

Valley Regional Roundtable

MISSION:

To develop and implement a Responsible Growth Agenda that knits together a comprehensive development strategy utilizing Brownfield Redevelopment, Economic Development, Housing Development & Transportation Planning along the Valley Region's existing Infrastructure Corridor.

The Responsible Growth Agenda for the Lower Naugatuck Valley 2009

The Valley Council of Governments (VCOG) and its 24-town Regional Brownfields Partnership has long experience defining environmental problems and proposing solutions to economically redevelop contaminated sites. As the Regional Planning Organization for our four municipalities and co-Lead Agency for the Greater Bridgeport / Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (GBVMPO), the VCOG also has deep understanding of the process of planning the future of our regional transportation system. As a partner in our 17-town, EDA-approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) group, the VCOG has been at the forefront of the Lower Naugatuck Valley's regional economic development efforts. As such, the VCOG is uniquely-positioned to convene our Valley Regional Roundtable, consisting of representatives from the government, business, community & public service sectors, to create Transit-Oriented Development Districts that Preserve Greenspace, Recycle Brownfields, and implement Land Use practices that create higher density mixed use developments that connect residential developments to employment centers.



Valley Council of Governments

The VCOG has used the Valley Regional Roundtable (VRR) as a vehicle to develop our Responsible Growth Agenda that will *Encourage Healthy Development Patterns* at the municipal and regional levels in order to foster:

- ♻️ *Preservation of Greenspace,*
- ♻️ *Economically Feasible Redevelopment of Infrastructure-Rich Brownfields,*
- ♻️ *Incentivized Sustainable Development Practices* that both conserve energy and protect the environment,
- ♻️ *Planning and Construction of New Commuting Options* that reduce our community's carbon footprint and allow commuters to give up their motor vehicles for convenient and efficient Public Transportation, &
- ♻️ *Coordination of all of these aspects of Responsible Growth* to assure the state and federal governments that their investments in the growth and development of the Valley Region meet established criteria in order to target funds for uses that are consistent with our shared goals for responsible growth.

In order to accomplish the foregoing, the Valley Regional Roundtable has developed an agenda consisting of the following three parts: *Development Agenda, Shared Service Agenda & Legislative Agenda*. Over the course of 2009 the VRR will formulate, review & approve a Priority Project List that will be appended to the Responsible Growth Agenda. The existence of such a project list will not only guide the coordinated approach to Responsible Growth but will also give state and federal legislators the assurance they need that the projects they are being asked to support have been publicly vetted and enjoy wide community support.

In reviewing this document, the reader should notice that many of the same categories and goals are similarly discussed across different agenda and areas of priority. This has been done intentionally to ensure that our primary goals are considered both within and between each discipline. Likewise, all of the following goals are intended to apply equally to local and regional entities.



Development Agenda:

The Development Agenda is the main component of our Responsible Growth Agenda and consists of the following categories and goals:

- **Arts & Culture**
 - Develop Institutional and Administrative Capacity for the region's Cultural Assets

- **Land Use**
 - New Training for Municipal Officials to Assist in making complex land use decisions
 - Update zoning maps and ordinances
 - Build the capacity of municipal staff, boards and agencies
 - Open Space
 - Develop model regulations that Preserve Greenspace through sensible densities that provide incentives for the recycling of Brownfields and Existing Infrastructure
 - Technology
 - Upgrade and implement common architecture for Geographic Information Science (GIS) Systems to easily guide and share Planning, Zoning & Development information across municipal, regional, state & federal boundaries
 - Population & Demographics
 - Develop independent projections of demographic trends to guide land use and development decisions.
 - Watershed Coordination
 - Develop and Implement model regulations for Aquifer Protection Areas, Wetlands & other Environmentally Sensitive Areas

- **Transportation**
 - Transit-Oriented Development Districts
 - Identify likely sites with developed & underutilized infrastructure, current & future commuter opportunities and possibilities for more dense mixed-use development
 - Enhanced Rail Service
 - Level of Service Improvements on Existing Line



- Plan for Increased Ridership & Parking
- Multi-Modal Station Improvements
- New, Convenient & Efficient Commuting Options
 - Study ability of Route 8 Corridor to accommodate New Transit Alternatives
 - ❖ Light Rail / Bus Rapid Transit connection between Derby / Shelton & Bridgeport Stations via Shelton, Trumbull
 - ❖ Commuter Shuttle Van connections between transit terminals and Employment Centers
- **Housing**
 - Develop Independent Market Demand Study of Housing Needs for use by municipal development & planning agencies
 - Develop Model Zoning Regulations to Accommodate more intensive use of areas of urban infrastructure that will limit sprawl and mitigate the need to develop greenspace
- **Brownfields (Assessment, Remediation, Low-Impact Development)**
 - Develop / Implement Planning Models for Sustainable Development
 - Establish LEED requirement
 - Human Health Risk Abatement
 - Define sites aligned to Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) priorities
 - Concentration on Rail for Energy Savings, Carbon Footprint Reduction
 - Define sites aligned to Plan of Conservation and Development, Aquifers
 - Define multiple funding resources
 - Assessment
 - Remediation
 - Development
 - Link to economic development
 - Create info sheets on sites
 - Connect with NBA, other groups
 - Identify Housing Reuse of sites where possible
 - Link to alternative energy for funding and economic leverage to offset assessment, cleanup and inherent timeline costs



