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A Publication of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

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**SNEAPA 2015**

Special Edition

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A Hearty Invitation and Welcome to the 2015 Hartford SNEAPA Conference

On behalf of CCAPA, I look forward to welcoming you to Connecticut for the 2015 Southern New England APA Conference! I am happy to have you back in the Nutmeg State. It is hard to believe another three years have gone by since this conference was last in Connecticut. Our state’s planning professionals have been busy since SNEAPA 2012 in Hartford. As you go on mobile workshops, hear from your Connecticut colleagues in conference sessions and hopefully take the opportunity to venture to other parts of the state after the conference has wrapped up, you will become aware of the great planning that has been going on here in the last few years. The Greater Hartford Region now has a brand new bus rapid transit line — CTfastrak that opened this past March and is providing opportunities for transit-oriented development. Expansion of the system is already under consideration. President Obama has authorized a new National Historic Park at Coltville. Six new towns have received Bike Friendly Community Bronze level designations and a seventh has moved up to silver. A growing number of communities have adopted or are exploring form based codes through charrettes; and, several communities have adopted sustainability plans and plans for adapting to climate change.

Just in the last few months, the Connecticut Chapter has had several successes which we hope will facilitate even better planning as we move into the future. In March, the American Planning Association announced $2.8 million in grant awards through the new collaborative Plan4Health program with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Eighteen competitive grants were given out to APA Chapters across the country to complete projects related to active transportation and healthy eating. The Connecticut Chapter was the recipient of a $150,000 grant for a project initiated by the Eastern Highlands Health District’s Community Health Action Response Team (CHART). The grant money will fund the creation (continued on page 11)
A Welcome Message from the SNEAPA 2015 Conference Co-Chairs

by Daniel A. Tuba, Demian A. Sorrentino, AICP, and Heidi Samokar, AICP, Conference Co-Chairs

On behalf of the entire Conference Committee, we welcome you to the SNEAPA 2015 Special Edition of Connecticut Planning. Within the following pages you will find an overview of the stimulating educational and professional development programs, exciting mobile workshops, and innovative special sessions that will be available at the SNEAPA 2015 Conference on Thursday, September 24 and Friday, September 25, 2015.

This year, the Connecticut Chapter of APA (CCAPA) has the honor of hosting our fellow chapters from Massachusetts (APA-MA) and Rhode Island (APA-RI), and welcoming 500+ professional planners and allied professionals to the Nutmeg State, and more specifically, to our capital city of Hartford.

For those who attended the SNEAPA Conference in 2012, the Connecticut Convention Center will be a familiar venue for attending our informative program sessions, networking with colleagues, catching up with old friends, and making new connections.

Outside of the Convention Center, Hartford is buzzing with city planning initiatives and private development projects that are reshaping how we live, work, and play. Within the Adriaen’s Landing District, construction is completed on the Front Street District, offering a selection of restaurants and entertainment options just across Columbus Boulevard from the Convention Center. Toward the river to the east, you will notice that Riverfront Recapture’s myriad parks are open for enjoyment and miles of the Riverwalk multi-use trail have been completed.

The CTfastrak busway is operational and improving transit within the City and between neighboring municipalities to the west. In the Downtown District, the TIGER Intermodal Triangle is enhancing transit connectivity, functionality and aesthetics within the Union Station-to-Main Street triangle. Construction at Dunkin’ Donuts Park, the future home of the Hartford Yard Goats minor league baseball team, is in full swing in Downtown North, and to the south commercial and residential space continues to come online at Colt Gateway in the up and coming Coltsville National Historical Park.

With so much to see and do, you may want to arrive on Wednesday evening and take advantage of the free one-hour mobile workshop, and of course you’ll want to soak in the early autumn air and beautiful scenery during our evening cruise on the Connecticut River, our first-ever floating reception.

We look forward to seeing you in September, and to exploring the Diverse & Dynamic nature of our profession and the places that we shape!
In 2012, the Southern New England American Planning Association conference was held at the Convention Center in the City of Hartford. Back then we were excited to report on quite a few new housing and transportation developments about to begin and several new construction projects that were about to open. Much has happened since!

