

What's New on HartfordInfo.org?



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Over forty community members attended the Community Dialogue Action Group Update meeting on December 4, 2012. Click on the link below to view the video of this event.

New Reports!

Check out a new report on The Economic Impact of Recycling Activity.

New Articles!

Read about how the Busway (CTfasttrak) is changing the landscape.

New Videos!

Watch a video of the Community Dialogue Action Forum Update

This newsletter provides periodic updates about recent additions to HartfordInfo.org. Please feel free to forward this message to others. To be added to the distribution list send an email message through our [feedback page](#).

HartfordInfo.org, a program of the Hartford Public Library, is a gateway to information and data on issues important to those who live and work in Hartford and the region.

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New Videos

- **Community Dialogue Action Group Update Video** — A video of the Community Dialogue Action Group held on December 4, 2012 is now available. [Click here.](#)
- **Understanding City Services Program** — A video of the Understanding City Services Program about City of Hartford Development Services held on November 29, 2012 is available. [Click here.](#)

New Reports

- **Pulling Apart: Connecticut Income Inequality 1977 to Present** — While home to some of the world's richest individuals, Connecticut has seen working-class wages stagnate, and more of its residents live in poverty today than 50 years ago. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **How Strong Are U.S. Teacher's Unions: A State-By-State Comparison** — Everyone knows that teacher unions matter in education politics and policies, but it's hard to determine just how much they matter—and whether they wield greater influence in some places than in others. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **Report of Findings and Recommendations on Mental Health and Substance Use Services in Connecticut** — This report draws from testimony on barriers to access to and coverage for preventive and treatment services for mental health and substance use. The report makes eight substantive recommendations aimed to alleviate the current fractured and fragmented method of delivering care. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **School Climate And Student Connectedness In The Hartford Public Schools: 2012 Report** — In May 2012, the Hartford Public Schools (HPS) administered a new and improved annual School Climate and Student Connectedness Survey. The purpose of this survey, administered to school staff, parents, and students in 3rd to 12th grade, is to gather perceptions of school climate and measure the level of connectedness that students feel with their schools. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **The Economic Impact on Connecticut from Recycling Activity** — In 2012, the impact on Connecticut's economy due to recycling activity, is estimated to be over \$746 million. Over seven years, from 2006 through 2012, this impact is estimated to be nearly \$5.17 billion. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **E-book Reading Jumps; Print Book Reading Declines** — Twenty-three percent of Americans ages 16 and older read an e-book in the past year, up from 16% the year before. The share who read a print book declined to 67%, from 72%. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **Housing In CT 2012: The Latest Measures of Affordability** — Connecticut continued to be buffeted by demographic and economic changes in 2012, but its housing resources struggled to keep up. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **Education Finance in Connecticut: Overreliance on the Property Tax** — According to the U.S. Census, Connecticut is the most reliant state in the nation on the property tax to fund PreK-12 public education. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **Searching for Markets: The Geography of Inequitable Access to Healthy & Affordable Food in the United States** — This Limited Supermarket Access (LSA) study identifies areas in US cities with inadequate access to food, sometimes referred to as food deserts. This study suggests that Hartford is the country's eighth worst city — among cities with 100,000 to 250,000 residents — for providing access to healthy foods for its low-income residents. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **Childhood Obesity in Connecticut** — This is a fact sheet about childhood obesity in Connecticut. [Click here for the report.](#)

New Articles

Good News

- **UConn To Move Its West Hartford Operation To Downtown Hartford** — Facing an estimated \$25 million in renovations to its Greater Hartford branch in West Hartford, UConn plans to move the campus to Downtown Hartford within a year, bringing along 2,100 students and 60 faculty members. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Hincks Never Lost Sight of Hartford's Potential** — When Dan Hincks considered opening a music hall and bistro venue in Connecticut about six years ago, his initial thought was to do it in Hartford. Hincks thought leveraging the City's dynamic arts scene would create a vibrant environment for an intimate music house. He targeted several Downtown locations, but eventually settled on a small Victorian opera house in Norfolk instead. But Hincks said he never took his eye off Hartford. Hincks' bullish outlook for Hartford was the driving force behind the recent deal to finally open a music venue Downtown. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **New Front Street Movie Theater Opens Today** — On Friday, November 16, 2012, Hartford's newest cinema opened. Spotlight Theaters, a four-screen complex on Columbus Boulevard between Front and Arch streets, was the first business to open in the Front Street development across the street from the Connecticut Convention Center. [Click here for the article.](#)

- **Hartford's Gifted And Talented School To Serve As Model For Districts** — The visitors come from as far as Australia to tour the North End school where children already have the Ivy League on their minds. On the Connecticut Mastery Test, all 27 seventh-graders who took the exam this spring met the state's goal in reading, but educators here say the high test scores are only a snippet of what makes the Renzulli Gifted and Talented Academy special. [Click here for the article.](#)

