

ANNUAL REPORT 2006

Member Municipalities:

- Bozrah
- Colchester
- East Lyme
- Franklin
- Griswold
- City of Groton
- Town of Groton
- Ledyard
- Lisbon
- Montville
- New London
- North Stonington
- Norwich
- Preston
- Salem
- Sprague
- Stonington
- Borough of Stonington
- Voluntown
- Waterford



INTRODUCTION

The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments was formed in the fall of 1992. The Council succeeded its predecessor agency, The Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (SCRPA), which had been in its existence since 1961. It was created through the adoption of membership ordinances by the towns, cities, and boroughs within the Southeastern Connecticut Planning Region. The Council is a governmental agency, formed and operating under the provisions of Sections 4-124i through 4-124p of the

Connecticut General Statutes.

The Council's mission is to provide a basis for intergovernmental cooperation for a wide range of issues facing southeastern Connecticut.

This annual report reviews activities of the Council during calendar year 2006 and provides financial information on the fiscal year ending 30 June 2006.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The policy board of the SCCOG consists of the municipal chief elected officials from the twenty member municipalities. Additionally, the Regional Planning Commission, which functions as a sub-unit of the Council, is composed of one representative from the planning commission of each member municipality. As authorized by statutes, some municipalities also have appointed alternates to the Council and Commission. The Council has amended its bylaws to provide for the participation on a non-voting basis of liaison representatives from the Mashantucket Pequot and

Mohegan Tribes, Submarine Group Two/Naval Region Northeast, and the Coast Guard Academy.

In addition to the Regional Planning Commission, the Council has formed several standing committees and, as needed, may form ad hoc committees. A staff of seven support the work of the Council, its committees, and the Planning Commission. In December, 2006, the staff consisted of an executive director, an assistant director, three planners, a secretary and a GIS coordinator.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

TRANSPORTATION:

The Council is the state-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for purposes of carrying out the regional transportation system planning and programming required under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFTEA-LU).

During this past year, staff worked to update the FY 2005-2006 Regional Transportation Plan. In February, 2007, it is anticipated that SCCOG will adopt the Fiscal Year 2006-2007 Regional Transportation Plan. The latest Regional Transportation Plan addresses a variety of new issues required by SAFTEA-LU, the new umbrella Federal Transportation Act, as well as previously identified needs such as Route 11 and regional transit improvements.

Transportation Investment Areas (TIAs), the Southeast Corridor and the I-395 Corridor, established under the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) legislation adopted in 2001. Both TIAs submitted revised TIA Corridor Plans to the TSB this past year. The TSB held a public hearing in Norwich in August, 2006.

In February 2005, work was completed on SCCOG's Intermodal Connections Study Southeast. This study, funded by a \$500,000 TSB grant, is a business/marketing plan for an intermodal connection system that would serve visitors traveling to the region. The study recommends that a two-year pilot program be funded by the state to demonstrate a level of success that would attract private funding to sustain the system. The report and a request for funding have been presented to the TSB and a request for funding is now in the report of the Governor's Commission on the Economic Diversification of Southeastern Connecticut.

The Council continued to be members of two

SCCOG MEMBERS:

Bozrah:

Keith Robbins, Chairman

Colechester:

Jenny Contois

East Lyme:

Beth Hogan

Franklin:

Richard Matters

Griswold:

Anne Hatfield

City of Groton:

Dennis Popp

Town of Groton:

Harry Watson

Mark Oefinger, Town Mgr.

Ledyard:

Susan Mendenhall

Lisbon:

Thomas Sparkman, Secretary

Montville:

Joseph Jaskiewicz, Treasurer

New London:

Margaret Curtin

Martin Berliner, City Manager

North Stonington:

Nicholas Mullane

Norwich:

Benjamin Lathrop

Robert Zarnetske, City Mgr.

Preston:

Robert Congdon

Salem:

Larry Reitz

Sprague:

Dennison Allen

Stonington:

William Brown

Borough of Stonington:

Andrew Maynard, Vice Chair

Voluntown:

Gilbert Grimm

Waterford:

Daniel Steward

AFFILIATE
MEMBERS:**Mashantucket Pequot Tribe:**

Michael Thomas, Chairman

William Satti, Dir. Public
Affairs**Mohegan Tribe:**

Bruce Bozsum, Chairman

Chuck Bunnell, Chief of Staff

U.S. Naval Submarine Base

CAPT Mark Ginda

U.S. Coast Guard Academy

RADM James Van Sice

LTCDR Curtis Sumrock

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CONTINUED

The Council also continues to support major projects being conducted by ConnDOT. These include the completion of environmental impact studies for the extension of Route 11, transportation system improvements in the Routes 2, 2A, and 32 corridors and the design of an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) for I-95 and I-395 in southeastern Connecticut.

The Council is a member of and provides staff assistance to the Route 11 Greenway Authority Commission. This commission, created by state statute, is charged with establishing standards for the development of a greenway which is integral to the Route 11 project. The Commission met monthly during the past year. The Commission adopted its first Greenway Development Plan and in October, 2006, acquired its first property, which is located in Salem. The Commission has recommended that additional parcels in Waterford, Montville and East Lyme be acquired. Finally, an MOU was signed with ConnDOT in November setting forth the steps necessary to enable the Commission to accelerate the acquisition of property.