**Transportation**

The City of Hartford had just received a $10 million TIGER IV grant for our Intermodal Triangle project that would greatly improve transit conditions in our Downtown. That project is now in its final months of construction. Major improvements have materialized including improved landscaping, new bus shelters, new bicycle racks, and road reconstructions that include road diets and one to two-way street conversions. Additionally, bus routes and stops were modified to improve the east/west connection through downtown and the transit experience. Our transit improvements downtown are a great addition and particularly well timed with the arrival of CTfastrak at Union Station and three other Hartford stations for the dedicated busway system.

(continued on page 5)
Hartford, Then & Now cont’d

Additionally the city has been increasing its focus on improved transit access and Complete Streets citywide. Hartford re-applied this year for another TIGER grant to extend our downtown improvements into the surrounding neighborhoods and we have also joined the national Safer People, Safer Streets Challenge as a way to prioritize safety and improve access for all road users of all ages and abilities.

Downtown North Redevelopment

In the beginning of 2012, we completed our new Public Safety Complex on High Street in the area known as Downtown North as part of our redevelopment vision. Fall of 2012, we released an RFP for the creation of the Downtown North Master Plan with the goal of creating a realistic, implementable framework for development of that area. Fast forward to July 2014 when the New Britain Rock Cats officially made public their desire to move their minor league baseball team from New Britain, CT to Downtown Hartford. The ballpark was the spark and the framework established by the Downtown North plan was in place to help guide the subsequent proposal received from Centerplan Companies for the construction of not just a state-of-the-art minor league ballpark but also for more than 800 units of housing, 40,000 square feet of space for the Thomas Hooker Brewery, and over 80,000 square feet of retail space — including a new and much needed full-service grocery store. Construction on the ballpark began early 2015 and will be complete March 2016 — join us next season to welcome the Hartford Yard Goats!

Housing

In 2012, we were excited to report that approximately 600 units of housing would be arriving in Downtown Hartford over the next two years. Since then, many of those have come to fruition. Along with the 800+ units that are a part of the Downtown North redevelopment, the former Sonesta hotel, now Spectra, (continued on page 6)
Hartford, Then & Now cont’d

Great things are happening in Hartford and there are so many exciting things to do!

has finished their conversion and has recently begun leasing their 197 “boutique apartments.” Within the last two years the city has also seen the conversion of the old Bank of America headquarters at 777 Main Street to 286 high-end apartments. Several other smaller-scale housing conversions were developed including The Grand on Ann Street and 179 Allyn Street. Opportunities for housing are also expanding in other neighborhoods as well, including the Capewell Horseshoe Nail Factory that is in the beginning of renovations on their adaptive reuse project. Also, the Colt building (part of the recently designated Coltsville National Historic Park) has leased several of their renovated apartments and continues to work on converting the factory space under the iconic dome into additional units. Units are also planned for the adaptive reuse of the Hartford Office Supply Co. building.

Front Street

Major strides have happened at Front Street since SNEAPA’s last visit. In 2012, Spotlight Theaters was about to open and now the Theater is thriving. It has been joined by Ted’s Montana Grill, NIX’s, Infinity Bistro, and Capital Grille. Nearby, (continued on page 7)
Jamie “The Bear” McDonald opened Bear’s Smokehouse on Arch Street to rave reviews from locals and the New York Times. It has recently signed a lease to expand to another space on Front Street.

Great things are happening in Hartford and there are so many exciting things to do — stay tuned to learn more about opportunities in Connecticut’s Capital City during your SNEAPA stay! 

Illustrative rendering of supermarket by Centerplan of Downtown North redevelopment.

Above left: Hartford Convention Center.
Right: Riverfront directory sign.
“I like overly complicated traffic studies that cost me a ton of money,” said no one ever.
one who wanted to perform or exhibit.” Thirty years later, downtown Providence is a different place — and AS220 has been an important part of this transformation. Today, AS220 can boast 55 employees, four dozen affordable live/work studios, gallery spaces, production facilities, a fabrication and electronics lab, performance venues, a bar, restaurant, and more.

