

**Report on Land Use Training and Education
Available to Members of Local Land Use Agencies**

In Accordance With Section 85 of Public Act No. 05-3 (June Special Session)

January 13, 2006

Prepared by the Office of Policy and Management for the General Assembly's
Planning and Development Committee

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OPM would like to recognize and thank Ashley Cunningham, a student at the University of Connecticut, for her contributions to this report during her internship.

I. Legislative Requirement

Public Act No. 05-3 (June Special Session)

Sec. 85. (*Effective from passage*) On or before January 15, 2006, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, in consultation with the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, the Council on Soil and Water Conservation, regional planning agencies organized under the provisions of chapter 127 of the general statutes, regional councils of governments and regional councils of elected officials organized under the provisions of chapter 50 of the general statutes, the Agricultural Extension Services of The University of Connecticut, the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association, the Center of Land Use Education and Research at The University of Connecticut and the Rural Development Council, shall prepare a report on land use training and education available to members of local land use agencies. Such report shall include a survey of existing programs and their utilization and recommendations, if any, for enhancements and additions to such programs including changes in state law.

II. Executive Summary

This report on land use training and education programs available to members of local land use agencies was prepared by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), in accordance with Section 85 of Public Act No. 05-3 (June Special Session). This is the first comprehensive update of land use training and education programs since a similar effort was conducted eighteen years ago after the passage of Special Act No. 87-92. That effort, which is summarized in Chapter III of this report, provided much of the foundation upon which this report was developed.

An important component of this report is the survey that OPM conducted of existing training and education programs available to local officials. OPM developed a survey form and questionnaire that were provided to each of the agencies and organizations identified in statute for consultation. In addition, OPM sought out and consulted with a number of other organizations that were known to provide some type of land use training and education for local officials. While OPM made its best effort to reach every such organization in Connecticut, it is possible that the survey results do not reflect all ongoing efforts in the state. The cumulative results of this survey can be found in Chapter V.

OPM believes that this report is a complimentary component to the new planning requirements established under Public Act No. 05-205. This Act strives to enhance the role of municipal plans of conservation and development, and to improve the vertical integration of such plans with their regional plan and the State Plan of Conservation and Development. Further efforts to improve the statewide coordination of land use training and education programs for local land use agencies should have a commensurate positive benefit on the quality and effectiveness of municipal plans of conservation and development.

III. Summary of the Land Use Education Council Report (Prepared pursuant to Special Act No. 87-92)

Special Act No. 87-92 created the Land Use Education Council (LUEC), comprising representatives from twenty agencies and organizations deemed to be stakeholders in the matters of land use training and education for local land use officials. The LUEC was charged with establishing a curriculum for a statewide land use education program for local land use officials, formulating the education objectives of the curriculum, identifying the appropriate organizational structure for providing educational programs throughout the state, and reporting its recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Development not later than January 1, 1988.

The LUEC was created in response to the significant increase in the rate of development in Connecticut during the mid-1980s. This period witnessed many communities struggling with rapid, and often unplanned, development. Special Act No. 87-92 recognized that municipal officials and their staff would benefit from a coordinated series of land use education programs that would enhance their expertise in dealing with the many complex land use issues they faced.

In order to assess the extent of land use education and training provided in Connecticut, each of the 20 member organizations of the LUEC conducted an internal survey of its respective educational activities provided over the previous two-year period. To help establish a common understanding of the target audience, the LUEC broadly interpreted the term "local land use officials" to include: 1) members of commissions and boards; 2) professional staff; and 3) key elected and administrative officials of a municipality.

The survey revealed that many of the organizations that provided periodic land use training and education programs did not have long-term comprehensive programs. Programs were often developed on an ad hoc basis, whereby each sponsoring organization would address issues of interest to their organization without consideration of what other organizations were doing. Furthermore, programs often did not distinguish between the need for basic education of new members and the continuing education of veteran members.

The LUEC report provided a series of recommendations with regard to both the organizational structure and the course curriculum. First, the LUEC recommended that it become the permanent body charged with coordinating land use education in the state. The report also recommended that an Office of Land Use Education be created at the University of Connecticut to provide the LUEC with administrative and staff support.

The primary function of the Office of Land Use Education was to provide long-term curriculum direction and day-to-day administrative and programmatic assistance for publicity, coordinated timing, provision of teaching aids and materials, and training and evaluation of instructors. The annual cost to operate this office was estimated to be \$120,000 in 1988 dollars, and was based on two program employees and one support staff.

In addition, the LUEC made certain recommendations for a land use education curriculum that would address the needs of a broad and varied audience. The report recommended that the curriculum consist of both a short introductory course for new commission members, and a coordinated series of workshops that would offer more in-depth material to veteran commission members and staff.

Due to the relatively high rates of turnover on local boards and commissions, the report recommended that the introductory program be offered on a regional scale at several locations around the state to enhance accessibility. The report also recommended that, because of the voluntary nature of so many of the local positions, participants in the introductory program should receive a certificate of attendance instead of a more formal course certification.

The LUEC developed a draft outline for the introductory course curriculum that was included in the report. However, the LUEC recommended that the more advanced curriculum be developed over time by the proposed Office of Land Use Education. Both the introductory and advanced courses would be based on the following curriculum objectives:

- To provide a general understanding of the land use planning principles which underlie land management and the regulatory process.
- To foster an understanding of the interrelationship between land use and:
 - human needs;
 - natural resources and environmental quality;
 - infrastructure;
 - economic resources and economic development;
 - cultural resources and elements of material culture.
- To better equip land use officials to meet statutory, regulatory and case law obligations in their responsibilities as public officials.
- To foster an understanding and the ability to apply organizations, procedures and skills needed for effective land use administration.

