



# Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

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

## Meeting Notes

Wednesday November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 9am

Torrington Senior Center

88 East Albert Road, Torrington, CT

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

Co-Chair Rista Malanca opened the meeting, and introductions were made.

Rista discussed the **new section of NRG Trail** that was built by the City of Torrington. Two sections of trail have just been completed. A paved section was built between East Albert Street and Scoville Street, running along the top of the USACE built flood control levee on the West side of the River, and adjacent to the Senior Center. A stone dust section was built between Palmer Bridge Street and the Toro Field on the East side of the River. The City plans to connect the two sections next year by making Scoville Street one way and taking the extra lane to create a trail. South of Toro Field, the trail connects to a temporary access road built previously to carry traffic when the Bogue Road Bridge is replaced, and which will be used to carry the NRG Trail when the bridge project is complete.

Aaron Budris gave an update on the **Thomaston to Torrington Routing Study**. A meeting of the project steering committee was held in September where project staff presented a recommended preferred route based on all of the data and feedback that has been received from stakeholders and the public. The Project Steering Committee selected the preferred alternative at that meeting, and the results are being developed into a project report. That report is expected to be released in the coming months for public comment. Comments will be addressed, and a final report is expected probably sometime in early 2020. Aaron also explained that the project team had met with the USACE and an OHV representative prior to the Project Steering Committee Meeting, and a compromise had been agreed upon that would avoid negative impact to the OHV area. It was that compromise route and trail concept that was ultimately selected as the preferred route. Aaron reviewed the route section by section using an interactive map. More information can be found at <https://nvcogct.gov/project/current-projects/naugatuck-river-greenway/nrg-thomaston-to-torrington-routing-study/>.

Aaron discussed the **Watertown Thomaston Design and Construction project**, funded by a Recreational Trails grant. NVCOG has been working with VHB, Inc. on design of a new pedestrian bridge over Branch Brook, which is expected to be complete by the end of January. Design of a new bridge was made necessary due to the poor condition of the existing trolley bridge, and was funded by shifting Rec Trails funds originally intended for construction of the trail segment behind the WPCA to bridge design. Thomaston applied to the Local Transportation Capital improvement Program (LoTCIP) to fund Construction of the trailhead, trail and bridge. NVCOG has approved that application, but the town is still waiting to hear back from DOT on the notice to proceed. Watertown applied for LoTCIP funding to construct the adjacent section of trail to Frost Bridge Road, and is also waiting to hear from DOT.

Aaron discussed the **Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program**. The program is part of the Federal Transportation Act. Typically, TA funding is used for non-motorized transportation related projects, and the funding can be used for design and construction of multiuse trails or sidewalks. While a new federal

*"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."*

transportation bill has not been passed, CT DOT is anticipating that the TA set-aside program will continue in future legislation and has assumed that the program will essentially remain the same as specified in the current FAST Act. Draft language that was passed out of the senate Environment and Public Works Committee included an approximately 40% increase in funding to the TA program, and also gives more control to small MPOs with urbanized areas with population under 200,000 (like Waterbury UA) . There is still a long way to go before a bill is passed, but this is a bipartisan proposal and may indicate good things in the future. If the changes remain NVCOG would have more control over project selection, and there would be more funding available to complete larger projects or more projects.

A solicitation for TA Set Aside projects in the NVCOG region closed on May 9th. Several projects were received by NVCOG, including three directly pertaining to sections of the NRG Trail. Seymour and Beacon Falls submitted a proposal to construct a trail between downtown Seymour and Toby's Pond in Beacon Falls estimated to cost just over \$3m. Naugatuck proposed construction of the NRG Trail between the northern terminus of their trail to Platts Mill Road, including a new bridge over the River with an estimated cost of approximately \$3.5m. Thomaston has proposed constructing a section of NRG trail from East Main Street to Watertown Road at a cost of \$2m. Additional non-NRG projects were submitted for sidewalks in Oxford along Route 67, and the purchase of ROW and construction of a section of Steele Brook Greenway in Watertown. Following direction from the committee's last meeting, support letters were submitted to all five projects.

**Signage** designed and purchased by NVCOG with a Recreational Trails grant has been installed along most sections of open NRG Trail, and NVCOG staff is available to assist where they have not been or more signs are needed.

