



DOWNTOWN HOUSING— *Carpe Diem!*

Demand for downtown housing will grow dramatically in the next 20 years, yet the supply will be challenged. The good news for Connecticut is that **tools and resources to build more housing units, including affordable housing options, can be assembled if we seize the day.** Neighboring states offer examples for encouraging mixed-use/mixed income development in downtowns:

Rhode Island's Historic Tax Credits

This program provides a 30% tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic properties for any use. In the first three years, the State of Rhode Island's \$145 million investment generated \$795 million in economic activity, \$179 million in additional property taxes and \$42 million in additional sales and income taxes. 25% of all qualifying housing units were designated affordable.



Hygienic Building on Bank Street, New London

rehabilitation plays a critical role in the provision of quality affordable housing. Recognizing their building codes were oriented towards new construction, New Jersey created a sub-code that is rational, predictable and delivers safe and sound rehabilitated structures. This sub-code contains all technical requirements applicable to rehabilitation projects, and has been lauded nationally as a model to apply to existing and historic structures.

Current Zoning is Impeding Progress

Since the 1920's, zoning regulations have isolated areas of towns and cities into

GrowSmart Rhode Island, who championed the savvy economic development strategy and tax credits, states "The credit recognizes that these neighborhoods and buildings are in many ways our most valuable state product, capable of providing the same boost to our economy as wheat does for Kansas or dairy farming does for Vermont." **Now is the time to embrace and care for one of Connecticut's greatest historic assets – our built environment.**

New Jersey's Building Rehabilitation Sub-codes

New Jersey has considerable older building stock whose

single-use zones, contributing to sprawling development and increased dependence on cars. There are model zoning codes available that guide development and redevelopment of traditional neighborhoods, towns and villages while addressing the surrounding built and natural environment. These codes do not limit choices but, rather, expand them. Such model codes would provide Connecticut's towns and cities with the choice of adopting zoning regulations that will support quality development.

These three examples have seized the opportunity to increase economic value, gain benefits through modifying building codes, and positively effect zoning to encourage mixed-use/mixed income development in downtowns.

The opportunity is now for the non-profit, private and public sectors to take the lead in providing quality housing choices for their employees within walking distance of work.

Now is the time for place-based institutions, like colleges, universities and hospitals, to be at the table to encourage and support more quality housing choices for their employees. Now is the time to induce young adults to stay in the state and to attract the knowledge workers who will be the backbone of our competitive economy. Let us applaud our 400-year-old history, the culture of our neighborhoods and downtowns, and be at the forefront in building liveable neighborhoods, rich in their array of uses and housing choices, which bring value to both peoples' lives and to the economy.

*John Simone
President & CEO*



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CT Main Street Welcomes Professional to Staff

Say hello to Deb Werner, Connecticut Main Street Center's new Office Manager, who joined our staff in October.

Deb brings to CMSC extensive experience in creative communications, client and employee relations, and project and office management. Most recently, Deb was with Aid to Artisans, a nonprofit organization committed to building sustainable artisan enterprises in the developing world, as Private Grants Manager. Previous to relocating to Connecticut, Deb served as Director of Planning and Administration for Savage Design Group in Houston, a design communications firm specializing in the strategic development, design and production of print and interactive solutions. For ten years in Chicago, Deb was Director of Design Development at ComCorp, Inc., a graphic design firm specializing in the creative development of business-to-business materials for clients in the areas of corporate real estate, human resources, transportation. Trained as a professional graphic designer, Deb has received recognition within the graphic industry.



Deb Werner

Simsbury Executive named to HBJ "40 Under 40"

Sarah Floroski, Executive Director of Simsbury Main Street Partnership, was selected by the *Hartford Business Journal* as one of the 2007 "40 Under 40". Nominated by colleagues and friends, Sarah was chosen by an independent panel of business leaders. For ten years the *Hartford Business Journal* has looked at the region's up-and-coming young executives. HBJ's 40 Under 40 recognizes those individuals who, though still early in their professional careers, have nonetheless shown every sign that they have what it takes to be leaders in their fields.



Sarah Floroski with CMSC Board member Alan Plattus



Carl Rosa

Waterbury CEO Accepted by National Certification Institute

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center has announced that Carl Rosa, CEO of Main Street Waterbury, has been accepted to the Certification in Professional Main Street® Management Institute.

The certification program is designed to give seasoned professionals advanced tools and problem-solving skills. A candidate can graduate from the Certification Institute within two years if he/she is admitted to each of the four units and passes each unit written exam given during the February sessions.

WELCOME *New Member Communities!*

Town of Watertown

City of West Haven

Energize Your First Quarter!



Dave Helmin, CMSC Business Development Specialist

Despite the traditional first quarter holidays, this time of year is typically challenging for most downtown retailers. Bad weather, paying off holiday debt, more bad weather, returning presents, and still more weather, usually define the mood of consumer buying during this time. But it doesn't have to be this way.

This is the time to be savvy, focused and out-of-the-box retailers – to band together as a business district and promote everything you have to offer. **The days of the independent businessman are over: welcome the dawn of the interdependent businessman!** Use each other's strategic thinking and creativity and promote each other and the district to instill in the consumer the idea of coming to downtown as a destination to walk, to eat, to buy...in other words...To Experience! At this time of year people are just begging to get out of their homes and do something. Here are my *Six Tips for a Successful First Quarter*:

1. Decorate and visually merchandise your store. Keep the sidewalks in front of your store clean and accessible.

2. Coordinate selling events with other merchants. Use bounce backs, scavenger hunts, or directed selling to your advantage.

