



WHY SHOULD YOU

# Care?

## COMMUNITY MATTERS



Connecticut has much to offer; beautiful rolling hills and scenic shorelines, accessible and walkable cities, cultural and historic attractions, charming small town centers, acres of preserved forests, trails and open space, farmland and clean rivers and lakes. These are some of the characteristics that give Connecticut a unique identity, a sense of community, a sense of place. These are things we cherish and want to preserve and to do so we must look closely at the impact of transportation and land use decisions on our communities and our quality of life.

America stands at a crossroads. Our nation has begun to understand the consequences of the choices we have made that negatively affect the places we live, work and play. In fact, many American communities are at a tipping point with a prosperous and healthy future in the balance. If we are to be responsible stewards of the land and a sustainable community life, we must now pause, assess our course, and where needed, change direction to achieve our goals.

The evidence of our past choices and actions surrounds us. Heart disease, obesity and diabetes are epidemic due to an increased indoor, sedentary lifestyle. Reckless environmental practices place enormous burdens on our children to adapt to a changing global climate. Sprawl has depleted our open spaces necessitating more energy consumption measured in fuel and pavement to simply connect to each other.



*Multi-use trails throughout Connecticut provide travel options, encourage healthy lifestyles and add to our quality of life.*

COURTESY OF CONNECTICUT DOT

These actions have consequences. Do we continue trends to exploit rich resources leading ultimately to an unsustainable future? Or, do we change direction to create walkable, transit-served communities with high-performance infrastructure? Do we continue to develop unplanned and in isolation with little consideration to the impact on our citizens' health and the environment? Or, do we promote growth that fosters healthy lifestyles and offers mobility choices for all of our citizens while protecting our valuable natural resources?

This guidebook is an urgent call to action. If informed, voters will make better choices about how to shape the world our children will inherit including having the same life-sustaining options we have today. We already have the knowledge from years of studies and planning to make better choices but time is of the essence.

It all begins with the land. How we plan our communities, linking land-use and infrastructure, is at the heart of a comprehensive reform.



**FACT**

*The Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality reports that in 2011, Connecticut preserved **1,975 ACRES OF FARMLAND**—the best year for preservation since 1993.*