IV. Notable Developments since the LUEC Report was Published

The fundamental structure and legal framework of land use decision-making in Connecticut remains basically unchanged since the Land Use Education Council issued its report 18 years ago. However, there have been a number of significant developments related to local planning issues and mandates that could affect training and education priorities. Some of the more significant developments include:

(1) Revision of the State Plan of Conservation and Development and related changes to state enabling legislation.

State Plan of Conservation and Development:

In accordance with Sections 16a-24 through 16a-33 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) is required to revise the State Plan of Conservation and Development (C&D Plan) on a recurring five-year cycle. The C&D Plan serves as a statement of the development, resource management and public investment policies for the State. It provides the framework for evaluating plans and proposals submitted to OPM for review through mandated review processes, including the review of bond funds.

The Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2005-2010, is the latest version of the C&D Plan approved by the General Assembly. In a departure from past plans that were structured around topical chapters according to state agency functions, the current C&D Plan is structured around six Growth Management Principles that address broad issues in a more comprehensive format. The policies contained in the current C&D Plan text provide the context and direction for state agencies to implement their plans and actions in a manner consistent with the following six Growth Management Principles:

- (1) Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure*
- (2) Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs*
- (3) Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options*
- (4) Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands*
- (5) Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety*
- (6) Promote Integrated Planning Across all Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional and Local Basis*

These broad-based principles are an important step in furthering the state's efforts to improve interagency, or horizontal, coordination and to ensure uniform application across state-sponsored projects. Furthermore, municipalities and regional planning

organizations (RPOs) must note any inconsistencies with the Growth Management Principles when developing their own plans of conservation and development.

Public Act No. 05-205:

Public Act No. 05-205, *An Act Concerning Plans of Conservation and Development*, is intended to improve the vertical coordination among municipal, regional, and state plans of conservation and development, primarily through the consistent application of the Growth Management Principles established in the 2005-2010 State Plan of Conservation and Development.

Public Act No. 05-205 includes the following provisions:

- Municipal plans of conservation and development:
 - shall identify areas where it is feasible and prudent (i) to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse, and (ii) to promote such development patterns and land reuse;
 - shall address the plan's consistency with the six Growth Management Principles;
 - may identify plans for corridor management areas along limited access highways or rail lines, and may recommend priority funding areas; and
 - shall be subject to an advisory report by the RPO on the extent to which the municipal plan is consistent with the regional and state plans, as well as with the plans of member towns in the region.
 - The Act also outlines the plan adoption process to be followed by the municipal legislative body, as well as the process for amending the municipal plan after it is adopted.
- Regional Planning Organizations shall revise their existing plans of conservation and development by July 1, 2008 and at least once every 10 years thereafter, within the context of the six Growth Management Principles. OPM must determine that the regional plans are not inconsistent with the State C&D Plan, and the RPO must notify OPM of any inconsistencies with the State C&D Plan and the reasons for them.
- The next revision of the State C&D Plan shall identify (1) areas where it is prudent and feasible (A) to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development patterns and land reuse, and (B) to promote such development patterns and land reuse, (2) priority funding areas designated under section 5 of the act, and (3) corridor management areas on either side of a limited access highway or a rail line. In designating corridor management areas, the secretary shall make recommendations that (A) promote land use and transportation options to reduce the growth of traffic congestion; (B) connect infrastructure and other development decisions; (C) promote development that minimizes the cost of new infrastructure facilities and maximizes the use of existing infrastructure facilities; and (D) increase inter-municipal and regional cooperation.
- The Act defines the terms "growth-related project" and "priority funding area," and it outlines the process for delineating boundaries of priority funding areas in the State C&D Plan.

- The Act generally restricts state funding for growth-related projects to priority funding areas, but it also establishes an exception process for such projects that are outside priority funding areas when they are consistent with the municipal plan and meet various other criteria.
- The Act requires that state agencies cooperate with municipalities to ensure that projects or activities in rural areas sustain village character.
- The Act requires that state agencies review and modify their regulations, as needed, to ensure coordinated management of growth-related projects in priority funding areas.

(2) New land use-related laws and programs affecting local land use officials.

There have been a number of new land use-related laws and programs, since the LUEC report was published 18 years ago. Some of the more significant ones are outlined below in the approximate chronological order of their implementation at the local level.

An Act Concerning the Responsibilities of Municipal Conservation Commissions:

Public Act No. 93-270 expanded the duties of local conservation commissions by allowing them to supervise and manage town-owned open space, inventory natural resources, make recommendations to other municipal commissions and agencies regarding proposals to change current land uses, and prepare watershed and drought management plans which must be consistent with state-approved water supply plans.

An Act Authorizing the Establishment of Village Districts:

Public Act No. 98-116 enables municipal zoning commissions to establish village districts as part of their zoning regulations. The regulations must protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures of the designated districts. The Act states that "proposed buildings or modifications to existing buildings be harmoniously related their surroundings, to the terrain and to the use, scale and architecture of existing buildings in the vicinity that have a functional or visual relationship to the proposed building or modification."

Source Water Assessment Program:

The 1996 Amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act included the Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), which calls for the assessment and protection of all public drinking water supply sources throughout the United States. In Connecticut, the Department of Public Health (DPH), working in partnership with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), has evaluated the susceptibility of all public drinking water supply sources, including surface water reservoirs and ground water supply wells, to potential contamination. This effort covers all active community and non-community public water supply sources that include over 3,400 public water supply systems, with over 4,500 sources of supply. Maps and information were supplied to each town's planning commission, health department, and chief elected official in 2003.

Stormwater Permitting and Guidance:

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater program was established under Section 402 of the federal Clean Water Act (Public Law No. 100-4) and specifically targets point source discharges by industries, municipalities, and other facilities that discharge directly into surface waters. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency promulgated rules for this two-phased national program targeting non-agricultural sources of stormwater discharges that may adversely affect surface water quality. The State of Connecticut has been delegated the authority to implement federal regulations that pertain to water resources protection.

