



# Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

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

## Meeting Notes

Wednesday August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 9am Via Zoom

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

Josh Lecar started the meeting, and introductions were made.

### **NRG Trail Design and Management Guide Endorsement**

Josh Lecar presented the final [NRG Trail Design and Management Guide](#), explaining that there had been a few minor changes made to it since the draft was circulated to the NRGSC ahead of the previous meeting. Josh asked the committee to endorse the guide. Jack Walsh made a motion to endorse it, seconded by Jan Mizeski, the committee universally voted to endorse the guide.

### **Ansonia Routing Study**

Joshua Eannotti and Mark Jewell gave a presentation on the routing study that is underway in Ansonia for the NRG Trail. The project focuses on the area between Pershing Drive, the current terminus of the NRG, to the Seymour Town Line. The project team has met with First Selectperson Drugonis and Seymour Officials to discuss connections into Seymour. Currently, the only route that is being considered south of Maple Street follows along Pershing Drive, crossing Bridge Street, then following Olson Drive with a separated multiuse trail along the river. The city is looking at improving connections to the trail along Bridge Street, and to the new trail on the east side of the river south of downtown, but that is not part of this study.

North of Maple Street, options on the east and west side are being considered. On the East Side, one option is primarily on-road along Maple Street, Main Street then N. Main Street (Route 115). Major issues with that route are that it is away from the river, and on road. On the west side of the river, two routes are being considered. One along the river along Riverside Drive and the concrete floodwall, possibly getting on top of the floodwall/levee where possible to get a view of the river. A second option follows 334, then hugging back sides of properties along Riverside Drive at the toe of the steep slope behind properties on Franklin Street. Since there would be private property impacts to these options, the project team has done outreach to property owners ahead of a public meeting and have had some positive feedback. All these options on the west side of the river would meet at the Burns Construction property, and continue through that property, where there is a lot of space for a trail outside of their area of operation. To traverse a steep slope up to Riverside Drive, one option is to follow an existing service road, with an alternative to follow a future alignment of route 334 that is in NVCOG's long range transportation plan. Both would connect to Nolan Field.

Paul Bunevich asked about river views from behind businesses on Riverside Drive. There are not river views from behind the businesses, but as you go north and go up grade, there could be.

Jack Walsh asked if the City would purchase the property required to build the trail. Mark Jewell answered that that conversation would be had during design. The City does not have funding for design yet, but if state or federal funds are used, they would need to follow standard rights of way procedures, including paying fair market value for property or easements.

*"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."*

### **Emergency Response Locating on Trail**

Josh Lecar explained that as Waterbury approaches completion of their Phase I NRG Trail section, they have reached out to NVCOG with questions about protocols for emergency response locating along the trail. Josh raised the question of how towns with open sections of trail are handling emergency locating. Jack Walsh explained that there are mile markers every 1/10 mile, and that seems to work well. Mark Nielsen added that mile markers are a good idea, but we don't currently have an idea of where those markers will fall until we have longer sections of trail built. NVCOG will continue looking into interim measures that make sense.

### **Project/ Funding Updates**

Waterbury Phase II: It was just announced that Waterbury will be receiving a \$23million RAISE grant to construct Phase II of the greenway between Eagle Street and West Main Street, construct a riverfront park on Jackson Street, and improve bike and ped access along West Main Street.

Thomaston-Watertown: Mark Nielsen reported that there will be a new round of Rec Trails funding available likely in the fall, and that DEEP may consider previous highly ranked projects that were not funded in the previous round, including for design of the Watertown section connecting Frost Bridge Road to Branch Brook.

Mark Nielsen also discussed the expansion of the Transportation Alternatives program under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, explaining that NVCOG is trying to figure out what that will mean for projects that were submitted to the program in 2019, including several NRG sections.

Josh explained that a portion of the Oxford Main Street project was recommended by Senator Murphy for Congressionally Directed Spending.

Josh said that if any municipal partners are considering applying for any funding for the NRG Trail to reach out to NVCOG staff if they need assistance.