More than $25 million in investment in the heart of downtown Providence! These investments, and a commitment to affordable access and instruction for all who want it, have helped ensure that even as Providence has thrived, the arts have thrived, too. Crenca describes his approach as the “compost theory:” creating a rich, fertile, and nurturing environment in which entrepreneurship, the arts, and a diverse community of all ages can thrive — for the benefit of all.

**Success! The Threat to Funky?**

Providence’s success is not so easily translatable to other communities, especially in towns and cities where real estate is expensive, and property values are on the rise. Session panelist David E. White, Director of Planning & Zoning for the City of Burlington, Vermont, described some of the challenges that accompany revitalization in makerhoods. He draws on experience with the city’s funky South End neighborhood, including concerns raised by local artists during a recent planning process, as well on what he’s seen happen elsewhere. “Artists, makers, and other entrepreneurs are drawn to inexpensive space,” White explains, “and create buzz that draws others. People want... (continued on page 10)
What Smart Cities Know cont’d
to be a part of it. Suddenly, there are a lot of workers in the area, and there’s demand for a place to get a sandwich, or grab a beer. Someone wants to open a gym. And these uses can support a more dynamic place. But behind the scenes, the land becomes more valuable. And some of those who were part of the area’s success discover they can’t afford the neighborhood anymore. Things get prettier. You lose some of the funkiness, some of the grittiness.”

Retaining gritty areas where creative industries can grow and thrive is a priority for hip Somerville, MA as well. “Creative places and people are part of what makes our city what it is,” says panelist George Proakis, Director of Planning for the City. “It’s who we are. Somerville has been a place where ideas and inventions are born. So it’s important that we continue to have available, affordable workspace that’s reasonably close to our city’s vibrant walkable commercial and residential areas — but not in them.” Adds Proakis, “We’re creating opportunities to build the creative industries that could be Somerville’s next Big Thing.”

So what’s a city to do?
Affordability, building and zoning codes, transitions in building ownership, incompatible uses, and rising real estate pressures can all pose threats to a makerhood’s success. How to navigate these challenges? Session attendees will hear what cities are doing to sustain their artist and maker neighborhoods. And they’ll get the scoop on some hard-won secrets to success, including:

• How to help local arts-based initiatives...and how not to “get in the way”
• How to preserve affordable arts space over time
• The power (and limitations) of protective zoning
• Achieving a commitment to success shared by landlords, the city and tenants...and sustaining that commitment over time
• Patience, perseverance, and the power of bringing people together.
of a toolkit for planning and zoning commissioners to help plan for active transportation and access to healthy foods. For more information, visit www.plan4health.us. To learn more, attend SNEAPA session E4!

In May, the Connecticut Legislative Commission on Aging, CCAPA and the Capitol Region Council of Governments released the first in a series of reports on a statewide survey to determine the place preferences of millennials and baby-boomers. This survey mirrored a National APA Survey — Investing in Place. To hear more of the findings, check out SNEAPA session A4.

On June 19th, Governor Malloy signed into law Public Act 15-57, An Act Establishing Tax Increment Financing Districts, to allow for the use of incremental property taxes generated in a development district for infrastructure improvements, development projects and other costs associated with development. CCAPA partnered with the Connecticut Economic Development Association, Connecticut Main Street, and Pullman & Comley, LLC to propose this legislation, which will help greatly with municipal development efforts often stemming from planning and visioning efforts. To learn more about Connecticut’s new TIF legislation, go to SNEAPA Session E4.

I hope that you will enjoy your time in Hartford in just a few weeks and that it will prove to be an educational and enriching experience that will inspire you throughout the next year and beyond. We look forward to the SNEAPA Conference and the Connecticut Chapter looks forward to welcoming you personally in September! 🎉

— Emily Hultquist, AICP

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ReImagine, ReVitalize, ReAssert Main Street

by Caitlin Palmer, Senior Planner, City of Hartford, Department of Development Services and Ken Livingston, AICP, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

This year, there is a unique opportunity to be involved in the first ever two-day SNEAPA charrette! This charrette will focus on the creation of a town center at Terry Square, a major gateway intersection along Main Street with ample development opportunities. Business owners and residents will be on hand to share their unique perspectives, knowledge of the area, and provide immediate discourse on ideas. Conference attendees are invited to participate in this exciting challenge — and it does not end there! The final recommendations from the charrette will be presented Friday at the conference and the City of Hartford will incorporate the results of your ideas and insights into the official phase of the Terry Square Master Plan visioning process.