Phase I of the NPDES Stormwater Program regulates stormwater discharges from medium and large municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) located in areas with populations of 100,000 or more, as well as from construction activity that disturbs five or more acres of land. The Stormwater Phase II Rule under the NPDES program expands the scope of regulated discharges to include certain regulated small MS4s and construction activities that disturb between one and five acres of land.

The Phase II rule covers most of the state's 169 municipalities. Affected municipalities were required to apply for a permit in the Spring of 2005, and must develop stormwater management plans by December 2008. These plans have six required elements, some of which require a significant land use planning and design component. In response to this and other stormwater issues, DEP issued the *Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual* to provide guidance to municipalities on the measures necessary to protect waters from the adverse impacts of post-construction stormwater runoff.

Aquifer Protection Area Program:

Connecticut's Aquifer Protection Program was created to protect major public drinking water supply wells in sand and gravel aquifers from potential sources of contamination. Aquifer Protection Areas (APAs) must be designated around the state's 120 active well fields that serve more than 1,000 people. The APA encompasses the areas of contribution and recharge for the well field.

Regulations were adopted in 1991 (R.C.S.A. 22a-354b-1) which set forth the methodology and data standards for mapping APAs. In September 2005, these regulations were amended to allow for improvements in ground water modeling techniques that have taken place since 1991. The result will be somewhat smaller, more accurate land areas to be regulated under the program. The statutory deadline established for water companies to complete final mapping is June 1, 2008.

State Land Use Regulations (R.C.S.A. 22a-354i-1 through 10) for APAs were adopted February 2, 2004. These regulations prohibit development of new high-risk land use activities (those that use hazardous materials) in APAs and require existing high-risk land use activities to register and follow best management practices. These

regulations provide the minimum standards for land use restrictions at the municipal level.

In June 2005, DEP issued a Model Municipal Regulation that serves as a template and aid for the 84 affected municipalities in adopting the State Land Use Regulations at the local level (CGS Section 22a-354i). Each affected municipality is required to appoint an existing board or commission, such as planning and zoning, to act as the local Aquifer Protection Agency. Once the municipality receives notice that the final mapping for a particular well field is approved by DEP, the Aquifer Protection Area Boundary must be placed on the town's zoning map (RCSA Section 22a-354i-2) and the aquifer protection agency must also adopt local regulations to be imposed in the delineated APA. DEP is currently in the process of developing a training program for municipal aquifer protection agencies, in accordance with CGS Section 22a-354v.

An Act Concerning Farm Land Preservation, Land Protection, Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation (Public Act No. 05-228):

This act authorizes Connecticut communities to collect a new \$30 fee on each land record transaction, with revenue going to various farmland, open space and historic preservation programs, and affordable housing development. It also establishes several matching grant programs for agriculture, and enables communities to establish local land acquisition commissions.

(3) Advances in technology.

When the LUEC report was published 18 years ago, personal computers were not the ubiquitous presence in our lives that they are today. In fact, the report makes only a brief reference to "computer programs" under "audio-visual tools." The ascendancy of the personal computer, the internet, and the use of geospatial technology and geographic information systems (GIS) has significantly changed the way that business is conducted by government.

Since land use planning and regulation has a strong spatial component, GIS has become a popular tool at town halls across the state. According to the UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research/Geospatial Technology Program, approximately 2/3 of the towns in Connecticut use GIS technology in some form. At the same time, sources of digital data on land use, natural resources, infrastructure and other things have proliferated. Many towns have quickly transitioned from not having enough data, to having too much data or at least, an inability to discern which data to use in local planning applications.

Consequently, GIS technology and applications must be major considerations in any educational programs for land use officials. First, educational methodologies must take advantage of new technologies like the internet, CD-ROMs and DVDs, increasing the number of ways that information can be supplied to local officials. Second, educational programs must be designed with local use of these computer

technologies in mind. Finally, educational programs for local officials must expand to include training on related technologies, such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and remote sensing.

(4) Creation of major new educational programs for land use officials.

The 1987 Report concluded that “*Land use education is provided on an ad hoc fashion based upon the initiative and the individual determination of a wide variety of organizations as to what is important and what is needed.*” This situation has not changed. Many of the agencies and organizations listed in the LUEC report are still providing educational services of one form or another to local land use officials, and these have been supplemented by the addition of several newer programs that were created in a similar *ad hoc* fashion following publication of the LUEC report.

Chapter V of this report summarizes the results of the most recent survey of organizations that provide training and education of local land use officials in Connecticut. Two particularly noteworthy efforts that have evolved since the LUEC report was published are:

- The *Municipal Inland Wetland Commissioners Training Program* encompasses a broad range of issues including the administrative, legal and scientific aspects of municipal wetlands regulation. This program was created pursuant to Section 22a-39 of the Connecticut General Statutes, which charged the Department of Environmental Protection with developing an annual comprehensive training program for inland wetlands agency members. At least one member of a town’s inland wetlands agency, or staff of the agency, is required to complete the training program. DEP provides each municipality with a voucher allowing one person to attend the annual training program without cost. The municipal agency is then required to hold a meeting at least once a year to summarize the training program information for agency members.
- The *Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR)* was approved by the University of Connecticut Trustees in 2002 to expand the university’s land use education activities beyond those programs already in place during the LUEC report. The role of CLEAR is similar to that of the “Office of Land Use Education” proposed in the LUEC report. CLEAR comprises the following programs that are described in greater detail in Chapter V:
 - (1) The *Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO)* Program, which teaches land use officials on a number of subjects related to natural resource-based planning, particularly as it affects water. NEMO has been in existence since 1991, has won national awards for its work, and is the model for programs in 30 other states around the country.
 - (2) The *Land Use Planning Program*, which provides information and education on a number of planning topics, from Farmland Preservation to basic Roles

and Responsibilities. This program also coordinates the Connecticut Land Use Education Partnership (CLUEP), a joint program of UConn, the CT Chapter of the American Planning Association, the CT Bar Association, and the CT Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. CLUEP provides a three-part "basic training" course for local officials similar to the basic "short course" recommended in the 1987 Report. Training sessions are sponsored by the RPOs.