Council staff provided planning support to the Southeast Area Transit (SEAT) and to the Eastern Connecticut Transportation Consortium (ECTC).

Council staff continued to assist the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board in managing the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute Program, a multi-region system for providing transportation to individuals on welfare that are seeking jobs, job training, and day care services for their children. During FY 2006, 206,957 trips were supported by this system, up from 184,953 in FY 2005.

Staff also oversaw the development of a Locally Coordinated Health and Social Services Plan (LOCHSTP) which brings together the JARC, 5310 and New Freedoms Federal Transportation Programs.

During 2006, SCCOG staff has also been working with the Norwich Clean Cities Coalition. This effort resulted in a \$2.2 million Congressional appropriation for an Alternative Fuels-Bus Rapid Transit project that will be operated by SouthEast Area Transit. The project will provide funds for the acquisition of up to two new experimental buses that will be put into SEAT service to support the Intermodal Transit project championed by SCCOG.

The Council maintains and regularly updates a variety of information and statistics related to the region's transportation system. SCCOG staff maintains a regional Geographic Information System (GIS). In 2006, the Council hired a full-time GIS coordinator.

As part of its ongoing transportation planning program, staff assisted Preston in its review of the traffic impact analysis for the Utopia Studios project proposed for Norwich Hospital.

REGIONAL PLANNING:

As an outgrowth of the publication of SCCOG's 2002 study *Housing a Region In Transition*, the Blue Ribbon Housing Initiatives Panel was formed. This group is working to identify solutions to the region's housing crisis and is now known as the Southeastern Connecticut Housing Alliance (SECHA). During 2006, the Panel made application for 501(c)(3) status. Also during the year, SECHA hired its first full-time executive director.

In 2003, SCCOG and the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) began work on a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region. This study was being funded with a grant of \$84,000 from the federal Economic Development Administration, matched by \$116,000 of cash and in-kind contributions raised locally. The goals of the CEDS were to update the region's economic development strategy for the 21st century and to make the region's towns eligible for accessing federal infrastructure funds in the future. In 2004, the firm of Mount Auburn Associates completed the CEDS under the direction of a regional steering committee. The report was submitted to the EDA in the summer of 2004 and was approved in the summer of 2005. In 2006, a CEDS Implementation Steering Committee worked to rank the projects submitted and will provide annual updates to the plan.

SCCOG continued its emergency management planning efforts during the year. Citizen Corps/CERT classes were held at Mohegan Sun and in East Lyme. An update to the REM Plan was adopted. In 2006, an application in the amount of \$111,000 for FY 2005 DEMHS funds was submitted by the SCCOG on behalf of eight municipalities and one tribal nation.

SCCOG prepared a grant application on behalf of the eight Millstone Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) municipalities (East Lyme, Groton, Ledyard, Lyme Montville, New London, Old Lyme, and Waterford) which was approved in the amount of \$118,372. These funds, from a FY 2004 Fed-

eral Homeland Security Large City Stipend grant, were used to purchase 13 portable variable message signs that could be used in an emergency. All eight municipalities took action approving of pooling their individual allocation of funds to allow this joint purchase. The collaboration is even more significant due to the fact that two non-members of SCCOG located within the EPZ (Lyme and Old Lyme) participated in this cooperative venture. SCCOG drafted an agreement for the eight municipalities, which set forth the protocols for the signs' deployment, use, and maintenance.

SCCOG staff continues work on the update of the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. Under the guidance of the RPOCD Steering Committee, an "issue identification" questionnaire was developed and distributed. Two public workshops were also held. The information gathered during this process has been tabulated and provides a range of issues of concern important to both regional public officials and residents. Background information for various plan components has been compiled with work continuing on the land use and housing components. These sections are scheduled to be completed this winter. The scheduled adoption date for the RPOCD remains the summer of 2007.

SCCOG members and staff spent considerable time during the year serving on the Governor's Commission on the Economic Diversification of Southeastern Connecticut. This Commission had two charges: to formulate recommendations that would make SUBASE NL less likely for closure in future BRAC rounds and to find ways to diversify the region's economy. The Commission broke into four committees to develop those recommendations: Defense and Homeland Security; Infrastructure and Utilities; Workforce Development and Housing; and Marketing and Advocacy. The Commission adopted its final report and forwarded it to Governor Rell in December.

The Council's Regional Planning Commission Reference Committee reviewed 117 referrals for member municipalities during the past year.

OTHER SCCOG ACTIVITIES:

SCCOG continued to participate in the activities of the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (ECWIB). This board, covering 43 towns in eastern Connecticut, oversees a network of workforce related programs and agencies using federal and state funds. The ECWIB is governed by a 35-member Board of Directors appointed by member towns' chief elected officials.