Overall there is a Special Program Charrette Track within the conference. Attendees can register for specific sessions, with CM credits being offered for the Thursday sessions, or you can stop by during breaks in the action to observe the charrette participants progress, offer suggestions and even put pen to paper to help draw up new ideas.

If you are interested in being a participant for the charrette process, volunteering time to develop concepts, complete design work or obtain a deeper understanding of conducting a charrette, please contact Ken Livingston at klivingston@fhiplan.com or (860) 247-7200.

Specific sessions include:

Thursday

- Charrettes 101: So how do you pronounce it, spell and what is it?
- Where are we going and what are we doing? A review of charrette focus and initial discussion of issues and ideas.
- Focus on Economic Development — Discuss economic issues related to site included development opportunities, real estate issues, and demographics.

- Focus on Placemaking — Discussion of how to design a place, zoning, urban design and planning, included as part of this discussion is the conference’s Keynote Speaker Peter Kageyama.

Friday

- Putting the pieces together — Creating value from a Charrette: How to package the work effort and give it value.
- Show and Tell — Presentation of the work effort.

Charrette Focus Area

The Northeast neighborhood serves as an important entry corridor into the City of Hartford and was once home to a mixed-income community with a strong manufacturing base. Conditions documented over ten years ago, as evidenced by the 2001 Strategic Plan for the Northeast Revitalization Area, still exist today — significant retail leakage out of the neighborhood, high poverty rates, security, access to parking, prevalence of subsidized housing units, blighted and vacant buildings, and other factors. More specifically, this area is now characterized by pervasive poverty (49.35% compared to the City’s 33.9% and State 10%), low employment (72.56% compared to the City’s rate of 83.6%), violent crime (the area’s Part I violent crime rate per 1,000 residents is 66.2, compared to the City’s rate of 53.9 from 2011-2013), and food insecurity. The area’s sharp socio-economic decline began after WWII with the construction of Interstate 84. The highway’s location divided the City in half, isolating the Northeast and other neighborhoods from the economic activity of the downtown. Even more devastating were the race riots in 1968 that resulted in massive arson, destroying the majority of North Hartford’s commercial strip. Years later,

(continued on page 13)
the Northeast commercial corridor and neighborhood has yet to recover from this economic downturn. These conditions qualified this area, and two other adjacent neighborhoods, to become a federally designated Promise Zone earlier this year.

In May of 2014, State Representative Brandon McGee approached Development Services about establishing a new vision for the commercial portion of Main Street, focusing on the areas north of the Terry Square Trident to the Windsor town line. Staff proposed to Representative McGee a three tiered approach to reimagine, revitalize, and reassert Main Street as a commercial destination: 1) a comprehensive business and residential survey to understand local business conditions; 2) a phased streetscape improvement project extended from the Windsor town line south to the intersections of Main and Earle streets and Windsor Street and Boce Barlow Way; and 3) a massing and land use vision for the Terry Square trident area.

The business survey is the springboard to the redevelop and revitalization of the Northeast neighborhood. The City retained the services of GreatBlue Research to create the surveys and oversee and administer the business and residential research process. The primary goal of this research study was to identify barriers to visitation, identify appealing aspects of a potential streetscape that would draw visitors, and ultimately identify what is necessary to increase the amount of business conducted in the Northeast Neighborhood.

The variation in the businesses and residents’ perspectives proved incredibly interesting, for example: residents are more optimistic about the benefits of a streetscape project and the positive effect it will have compared to business owners (78% compared to 68%); businesses believe customers can easily find parking compared to residents who also reported parking issues having a negative impact on their tendency to visit businesses (68% compared to 42%).