- (3) The *Green Valley Institute*, which provides information and education to land use officials, particularly Conservation Commissioners, in the 29 Northeast CT towns in the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor.
- (4) The *Geospatial Technology Program*, which provides training courses for land use officials, staff and others on GIS, GPS, and remote sensing technologies.

V. Results of Survey

Section 85 of Public Act No. 05-3 (June Special Session) requires that the Office of Policy and Management consult with the agencies and organizations listed below in preparing a report on land use training and education opportunities available to members of local land use agencies. OPM conducted a modest survey to characterize what programs currently exist and the extent to which they have been offered over the past two years. Specifically, OPM asked the agencies and organizations for a brief description of each program they administer, and to not include one-time workshops or conferences. The results of the survey are summarized below:

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Program Name: Coastal Non-point Program

The purpose of this program is to provide an overview of techniques for reducing non-point source pollution, including stormwater runoff that carries pollutants over impervious surfaces and eventually drains into Long Island Sound. This program is given as needed to affected planning and zoning commissioners and their staff, as well as private citizens.

Program Name: Coastal Management Program

The Coastal Management Program provides an overview of coastal management issues, with an emphasis on the coastal site plan review process and the role of local land use agencies. It is targeted toward planning and zoning commissioners, as well as zoning boards of appeal and land use staff. It is given on request about an average of twice a year, and is funded by federal grants and state general funds.

Program Name: Municipal Inland Wetland Commissioners Training

This program is targeted at Inland Wetland Commissioners and their staff. It is a three segment comprehensive training program that provides detailed information on inland wetland regulation and management. The program is offered annually and it is available to all towns. It is funded by inland wetlands enforcement penalties and EPA grants.

Program Name: Stormwater Quality Manual Training

This is a new program with training initiated in March 2005. Six sessions were given between then and the end of May 2005, in collaboration with the UConn NEMO Program (see UConn program descriptions). In the future, this training will be offered through a consultant under contract to the DEP. Training will be targeted toward local land use officials as identified by the RPOs. Thus far, this program has reached about 60 towns and the DEP goal is to reach all 169 municipalities. It has been funded by federal funds from EPA, but DEP anticipates that it will eventually move to Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) monies.

Program Name: The National Flood Insurance Program

The topic of this program is Flood Plan Management. It is targeted toward town planners, zoning enforcement officials and inland wetland officials. This program is given periodically and reaches about 50 towns. Additionally, training is also provided on specialized topics within this program such as Elevation Certificates for Surveyors. It is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant.

Program Name: Coastal Construction

The focus of this program is on construction requirements in coastal flood areas. This program is given every 2-3 years, and is funded by a FEMA grant. It is targeted towards town planners, zoning enforcement officials, inland wetlands officials and town engineers. It reaches 50 towns.

Program Name: Winning Applications

This program focuses on how to write effective grants for the pre-disaster mitigation program. It is targeted toward town planners and emergency management officials. It is provided annually to 15 towns, and funding comes from FEMA grant funds.

Program Name: Project ID

This is a pre-disaster mitigation program targeted towards town planners and emergency management officials. It is given annually to 15 towns, and is funded by FEMA grant funds.

Program Name: Benefit Cost Analysis

This is a pre-disaster mitigation program that is targeted towards town planners and emergency management officials. It is provided annually to 15 towns, and is funded by FEMA grant funds.

Program Name: E-grants

This is a pre-disaster mitigation program that is provided for town planners and emergency management officials. It is given to 15 towns annually, and is funded by FEMA grant funds.

 **Council on Soil and Water Conservation (CSWC)**

Program Name: Best Practices for Erosion and Sedimentation Control

This program is intended to reach planning, zoning and inland wetland commissioners, and planning and zoning enforcement officers statewide. Although the program's frequency and overall budget has yet to be determined, \$25,000 has been budgeted to work with Soil and Water Conservation Districts for the development of a statewide image archive demonstrating successful and unsuccessful soil erosion and sedimentation practices to be utilized as part of the training program.

Note: Three of the five CSWC districts responded to the survey providing additional information about the programs they offer, including:

Connecticut River Coastal Conservation District

Program Name: Site Plan Review

This program is used to teach local land use commissioners about best management practices for erosion and sedimentation control. It is offered once a year to 26 towns at a cost of \$1,000. It is funded by the Fee Bill and EPA 319 grant.

Program Name: Erosion and Sedimentation Control for Decision Makers

The focus of this program is to teach local land use commissioners about natural resource topics pertinent to realtors. Topics include land use, tools for reading the land, soils and wetlands, and understanding septic systems and water supply wells. It is given once a year to 26 towns at a cost of \$1,000. It is funded by the Fee Bill and EPA 319 grant.

Program Name: Reading the Land

Every 2 years, realtors are offered this program to learn about land stewardship practices to protect local water resources. The cost is \$2,000 and funded by the Fee Bill and EPA 319 grant.

Program Name: Backyard Water Resource Protection

Targeted toward land use commissioners, town staff, landscapers, residential property owners, and the general public, this program helps to gain an understanding of wetland delineation methods, wetland soils identification, and other wetland topics. The program is offered once a year to 26 towns at a cost of \$1,000. It is funded by the Fee Bill and EPA 319 grant.

Eastern Connecticut Conservation District

Program Name: Wetlands De-mystified

This program is targeted toward inland wetland and conservation commissioners. It focuses on wetland delineation methods, wetland soils identification, and other wetland topics. It is offered once per year to 36 towns and costs \$4,000. This program is funded by town contributions, the CT Fee Bill, and registration fees.

Program Name: Pond Management

This program is targeted toward Inland Wetland and Conservation commissioners, land trusts, and pond/lake associations and their homeowners to educate on riparian buffers, algae control, invasive pond weeds, and shoreline erosion. It is offered once a year to 36 towns at a cost of \$4,000 and is funded by town contributions and the CT Fee Bill.

