



THE NEWSLETTER OF CONNECTICUT MAIN STREET CENTER

VOL.5, NO.4 FALL 2005

## CMSC's Best Year *A Letter from the Executive Director*

### *Dear Friends of CMSC:*

Connecticut Main Street Center wrapped up the fiscal year on June 30 with impressive statewide growth thanks to two new programs which debuted in January 2005: the **Downtown Resource Center (DRC)** and the **Downtown Revitalization Institute (DRI)**. DRC membership grew to eleven communities in the first six months of the year, and by September had jumped to seventeen. The DRI workshops, providing comprehensive training in the Main Street Four Point Approach™, have proven highly successful. Over 175 attendees, including municipal and state employees, urban planning and economic development personnel, Main Street staff and volunteers, college students, and others, have given these workshop excellent ratings.

As we celebrate our tenth anniversary, CMSC's growth has led to the hiring of two new staff members who assist in providing increased marketing and communication as well as developing our new Business Development Services. These new services include Business Development Workshops and One-on-One Business Consulting for our designated communities and DRC members. While Main Street is about "clean, safe and friendly" it is also economic and community development. And successful businesses are a vital part of a healthy downtown.

A number of our Designated Main Street Communities are moving into a

new phase of growth. As these programs reach maturation, they are building partnerships with their municipalities, state agencies, business and property owners, economic development entities and developers. While volunteers remain an important ongoing resource, there is a need to bring in the right expertise for many initiatives, often including additional staff or outside consultants.

Commercial district revitalization is serious work which requires sophisticated tools and resources. The Brookings Institution recently surveyed national developers to ascertain why they are not focused on downtowns. One of the reasons cited was that they are adept at Greenfield development but feel that the complexity of mixed-use and infill development in downtown is a disincentive to look for downtown opportunities. It is the job of CMSC, our designated communities and DRC members, working with local municipalities and the state, to make downtown an attractive market for good developers. The rules and guidelines for development must be clear and transparent, and financial incentives such as historic tax credits or Brownfield remediation should be made available. It is important for the community to create a clear vision and plan for how downtown will be developed so that the developer will know the community supports the project.

CMSC has developed relationships with a number of organizations to advocate for

downtown targeted resources and policies. In the past year we have joined the Connecticut Economic Development Association, the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits, The MetroHartford Alliance, and the Connecticut Preservation Action, the only statewide advocacy group for historic preservation. This past year our staff participated in the national lobby day for historic preservation in Washington, D.C. Our Connecticut delegation met with representatives from the offices of our senators and representatives, and we will be going back in 2006.

Between our designated programs and our DRC members, in less than one year we have grown from eleven members to twenty-seven participating communities. CMSC is growing to ensure that we can play a leadership role in helping to improve and maintain the high quality of life that makes Connecticut such a special place to live and work.

**John Simone**  
*Executive Director*



Book Store in Niantic Village

# Our Funders & Partners

*CMSC would like to acknowledge the following institutions for their generous support and partnership:*

## Growth Partners

**The Connecticut Light and Power Company / Yankee Gas  
CT Department of Economic and Community Development**

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| Bank of America                           | Webster Bank              |
| Burnes Consulting                         | Wachovia                  |
| Community Economic Development Fund       | BankNorth CT              |
| CT Association of Nonprofits              | CERC                      |
| CT Commission on Culture & Tourism        | Fleet-Bank of America     |
| - Historic Preservation & Museum Division | Konover Development Corp. |
| - Tourism Division                        | New Alliance Bank         |
| CT Preservation Action                    | SBC                       |
| CT Trust for Historic Preservation        | Citizens Bank             |
| CT Economic Development Association       | Colliers Dow & Condon     |
| CT Urban Legal Initiative                 | Liberty Bank              |
| National Main Street Center               |                           |
| National Trust for Historic Preservation  |                           |
| Office of the State Treasurer             |                           |
| Yale Urban Design Workshop                |                           |

*We are grateful to Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell for her ongoing commitment to Main Street Revitalization since the inception of the Connecticut Main Street program.*

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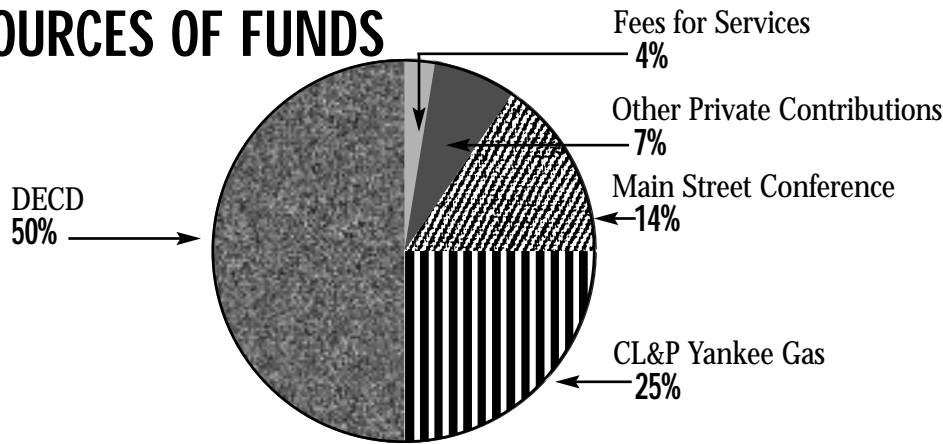
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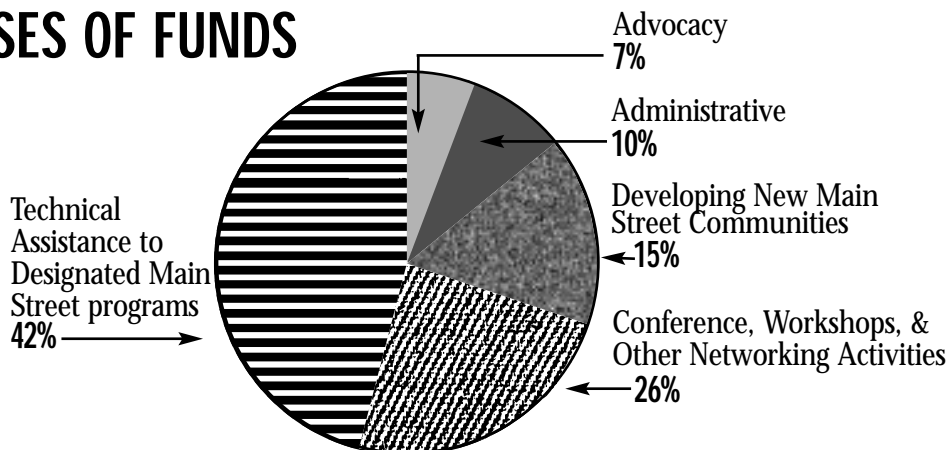
## SOURCES OF FUNDS