(continued on page 14)
ReImagine, ReVitalize, ReAssert

KEY CATALYST SITE
Develop strategy to acquire DATCOCO property; Redevelop into mixed-use with residential

Incorporate bus stop + shelter

Emphasis on City Gateway

Business Improvement Zone

Streetscape Continued

Phase One Streetscape
Estimated Cost @ $2,000 per linear foot
Construction - $4.25M
Design - $420,000

TOWN CENTER

Develop strategy for housing; potential joint venture with property owners or assist with acquisition and assembly of properties

(continued on page 15)
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SNEAPA SESSION

Thursday

- Charrettes 101: So how do you pronounce it, spell it and what is it? – 9:00 a.m.
  Francisco Gomes, AICP, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

- Where are we going and what are we doing? A review of charrette focus and initial discussion of issues and ideas. – 11:30 a.m.
  John Simone, Connecticut Main Street Center
  Caitlin Palmer, City of Hartford

- Focus on Economic Development — Discussion of economic issues related to site included development opportunities, real estate issues, and demographics. – 2:15 p.m.
  Kevin Hively, Ninigret Partners
  Glenn Geathers, City of Hartford
  Local business owners from the charrette focus area

- Focus on Placemaking — Discussion of how to design a place, zoning, urban design and planning; included as part of this discussion is the conference’s keynote speaker Peter Kageyama. – 4:00 p.m.
  Valarie Ferro, Weston & Sampson
  Don Chapman, City of Hartford
  Peter Kageyama (conference keynote)
  Neighborhood residents

Friday

- Putting the pieces together — Creating value from a Charrette- How to package the work effort and give it value. – 9:45 a.m.

- Show and Tell — Presentation of the work effort. – 1:45 p.m.

Relimage, ReVitalize, ReAssert cont’d

The survey was also used to identify the types of uses that residents would like to see in order to visit Main Street more frequently — big box retailers and general restaurants — or understand that residents are in favor of some sort of design review or standards to ensure that buildings are attractive and create a cohesive environment. These results are being used to guide the subsequent steps of the process (streetscape design and town center master plan) and to uncover near-term opportunities to increase commercial activity.

The City has progressed to the next phase of the project and has selected VHB for the streetscape design and construction portion of the project. While VHB begins works on conceptual streetscape improvement options, they have also been asked to select a sub-consultant to begin the visioning and massing of development along Main Street.

Caitlin Palmer: Caitlin.Palmer@hartford.gov
Ken Livingston: klivingston@fhiplan.com

“Our inability to get a cable connection in the North end of Hartford... that is just absurd in today’s climate.”
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The City of Hartford takes up just about 18 square miles, the majority of which is covered by dense neighborhoods of historic buildings. It has a small downtown core, located beside the Connecticut River, and a few industrial areas, located along a north-south highway (Interstate 91). The city’s population has been shrinking since its peak in the early twentieth century, leaving many buildings vacant, including former mills and factories. To top it off, Hartford is (depending on the year) the first or second poorest city for a city of its size in the country. Many of its residents depend on assistance from the government for food. The vast majority of the children in the school system have free or reduced school breakfasts and lunches. The city is a documented (continued on page 18)
Bringing urban agriculture to a dense, urban location can be a difficult proposition politically. But in the case of Hartford, leadership led to a sweeping new section in the zoning rules that will strengthen the ability of Hartford residents and property owners to enhance food security and local sourcing.

Urban Agriculture cont’d

food desert, with many small convenience stores (bodegas), but few places to get fresh food.

It is in this context that two local organizations — Hartford Food System (HFS), which focuses primarily on the food supply chain, and Knox Parks, which focuses primarily on trees and parks – began to see the city as a perfect location for urban agriculture. Urban agriculture, in the case of Hartford, could help address the food desert problem, provide opportunities for low-income communities to pool resources to produce food, and “green” underutilized properties. Unfortunately, the zoning regulations did not expressly allow community gardens, urban farms, farmers’ markets, henhouses, and beekeeping – all components of a healthy urban agriculture system. Some of these uses had been operating under the radar for years. But they were not legitimate under the law.