Program Name: Reading the Land

This program is targeted toward real estate agents and inland wetland and conservation commissioners to help understand wetland regulations, septic system siting, permit requirements, wetland soils. This program is offered once a year to 36 towns. It costs about \$4,000 and is funded by town contributions, CT Fee Bill, and registration fees.

Program Name: Erosion Control Workshop

This program is targeted toward inland wetland and conservation commissioners, developers, and engineering firms. It covers erosion and sedimentation (E&S) guidelines, understanding E&S engineering drawings, and stormwater management best management practices (BMPs). It is offered once every other year to 36 towns at a cost of \$4,000. It is funded by town contributions, CT Fee Bill, registration fees, and DEP/EPA grants.

Program Name: Forest Management in Connecticut

This program covers 50 years of forest management on ECCD land including timber production, wildlife habitat, and soil and water conservation. The target audience is planning and zoning, inland wetland and conservation commissioners, as well as local municipal officials, federal, state and local agencies. It is offered once year to 36 towns and costs \$4,000. The funding comes from town contributions, CT Fee Bill, registration fees, and UConn Cooperative Extension System in-kind services.

Thames River Basin Partnership, c/o Eastern Connecticut Conservation District

Program Name: Floating Workshop

This program offers information about current issues impacting water quality and use and enjoyment of the Thames River tributaries. It is offered once a year in 36 towns to planning and zoning, inland wetland and conservation commissioners, local municipal officials, federal, state and local agencies. This \$5,000 program is funded by town contributions, the CT Fee Bill, registration fees, and in-kind support from members of the Partnership.

 **Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs)**

Program Name: Connecticut Land Use Education Partnership (see program description under UConn/CLEAR ó Land Use Planning section)

The state's 15 regional planning organizations participate in the Connecticut Land Use Education Partnership by sponsoring and coordinating such forums for their member towns. In addition, a number of RPOs also sponsor a variety of other targeted or one-time land use education or training programs for their member towns.

Program Name: Connecticut Land Use Leadership Alliance (LULA)

The Connecticut LULA program was developed in cooperation with the Pace University Land Use Law Center, and is funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service under a partnership between the Capitol Region Council of Governments, the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency, and several other organizations. This program is designed to put needed technical, planning, and process tools into the hands of local land use officials. The LULA program is a four day course that teaches participants how to use land use law, conflict resolution, and community decision-making techniques to accomplish sustainable community development. Participants attend free of charge.

Program Name: Planning and Zoning Commission Workshop Series

This series was developed by the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments as a practical approach and guide to commission operation and function. The workshop is offered free of charge to the region's 11 member towns upon a commission's request. The workshop series covers a range of topics, including: 1) commission and application basics; 2) meetings; 3) public hearings; 4) decision-making; and 5) enforcement.

 **CT Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA)**

Program Name: Connecticut Land Use Education Partnership

See program description under UConn/CLEAR's Land Use Planning section.

The CCAPA also offers a number of topic-specific sessions that vary from year to year.

 **UConn Cooperative Extension System (CES)**

 **UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR)**

Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO)

The NEMO training budget for the following programs is \$150,000 per year and is funded by the annual Clean Water Act section 319 grant from DEP, as well as annual support from the CT Sea Grant Program. UConn senior staff support is not included in this budget. There are approximately 100 workshops per year that reach approximately 90 towns.

Program Name: Linking Land Use to Water Quality

The topic of the program is about the impacts of development on water resources, and strategies to reduce impacts. It is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments. It is given on request, but the average is about eight times a year. This program reached 16 towns over the past two years.

Program Name: Reducing Runoff

This program is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments. Its focus is on town actions to reduce the amount and impact of runoff from impervious surfaces. It is given by request on average 8 times yearly. This program reached 17 towns over the past two years.

Program Name: Introduction to the CT Stormwater Quality Manual

This program focuses on stormwater treatment practices recommended by DEP, and has reached more than 75 towns. The program is available to all local land use commissions and related departments. It was developed as a partnership with DEP (see DEP program section). Continuation of the program is under discussion with DEP.

Program Name: Conducting a Community Resource Inventory

Targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments, this program reaches 28 towns and focuses on how to organize and conduct a community resource inventory. It is given by request, on average about 12 times per year.

Program Name: Open Space Planning

This program reaches 28 towns about 14 times per year. Its focus is on creating and implementing a town open space plan, and is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments. It is a partnership with the Land Use Planning Program (below).

Program Name: GIS in your Town

This program covers the basics of GIS technology. It is given about once a year to one town and is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments.

Program Name: Connecticut's Changing Landscape

This program reviews land cover change in Connecticut since 1985: trends and implications. It is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments and reaches about 20 towns yearly.

Program Name: Map Reading 101

This program covers the basics on how to understand and interpret maps and site plans. It is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments. It is held about once a year in one town, and it is also included as part of the Land Use Education Partnership (see RPO and Land Use Planning Program listings).

Program Name: Natural Resource-Based Planning for Watersheds

This program covers the process and analyses required for developing watershed plans. It is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments, and is offered about 4 times a year in 9 towns.

Land Use Planning

The Land Use Planning training budget for the following programs is \$170,000 per year. Funding support for one faculty member is provided by the University of Connecticut. The program reaches about 75 towns per year.

Program Name: Plans of Conservation and Development

This program reaches about 5 towns and is given on request an average of 5 times per year. The target audience is local land use commissions and related departments, with a focus on planning and zoning. The topic of the program is legal mandates of a municipal plan of conservation and development and the process for updating such plans.

Program Name: Economic Development

This program focuses on strategies for creating and implementing sustainable economic development. It is given on request to 11 towns yearly. The target audience is local land use commissions and related departments, with a focus on economic development commissions.

