

Smart Growth ENews



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1000 FRIENDS OF CONNECTICUT

February 2009

Smart Growth and Gov's Budget

Governor M. Jodi Rell presented her proposed budget earlier this week. She said the budget makes for a leaner more efficient government that would position the state to soar when the economy recovers.

Connecticut's future prosperity and competitiveness hinges on developing robust downtowns and urban centers; fostering desirable communities where millennials can start their careers, Gen X-ers can start their families, and baby boomers can transition to the challenges of aging within walking distance of shopping, recreation, education opportunities and easy access to transit. *That* behooves the state to play a significant role in **reducing cities and towns' reliance on the property tax to pay for** government services; improve regional cooperation to realize efficiencies in government service delivery and coordinate land use & economic development at a sustainable scale; and invest strategically in assets that guarantee a positive long-run return **to the state's economy, environment and society** – investments in transit, transit oriented development, brownfield revitalization, affordable housing, and priority property preservation.

Does the Governor's proposed budget advance smart growth in the next biennium? Not so much.

The Governor proposes a one-year \$40 million grant program that encourages towns to provide services like trash collection, road maintenance, animal control, etc. regionally. At the same time, the budget:

- reduces bonding to cities and towns,
- eliminates planning grants to municipalities,
- reduces previous bond authorizations for planning by half,
- eliminates state-sponsored education for land use commissioners,
- eliminates funding for regional planning organizations,
- eliminates the regional incentive grant program,
- zeros the regional performance grant,
- cuts Payments in Lieu of Taxes for colleges and hospitals and PILOT for state-owned property in all of our major cities except Hartford.

For smart growth advocates, other worrisome items in the budget include a proposal to switch all Department of Environmental Protection special funds to the General Fund – this includes the emergency spill response program and underground storage tank cleanup. The budget narrative says this would open the funds to the transparency of the appropriations process. 1000 FRIENDS vociferously supports greater transparency and accountability in government but **clearly there's more going on here than openness. DEP loses its dedicated funds and its lines in the Governor's budget reflect a 7.44 percent cut in the biennium with \$12 million lost in 09/10 only \$7.1 million of which would be recovered in 10/11.**

The Governor proposes big changes to the Department of Economic and Community Development. It will absorb the Office of Workforce Competitiveness and the Commission on Culture and Tourism. DECD is currently responsible for a number of growth and development programs. They include:

- brownfield remediation and redevelopment,
- affordable housing,
- Main Street development, and
- urban redevelopment.
- The Commission on Culture and Tourism is responsible for historic preservation – a key concern when redeveloping older neighborhoods.

DECD takes on significantly more **responsibility with the Governor's** proposed budget, but it loses \$10.3 million in 09/10 and another \$4 million in 10/11. And the CCT loses all \$33 million of its funds.

Transportation fares little better. The Transportation Strategy Board is eliminated and the Special Transportation Fund receives an anemic four percent infusion.

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Smart growth policies allow us to invest in the growth of the Connecticut we want.

vibrant, diverse business sector • mixed land uses • vital city and town centers • brownfield redevelopment • transit-oriented development • compact, walkable communities • green buildings

Smart growth policies protect and preserve the Connecticut we value.

historic and cultural resources • traditional town and village centers • uniqueness of place • agricultural economy • scenic beauty • open space, greenways and biodiversity

Join the Campaign

Smart growth policies include predictable, fair & cost-effective rules.

balanced, transparent and progressive taxation • effective deployment of resources • intergovernmental cooperation • simplified permitting • revised codes • accountable implementation • improved land use planning & regulation affordable housing • quality jobs • transportation alternatives • meaningful citizen participation • transparency and accountability • integrated communities • energy alternatives • environmental justice • educational equity

I support 1000 FRIENDS' efforts to align Connecticut's policies and practices behind smart growth principles. Sign me on to the Campaign to Grow Connecticut Smart.