3. With a great holiday selling season behind you, continue to build customer interest during the next three months through:

- product giveaways
- a drawing to win a grand prize offered district-wide
- free parking at the meter in front of your store
- an educational seminar or *How-To* series
- free coffee and doughnuts on a Saturday morning!

4. Customers make buying decisions for special events such as birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, and graduations. Capture their interest by showing new products geared for those events.

5. Keep your repeat customers coming back and greet new customers with the highest standard of service you can give.

6. Change your hours of operation to cater to the customer's needs. Convince your business neighbor to do the same. By doing so you will minimize the amount of dead-zones in your walking district and you will see more foot traffic!

Remember, if you are customer-driven, everyone wins; the customer, the district, and you, the merchant!

Downtown Revitalization Institute Appeals to Elected Officials



(from left) Colleen Gresh of Niantic Main Street and Maura Martin, First Selectwoman of Thomaston, receive DRI Certificates from John Simone.

CMSC's education and training program, the Downtown Revitalization Institute, has attracted a large and diverse audience since its debut two years ago. Each workshop typically pulls in 50-75 attendees representing professionals in economic development, planning and downtown management. But a growing number of state and municipal elected officials are expressing interest in our programs.

Maura Martin, First Selectwoman of the Town of Thomaston, became the first elected official to earn a Certificate of Completion from the Downtown Revitalization Institute in October 2006 by completing all four workshops. **"Since taking office one year ago, I have worked closely with citizens, property and business owners and our Town Commissions to develop strategies that will ensure that we improve and continue to value the heart of our community. Connecticut Main Street Center's workshops have proven to be invaluable by providing us with great knowledge and support."**

2007 Downtown Revitalization Institute Workshops

January 19, 2007 - 8:30am to 3:00pm

Building Nonprofit Capacity for Preservation and Downtown Revitalization

Presenters: Valecia Crisafulli, Director of Statewide & Local Partnerships, David Cooper, Vice President, Development Resources, National Trust for Historic Preservation

April 27, 2007 - 8:30am to 3:00pm

VISUALIZE CHANGE in Downtown: Using Design as a Revitalization Tool

Presenter: David V. Sousa, R.L.A., A.I.C.P. Landscape Architect, Clough, Harbor & Associates LLP

July 27, 2007 - 8:30am to 3:00pm

Restructuring and Strengthening Your Downtown Economy

Presenter: Todd Barman, Program Officer, National Main Street Center

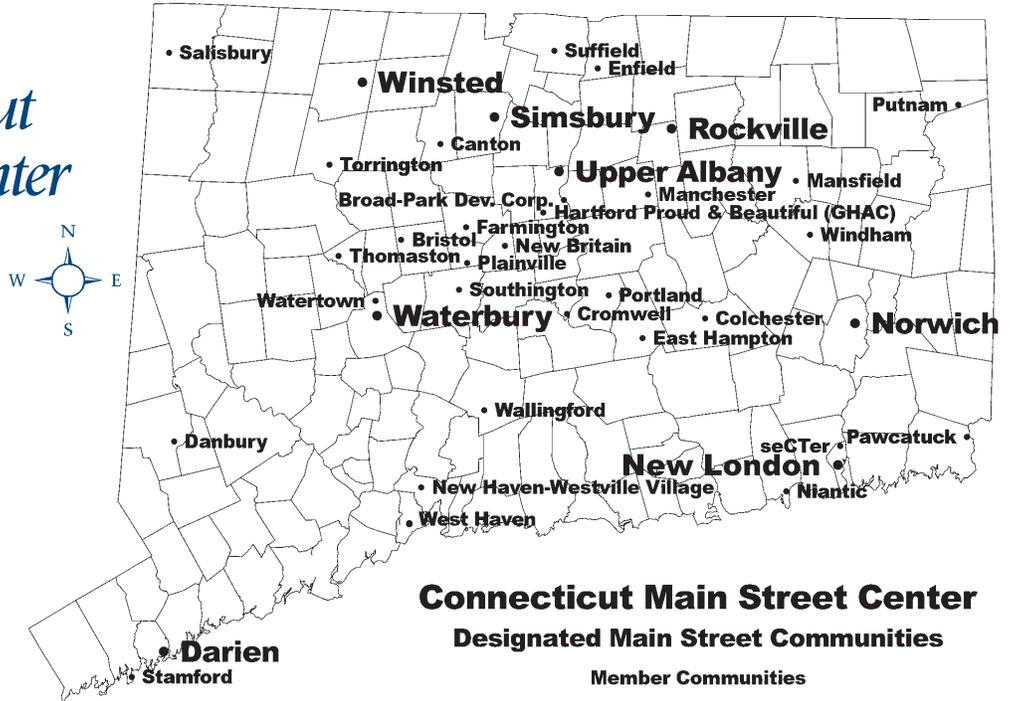
October 26, 2007 - 8:30am to 3:00pm

Developing Promotional Strategies for Your Commercial District

Presenter: Jane Jenkins, Executive Director Downtown Boulder Business Improvement District
Subject material appropriate for CEUs for Landscape Architects. Also approved for 5.5 CPD credits for Certified Planners.

For information and registration for DRI workshops, visit www.ctmainstreet.org

*Since January
2005 Connecticut
Main Street Center
has welcomed
29 new
member
communities!*



December 2006

Connecticut Main Street Center, a statewide nonprofit corporation, is dedicated to the concept of economic and community development within the context of historic preservation. CMSC is committed to bringing Connecticut's commercial districts back to life socially and economically by providing education and training, resources and technical assistance, and advocacy.

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