Bringing urban agriculture to a dense, urban location can be a difficult proposition politically. But in the case of Hartford, the leadership of HFS and Knox, and a willing Planning & Zoning Commission, led to a sweeping new section in the zoning rules that will strengthen the ability of Hartford residents and property owners to enhance food security and local sourcing. The section allows for bees and hens to be kept in any zone in the city. It legitimizes community gardens and identifies reasonable requirements for soil quality, sales of site-grown products, and water access. It allows for urban farms pursuant to a special permit, with some provisions dealing with motorized tractors when the urban farm is in a residential zone, which will prevent on-site harvesting from becoming a noise nuisance. (As a nod to some who objected to the term “urban farm,” since that term conjured up industrial animal use, Hartford calls them “single-operator gardens.”) The regulations also provide for compost bins, greenhouses, hoophouses, shade pavilions, and farm stands. And finally, and perhaps most controversially, the Planning and Zoning Commission allowed for both henhouses and bees as accessory uses in all areas. There was only one person who spoke against the proposed urban agriculture provisions: he spoke passionately against the potential odors caused by hens and potential stings caused by bees. There was much on the record to address these concerns, as well as specific provisions in the zoning regulations that would mitigate them (e.g., a 6’ flyway barrier for the bees; a limit of 6 hens, with odors declared a public nuisance). But thanks to an awareness and education campaign, the rest of the testimony was strongly in favor, and even the Planning & Zoning Commissioners who were initially skeptical came around to see why urban agriculture would be compatible with an urban location.

As another example of a leading urban ag ordinance, adopted into law in December 2013, Article 89 is the newest section of the Boston Zoning Code that sets new standards for a variety of urban agriculture activities in Boston. It applies citywide. In 2012, the city gathered nearly two dozen farming advocates, urban agriculture experts, and neighborhood representatives to assist in developing new zoning for urban ag activities. After 30 open public meetings with stakeholders and an advisory group, Article 89 is the result of that collaboration.

Most agricultural activities were not allowed under prior zoning regulations in Boston. With the adoption of Article 89, a wide range of urban ag activities such as ground-level and roof-level farming, hydroponics, composting, and farm stand sales (to name a few) are now being addressed and are mostly allowed outright.

(continued on page 19)
Urban Agriculture cont’d

Article 89 has helped to increase access to healthy food, promote community building, create business opportunities, and beautify many of Boston’s neighborhoods.

Urban ag provides some incredible opportunities for economic development, food security, and reduction of waste, yet even with the most supportive zoning ordinances in place to encourage urban ag practices, urban localities likely cannot meet the food needs of a large city relying on production within the city’s limits alone. In addition to modifying zoning ordinances to make urban ag a real possibility in cities, states and localities can support local food distribution in urban centers through other mechanisms. Presently, the most common distributional forms for locally produced foods are direct-to-consumer sales through farmers markets and community supported agriculture (CSA); however, there are limitations to these models, as they typically fail to meet the scale and demand for local foods in urban settings.

To address the issue and provide support for locally grown foods, some states and localities have experimented with different types of laws and policies. Some have adopted locally grown food ordinances that either increase incentives for or mandate local food procurement. While there are some potential legal issues to consider for these types of laws, generally, they present a creative means by which to support the production and distribution of local foods while allowing for flexibility to define what “locally produced” means for that community. Additionally, states and localities can provide financial support for the development of food hubs, which are organizations that typically serve as aggregators, distributors, and marketers of locally produced foods. Finally, states and localities can incorporate the promotion of local food as a priority within the comprehensive land use plan for the region or consider urban revitalization projects to provide space for local food production, education, and processing.