Name and Address:

Email and Phone:

From the Blogs

Www.CTSmartgrowth.com

Quick Hits

by: [commonweal](#)

Thu Jan 29, 2009 at 09:06:48 AM EST

1. Why the Secrecy? -- The [Tri-State Transportation Campaign](#) wonders why Connecticut has been less than transparent with its economic stimulus wish list.
2. New rail service -- The [Courant](#) reports that several prominent legislators are looking into whether the state could use federal stimulus aid to establish passenger train service from Waterbury to Hartford.
3. We are falling apart -- The American Society of Civil Engineers issued an [infrastructure report card](#) Wednesday giving the country a cumulative ranking of D.

<http://1000friends-ct.blogspot.com/>

ConnDot recently released its 2009 Master Transportation Plan. Give it a read, and share your comments.

<http://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dpolicy/mtp/2009mtp.pdf>

Funders Recognize 1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut

National Funders and Community Foundation for Greater New Haven grants leverage your donations. Smart Growth initiatives in Bridgeport, Harford, and New Haven regions to continue in earnest.

1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut was awarded a \$25,000 national matching grant through the Funders Network for Smart Growth. This first-ever infusion of national money was awarded to on a 2-to-1 basis to \$25,000.

We couldn't have met the conditions of this Strategic Partnership Investment without your help. Here's how it worked: In the all-hands-on-deck appeal begun in November, you contributed \$15,740. Members of the Board of Trustees gave and raised to match the first \$10,000 of your gifts. Their contributions tallied \$11,040. The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven committed \$25,000 in 2009 and \$25,000 in 2010. Thus, we were eligible for \$25,000 in national matching funds.

The economy isn't great. Unless you were really good or really lucky, the value of your investments declined in 2008. And many of you are facing uncertain household budgets. But when you heard we needed you, you chose to invest in us and through us, in a smart sustainable future for Connecticut. Thank you!

In the coming months we will monitor smart growth legislation and advance the Campaign to Grow Connecticut Smart. We will focus our efforts on the regions of our major metropolitan areas and build grass roots and grass tops support for smart growth policies and investments — policies to reduce our reliance on the property tax; modernize local zoning; encourage regional cooperation; and encourage private and public investment in transit, transit oriented development, brownfield remediation and reuse, affordable housing and priority property preservation.

It's an uphill battle. Thanks to you, the Funder's Network for Smart Growth and the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, we've built a solid head of steam!

Killingly and Exeter

Heart and Soul Visioning Report

Representatives from these Connecticut and Rhode Island towns will discuss lessons learned and the regional implications of their work for the Borderlands.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy will provide information on its current study of the Borderlands — what issues are shared across the region, where do challenges diverge, what can be addressed better separately than together. Pizza will be served.

March 25, 5 PM

Jordan Community Center
50 Main Street, Sterling

Green Design: A New Criterion for Residential Construction

In part 1 of the Four-Part Green Homes Series, Alex Wilson, founder & President of BuildingGreen, LLC, Brattleboro, VT, will lay out the key components of green residential design and will share some recent thinking on how the residential design community must evolve to respond to the challenges of the struggling economy, climate change and interruptions in water and power in the years ahead.

February 18, 1 to 5 PM, 370 James Street, New Haven. aiainfo@aiact.org.

Build on Economic **Strengths, Focus on Cities'** Competitive Niches

Instead of spending city resources predominantly on luring major corporations, cities may benefit their residents more by directing those resources toward local entrepreneurs!

Read the case study of Youngstown Ohio and the Mahoning Valley at www.policylink.org/ToBeStrongAgain.pdf

Low Impact Development Workshop

CT NEMO and Goodwin College are offering a workshop on Low Impact Develop (LID) techniques for developers and contractors.

The workshop will provide practical information on the importance of LID and ways to avoid common pitfalls during installation. Registration is required. Breakfast will be available. To register, email Rachael.cleveland@uconn.edu or call 860 345 5205.

February 12, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM,
Goodwin College, One Riverside Drive, East Hartford.
\$25

Got a Commuter Savings Account?