Kim Bradley is the new DEEP CT Trails and Greenways Coordinator, replacing Laurie Giannotti. Kim reported that indeed, there will be \$9m in funding available soon through the Recreational Trails program, and that the CT Greenways Council and DEEP are meeting to discuss the unmet need in the last round, as well as how projects will be scored going forward. That discussion will take some time, but DEEP is anticipating a late fall funding round. Jack Walsh asked about the CT Trail Census, and availability of data. Kim explained that her position at UConn as the Trail Census Coordinator will be filled once a contract is finalized between UConn and DEEP for funding awarded during the previous rec trails round. Data is still being collected from trail counters, but the online data portal is currently not being maintained. Part of the new funding will be used to upgrade the portal to be more user friendly and easier to maintain. Data can still be requested from CT Trail Census staff Aaron Budris or Emily Wilson.

Jack Walsh asked how the work on Main Street in Derby will impact the entrance to the NRG. Mark Nielsen explained that the old parking area will be replaced with a new parking area on Route 34, and the old parking area will be replaced with a entrance park. The trail will rise to the level of the pedestrian walkway on the bridge. The Route 34 project is a 2-year project, so access to that end of the NRG will be impacted for a while longer.

### **Public Outreach**

Josh Lecar explained that NVCOG staff has been busy attending events with outreach for the update of the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which will include enhanced inclusion of active/alternative transportation. NVCOG has a survey open to receive public input for the plan. COG staff will be attending events throughout the fall. Rich Donovan added that NVCOG are being aggressive with public outreach with a

focus on safety, especially non-motorized user safety. Please take the survey and distribute. NVCOG is also hosting the NVision conference at the Palace Theater on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Other**

Josh Lecar explained that NVCOG is working on advancing improvements to fish passage at Kinneytown Dam, and those improvements may have an impact on future NRG trail routing between Seymour and Ansonia.

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 a.m. Next Meeting Wednesday, November 9, 2022.**

# Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee (present in BOLD)

## Municipal Representatives

Torrington	Rista Malanca*
	Jeremy Leifert
Litchfield	Cleve Fuessenich
Harwinton	Suzanne Stitch
	Joan Kirchner
Thomaston	Stacey Sefcik
Watertown	<b>Paul Bunevich</b>
Waterbury	Kenny Curran
	Judy Mancini
Naugatuck	Jim Stewart
	<b>Vincent Seifert</b>
	<b>Jan Mizeski</b>
Beacon Falls	Liz Falzone
	Josh Carey
Seymour	Rory Burke
Ansonia	Sheila O'Malley
Derby	<b>Jack Walsh*</b>

## Stakeholder Representatives

Aaron Budris – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments  
**Anna Bergeron** – CT DOT  
Bill Purcell – Valley Chamber  
Bob Gregorski - Trout Unlimited  
Chuck Berger – Retired Watertown Town Engineer  
Clifford Cooper - Litchfield Community Greenway  
Dave Faber –Naugatuck Valley Outdoors Club  
Janell Mullen – Northwest Hills Council of Governments  
Jim MacBroom – Milone and MacBroom  
Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury Y  
John Ceretta - Railroad Museum of New England  
Jolene Podgorski - Watertown DPW  
Josh Carey – Connecticut Community Foundation  
Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group  
**Kim Bradley** – CT DEEP  
**Mark Nielsen** – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments  
Matthew Coleman – US Army Corps of Engineers  
Melanie Zimyeski – CT DOT  
Mike Jastremski – Housatonic Valley Association  
Robert Phillips - Northwest Hills Council of Governments  
Steve Casey – Railroad Museum of New England  
Susan Peterson - CT DEEP Watershed Program  
Vicki Barnes - Watertown - Steele Brook Rangers

## Also Present

**Helen Leung** – Town of Oxford  
  
**Kerri Stolle** – Park and Rec Director,  
Harwinton  
  
**Adrian Huq** – NVCOG Sustainable CT  
Fellow  
  
**Josh Eannotti** - VHB/ City of Ansonia  
  
**Mark Jewell** – VHB/ City of Ansonia  
  
**Richard Crowther** – NVCOG  
  
**Richard Donovan** - NVCOG