The **CT Trails Census** continues to count and collect information about trail users along multiuse trail users statewide, including on the NRG in Derby. Aaron mentioned that he was working to get counts on the new section in Torrington. A 2019 Recreational Trails Grant from CT DEEP supported the hiring of a new full-time program coordinator, Charlie Tracy, along with a part time program specialist, Ryan Faulkner. The additional capacity will allow for more community support and outreach about the data being collected. Charlie Tracy recently retired from the National Parks Service where he was Superintendent of the New England National Scenic Trail. More information: [www.cttrailcensus.uconn.edu](http://www.cttrailcensus.uconn.edu)

Jack Walsh discussed **an unfortunate incident** that occurred on the NRG Trail in Derby on Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>. A woman was sexually assaulted near the Route 8 overpass along the NRG trail in the middle of the afternoon. A suspect was arrested, and news reports have indicated that the man was "transient", and also wanted by police on larceny charges. Jack discussed how busy the trail typically is on Saturday afternoons, making such an attack difficult to understand.

A brief discussion about **membership** was led by Jack Walsh who suggested more contact with tourism boards and the CT Office of Tourism.

### **Roundtable Discussion**

Rista Malanca explained that there had been some unintended benefits with the construction of the trail in **Torrington**. Even before the trail had opened one previously blighted property had been cleaned up by the owner along the trail – presumably because trail users would have a clear view of the rear of the property.

Roy Cavanaugh explained that **Watertown** is working on getting tree identification placards installed along the open section of trail next to the DOT Bus Maintenance Facility. He also reported that the Cherry Hill construction materials recycling company next to the bus maintenance facility will be paving the trail around their facility.

Kevin Zak discussed the **Kinneytown Dam**, explaining that he is putting together a coalition of interested parties including federal state and local partners to discuss strategies that will improve fish passage past the dam. The Kinneytown Dam is the only major remaining obstacle to fish passage along the Naugatuck River between Thomaston and the river's confluence with the Housatonic River.

Judy Mancini reported that **Waterbury** is still on track to begin construction of Phase I from Bristol Street to Eagle Street in 2020.

The 2020 schedule will remain quarterly, with meetings on February 12<sup>th</sup>, May 13<sup>th</sup>, August 12<sup>th</sup> and November 11<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30

**Next Regular Meeting: February 12, 2020 at 9 am**  
**Location – NVCOG, 49 Leavenworth Street, Waterbury**

# Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

\*Indicates Co-Chair - Present in **BOLD**

## Municipal Representatives

<b>Torrington</b>	<b>Rista Malanca*</b> Jeremy Leifert
<b>Litchfield</b>	<b>Cleve Fuessenich</b>
<b>Harwinton</b>	<b>Suzanne Stitch</b> Joan Kirchner
<b>Thomaston</b>	<b>Stacy Sefcik</b>
<b>Watertown</b>	<b>Roy Cavanaugh</b>
<b>Waterbury</b>	Kenny Curran Sal Porzio
<b>Naugatuck</b>	Jim Stewart
<b>Beacon Falls</b>	Liz Falzone Josh Carey
<b>Seymour</b>	Rory Burke
<b>Ansonia</b>	Sheila O'Malley Bill Luneski
<b>Derby</b>	<b>Jack Walsh*</b>

## Stakeholder Representatives

### **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 – Retired Watertown Town Engineer

Clifford Cooper - Litchfield Community Greenway

Courteny Morehouse – Housatonic Valley Association

Dave Faber –Naugatuck Valley Outdoors Club

Jim MacBroom – Milone and MacBroom

Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury Y

Jolene Podgorski - Watertown DPW

Josh Carey – Connecticut Community Foundation

### **Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group**

Laurie Giannotti - CT DEEP Greenways

### **Mark Nielsen – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments**

Melanie Zimyeski – CT DOT

Rick Lynn – Northwest Hills Council of Governments

### **Steve Casey – Railroad Museum of New England**

Susan Peterson - CT DEEP Watershed Program

Vicki Barnes - Watertown - Steele Brook Ranger

## Also Present

**Judy Mancini, City of Waterbury**

**Richard Bingham, Railroad Museum of New England**