Do you regularly take the bus, ride the train, use the van pool? Do you commute by bike?

If you do, the IRS wants you to save a little in the process.

Ask your employer about establishing a pre-tax commuter savings account.

IRS Section 132 allows commuters to contribute up to \$120 a month in pre-tax dollars for mass transit passes, including van pools.

Employees can also contribute up to \$20 a month for biking expenses.

It costs your employer a small account administration fee, which can be more than offset by tax savings. The funds are taken out before FICA is applied.

EARTHSTOCK CONNECTICUT

Save the Date

Last year's Earthstock event featured 60 eco-minded exhibitors, family-friendly activities, and 2500 participants.

Tunxis Community College
271 Scott Swamp Road, Farmington

10 AM to 4 PM

CAN RAIL SAVE CT'S CITIES? 16TH GALLIVAN CONFERENCE

The 16th Gallivan Conference will focus on the subject of rail travel in the State of Connecticut. After introductory remarks by the dean, a distinguished panel will discuss the legal framework within which rail is regulated as well as relevant planning, policy and economic issues. This conference should be of interest to attorneys, architects, engineers, developers, planners, government officials, and anyone interested in livable cities.

February 20, Noon to 2:15

William F. Starr Hall, Hartford

Registration is free by calling Linda Kirk at 860 570 5241 or via email at gallivan_conference_2009@law.uconn.edu

University of Connecticut School of Law

DON'T DRIVE & WIN !

DOT Commissioner Joseph Marie recently announced an Earth Day Challenge with an ironic prize. The challenge is a statewide initiative to encourage commuters to take greener forms of commuting between February and Earth Day.

"In these tough economic times it is important to help Connecticut commuters save money while getting the most out of our transportation infrastructure," the Commissioner said.

Commuters who participate will be eligible to earn rewards from local and national sponsors including more than a dozen grand prizes of \$100 in groceries *delivered to your home* from Pea Pod by Stop & Shop.

For more details
www.earthdaycommuterchallenge.com

Economic Crisis and Connecticut's Future

How would public service cuts affect Connecticut's Economy?

How will the federal stimulus package affect our state?

You're invited to a Citizen's Forum featuring Economist Robert H. Frank

- New York Times Economic View columnist,
- *Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Harms the Middle Class* (author),
- *Principles of Economics*, co-authored with Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke,
- **Professor of Management and Economics at Cornell University's Johnson Graduate School of Management,**
- **Visiting Professor of Business Ethics at New York University's Stern School of Business ; with**

Congressman Chris Murphy, D-5th District.

February 9, 12 to 1:30 PM ,
Legislative Office Building, Room 1c, Capitol Avenue, Hartford

THRIVING IN TIMES OF CHANGE

The Urban Land Institute New Haven/Hartford/New London Steering Committee invite you to learn how with change comes opportunity. How can we refocus ourselves and our organizations to see these opportunities? Once seen, what does it take to re-tool and enact the changes required to not only survive, but to thrive?

Join our panelists for an engaging and interactive discussion focusing on individual, business and institutional vision, adaptation, and reinvention to remain vital and sustainable in the short and long terms. Then network with your ULI and development professional colleagues.

Panelists

Lyle Wray, PhD, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments

Dara Kovel, Regional Director, Jonathan Rose Companies

Mark Scheinberg, President, Goodwin College

Moderator: Laura Turlington, AIA, Principal, Pirie Turlington Architects

February 9th, 5:30 to 7:00 PM

45 Church Street (corner of Church and Crown), New Haven

Onsite registration is available.