To learn more about how urban ag is shaping Southern New England, and its potential for growing our communities, please attend this program, featuring as speakers: Prof. Sara C. Bronin of UConn School of Law, Professor of Law and Faculty Director for the Center for Energy and Environmental Law, and chair of Hartford’s Planning and Zoning Commission; Marie Mercurio, AICP, Senior Planner with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, who assisted in the planning and authoring of Article 89; Ellen Cynar, Program Manager for Providence’s Healthy Communities Office; and Laurie Beyranevand, Associate Director of the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems and an associate professor of law at Vermont Law School. The program will be moderated by Sorell E. Negro, a land use lawyer with Robinson & Cole LLP and co-editor of the 2015 book published by the American Bar Association, Urban Agriculture: Policy, Law, Strategy, and Implementation, for which Ms. Beyranevand wrote a chapter.
When the City of Hartford applied for TIGER funding in 2012, Downtown Hartford was facing a range of new and expected transportation assets including improvements at Union Station, planned commuter rail, and construction for CTfastrak was about to begin. However, despite exciting future prospects, the city faced the existing challenge of a transportation network that was not well integrated into its urban fabric. Union Station, the regional transportation hub for intercity rail and bus, is removed and essentially hidden from the commercial core — how do users find it now and what will happen with the arrival of CTfastrak? Main Street is the primary transit and commercial corridor — on a street that lacks necessary transit infrastructure, how do you balance the overabundance of local and commuter buses with pedestrians and other users? These conditions were exacerbated by an image of transit that did not attract riders.

In 2012, the City of Hartford applied for a TIGER IV transportation grant to strengthen the region’s economic and employment core through intermodal connections — pedestrian, bicycle, tax, bus, rail. The goal was to address the city’s challenges with practical, immediate, and effective transit improvements to the urban core, focusing on the area between Union Station and Main Street. The proposal included a reworking of the local bus network and called for the creation of transportation hubs, transit priority streets, complete streets, and the realization of the recently completed iQuilt Plan.

The City was awarded $13.5 million to complete the $21.1 million project, known as the Intermodal Triangle, that focused on four main elements: improvements around Union Station to reinforce the station’s role as a regional intermodal hub, creation of Bushnell Park North as a complete street, creation of Asylum and Pearl as transit priority streets, improvements to Main Street with a focus on public transit improvements.

Much of the Intermodal Triangle project was built on the foundations of the iQuilt Plan (2010-2012). The iQuilt (continued on page 21)
is an innovative plan for Downtown Hartford that promotes walking, culture and innovation. The concept, originally developed by the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, was officially adopted by the City in 2010 and included as a key component of Hartford’s Plan of Conservation and Development. The iQuilt Plan is an exciting urban design strategy for walkability and creative placemaking, focused on strengthening the links between Downtown’s extraordinary concentration of arts, cultural and landscape assets. While Downtown Hartford is compact, the pedestrian links to existing assets are often weak; the plan seeks to strengthen the links through physical and programmatic improvements to the pedestrian network, including parks, plazas, streets, and sidewalks.

Since the beginning, the iQuilt Plan has been a collaborative partnership. The City and many residents, organizations, and community stakeholders — including Congressman Larson — rallied behind the iQuilt Plan and continued to show their support when the City submitted the TIGER IV application. Arguably, our selection by the U.S. Department of Transportation for funding and much of (continued on page 22)
The Intermodal Triangle’s success stems from this collaborative history. The Intermodal Triangle has since become a reality in Downtown Hartford with enhanced bus stop facilities, improved bus stop locations and bus routing, road improvements including road diets and one to two-way conversions, transit signal priority for buses on designed roads, landscaping, and improved wayfinding signage and lighting.

Construction for the project will be complete this fall and Wednesday evening, September 23rd, you will have the opportunity to join Jeffery Cormier, Town Planner for East Hartford and former Intermodal Triangle Project Manager for the City of Hartford, on a tour of the project. Not only will the tour highlight Hartford’s transit improvements, but see how our transportation network is now connecting to other development happening in the City — UConn student housing and new eating options at Front Street, multiple housing conversions in the Downtown, improvements in Bushnell Park, and more. Mr. Cormier will also talk briefly about the city’s plan to build on the successes of the Intermodal Triangle with a new TIGER VII application — a proposal to connect the transit improvements in the Downtown to surrounding neighborhoods. Come see what TIGER has done for Connecticut’s Capital City… and why the region has its eye on Hartford.
MOBILE WORKSHOP

Coltsville: A National Historical Park in the Making
by Craig Minor, AICP, Town Planner, Town of Newington

Have you ever wondered what’s up with that blue “onion dome” building on the south side of Hartford? It’s the historic Colt Armory, and is the subject of the conference’s second mobile workshop: a guided tour of the historic “Colt’s Patent Fire-Arms Manufacturing Company” complex, once the largest private armory in the world and maker of the famous Colt 45 Peace-maker: “the gun that won the west.” The tour will be led by Joanne M. Gangi-Wellman, Chief of Interpretation at Springfield Armory National Historic Site, with an overview of the National Historical Park nomination process presented by City of Hartford Senior Planner Caitlin Palmer.

