



Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

Torrington • Harwinton • Litchfield • Thomaston • Watertown • Waterbury • Naugatuck • Beacon Falls • Seymour • Ansonia • Derby

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, July 13th, 2016 - 9 to 10:30

NVCOG Conference Room

49 Leavenworth Street, Waterbury, CT

See last page for attendance and a roster of steering committee members.

Co-Chair Jack Walsh opened the meeting in the place of Ingrid Manning who was unable to attend due to a last minute change in plans. Introductions were made.

Jack tabled the discussion on organizational changes until a time when a larger group can be assembled and all three co-chairs are in attendance.

Mike Doherty, Landscape Architect at Milone & MacBroom, gave an overview of the **NRG Signage and Wayfinding project** that he is leading. Mike presented a draft Signage and Wayfinding manual that is nearing completion. The draft can be viewed [here](#). Images from the presentation that depict examples of signage and mounting methods can be seen here: can be viewed [here](#). The current draft has been developed through several rounds of comments that NVCOG has provided, and includes the new logo and colors approved by the signage subcommittee.

Mike explained that Milone & MacBroom will be developing the installation and mounting guidelines section of the manual next, and will also be designing one mock-up of a sign that will be produced as part of the project. Derby was originally considered as the subject for the mock-up since they have the highest volume of trail users. Torrington has since stepped forward, having collected information for signage over the summer in conjunction with their phase I construction work. Torrington is more prepared to produce information for signage, and the additional attention with the construction on Phase I might also be beneficial. It was agreed that Mike will work with Rista and Intern Kevin Finn to develop a sign for a location in Torrington.

If you have any comments (or questions) on the draft signage manual, please send them to Aaron Budris (abudris@nvcogct.org), and they will be passed on to M&M.

Mark Nielsen briefly discussed the **Thomaston/Watertown Recreational Trails project**, which has been stalled during negotiations with the selected consultant. A preliminary field walk was conducted with representatives from Thomaston, Watertown, NVCOG and the consultant. The intent was to identify and map critical features in the field to better focus the scope of the project and enable a better cost estimate. An interactive map was developed featuring the identified critical features, and it can be viewed [here](#). An agreement should be reached soon.

Aaron Budris explained that the NRG Economic Impact Study is progressing. Following the submission of a draft of the economic analysis portion of the report from the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA) at UConn, several issues were identified by NVCOG staff and NRGSC members. Upon receipt of comments, CCEA agreed to re-run the REMI model to address several of the comments. Aaron explained that NVCOG and the steering committee need to be able to defend and explain the figures that are arrived at by the study, so it is important to make sure that CCEA provides the information to do so. Most of the comments were focused on a

"The Naugatuck River from Torrington to Derby is rich with history, stunning scenery and wildlife. Just as the river built and shaped our towns and cities, the Naugatuck River Greenway will be a driving force for the next century and beyond.

Our mission is to harness the vitality and protect the health of the river for economic development and quality of life for all."

few inaccurate or misleading figures, as well as a lack of explanation of the processes that were used to reach some of the conclusions. CCEA has submitted a second draft which is being reviewed by NVCOG. Once a more final draft is developed, the steering committee will be asked to once again provide comments.

The **2015/2016 Recreational Trails Grants have been awarded**, and awardees are awaiting completed contracts to begin work. Rista Malanca discussed the 2015-16 Recreational Trails grant that Torrington received to construct Phase I of the NRG in Torrington. The trail will follow the USACE flood control levees along the Naugatuck River and will take advantage of a temporary access road that is being built while the bridge on Bogue Road is reconstructed. A ground breaking was held on 6/22 at Toro Sports Complex, see a news article [here](#).

Aaron gave an overview of the “CT Trail Census”, a Recreational Trails funded project that is being initiated through a partnership between the Connecticut Greenways Council (CGC) NVCOG, UConn, and the Center for Land Use Education and Research. The study will build on the user survey and trail count methodologies developed for the NRG Economic Impact Study to collect information on multiuse trails statewide. More information can be found [here](#).

Unfortunately, the **Recreational Trails program** funds have been swept for the 2016/2017 round. Connecticut had opted out of the federal recreational trails program last year and instead decided to fund the DEEP Rec Trails program using state bond funds. This was intended to provide more funding in a streamlined program that would not have had federal red tape associated with it. After being approved for \$10m funding over 2 years, more than would have been available under the federal program, the second year of funds was swept during budget negotiations. It is unlikely that there will be another solicitation for at least another year. There is also a chance that the state could opt back in to the federal program.

