive to changes in communities and the challenges being faced in achieving just, equitable and inclusive communities where the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are achievable by all. Creating great communities for all requires planners' basic understanding that while equity, diversity, and inclusion are distinct from each other, they are inherently linked together."<sup>6</sup>

APA's mission and vision statements are valuable because they provide members information about the values and direction our professional organization has decided to take. In these statements, the American Planning Association makes the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the profession and for the communities we serve clear. This commitment to clarity is continued in the definitions the American Planning Association provides for equity, diversity, and inclusion:

• **EQUITY** is defined as "just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Unlocking the promise of the nation by unleashing the promise in us all."<sup>7</sup> The American Planning Association expands on their definition for equity by stating that the inclusive and holistic nature of this definition "provides the foundation for considering and applying an equity process in all facets of planning, all levels of planning, all means of planning, and in all planning policies, working to eliminate socioeconomic disparities."<sup>8</sup>

• **DIVERSITY** is defined as an "inclusive concept that encompasses, but 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."<sup>9</sup> The American Planning Association argues that with greater diversity, the practice of planning can be more creative, effective, and just, and can bring more varied perspectives, experiences, backgrounds, talents, and interests to the communities we serve.<sup>10</sup>

• **INCLUSION** is defined as an environment in which "all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization's success."<sup>11</sup>

Practicing planners should understand that the pursuit of equity, diversity, and

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# CCAPA's Student Members

*Supporting the next generation of planners is a core goal of the Connecticut Chapter's current workplan. In line with that goal, the American Planning Association offers free membership to students for the duration of their studies in APA, CCAPA, and up to five APA divisions. CCAPA currently has 49 student members. Let's meet a few of them.*

## Chris Seeger

**Intern, Capital District Transportation Authority  
(Albany, NY)**  
*SUNY Albany, Master of Regional Planning, 2022*



**What got you interested in planning?** Short answer: Sim City 2000. Long answer: Learning about my town's downtown revitalization plan and getting interested in terminology and practice for creating a plan like it. I'm hoping to go into a regional transportation planning agency or research organization to

work on enhancing connectivity within and between regions as well as working to make transportation networks more resilient against climate change.

### **How can Connecticut planners better inspire and support young people to pursue planning careers?**

The best way to inspire young people interested in planning careers is to include them! When a young person comes to a planning meeting or public outreach event, engage them and get them involved in the planning process. You never know how today's actions might inspire tomorrow's planners.

## Caryn DeCrisanti

**Transportation Planner, AECOM**  
*Central Connecticut State University, Master of Science in Geography, 2021*



**What got you interested in planning?** I was wrapping up the final courses of my undergraduate degree in Geography at Central Connecticut State University, when Dr. Timothy Garceau introduced a course on transportation planning. This course was a pivotal moment in my planning career; I immediately decided to attend CCSU's

Geography graduate program, focusing on transportation planning. As I get closer to graduation, I look back over my path in life and realize this is where I was meant to end up. In addition to school, I've been working part-time at AECOM as a transportation planner for over two

years now and have been involved with a variety of planning projects, including plans for bicycles/pedestrians, public transportation, and rail. I love that transportation planning is not the same job day in and day out. It's a little of this and that, changing by the day, week, or month.

## Emma Petersen

**As of September 2021: Connecticut Careers Trainee,  
Connecticut Department of Transportation  
Formerly Membership Director, Greater Manchester  
Chamber of Commerce**

*University of Florida, Master of Urban and Regional Planning, 2023*



**What got you interested in planning?** I became interested in planning during my time working with the Town of Manchester's municipally-owned coworking and meeting space, WORK\_SPACE, designed to be part of the ongoing revitalization of Downtown Manchester. Previously, I received my undergraduate

degree in environmental science from the University of Vermont and subsequently worked with non-profit organizations and entrepreneurs to provide market-based solutions to promote sustainable agriculture practices. As I evolved through my early career, I recognized the planning profession as a path to connect my experience with environmental conservation and economic growth.

Since my time with WORK\_SPACE, I accepted a position as the membership director for the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. My work provides the opportunity to build relationships with community stakeholders and business leaders while receiving academic training in urban planning and geographic information systems. I am open to working in either a private or public capacity to provide urban design solutions for environmental issues affecting our communities.

### **How can Connecticut planners better inspire and support young people to pursue planning careers?**

Practicing planners in Connecticut can inspire and support a new generation by engaging with innovations in public participation. The history of the profession illustrates a balance between public and private forces to

*(continued on page 26)*

## Student Members, cont'd

shape positive outcomes amid complex societal transformations. Aspiring planners require mentorship opportunities to quickly identify the balance between bureaucracy and community to achieve progress that benefits society, the environment, and the economy.

### Stephanie Camp

#### Community Development Planning Intern, Capitol Region Council of Governments

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst: Dual Degree Master of Regional Planning, Master of Science in Sustainability Science (MRP/MS3), 2022*



**What got you interested in planning?** At my alma mater, The University of Connecticut, I studied both environmental and urban & community studies where I was able to intersect my interests in both environmental and social issues. Through my coursework I became more passionate about these interests and

found that I could work on these issues in my own community through planning.