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Coltsville cont’d

The Coltsville neighborhood is being transformed into a national historical park, showcasing industrial innovation and the controversial history of arms manufacturing in the Connecticut River Valley. A model of 19th century industrial paternalism, Samuel Colt created a workers’ village that included a church, a social hall for dances and lectures, workers’ housing, a landscaped park, and a tiny German village for skilled craftsmen from Germany. As innovative as his revolver was, Colt’s manufacturing plant was even more so. Colt advanced the concept of interchangeable parts, and introduced the concept of production lines six decades before Henry Ford. Participants will tour the Colt Armory building and the surrounding Coltsville neighborhood, seeing and hearing plans for the city’s National Historic Park.
Great, another bus service, you say. But this is not another bus service focused solely on just getting oneself from one place to another. Yes, CTfastrak’s new bus line is the direct result of a lengthy study investigating transportation alternatives to alleviate traffic congestion in one of the most congested areas along Interstate 84. But, it is much more than that. It is a catalyst to new economic development and growth, urban and infill renewal, new employment and housing opportunities; all of which are particularly associated with Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) strategies taking shape within the new transit corridor. This TOD, or mixed-use development, is routed in the response to demographic shifts toward more walkable communities within the young professional and retiree cohorts along with trends toward smaller one-person occupied dwelling units, job proximity and less reliance on the automobile.

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As part of the 2015 SNEAPA conference, attendees can take a ride on the busway and see for themselves the new opportunities under development via a mobile workshop. Stops will be made at several locations to showcase TOD and related new infrastructure, economic and housing development such as within New Britain and West Hartford.

Currently in New Britain, efforts are underway on a downtown beautification project and redevelopment of several vacant and/or blighted buildings within walking distance to the Downtown New Britain station. New Britain is also relocating existing supporting bus stops to be closer to the CTfastrak station and is working on road diets and incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian ways as part of a complete streets initiative in the area.

West Hartford has been active in promoting a new vision for mixed-use development at the Flatbush and Elmwood stations including provisions for walkability and complete streets concepts. For example, there are plans in the works for a $19 million mixed-use TOD development near the Elmwood station, at 616 New Park Avenue, that includes market rate and workforce housing on the top three floors of a four-story building while allowing commercial/retail uses on the ground level. The residential component includes one- and two-bedroom units with the former directed at young working professionals.

After almost 20 years in the making, CTfastrak, a 9.4 mile new bus rapid transit (BRT) system, opened in March of 2015 and provides frequent, fast, and reliable connections in towns and cities between New Britain and Hartford. The
BRT has 11 landscaped stations along the route through New Britain, Newington, West Hartford and Hartford. The BRT also links to an existing, much broader express service network linking the municipalities of Waterbury, Cheshire, Bristol and Southington. It doesn’t stop there, as there are also existing and planned links to multi-use trails along the corridor including one running directly beside the busway. Indeed, communities along the busway are looking at zoning codes to incorporate TOD and other redevelopment opportunities in response to this new catalyst to the area.

Early results on ridership have indicated that the bus corridor is operating at 25% greater levels than anticipated for the first year of service thus far. In fact, the program has been deemed such a success that there are now plans to expand the service east of Hartford toward East Hartford, South Windsor, Manchester and Vernon using existing HOV lanes. With the focus on urban renewal and new development opportunities and community linkages, ridership should surely grow.

With these mass transit improvements, interlinkages and new development opportunities, the state of Connecticut and the greater knowledge corridor is truly moving into the 21st Century. To see firsthand this new transit initiative and related economic development, sign up for this mobile workshop!