Mark Nielsen discussed the new federal transportation bill, **Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act**, and what it means for multiuse trail funding. The FAST Act is a five year spending bill that authorizes \$305 Billion through FY 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. It includes a set aside of \$835-\$850m annually for the **Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program** for which bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible. Half of each state’s portion of FAST TA funds will be allocated by urban area population for local or regional priority projects, and half will be allocated to state departments of transportation to be used on projects statewide. The local portion will be allocated by DOT and by MPOs with urban area populations of over 200,000. Large urban areas will be allocated funds and MPOs (COGs) will be able to solicit and choose projects to fund directly. Since the NVCOG MPO has an urbanized area under 200,000, it is considered a small urban area, and an allotment of \$2.9m for small urban areas will be shared with parts of the Danbury area. Project proposals for these small urban areas will be submitted to CTDOT rather than MPOs, and projects will be selected internally by DOT. Former VCOG towns will submit applications to GBVMPO.

Mark explained that the TA program is less than ideal because it does not provide enough funding to complete even a single complex project that are typical of the NRG. The already small pot of funds will also have to be shared, and NVCOG will not have the ability to choose priority projects to be funded. More information about the FAST Act TA allocation can be found in [this letter](#) that was sent to NVCOG from CTDOT. NVCOG will be soliciting TA projects this fall for the 13 original COGCNV towns, Bristol and Plymouth. Lower valley towns (Shelton, Seymour, Derby and Ansonia) will submit projects to CT METROCog (formerly Greater Bridgeport Regional Council).

Aaron Budris and Rista Malanca discussed two NRG-related grants that have been awarded to NVCOG and the City of Torrington in the **2016 OPM Responsible Growth and Transportation Oriented Development program**. The trail related projects under this program will be administered by CT DEEP, but a timeframe for disbursement has not yet been provided. Torrington and Winchester have been awarded \$1,825,000 to construct the Sue

Grossman Trail from its current terminus to downtown Winsted, and to prepare final design and construction plans to connect the trail to downtown Torrington. The completed Sue Grossman trail will effectively extend the connectivity of the NRG, and there are ongoing discussions about further connections along route 44 to the Farmington Canal Trail and East Coast Greenway. NVCOG was awarded \$110,000 to conduct a routing study for the NRG from Thomaston to Torrington, a section of trail where the route has not been firmly identified. The funds will be used to hire a consultant to conduct the study guided by stakeholders from Thomaston, Litchfield, Harwinton, Torrington, and the USACE.

The CFPA CT Trails Weekend events were briefly discussed. The NRGSC had an information booth set up at the Watertown/Thomaston event at Black Rock State Park. Photos [here](#).

Jack Walsh adjourned the meeting at 10:36.

Next Meeting: September 14th

Location TBD

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

Present in **bold**

Aaron Budris – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Bill Purcell – Valley Chamber

Bob Gregorski - Naugatuck River Watershed Association & Trout Unlimited

Christopher Way - US Army Corps of Engineers

Chuck Berger - Watertown Town Engineer

Clifford Cooper - Litchfield Community Greenway

Dave Faber – Connecticut Outdoors, LLC/ Naugatuck Valley Outdoors Club

Dominic Sorrentino – Beacon Falls

Fred Messore - Town of Seymour

Ingrid Manning – formerly of CT Community Foundation

***Chair-Jack Walsh - Valley United Way**

Jim MacBroom – Milone and MacBroom

Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury Y

Jim Stewart - Naugatuck Borough Engineer

Joan Kirchner - Harwinton Conservation Commission

Jolene Podgorski - Watertown DPW

Josh Carey – Connecticut Community Foundation

Kathy McNamara - City of Waterbury

Kevin Tedesco - CT DOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator

Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group

Laura Wildman – Princeton Hydro

Laurie Giannotti - CT DEEP Greenways

Liz Falzone- Beacon Falls

Mike Jastremski - Housatonic Valley Association

Mark Nielsen – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Rich Minnick – Beacon Falls

Rista Malanca - Torrington

Sal Porzio – City of Waterbury

Sheila O'Malley – City of Ansonia

Susan Peterson - CT DEEP Watershed Management Program

Suzanne Stitch – Town of Harwinton

Vicki Barnes - Watertown - Steele Brook Rangers

Vincent Gualtieri - US Army Corps of Engineers

Will Cummings – Thomaston Trail Committee

Also in Attendance:

Mike Doherty – Milone & Macbroom

Kevin Finn, Torrington Intern