Big Ideas

- **Connecticut Is Far Behind On Early Voting** — Connecticut, the Land of Steady Habits, is one of those quaint jurisdictions that still compresses its voting calendar for each election to one day — a Tuesday, which is a workday for most people. The limited time for most people to vote allowed by Connecticut is an unnecessary inconvenience. It will be changed, eventually. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Don't Waste State's Fiscal Crisis** — The State's finances in the lingering drag of the Great Recession are badly strained. But, crisis can be opportunity. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Busway Changing The Landscape** — Behind the State Armory in Hartford, workers operate the backhoes and cranes that are carving a two-story retaining wall beside the Amtrak rail line. Roughly nine miles away, more crews are preparing a new off-ramp from Route 72 up to New Britain's Truman Overpass. In between runs a two-lane passageway of back-to-back-to-back job sites: The path of CTfastrak. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **XL Center Needs Action, Skating, Outdoor Cafe** — Mike McGarry writes that the company chosen to manage the XL Center has the imagination and commitment to (finally) provide activities and economic benefit to the taxpayers and citizens of Hartford. Skating can be a very popular Downtown event, given the right promotion and investment. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **What's Wrong With 100-Year-Old Plan For Hartford** — The centenary of the 1912 Carrère and Hastings plan for Hartford offers an occasion to better understand how we are thinking when we think about Hartford and the region today. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Wheels Slowly Start Turning On New Haven-Springfield Rail Improvements** — Motorists are beginning to encounter brief construction delays at railroad crossings in central Connecticut, the first sign that work is under way on the long-planned Springfield-to-New Haven commuter rail system. For commuters on the busy I-91 corridor, the work offers at least a little hope of improved north-south rail service through the State within the next few years. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Cities Like Bridgeport Sell Off Residents' Tax Debts For Quick Cash** — New Haven kicked the habit years ago. Hartford is still trying to "wean itself off." But Bridgeport and dozens of other cities and towns facing deficit nightmares seem to be hooked on the cash injection you can get from this financial quick fix. The commodity these municipalities are selling is tax debt – back taxes their people and businesses owe on real estate, motor vehicles and other property. [Click here for the article.](#)

Downtown Development

- **Pearl Street Buildings Pose Downtown Challenge** — For years, two vacant, adjacent, sad-looking 1960s-era office buildings on Pearl Street have been a drag on Downtown Hartford, deadening a street that ought to be a vital part of the City's center. There have been several efforts to revive the buildings in recent years, and now there's another. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Spruce Up Or Sell Out?** — After a wave of high-profile foreclosures, Downtown Hartford is now home to a host of new landlords, many of them financial institutions with few ties to the City, but whose decisions on what to do with their recently acquired assets will have major ramifications on the central business district's commercial realty scene. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Islam Pitches \$53M Hartford Apartment Plan** — The list of proposed Downtown Hartford housing projects seeking State assistance is getting a bit longer. Middletown engineer and developer Abul Islam, who pitched erecting a 12-story retail-office tower on the former site of WFSB Channel 3's television studio in Constitution Plaza, has formally scrapped those plans and presented a new vision — a \$53 million primarily residential tower that would add 195 affordable and market rate rental units in the heart of Downtown. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Next Wave Of Apartments For Downtown Hartford: Smaller, Less Expensive** — A decade ago, apartment construction in Downtown Hartford was all about upscale and luxury, with rents to match. The next wave of rentals in the City's center is one being pursued by a growing number of cities: smaller, less expensive studios and one-bedroom apartments. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Hartford's XL Center Faces Daunting Challenge For Redevelopment** — From the street, the XL Center in Downtown Hartford exudes recent redevelopment, all stainless steel and glass, opening into an airy atrium. But walk a little farther through the interior doors of Veterans Memorial Coliseum, and it might as well be the 1970s. Redeveloping the XL Center to keep it competitive with other venues won't be easy. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Front Street Project Has Special Import To Nitkin** — With Hartford's Front Street Entertainment District finally gaining traction, and most importantly tenants, the opportunity for developer HB Nitkin Group to finally cash in on its investment is getting closer. But Helen Nitkin, who along with her late husband Bradley started the firm more than 25 years ago, said the company plans to be involved with the project over the long haul. [Click here for the article.](#)

Arts and Culture

- **Classes, Concerts, Candidate Forums: Hartford's Public Library A Real Civic Center** — Bringing people to the Hartford Public Library is something CEO Matthew Poland and his staff have gotten very good at. The Library offers a remarkable array of classes, concerts, readings and lectures. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Cathy Malloy's First Year As Arts Council CEO** — Call Cathy Malloy a determined drum-beater for the arts. In a way, her job is to campaign for the 140 arts, cultural and historical groups in the 34 cities and towns in the region as she raises funds from corporations, government and individuals through work-place giving. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Rob Ruggiero Will Run TheaterWorks In Hartford** — Rob Ruggiero, who arrived at Hartford's TheaterWorks as a freelance director in 1993 and stayed on as associate artistic director for many years, will be the Theater's next leader in the new position of producing artistic director, overseeing both its creative and management sides. [Click here for the article.](#)

