



**Connecticut Chapter of the  
American Planning Association  
Legislative Committee**

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Legislative Chairman, Christopher S. Wood, AICP – Mobile: 203 558-0654 ( [woodplanning@charter.net](mailto:woodplanning@charter.net) )

**To: Rep. Lew Wallace, Co-chairman  
Sen. Eric Coleman, Co-chairman**  
**From: Christopher S. Wood, AICP**  
**cc:**  
**Date: January 26, 2005**  
**Re: Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan Draft**

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We are pleased to submit the attached comments on the Draft State Conservation and Development Policies Plan on behalf of the Connecticut Chapter, American Planning Association.

We are unable to attend the Committee's hearing on this matter on February 7. However, we ask that our comments be incorporated into your record for consideration of the State Plan for adoption by the Legislature.

We have provided a copy of these comments directly to the Office of Policy and Management and to the Committee's Clerk.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments, and please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.



# Connecticut

## *Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association*

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**February 7, 2005**

### **CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES PLAN FOR CONNECTICUT 2004-2009**

**SUMMARY:** The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management has presented a draft of the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2004-2009 (Plan) to the Connecticut General Assembly for adoption. The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association believes strongly in the need for a comprehensive State Plan to provide State agencies, municipalities, and the public with guidance for important land use policy decisions, public and private investments in infrastructure and development, and conservation programs to sustain the State's high quality of life. Although CCAPA supports the Legislature's adoption of this Plan, we continue to believe that the State's capacity for planning is far from adequate.

**ANALYSIS:** The draft Plan is based on growth management principles that are intended to integrate State agency planning and guide municipal and regional planning. The growth management principles are consistent with growth management and planning goals that have been analyzed and reported on by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Property Tax Burdens and Smart Growth incentives, as well as planning principles that the American Planning Association and many other knowledgeable organizations have advocated.

These growth management and planning principles have been raised in recent legislative proposals and are expected to be considered in the current session. However, it is not clear that these principles, as presented in the draft Plan, provide adequate guidance and support for the planning concerns and opportunities facing communities in Connecticut today. Attached are examples of specific concerns with the growth management principles that we believe will need to be addressed in any legislation concerning planning.

The level of land use detail represented on the draft Plan's Location Map presents some difficulties at the local level. The Plan should recognize that local decisions should not necessarily be constrained by somewhat arbitrary boundaries established at the scale this map provides. The State's planning process should provide a mechanism to address the reconciliation of state, regional, and municipal plans, including map details, recognizing the different scale, timeframe, and level of detail in each respective plan.

Critical to the effective implementation of the State Plan will be the commitment of necessary resources, as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Report. CCAPA continues to believe that the State must establish and support planning capabilities to improve State, regional, and municipal planning.

**CCAPA POSITION:** The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association supports the adoption of the Draft Conservation and Development Policies Plan 2004-2009 and believes the Plan will begin to focus our planning on appropriate and necessary growth management principles. CCAPA is concerned that the Plan lacks a clear articulation of strategies for implementing the growth management principles. An appropriate first step would be recommendations in the Plan for the establishment of a defined, staffed, and responsible agency to provide leadership and accountability for planning at the State level and support for planning at the regional and municipal levels. We expect that anticipated legislation will present the opportunity to address our concerns and we look forward to working with the Planning and Development Committee and the entire Legislature to provide the State with effective land use planning systems that meet planning needs at all levels of government.

**COMMENTS ON  
THE STATE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
Growth Management Principles  
2004-2009**

**Growth Management Principle #1:** Redevelop and revitalize regional centers in areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure.

The State needs to specifically focus state investments in Regional Centers, Neighborhood Conservation Areas, and Rural Community Centers. Concentrating investments in fewer development areas will provide more resources to those areas that need infrastructure, housing, and social and human service resources to regain, or take advantage of, their competitive edge as compact, transit oriented locations.

There are also several recommendations dealing with design standards, mixed-use development, and aesthetics. This is one of many recommendations in the Plan where more assistance and leadership is needed at the State level, either through OPM or some other state agency, to investigate, develop, and promote these new design practices and principles to regional and local governments.

**Growth Management Principle #2:** Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.

"The State" is urged to study zoning and development regulations, and regional housing cost patterns, to market urban communities, to invest in various rental and housing opportunities, etc. However, the Plan is silent on who at "the State" should conduct these studies and share the results with regional or local governments.

Either OPM or DECD, or a joint effort of those two agencies, should be responsible for conducting the necessary studies and policy analyses recommended in the Plan.

**Growth Management Principle #3:** Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options.

Mass transit system improvements, interstate highway improvements, and major corridor studies should not proceed unless the State and the affected municipalities have adopted a specific land use plan for the corridor. Such land use planning should be considered an integral part of any major transportation project, and should be funded in whole or in part as a project cost.

**Growth Management Principle #4:** Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and transitional land areas.

A great deal of "sprawl" development is occurring in rural areas. The State should be very aggressive in identifying important rural lands that should be preserved, and work with rural communities and other interested organizations to acquire or otherwise preserve these lands.

There are zoning and development tools that would be successful in rural areas such as traditional neighborhood development, zoning, and transfer of development rights that could be investigated and promoted in these rural communities. A state agency should be assigned that specific responsibility.

**Growth Management Principle #6:** Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a state-wide, regional and local basis.

The Plan calls, in a general way, for more integrated planning across local, regional, and state-wide levels. There is also general language that the State would provide assistance and guidance to, and work with, municipalities and regional planning organizations. Conducting intelligence gathering and analysis and sharing this information is important, but only if it is gathered in a timely manner and analyzed in a professional way.