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**Upcoming Meetings will Provide Opportunities
for Public Input on Naugatuck River Greenway Trail Route**

Harwinton, Litchfield, Thomaston and Torrington residents can review and provide feedback on prospective locations and plans for the Naugatuck River Greenway Trail during a series of upcoming public meetings. Project partners and community leaders will be on hand for the meetings, which will be held on February 28th at Thomaston Town Hall, March 6th at the Harwinton Town Hall, and March 7th at the Litchfield Community Center. All meetings will begin at 5:30 with an informal opportunity to view maps and talk to project staff. A formal presentation will begin at 6:00 pm and will be followed by a question and answer period and a review of specific comments with residents.

The public outreach follows more than one year of studying potential Naugatuck River Greenway Trail routing options between Torrington and Thomaston. The purpose of the NRG Torrington to Thomaston Comprehensive Routing Study, being conducted by BSC Group of Glastonbury, CT is to inventory potential routes and rank them with stakeholder and public input with the goal of selecting a final preferred route with broad consensus. BSC will also provide phasing recommendations and preliminary construction cost estimates of the preferred route to help municipalities plan for future construction and prepare for potential funding opportunities.

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG), in partnership with the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG), received a Transit Oriented Development and Smart Growth grant from the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to conduct the study. The NVCOG and NHCOG are overseeing the project.

The project area spans approximately 11 miles of the Naugatuck Valley from Bogue Road in Torrington to a section of trail under design adjacent to the Water Pollution Control facility on Old Waterbury Road in Thomaston. During the past year, BSC and project partners inventoried all potential trail routes along with points of interest and environmental constraints along the way, and documented property ownership and stakeholder preferences and concerns. This information has been used to narrow down prospective routes to those that are most feasible. Now, public input is being solicited to help determine what route should ultimately be built when funding is secured.

Stakeholders have been involved throughout the project including chief elected officials and staff from the municipalities of Torrington, Litchfield, Harwinton and Thomaston along with representatives from the US Army Corps of Engineers, NVCOG, NHCOG, the Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee, The Railroad Museum of New England, and several property owners along the route.

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The NRG corridor has been officially designated as a greenway by the CT Greenways Council and the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The entire greenway trail is identified as a trail of statewide significance in the Connecticut Recreational Trails Plan, and was designated as one of 101 America's Great Outdoors projects in 2011 by the U. S. Department of the Interior. An Economic Impact Study conducted by NVCOG in 2017 estimated that there would be substantial economic, health and community benefits of constructing the trail.

The overall planned NRG trail route will follow the river for 44 miles, bringing it through parts of Torrington, Litchfield, Harwinton, Thomaston, Watertown, Waterbury, Naugatuck, Beacon Falls, Seymour, Ansonia and Derby. To date, trail sections have been constructed in Torrington, Watertown, Naugatuck, Beacon Falls, Seymour, Ansonia and Derby.

"We really want to hear what the public envisions for the NRG Trail," said Bill Paille, Transportation Engineer at BSC Group. "We want to be sure that the preferred route meets each community's long term needs and that the investments made are well-spent and provide the most benefit to residents."

More information can be found at <http://nvcogct.org/content/nrg-thomaston-torrington-routing-study>.