P.O. Box 261595  
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[www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)

John Simone, *Executive Director*  
Kimberley Parsons-Whitaker, *Associate Director*  
David Helmin, *Business Development Specialist*  
Ingrid Naumann, *Office Manager*

## USES OF FUNDS



Waterhouse Salon on Bank Street in New London

# DRI Workshops Feature Experts in Urban Design and Economic & Real Estate Development

CMSC continued to deliver as the leading statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to providing resources and tools to restore and maintain Connecticut's downtowns with Downtown Revitalization Institute workshops this Spring and Summer. These workshops featured two leading experts in their respective fields of urban design and economic & real estate development.

Alan Plattus is the founder of the Yale Urban Design Workshop, which has conducted projects throughout the

***"This workshop looked at the big picture vs. the details of design projects. It gave me a framework for how to approach the design process in my downtown."***

United States, Europe and the Far East. We are fortunate to have him right here in Connecticut, as Alan is a Professor of Architecture at Yale. Alan's June workshop, "Using Design as a Tool for Downtown Revitalization", provided a historical overview of the physical development of downtowns and how this

impacts both social and economic health. The presentation portion of Plattus' workshop was followed by an afternoon break-out session that focused on a Connecticut Town Center

***"I sense that many towns face the same hurdles: traffic management, pedestrian-friendly environments. This helped demystify the process"***

planning to physically improve and enhance its district. Five groups of 6-8 attendees each were asked to think outside the box and, taking the map of the existing district, "re-design" how the district looks and functions.

Donovan D. Rypkema, principal of Place Economics and an industry leader in the economics of preserving historic structures, has consulted on real estate

***"Dynamic and informative. It surpassed my expectations!"***

and economic development for 30 years. Don's July workshop, "Economic Realities of Downtown Revitalization",

started with the nuts and bolts of how downtowns must function economically, then moved to creating a persuasive argument for real estate developers that highlights the benefits of redevelopment projects in downtowns. With his expertise in both real estate development and preservation, Rypkema

***"Helped me understand the value of downtown improvements and its relationship to business profits."***

focused on demystifying some of the more technical aspects of acquisition, rehabilitation and gap financing, then moved on to connecting Real Estate and retailing and their relationship to Downtown.

DRI attendees continue to give this series good marks and constructive feedback. CMSC has announced the 2006 Downtown Revitalization Institute schedule (see below) and is developing a DRI "expert track", focused, topic-driven workshops that delve into more complex and detailed issues related to the many aspects of commercial district revitalization.

*The Downtown Revitalization Institute is presented by Connecticut Main Street Center, and made possible by Bank of America, in collaboration with the Office of the State Treasurer.*

**Welcome  
New Downtown Resource  
Center Members!**

***Collinsville Village  
Town of Cromwell  
City Center Danbury  
Town of East Hampton  
Town of Farmington  
Town of Plainville  
Town of Putnam  
Town of Suffield  
Town of Windham***

## Downtown Revitalization Institute 2006

*Connecticut Main Street Center has announced the next DRI series schedule:*

**JANUARY 27TH - Building Your Capacity to Revitalize Downtown**

**APRIL 28TH - Using Design as a Tool for Downtown Revitalization**

**JULY 28TH - Economic Realities of Downtown Revitalization**

**OCTOBER 27TH - Promotional Strategies for Your Commercial District**

**To register, visit our website at [www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)**

## Making Businesses More Competitive in Your Downtown

*Workshops and One-on-One Business Consulting Services*

**Dave Helmin, Business Development Specialist**

Connecticut Main Street Center 860-280-2430 [david@ctmainstreet.org](mailto:david@ctmainstreet.org)

# Economic Development That Works

Nationally, the Main Street Approach to Downtown Revitalization™ is one of the most powerful economic development tools known. Here are the cumulative reinvestment statistics for Connecticut Main Street communities from 1996 – June, 2005:

Public Improvements . . . . .	194
Net New Businesses . . . . .	309
Net New Jobs . . . . .	1,901
Construction Projects . . . . .	1,272
Number of Volunteer Hours . . . . .	137,804
Public Investment . . . . .	\$208,566,383
Private Investment . . . . .	\$225,439,737
Total Investment . . . . .	\$434,006,120

**For every \$1 spent on a local Main Street Program's operating budget, \$75.35 has been reinvested into Connecticut Main Street Downtowns.**



Main Street in Torrington



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