- **Economic Development**
 - Implement Municipal plans to develop Office / Industrial Parks to create attractive “shovel ready” sites that are co-located with established and new transportation infrastructure

- **Workforce Development**
 - Encourage Efforts to Close the Achievement Gap and Improve Workforce Readiness through:
 - Analyze Workforce Housing needs as part of the Home CT Demand Study
 - Revival of Deployment Centers to encourage partnerships between Industry and Vo-Tech Schools for task-specific job training and workforce readiness
 - Elimination of Disparities in Educational Funding between Municipalities
 - Funding for Early Childhood Care to Prepare Children for School

- **Energy & Utility Infrastructure (Public, Private)**
 - Work with regional public utilities to plan for long-term capital repair and replacement of infrastructure to promote:
 - Efficiency
 - System reliability.
 - Expand use of Energy Improvement Districts (EIDs) throughout the region to:
 - Mitigate the rising costs of energy which have an adverse impact on local budgets and the ability to grow local business;
 - Promote local economic development by stabilizing energy costs and building EIDs which will employ new workers and make communities more business-friendly;
 - Improve the community’s environmental citizenship and reduce its carbon footprint by using clean, renewable energy sources such as solar, fuel cells and other environmentally friendly local generation that serves the participating members of the EID;
 - Reduce the community’s dependence on foreign sources of energy supply;
 - Create a more stable and secure local electric grid in this time of security uncertainty.



- **Community Development**

- Expand Regional Administrative Capacity
 - Retain locally-controlled Contracts for regional services with State of CT
- Recreation
 - Develop Natural Resources to foster closer encounter between residents and their Natural Environment
 - ❖ Greenways
 - ❖ Hiking Paths
 - ❖ River Access
 - ❖ Bike / Ped Links

Shared Service Agenda:

The Shared Service Agenda will allow municipalities as well as public agencies and private businesses to economize by aggregating their expenses and purchasing power to develop cost-saving solutions to common needs in the following areas:

- **Purchasing Consortium**

- Goods
- Services

- **Municipal Services**

- Public Works
 - Recycling and Waste Stream Management
- Education

- **Energy/EIDs**

- Energy Improvement Districts

- **Regional Planning**

- Greater Coordination between Municipalities regarding Zoning & Land Use Planning

- **Public Safety/Emergency Services**

- Regional Dispatch Capabilities



2009 State & Federal Legislative Agenda:

The 2009 Valley Legislative Agenda consists of the following priorities for state and federal assistance in order to accomplish the Planning and Development goals outlined in the Development & Shared Services Agenda:

- ❖ Direct OPM to Develop & Maintain State-Wide Capital Project List prioritized by Need & Benefit in order to always have ready projects as funding becomes available
- ❖ Direct that CT Adopt the already Federally-approved EDA Economic Development Districts (EDD) as part of a logical, locally-implemented Economic Development Strategy for CT (49 states currently recognize EDDs. CT IS THE ONLY STATE IN THE COUNTRY WITHOUT STATE RECOGNITION! This lack of priority by CT probably results in the loss of millions of dollars of leveraged economic development funds.)
- ❖ Direct DECD to prioritize any new Federal Funds for Economic Development to Authorized projects developed by EDA Approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs) under the US Commerce / EDA process such as the NVC CEDs
- ❖ Establish funding preference for project proposals that implement re-use of Brownfields and Sustainable Development Practices
- ❖ Increase Afternoon Peak-Hour Service on the Metro-North Waterbury Branch Line
- ❖ Fund Multi-Modal Study and Improvements to Derby / Shelton Train Station
- ❖ Create, Extend & Expand Incentives to Implement Sustainable Development Practices in the creation of New Housing and Commercial Facilities
 - ⇒ Provide Funding for Demonstration Project: Sustainable Municipal Industrial / Office Park
- ❖ Funding of \$2 million *Valley to Bridgeport* Alternate Transportation Modes Study
- ❖ \$200k to conduct Transit-Oriented Development Planning Study



- ❖ \$200k to conduct Regional Housing Market Planning & Demand Study
- ❖ Establish New Funding Resource for Cleanup of Brownfields Sites that can subordinate to private lenders
- ❖ ConnDOT Authorization and Funding to complete the Re-Construction of Route 8 Interchange 16-17
- ❖ Re-Establishment of Industrial Deployment Centers at State Vo-Tech Schools to encourage partnerships with Industry for task-specific job training and workforce readiness
- ❖ \$2 million Authorization to complete Environmental Cleanup of O'Sullivan's Island Fire Training School and Establish new Regional Waterfront Recreation Facility
- ❖ Enhance State Subsidies to Municipalities who join together to provide services regionally
- ❖ Expanded funding for Construction of Regionally-developed Bike / Ped Trails
- ❖ Continue & Expand Planning Funds for HOME-CT Program
- ❖ Expand Funding for Urban Action Bond Act to Rehabilitate / Construct Commuter Parking Facilities
- ❖ Expand Funding of Open Space Purchase Program

