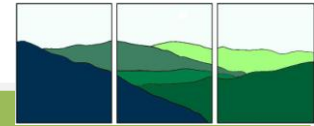


NWCT Regional Planning Collaborative Newsletter

Plan Locally. Act Regionally.



In this update:

- \$250,000 Village Center Vitality Grant application submitted! With bi-partisan support!
- 1st Village Center Vitality signage installed & getting rave reviews
- Accessory Apartment workshop makes front page news
- Falls Village holds Town Plan focus group on housing needs- have your pie & eat it too
- USDA resources for renewable energy, business development, and housing assistance
- Orton Foundation Heart & Soul Planning Grants- July 20th deadline
- A Thank You! to our towns, legislators, and partners for your continued support

"The Collaborative is a model of regional cooperation which allows small towns working together to accomplish that which they could never accomplish on their own." -Senator Roraback, Senator Witkos, Representative Willis, Representative Smith, and Representative Rigby

\$250,000 Village Center Vitality Grant Submitted 1st multi-town STEAP application in the State!

Last week the Collaborative submitted a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) application for economic development on behalf of seven of its member towns. According to OPM this is the first time that seven towns have jointly applied for a STEAP grant. The application received bi-partisan and bi-cameral support from our state legislators who stated in their support letter for our joint application:

"We wholeheartedly support this application...This vital work will help to insure that employment opportunities and economic activity will grow in the years ahead." -Senator Roraback, Senator Witkos, Representative Willis, Representative Smith, and Representative Rigby

We want to thank our state legislators for their support, especially Senator Roraback who wrote and pushed through legislation to allow us to submit this joint application. We are very optimistic that this first ever joint STEAP application will be successful, we expect to be notified this October, and we look forward to working with our towns to carry out this work.

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Included in this STEAP application is funding to:

- **Support our local businesses** by creating a website for residents & visitors to promote our local businesses, including a coordinated schedule of events.
- **Assist our town's economic development commissions**, study groups and merchant associations to put their plans into action.
- **Create jobs and fill vacant storefronts** through focused marketing of business opportunities in our towns.

First Village Center Signage Installed in Salisbury

Part of our NWCT Village Center Signage & Wayfinding Initiative



New Salisbury signage being installed

You may have noticed some new signage in Salisbury directing passers-by to all the offerings on Library & Academy Streets. This signage was designed and approved through our NWCT Village Center Vitality Signage & Wayfinding workshops, funded by the Connecticut Main Street Center and was installed earlier this month.

We have also held local signage workshops in Cornwall & Sharon and are working on finalizing designs in these towns as well. We plan to hold a local workshop in Norfolk in July.

The signs & wayfinding systems designed through these workshops will direct residents and visitors to our local businesses and add to our village center's historic character and sense of place.

ACCESSORY APARTMENT WORKSHOP

Makes font page news

On June 8th, 25 people packed themselves into the (thankfully!) air conditioned lobby of Salisbury Bank in Lakeville to learn how to turn underutilized space into an accessory apartment. Presenters included Jocelyn Ayer, Accessory Apartment Program Coordinator, Patrick Hare, accessory apartment expert, and Geoff Talcott of Salisbury Bank.

To read the front page Lakeville Journal article on this workshop, [click here](#).

This workshop was presented by HousingUs, an initiative of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. For more information on the Accessory Apartment Program please visit www.housingus.org.

USDA Resources for Renewable Energy, Business Development, & Housing Assistance

This month, Collaborative staff attended a forum to hear about the resources available to our towns and local businesses through the US Department of Agriculture.

Jennifer Lerch, Director of Business and Cooperative Programs for USDA Rural Development described 45 available programs in three areas: community development, business and cooperative programs, and housing assistance. She pointed out that recent emphasis has been given to renewable energy, job creation, and collaboration. Lerch also described the financial assistance programs available to businesses, including loan guarantees (the biggest portion), direct loans, and grants.

Primary contacts for more information and assistance are David Brown or Mary Grasso at the USDA office in Windsor, Connecticut (860) 688-7817. More information is available at the [USDA Rural Development webpage](#).

Encouraging Age & Housing Diversity

Falls Village Town Plan Update: Focus group session

This Monday, representatives of Falls Village's Planning & Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, volunteer emergency services, and other interested citizens met to eat pie and discuss specific strategies the town could take to meet the housing needs of young families, emergency service volunteers, and seniors.

The Collaborative facilitated this discussion as part the Falls Village 2012 Town Plan update process. To learn more about the exciting events & activities that are part of this process, [click here](#).

Orton Foundation Heart & Soul Planning Grants Available

Applications due July 20th

The Orton Foundation is offering a 1:1 matching grant of up to \$100,000 for a two-year planning initiative available to small towns. Foundation funding is to support the community's use of innovative methods and tools that help increase citizen participation, identify and articulate community values, and implement values-based decision-making and action. Funds are to be used for direct project expenses such as staffing, consultants, supplies, events and implementation activities.

Applications for this matching grant are due July 20th. For more information about these grants and information on other planning tools offered by the Foundation, visit www.orton.org.

We have been encouraged and energized over the last few months by the new and renewed support for our efforts by our towns, our legislators, local banks, and foundations including:

- *Salisbury Bank*
- *CL&P- Yankee Gas Services*
- *Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut*
- *Connecticut Main Street Center*

A big thank you to all for your support, we could not do it without you.

Jocelyn Ayer & Chris Wood
Collaborative Planners