Program Name: Roles and Responsibilities of Land Use Commissions

Given about 5 times per year to 10 towns, this program is about enabling legislation, what is required and what can be done. It is offered to all local land use commissions and related departments.

Program Name: Farmland Preservation

This program focuses on the preservation of agricultural lands. It is offered to all local land use commissions and related departments, with a focus on conservation commissions. The program is held about 3 times a year for 6 towns.

Program Name: Lot Size, Net Buildable Area and Cluster

This program focuses on a range of zoning density options. The target audience is all local land use commissions, with a focus on zoning commissions. It is given about 5 times a year to 10 towns.

Program Name: Commercial Development -Cluster versus Strip

Planning and zoning techniques to address the form of commercial development. It is targeted toward all local land use commissions, with a focus on economic development commissions. It is given about 5 times a year and reaches 10 towns.

Program Name: Connecticut Land Use Education Partnership (CLUEP)

This program addresses three main topics: (1) Roles and Responsibilities of Land Use Commissions (see above); (2) Map Reading 101 (see above); and (3) What's Legally Required. It is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments. The program is provided upon request by the sponsoring RPO, who is responsible for organizing the attendance of its member towns. The program is a partnership of UConn, the CT Bar Association, the CT Chapter of the American Planning Association, and the CT Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Program Name: Smart Growth

This is an overview of smart growth principles and their relevance to Connecticut municipalities. All local land use commissions and professional groups are invited. It is held on request on average about 6 times a year in 12 towns.

Program Name: Planning Roads and Driveways

This program explains how to plan for these important features. It is targeted toward all local commissions, selectman and public works people. It is held on average 5 times per year and reaches 10 towns.

Program Name: Zoning Regulations

This program is held about 6 times per year in 12 towns. It is targeted toward all local commissions and related departments and focuses on legal basis options.

Program Name: Subdivision Regulations

This program focuses on legal basis options. It is offered to all local commissions and related departments. It is given about 6 times per year in 12 towns.

Program Name: Tourism

The tourism program is given about 5 times per year in 10 towns. It is targeted toward all local commissions and related departments. The topic is how to plan for tourism, with a focus on natural resource-based tourism.

Program Name: Greenways

The topic of the program is how to plan open space corridors. It is targeted toward all local commissions and interested groups. The program reaches about 10 towns 5 times per year.

Program Name: Keeping Animals in Residential Areas

This program reviews the laws and management practices. It is given by request, on average 4 times yearly and reaches 8 towns. It is offered to all local commissions and interested groups.

Program Name: Working with Local Land Use Officials

This program deals with how best to deal with local land use commissions. It is targeted toward farmers and forest land owners, and Farm Bureau members. It is given on request about 6 times per year and reaches 12 towns.

Program Name: Managing Open Space

This program covers what to do with open space once you have it. It is offered to local commissions, land trusts and land owners. This program is given by request about 4 times per year in 8 towns.

Green Valley Institute (GVI)

The Green Valley Institute training budget for the following programs is \$196,000 per year. Funding is provided by the Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, UConn Cooperative Extension System, and private foundations.

Program Name: Community Resource Inventories & Analysis

This program is held 6-8 times a year. It reaches 18 towns and has a target audience of conservation and planning & zoning commissions and boards of selectmen. The focus of the program is the development and use of GIS-based inventories of natural & historical resources.

Program Name: Greenways & Blueways Planning

The focus of this program is the building a green infrastructure. It is targeted toward conservation and planning & zoning commissions and boards of selectmen. This program is held 6 times per year and reaches 35 towns.

Program Name: Economics of Land Use

This program is given by request, but on average about 5 times per year. It reaches 12 towns and targets land use commissions, boards of selectmen, finance boards, and land trusts. There is a focus on how land use decisions impact a town's mill rate.

Program Name: Growth and Rural Character

This program is given 4 times per year and reaches 7 towns. It focuses on the types of economic development that maintain rural character. Its target audience is land use commissions, boards of selectmen, finance boards, and land trusts.

Program Name: Development Alternatives

The focus of this program is alternative development patterns that can preserve rural character. It targets land use commissions, boards of selectmen, finance boards, and land trusts. It is held on average 4 times yearly and reaches 7 towns.

Program Name: Open Space Planning

This program provides land use commissions, boards of selectmen, finance boards, and land trusts with the tools and steps necessary to protect open space. It is held about 3 times yearly in 4 towns.

Program Name: Conservation Subdivisions

The focus of this program is to provide subdivision options that can protect resources and create communities. This program targets land use commissions, boards of selectmen, finance boards, and land trusts. It is held twice a year and reaches 2 towns.

Program Name: Volunteer Recruitment, Training & Support

This program is set up to recruit, train, place and support natural resource/land use volunteers to fill vacancies on local commissions. It is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments and is held in 31 towns once a year.

Program Name: Protecting Family Lands

This program provides the tools, techniques and funding sources to keep family lands in tact. It is targeted toward conservation commissions and land owners. It is held about 3 times a year in 8 towns.

Program Name: Land Use Seminars

Land use seminars are used to provide a forum for smart growth and sustainable development success stories from various presenters. Seminars are targeted toward land use commissions, boards of selectmen, finance boards, and land trusts. This program is held 3-4 times a year and reaches more than 35 towns.

Program Name: Win-Win of Subdivision Design

This program reaches 6 towns and is held on average 3 times a year. It focuses on designing with the land.

Program Name: Conservation Options that Work

This program is targeted toward realtors and is held 1-2 times a year. It focuses on the tools and techniques for better understanding and marketing conservation opportunities.

Program Name: Becoming a Conservation Community

This program is held 1-2 times a year and is targeted toward conservation commissions. The focus is on proactively conserving natural and cultural resources.

Geospatial Technology

The geospatial technology training budget for the following programs is approximately \$100,000 per year. Funding is provided by various federal grants, and small registration fees are charged to cover materials.

