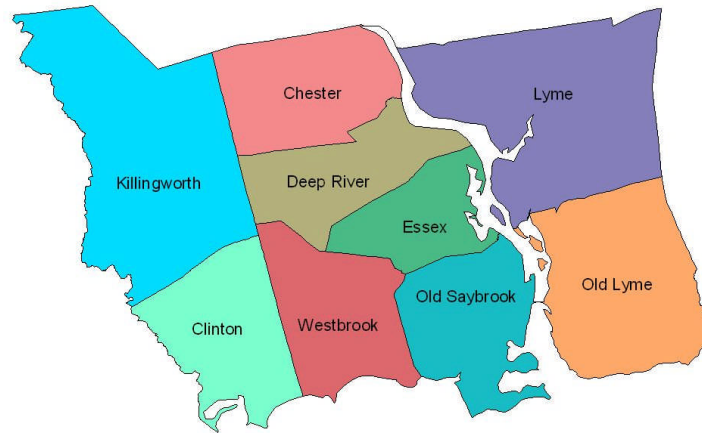


Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency 43rd Year 2009-2010



TOWNS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER ESTUARY REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

The Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (CRERPA) is in its 43rd year of planning for the nine-town Estuary region. CRERPA consists of two representatives from each member town, one representing the Board of Selectmen and the other representing the Planning Commission. The CRERPA Board meets on the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Agency office in the Saybrook Junction Marketplace. Our current Chairman is Bruce Edgerton of Deep River.

CRERPA has a staff of 8 full and part-time employees. Independent consultants are occasionally contracted on an as need basis. CRERPA is supported financially from a variety of federal, state and local sources. A significant portion of the CRERPA budget continues to be the annual contribution of its member towns, with other major support coming from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the State Office of Policy and Management, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

CRERPA helps its member towns work together voluntarily to solve common problems affecting the Estuary Region. During the year, CRERPA provided staff support and meeting space for several area organizations including the following:

The Connecticut River Estuary Metropolitan Planning Organization: The CREMPO Board includes: the nine chief elected officials and their alternates, a

CRERPA board representative and alternate, and a representative from the Estuary Transit District. CREMPO provides executive oversight for transportation state and federal transportation funding within the region, planning and regional projects. During 2009, CRERPA and CREMPO made significant progress on transportation preparedness for emergency response during disasters; including a special project for a geo-spatial transportation database for the 30 towns in DEMHS Region 2; planning for integrated transportation for pedestrians, bicyclists, public bus passengers, rail, and automobile;; work on trail systems, and freight planning,

Although designated as an urban area, the region is characterized by small town centers separated by rural scenic areas and roadways. The need for alternative transportation, more efficient use of the automobile and inter-modal planning remains an important goal of the region even with limited funding opportunities. The most promising work is with the small public transit system, including expansion of the Estuary Transit District with connections to Middletown's public bus service and streamlined service to New London's rail station. The planning for rail parking, and expansion, transit oriented development regulations, and expansion of Shoreline East service is another high priority.

The Lower Connecticut Valley Selectman's Association (LCVSA), brings the chief elected officials of the region together monthly to discuss common interests, including transportation, elderly services, solid waste disposal and recycling. The LCVSA oversees the operation of a regional household hazardous waste collection facility in Essex and is involved in emergency planning efforts. First Selectman Michael Pace of Old Saybrook is the LCVSA Chairman

Janice Ehle/Meyer serves as the CRERPA Recycling, Environmental Education, and HHW Coordinator. Janice organized and manages the Household Hazardous Waste and electronics collections at the regional facility in Essex operated by CRERPA on behalf of the nine towns.

The Connecticut River Gateway Commission, which meets monthly at the CRERPA office, was established in 1973 by State Statute to protect the scenic and environmental qualities of the Lower Connecticut River through a compact among the eight towns that border the River estuary. The Commission participates in the acquisition of land and easements for conservation purposes. Gateway member towns have agreed to adopt common zoning standards for development in the State designated Gateway Area.

REGIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Local Technical Assistance: A major component of CRERPA's work program is technical assistance to individual member towns including review and comment on inter-municipal referrals for zoning applications, zone changes, subdivisions or as required by statute. CRERPA staff is available to answer questions or conduct research on land use and planning for local officials as requested.

GIS and Environmental Planning: CRERPA, with support from Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, established and serves as the coordinator for the Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (LTE), an informal organization whose members include: Chester Land Trust, Clinton Land Conservation Trust, Deep River Land Trust, Essex Land Trust, Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Old Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Old Saybrook Land Trust, Westbrook Land Conservation Trust, Haddam Land Trust, East Haddam Land Trust, Middlesex County Land Trust, Connecticut River Land Trust, and Salem Land Trust. CRERPA and the LTE have embraced and participates in the Wildlands and Woodlands initiative to further the burgeoning New England wide landscape scale preservation, conservation, and development vision.

CRERPA has begun a study to create a Viewshed Education Model for the land use commissions of CRERPA and Connecticut River Gateway member towns. The study began in the Spring with a survey of the Commissions to assess the attitudes and perceptions of the Commissioners towards viewshed protection on a local and regional scale, but also designed to encourage them to think about what viewsheds within their towns and the region they feel are important and why. The study will conclude with a report back to the Commissions which will include the results of the survey, examples of existing Connecticut viewsheds regulations, and a representative regional geographic information system (GIS) viewshed model.

The Estuary Transit District: (ETD) was established in 1981, with the help of CRERPA, to provide public transportation in the Region. In July, 2003, CRERPA successfully transferred administration of the program to an independent office for the Estuary Transit District. CRERPA provides transportation planning services for the district.

Harbor Management: Studies funded by the CTDEP and NOAA enable CRERPA to be involved with several of the Harbor Management Commissions that exist on the lower river valley. CRERPA has also been involved in the guidance of a multi town effort to develop standards for private residential docks in the lower river.

Kayak and Canoe Trails: CRERPA provides education materials for canoers and kayakers through their Connecticut River Estuary Canoe and Kayak Trail program. This very popular service includes the trail map series of maps for waters of Old Lyme, Essex, Deep River and Old Saybrook. Free laminated trail guides can be found in local libraries, town halls, the DEP Marine Headquarters, at the CRERPA office in Old Saybrook, and online at the CRERPA website (www.crerpa.org).

Emergency Management Planning: The agency continues to work with the Valley Shore Emergency Management Association (VSEMA) to facilitate their emergency planning goals with GIS, financial services, and grant writing support. Jean Davies represents the interests of the CRERPA region on the DEMHS Region 2 Emergency Planning Team for emergency planning, sheltering, and evacuation.

Community Garden: The agency now offers to the Estuary region a chance to purchase a seasonal plot and garden. The community garden is behind the Pratt House in Essex. The 10 x 10 plots are in full sun and fully fenced. The soil is prepared with manure and turned ready to plant. Classes are offered throughout the year on garden issues.

CRERPA staff continues to assist member towns with local open space plans, which serve as building blocks for a regional greenway plan. The greenway plan will be part of the background work for the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development Board Members as of June 30, 2009:

CHESTER	Sally Murray
CLINTON	Alan Kravitz.
DEEP RIVER	Bruce Edgerton, Chairman; Rob Wylie, Treasurer
ESSEX	Robert Laundry
KILLINGWORTH	Stephanie Warren, Jere Adametz
LYME	Ning Rich
OLD LYME	Jane Marsh, Vice Chairman
OLD SAYBROOK	Karen Jo Marcolini, Richard Tietjen
WESTBROOK	William Neale, Secretary; Lee Bridgewater

CRERPA STAFF: **Linda Krause**, Executive Director; **J. H. Torrance Downes**, Senior Planner; **L. Jean Davies**, AICP, Principal Planner; **Margot Burns**, Environmental Planner; **Janice Ehle-Meyer**, Recycling Coordinator; **Dorothy Papp**, Financial Administrator; **Pat Anthony**, Office Manager.