Neighborhoods

- **Renovation Project in Hartford's Asylum Hill Gets \$500K Donation** — A \$1.7 million project to rehabilitate a three-story building on the corner of Ashley and Garden Streets has received a \$500,000 donation from Connecticut Light & Power, officials from the Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance said recently. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Hartford Apartments To Get Facelift** — A project to renovate nine historic brick buildings on Vine Street has gotten a boost thanks to a \$500,000 contribution from Connecticut Light & Power. Officials expect to begin the \$15 million project in April. Nine three-story buildings at 4-40 Vine Street, known as the Horace Bushnell Apartments, will undergo significant improvements. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Hartford's West End Eateries Are in Danger** — Hartford's funky West End may be best known for its eclectic selection of restaurants, but in the current economy, this source of neighborhood pride and identity is under threat. Several establishments may be in danger of closure. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Bird Lovers Create Safe Habitat In Urban Hartford Setting** — A project is underway to plant native shrubs at Hartford parks as part of a new project to enhance bird habitat in Hartford, educate children and adults about the importance of bird habitat in cities, and to identify hazards to birds living in or passing through Hartford. [Click here for the article.](#)

Economic Development

- **Hartford Denim Trio Make The Journey, And the Leap, To Big Apple For Launch Of Timberland Collaboration** — Marshall Deming, Dave Marcoux and Luke Davis spend their days toiling at sewing machines in a fourth-floor Hartford factory, so an evening of eating hors d'oeuvres and mixing with downtown New York fashionistas to the sound of house music took some adjustment. The happening on Broadway was part of doing business for the three partners in the Hartford Denim Co., a fledgling firm that was featured recently at the Timberland store in SoHo. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **CT Construction Contracts Leaving Out Minorities** — The design and execution of Connecticut's affirmative action program to award a portion of construction contracts to minorities-owned businesses falls short of its goals according to Derrick Diggs, vice president of Hartford firm Diggs Construction. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Freeman Just Keeps Climbing Mountains** — After climbing the world's highest peaks, Rohan Freeman is looking for new mountains to climb with his Hartford-based civil engineering firm Freeman Companies, LLC. Just three years after Freeman founded the firm, he has hired a top geotechnical engineer to lead a new geotechnical division as he looks to expand his business. [Click here for the article.](#)

Education

- **Hartford Parent University Set To Launch Saturday** — The Hartford Parent University will soon be in session. The parent-led group, founded by Milly Arciniegas, will offer free training this weekend to City mothers, fathers and guardians on how they can become leaders and advocates for their children in the public schools. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Educators Prepare For Mandated Change At Community Colleges** — The higher education reform law signed by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy in 2012 gets rid of the classes now used to prepare underperforming students for college-level work, and replaces them with ... the best of intentions. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **The Repercussions Of National Education Standards** — Connecticut's public education establishment is facing a reckoning. Not only are student test scores expected to drop drastically when standardized tests based on national standards are adopted in 2015, but the shift is expected to cost districts millions to update their textbooks, teaching materials, technology to administer the new tests on computers and to train teachers to align lessons with the new standards. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **In Hartford, New Senate To Represent Students On School Board** — Delegates to the city's new Student Senate convened for the first time recently under a portrait of George Washington and with direct orders from the Superintendent to represent the voices of thousands of students across Hartford. [Click here for the article.](#)

- **Who Will Graduate High School? Major Disparities In Connecticut's Schools** — For an idea of the achievement gap Connecticut students face, one needs to look no further than the graduation rates of the state's different student populations. [Click here for the article.](#)

History

- **Hartford's Old North Cemetery On The Rebound** — Not too long ago, an invitation to take a walk through Old North Cemetery with noted historian William Hosley meant one thing: that someone wanted to point out how the landmark resting place of some of the City's earliest captains of industry, politics and architecture had fallen into disrepair. But, that neglect will end with the City's commitment of \$1.25 million over the next 10 years to restore the cemetery and "sculpture park" to its former glory. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Hartford's Historical Allure Coming Into Focus** — Hartford's efforts to embrace its storied past and present it to the world advanced considerably in November 2012. [Click here for the article.](#)

Notable Transitions

- **Vibrant Advocate For The Homeless, Carol Walter, Dies At 53** — Carol Walter, the executive director of Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, was remembered by her friends recently as a quick-witted, energetic leader and unwavering advocate for the homeless. Walter, 53, died December 27, 2012 after a short battle with lung cancer, friends said. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **James Kinsella, Former Hartford Mayor, Probate Judge, Dies At 88** — James H. Kinsella, a former City mayor, councilman and probate judge, died on October 8, 2012. He was 88. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Shepherd Holcombe: A Passion For Hartford And Its History** — Shepherd Holcombe, the descendent of a family that arrived in Connecticut in the 1600s was connected to Connecticut, its history, its people. Shepherd Holcombe, who was born on June 12, 1921, grew up in a home on Spring St., where six generations of his family had lived. A staunch booster of Hartford's history, Holcombe died Nov. 28, 2012. [Click here for the article.](#)



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