Program Name: Geospatial Technologies at Work: Arc GIS

This program focuses on ArcGIS basics, such as understanding and using a wide variety of natural resource data in a desk-top GIS environment. It is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments. The program is held 4 times per year and reaches 20 towns.

Program Name: GPS for GIS

This program is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments. It focuses on the basics of global positioning system (GPS) technology, and how to use GPS data within the context of a GIS system. It reaches 15 towns 4 times a year.

Program Name: Hands-On Remote Sensing

This program is planned to be given once a year starting in 2006, and should reach approximately 20 towns. It will cover the basics of remote sensing technology and provide examples of how remote sensing can be used in a local decision-making context. It is targeted toward all local land use commissions and related departments.

CT Rural Development Council (CRDC)

Program Name: Rural Development Economic Training

This program is an ongoing series sponsored by the CRDC in cooperation with various partners, including Northeast Utilities. The program's agenda is developed periodically based on surveys conducted by CRDC, in which they solicit their member towns for topical areas of interest. Based on this feedback, CRDC organizes approximately four training sessions per year that bring together interested towns. Each session comprises between 4-15 towns. The targeted audience is typically planning and zoning and inland wetland officials. Associated costs are minimal and are paid for out of CRDC operating funds.

Additional Survey Responses

In addition to the agencies and organizations listed above, the Office of Policy and Management also requested input on the survey from several other organizations that perform land use training and education for local land use agencies. The following responses were received:

✚ Department of Public Health (DPH)

Program Name: Public Drinking Water Land Use for Local Health Directors

This program focuses on the protection of drinking water sources through effective land use planning. Training is provided by the DPH Drinking Water Section ó Source Water Protection Unit upon the request of Local Health Directors. There is no cost to program participants, and DPH expenses are covered by a grant from EPA.

Program Name: Public Drinking Water Land Use for Local Land Officials

This program focuses on the protection of drinking water through effective local land use planning. Training is provided by the DPH Drinking Water Section ó Source Water Protection Unit upon the request of local planning and zoning commissioners. There is no cost to program participants, and DPH expenses are covered by a grant from EPA.

Program Name: On-site Sewage Disposal Certification for Local Health Agents

This program is given four times per year to an audience of Local Health Officials from about 100 towns. It provides an overview of regulations regarding subsurface sewage disposal, location, size, and separation distances. The certification consists of two phases, and it is mandatory for all local health department staff involved with approving and permitting on-site sewage disposal systems. The program is paid for by DPH state funds.

Program Name: Soils Training Workshop

The focus of this workshop is on identifying restrictive layers for siting a subsurface sewage disposal system. The workshop is targeted toward Local Health Officials representing approximately 40 towns. The workshop's \$20,000 budget is funded by a DEP grant.

✚ CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWC)

Program Name: Annual Environmental Conference

This conference is given once a year to municipal Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissioners, and reached approximately 280 commissioners and staff from approximately 90 municipalities. The focus of the conference is on providing information to commissioners for the purpose of allowing them carry out statutory roles, such as the value and function of wetlands and open space planning. The registration fee is \$30 per attendee. CACIWC also provides a quarterly newsletter and periodic website updates to facilitate continuous outreach throughout the year.

CT Bar Association (CBA)

Program Name: Various Seminars in the Basics of Planning and Zoning Law, Advanced Planning and Zoning Practice, and Land Use Law in Connecticut

Targeted at legal practitioners, the seminars focus on planning and zoning laws. One to three seminars are given within an academic year.

Program Name: Connecticut Land Use Education Partnership

See program description under UConn/CLEAR ó Land Use Planning section.

Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) Center for Public Policy and Social Research (CPPSR)

Program Name: Zoning Enforcement Official Certification

This certification program was established in 1982 and is designed to raise the professional standards for zoning enforcement personnel employed by local governments, planning and zoning departments, or zoning commissions in Connecticut. CCSU's CPPSR, under the direction of the Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officials (CAZEO) Certification Committee, administers the educational components of the program, maintains program records and provides program evaluations for purposes of ongoing program development, conducted collaboratively by CAZEO and CPPSR.

There is a \$195 registration fee for each of the five two-day courses held at CCSU. Candidates are considered eligible for CAZEO certification upon meeting all of the following criteria:

- Becoming a regular member of CAZEO;
- Having at least three years experience in the zoning profession (One-year of "experience" may be credited upon successful completion of the certification program);
- Having completed, within three years, 60 class hours of study in the areas of zoning enforcement process, Connecticut's Freedom of Information Laws, Law of Planning I & II, Site Plan Review, Zoning Technicalities, and Legal Aspects of Zoning;
- Receiving a passing grade on each of the three exams; and
- Applying to the Certification Committee for approval of the candidate's case study within three years of completing the 60 class hours of study.

Program Name: Zoning Enforcement Technician Certification

This certification program was established in 2004 and is designed to raise the professional standards for zoning enforcement personnel employed by local governments, planning and zoning departments, or zoning commissions in Connecticut. CCSU's CPPSR, under the direction of the Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officials (CAZEO) Certification Committee, administers the educational components of the program, maintains program records and provides program evaluations for purposes of ongoing program development, conducted collaboratively by CAZEO and CPPSR.

There is a \$195 registration fee for each of the five two-day courses held at CCSU. Candidates are considered eligible for CAZEO certification upon meeting all of the following criteria:

- Becoming a regular or associate member of CAZEO;
- Having at least two years experience in the zoning profession (One-year of "experience" may be credited upon successful completion of the certification program);
- Having completed, within three years, 60 class hours of study in the areas of zoning enforcement process, Connecticut's Freedom of Information Laws, Law of Planning I & II, Site Plan Review, Zoning Technicalities, and Legal Aspects of Zoning; and
- Receiving a passing grade on each of the three exams.