1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Susan Merrow, Co-Chair - Environmental Lobbyist	Jefferson B. Davis - Principal, J.B. Davis Assoc.	Robert Orr - Principal, Robert Orr Associates
Richard Maine, Co-Chair - Former Managing Partner, Madison Harbor Capital	John DeStefano, Jr. - Mayor, City of New Haven	Dr. Robert Painter - Citizen Smart Growth Champion, Hartford
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Susan Bryson- Partner & Chair of Real Estate, Environmental & Land Use Dept., Wiggin & Dana	Toni Gold - Senior Associate, Project for Public Spaces, NY	Robert Santy - President & CEO, CT Economic Resource Center
Leo Canty - Vice President, American Federation of Teachers	Eunice S. Groark - Former Lieutenant Governor	Stephen Sasala - President & CEO, Waterbury Regional Chamber
William Cibes - Chancellor Emeritus, CT State University System	Dara Kovel - CT Director, Jonathan Rose Companies	Patricia Wallace - Associate Director, Office of Urban Affairs
	Matthew Nemerson - President & CEO, Connecticut Technology Council	Cornell Wright - Principal, Parker Wright Group

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The Governor includes \$1.9 billion in federal stimulus dollars in **her budget. Given this week's tussling in the U.S. Senate, this amount seems optimistic.** The current deficit projected by the Office of Fiscal Analysis is close to \$3 billion deeper than the **Governor's budget reflects. Obviously, the Connecticut General Assembly will have to consider both cuts and revenue**

enhancements in the coming weeks. Smart growth advocates need to help them keep the endgame in sight as they do. If they choose well, we can grow smart and sustainably. We can weather **the recession and come out stronger. If not, we'll see further urban disinvestment, lose even more land, be stuck in our cars in traffic and no one will relocate their homes or businesses here because they won't be able to afford our housing!**

SMART GROWTH PARTIES

WE'RE BUILDING THE GRASS ROOTS
ONE HOUSE PARTY AT A TIME

THE NEXT PARTY WILL BE
FEBRUARY 14TH in NEW HAVEN

INVITE US TO YOUR HOME.
CALL 860/523-0003 or
EMAIL KGriebel@1000friends-ct.org.



Crisis as Opportunity: Creating a Climate for Change

The Land Trust of Danbury will host
Marjorie Shansky, certified presenter of Al
Gore's slide show on climate change.

Tarryville Mansion, 70 Southern Boulevard,
Danbury, February 8th snow date will be
February 15th. A short business meeting
will begin at 2:30, the slide show begins at 3.
Q & A will follow. All are welcome. Light
refreshments will be served.

For more information, email:
info@landtrustdanbury.org; or call
203 744 2795.

DETAILS OF GOVERNOR'S BUDGET AVAILABLE

You watched the speech.
You heard legislative leaders respond.
You read the spin.
Still hungry for details?

Town-by-town and state agency impact
databases are available.

Go to:

<http://www.courant.com/news/politics/hc-grants-db-0204,0,4058650.htmlstory>



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President Barack Obama called on the nation to participate in a National Day of Service in January. He called on **citizens to make an enduring commitment to their communities. While the date has passed, the call shouldn't end!** There are so many ways you can have a lasting impact on your neighborhood, community and state. One way is to become a smart growth activist.

How? Talk to your neighbors and recruit new members to the [Campaign to Grow Connecticut Smart](#) at www.1000friends-ct.org or the Facebook group for the Campaign. Call your Senator and ask him to support transit and green investments in the stimulus package. Call or write the Governor and members of the General Assembly, urge them to protect smart growth programs and investments in the biennial budget. Host a house party. Tweet that smart growth should be priority 1 for new state projects. Comment on the 1000 FRIENDS blog or other blogs you follow. Write an Op Ed. Send a letter to the editor. Write a Facebook note. Text a friend. Call a radio station. Make some buttons. Bang together a lawn sign. Create a batch of stickers. In short, generate the buzz for healthy downtowns, walkable and bikable streets, a world class transit system, bringing back brownfields, saving priority properties, creating housing choices, and rebuilding a robust economy. The Connecticut smart growth movement needs you. Engage!

You could also donate to 1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut.

We need your help to maintain our critical work at this critical time.

GO TO <http://www.1000friends-ct.org/support.htm> to give through Google Checkout, Paypal or by check. Thank you!