SCCOG worked closely throughout 2006 with the region's legislative delegation. Additional impact

aid to southeastern Connecticut and the funding of regional transportation were two of the most important issues discussed.

Responding to a request from a citizen, the SCCOG in October 2005 agreed to appropriate funds toward the operation of an emergency homeless shelter in New London. The opening of the shelter was threatened due to the elimination of the Social Services Department in New London for budgetary reasons. Sound Community Services, Inc. (SCS) agreed to manage the shelter if it could secure the necessary funding. The Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) served as the SCCOG's fiduciary for these funds. The shelter opened on December 1st. Payment in the amount of \$18,249 was made to SCS in 2006, after they submitted required documentation to the COG.

SCCOG members and staff participated actively on the boards and commissions of the region's key economic development organizations including seCTer, the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board, and the Eastern CT Convention and Visitors Bureau. These inter-agency links are critical to developing a consistent regional position on major economic development issues and programs.

In late 2005, SCCOG members and staff were invited to participate in the Governor's Commission for the Economic Diversification of Southeastern Connecticut. This Commission is an outgrowth of the effort to save the SUBASE. It was tasked with developing a plan for the economic diversification of the region and for preventing the SUBASE from being considered for closure in the future. SCCOG's Executive Director has served on the Commission's 11-person Executive Committee of that Commission, which met throughout 2006 to prepare its plan. The Commission's report to the Governor is scheduled to be submitted in December, 2006.

Staff and SCCOG member Nick Mullane served on Connecticut DEP's Stakeholder Steering Committee which provided guidance to the state on their update to the State Solid Waste Management Plan.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

In FY 2006, technical assistance to local land use commissions was provided under contract to Bozrah (2), Colchester, Franklin, Griswold, Lisbon, Sprague, and North Stonington.

R P C M E M B E R S :

- Bozrah:**
Seymour Adelman
- Colchester:**
James Ford, Secretary
Stacey Brown
- East Lyme:**
Greg Ellis
Ashley Peterson-Schinella
- Franklin:**
Louise Fisher
Peg Ayer
- Griswold:**
Martin McKinney
Robert Parrette
- City of Groton:**
David Rose
Hubert Peppe
- Town of Groton:**
Peter Roper
James Sherrard
- Ledyard:**
Mike Cherry
John Phetteplace
- Lisbon:**
John Dempsey, Jr.
Lawrence Alice
- Montville:**
Robert Baron, Chairman
Bart Ferrante, Jr.
- New London:**
Eleanor Butler
- North Stonington:**
Vilma Gregoropoulos
Elaine Boissevain
- Norwich:**
Arthur Sharron, Vice Chair
Richard Morell
- Preston:**
Thomas Fenton
- Salem:**
James Mulholland
David Bingham
- Stonington:**
Paul Holland
- Stonington Borough:**
Lissa vanDyke
- Voluntown:**
Ken Hollister
- Waterford:**
Edwin Maguire
Gene Lohrs, Secretary

Financed with Grants from the Connecticut Office of Policy & Management and Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and with funds provided by member Municipalities of the SCCOG

**Southeastern Connecticut
Council of Governments**

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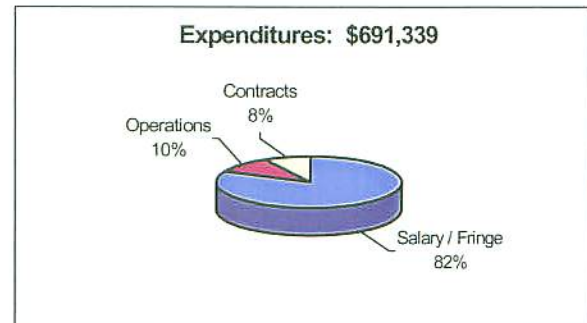
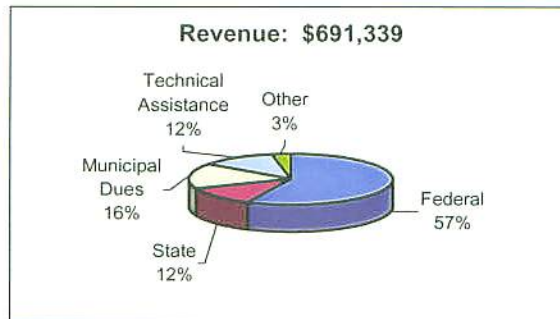
SCCOG Staff:

James S. Butler, AICP
Executive Director
Richard Guggenheim,
Assistant Director
James Rabbitt, AICP
Planner III
Thomas Seidel
Planner III
Richard Serra
Planner III
Wendy Leclair,
Executive Secretary
Claudia Tamayo
GIS Coordinator

FINANCING

During FY 2006, the Council operated its program with a combination of funds from a variety of sources. Member municipalities contributed toward the support of the Council at the per capita rate of \$0.46. The charts below summarize both revenues and expenditures during the fiscal year.

OPERATING BUDGET, 1 JULY 2005 — 30 JUNE 2006



Based on independent audit by Albert J. Rusilowicz, CPA. Copies of the FY 2006 Audit are available for review at the SCCOG office.