VI. Findings and Recommendations

Findings

Based on the results of this latest survey, it is evident that there are ample opportunities for training and education of local land use officials. Although there continues to be a general lack of overall coordination of land use training and education programs in Connecticut, considerable progress has been made since the Land Use Education Council (LUEC) published its report in 1988.

The creation of the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) at the University of Connecticut has helped to partially fill the role envisioned by the LUEC's proposed Office of Land Use Education. Although CLEAR operates without any legislative mandate, it has been a major player in the development, implementation, and coordination of the Connecticut Land Use Education Partnership, which also includes the Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) and a number of other statewide organizations (see *Results of Survey*). The Partnership program was developed largely along the lines of the LUEC's proposed introductory course curriculum, and it is widely viewed as the most comprehensive training program available to new members of municipal land use agencies.

Beyond this "basic training" function of the Connecticut Land Use Education Partnership, there is a vast array of programs that cover many of the "advanced course" topics recommended in the 1988 LUEC Report. OPM recognizes that the regular training efforts of all the agencies and organizations listed in this survey, while largely *ad hoc*, provide useful and diverse continuing education opportunities for municipal officials and other land use professionals.

OPM would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the many organizations that often conduct or sponsor non-recurring workshops and conferences on specific topics of interest for their constituents. Although such efforts are not reflected in the *Results of Survey* chapter, they nonetheless fulfill an important supplemental component of the overall training and education of local land use officials in Connecticut.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, OPM makes the following recommendations:

1) Support land use education through strengthening of existing efforts, rather than creating or mandating new programs or entities.

Based on the progress made since the 1988 LUEC Report — even in the absence of any action by the Legislature — it seems most efficient, effective and feasible to support and enhance ongoing efforts, rather than try to create an entirely new framework. The comprehensive survey results provided in this report should help to facilitate a better understanding among the various agencies and organizations of their reciprocal responsibilities in sharing the latest technical information and regulatory requirements associated with their programs.

With few exceptions, such as the mandatory DPH On-site Sewage Disposal Certification for Local Health Agents, the mandatory DEP Inland Wetland Commissioners Training Program, and the pending DEP Aquifer Protection Agency Training, most programs listed in the survey are strictly voluntary. If the General Assembly were to consider expanding the scope of mandatory training programs, OPM recommends that a formal opinion should first be obtained from the Office of the Attorney General to determine whether municipal officials can be subject to such requirements and the potential associated costs. An important issue to bear in mind when considering the expansion of mandatory training is the fact that a large percentage of the land use audience consists of voluntary members on local boards and commissions with limited available time.

2) Support and strengthen the Land Use Education Partnership as the best vehicle for “basic training” of local land use officials.

As noted, the Partnership is widely viewed as the most comprehensive training program available to new members of municipal land use agencies. However, it currently exists as an entirely volunteer effort of the Partnership organizations. The following steps are recommended to strengthen this key resource, so that the Partnership can effectively reach a higher percentage of land use decision-makers with a broader array of topics:

a) UConn CLEAR should be provided the resources to better organize, coordinate, market and deliver the Partnership training.

Given the results of this most recent survey and the fact that there is no top-down authority in the state to coordinate such training, OPM recommends that CLEAR is the most logical and most appropriate group to be responsible for the coordination of all land use training of local officials in the State of Connecticut. It must be noted, however, that all CLEAR programs operate on “soft money” grant funds, making it difficult to redirect staff effort toward strengthening the Partnership. CLEAR cannot carry out this recommendation without additional resources, including targeted funding and increases in staff. As resources permit, CLEAR should implement the following enhancements to the Partnership: 1) development of marketing and communication tools for the Partnership and other programs (web sites, list-serves, etc.); 2) more regular and thorough coverage of all regions of the state; and 3) expansion of the core curriculum (see below).

b) RPOs should continue to work with their member municipalities to ensure that the Partnership training is conducted for new commission members at appropriate intervals throughout the year.

In addition, RPOs should work in cooperation with CLEAR to ensure that their constituent towns’ future training needs are clearly communicated. This will help the Partnership program remain robust and attentive to possible regional variations in training curriculum.

- c) The Land Use Education Partnership should expand the core curriculum to include the new planning requirements associated with Public Act No. 05-205. Specifically, there should be new efforts aimed at educating local land use agencies on how to revise their plans of conservation and development based on the Growth Management Principles that were incorporated into state statutes. The Growth Management Principles are the primary vehicle for ensuring that the state, regional and municipal plans are developed on a more consistent basis.

3) Develop a program on affordable housing.

OPM recommends that the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association, in consultation with the Home Builders Association of Connecticut, Inc., develop a training program for local land use agencies and other interested parties that presents the economics of the real estate development business with regard to affordable housing. This program would focus on the planning and regulatory techniques for affordable housing within the context of Growth Management Principles 1-3, and would cover topics such as density, variable sized homes, and how regulations and delays impact a developer's project viability calculations. The goal of this program would be to help local officials better understand the risk-based environment of developers, and to help developers build the type of market-driven affordable housing encouraged in municipal plans.

4) Coordinate existing GIS training programs provided by CLEAR and other organizations with the future training programs to be provided by the Connecticut Geospatial Information Systems Council.

The Connecticut Geospatial Information Systems Council (CGISC) was recently created by Section 84 of Public Act No. 05-3 (June Special Session). The CGISC is charged with developing a coordinated statewide GIS implementation strategy for the benefit of all users of this important and growing technology.

At present, there are numerous opportunities for introductory GIS classroom training courses offered through various public and private providers. In order to supplement these existing efforts, the GISC plans to provide low/no-cost, specialized Geodatabase training for advanced users in the near future. Longer term, the CGISC could potentially become a provider of introductory GIS training as well, depending upon their available resources.

Therefore, it is recommended that CLEAR staff work with the CGISC and other GIS training providers to ensure that training options for both basic and advanced GIS training are available and appropriately tailored to meet the diverse needs of GIS users. Given the funding constraints noted above, CLEAR staff may be somewhat limited in their efforts without additional resources.