During my first year in my dual degree program at UMass Amherst, I was able to join the Planning Student Organization and serve as both the Communications Officer, as well as a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) representative to the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning's Expanded Diversity Committee. I'm grateful to also work in my department as a research assistant, researching various topics such as urban agriculture and green infrastructure. This summer I've also had the privilege of working with The Capitol Region Council of Governments as a Community Development Planning intern, where I had the opportunity to work on an affordable housing analysis, conduct research on electric vehicle adoption through zoning and planning, and aid with complete streets projects. These experiences have truly reaffirmed the path I've begun to take towards becoming a regional or municipal planner in Connecticut.

#### How can Connecticut planners better inspire and support young people to pursue planning careers?

During my undergrad at UConn, many professors and my learning community incentivized students to attend career fairs every semester. I think the career fairs, and possibly even a smaller event just for planning, would be a great way for planners in Connecticut to bring the career to the attention of students, especially for the public policy and urban and community studies majors who might not be entirely aware of the profession yet (like myself in my early undergrad days).

### Norell Ferguson

#### Healthcare Interior Designer, Francis Cauffman Architects (Pennsylvania)

*University of Connecticut, Master of Public Policy, 2022*



**What got you interested in planning?** After a few years of working in healthcare design, I became particularly aware of who had access to beautifully designed spaces and who did not. This sparked my interest in zoning codes and planning and led me to pursue a master's degree in public policy with a focus in urban planning. I am currently a health-

care interior designer at Francis Cauffman Architects (FCA). This fall, I will be working with Capitol Region Council of Governments as a regional planning intern.

**How can Connecticut planners better inspire and support young people to pursue planning careers?** I think one of the best ways to inspire younger generations to pursue planning careers is to expose them to the various opportunities in the field. One of the things that excites me about planning is the fact that everyone's career path can be different.

**One of the things that excites me about planning is the fact that everyone's career path can be different.**

— Norell Ferguson

### Kevin Fitzgerald

*University of Connecticut, Master of Public Administration, 2021*



**What got you interested in planning?** I launched my career in planning while running on Route 32 in Uncasville and envisioning the opportunities for community growth and economic revitalization that could spring from activating properties and adding Complete Streets design. These early interests

in transportation planning and economic development guided my contributions to the Hartford 400 POCD and my time launching Berlin's Kensington Village Main Street campaign in 2019. These experiences shaped my interest in transit-oriented development and inspired me to explore additional proposals to connect Connecticut's communities around accessible and inviting downtown centers.

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## Student Members, cont'd

As a Policy Fellow with DesegregateCT, I contributed to the creation of the nation's first statewide Zoning Atlas and documented municipal zoning practices that hinder equitable, sustainable, and accessible growth in Connecticut communities. Our efforts generated national attention to the issue of exclusionary zoning and advanced a palette of key legislative reforms that reduce excessive parking mandates, expand housing options, and mandate training on affordable and fair housing for members of local planning commissions.

I plan to continue my public service work in transportation planning and economic development as a planner. I hope to rethink planning practices to promote equitable and sustainable growth and to support Connecticut small businesses and community access to downtown centers.

**How can Connecticut planners better inspire and support young people to pursue planning careers?** I was fortunate to shadow Connecticut planners through my time with CEDAS' Best Practices accreditation program who offered insights on their time in public service and mentorship to help me launch my career as a planner. A key piece of these shadowing experiences was the opportunity to visit development sites and hear their excitement as they walked me through the process of activating a property into a community asset. I credit those shadowing and mentorship experiences as invitations to join the Connecticut planning and economic development communities and I plan to pay those experiences forward in my career. ■

## Employment Opportunities

For more information: <https://ct.planning.org/jobs/posts/>

### Financial/Office Manager

Northwest Hills Council of Governments (Goshen, CT)

### Municipal and Regional Planner or Senior Planner

Windham Regional Commission (Brattleboro, VT)

### Building Official

Town of Haddam (Haddam, CT)

### Principal Planner & Special Projects Coordinator

Town of Warwick, RI (Warwick, RI)

### Assistant Planner

City of Middletown, CT (Middletown, CT)

### Planning, Zoning, & Development Coordinator

Town of Westbrook (Westbrook, CT)

### Town Planner/Development Coordinator

Town of Cheshire (Cheshire, CT)

### Field Services Coordinator

Connecticut Main Street Center (Hartford, CT)

### Community Planner

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (Pittsfield, MA)

### Regulatory Planner II

Cape Cod Commission (Barnstable, MA)

## ED&I Action Plan, cont'd

inclusion is an ongoing process that requires active engagement from the community, thoughtful decision making, and a commitment to advance these principles within a community and within the larger profession. The CCAPA strongly believes in the role we can play to support practicing planners in advancing these goals.

The CCAPA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee's first project was to conduct an internal organizational review prioritizing the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The committee engaged both our membership and our executive board to provide concrete recommendations and strategies about how the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association can formalize its commitment to advancing the profession and supporting practicing planners within the state in a manner that is equitable,

inclusive, and affirming to the diverse membership and communities our planners serve. Our CCAPA ED+I Action Plan is slated to be released to our membership this Fall.

If you are interested in being involved with or learning more about the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, please reach to me at [snvillalba20@gmail.com](mailto:snvillalba20@gmail.com).

— *Savannah-Nicole Villalba joined the Connecticut River Council of Governments (RiverCOG) in May 2021 as Regional Municipal Planner and is an adjunct faculty instructor with the University of Connecticut. She received her Master's Degree in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning from Tufts University in 2020.*