



Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

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

Meeting Notes

Wednesday November 8th, 2023, 9am Via Zoom

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

Rista Malanca started the meeting, and introductions were made.

NRG Trail Regional Priorities Update

A draft NRG Trail Priorities Document was presented at the September meeting, and Aaron Budris reviewed that presentation.

In 2015, the NRGSC developed a priorities document that laid out all the projected trail sections with context. The goal was to add more weight to funding requests and guide the future of NRG development. That document was last updated in 2021. With upcoming funding opportunities, and recent progress on previously identified priorities, Mr. Budris thought it would be a good idea to update the document.

The document identifies sections that are complete, active (funded for design and construction), and regional priorities. "Priorities" refers to a section that: connects two completed sections, connects a completed section with an important destination or population center, or requires little investment/effort. Seven priorities were identified in 2021. Two of those, Waterbury and Watertown's, have been funded in the two years since that update. Torrington, Harwinton, Naugatuck, Beacon Falls, and Seymour/Beacon Falls have remaining priorities.

At the September meeting, the Committee was asked to consider: are the prioritization criteria still valid? Is the information we have on each section accurate? Should other projects beyond the trail sections themselves be considered, such as signage?

NVCOG received some comments and corrections since the September meeting, and those were incorporated into an updated draft that was shared with the committee. The proposed priorities are:

- Torrington: TORR-2 (East Main Street/ Franklin to East Albert Street)
- Harwinton: LITC/HARW-3 (Campville Hill Road to Wildcat Hill Road)
- Thomaston: THOM -3 (Watertown Road to Old Waterbury Road Trailhead)
- Waterbury: WTBY-3a (Mad River Spur to Park at 313 Mill Street)
- Naugatuck: NAUG-1 (Naugatuck River Access Park to Pulaski Bridge)
- Beacon Falls: BEAC-3 (Route 42 to Toby's Pond)
- Seymour/ Beacon Falls: SEYM-1/BEAC-5 (Toby's Pond to Bank Street)
- Derby/ Ansonia: DERB-1 (Below grade crossing of Division Street)

NVCOG also received comments about outdated cost estimates. Many of the "best estimates" that were included in the previous documents and the original draft were several years old, some dating to the 2010 routing studies, reflecting a substantial undervaluation of current costs. NVCOG Transportation Engineer Kevin Ellis updated those costs based on the age of each estimate using standard inflation factors, and those "corrected" estimates were included in the updated draft. These should be much more realistic estimates but should still be considered rough estimates.

"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."

Kerri Stolle, Harwinton Parks and Recreation Director, asked if the proposed priority section in Harwinton was the section that there was opposition to during the Thomaston to Torrington routing study. Aaron answered that no, the section listed as a proposed priority is an on-road section along Valley Road between Wildcat Hill and Campville Hill Roads that would only require minimal upgrades to make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians to consider it a completed section of NRG Trail.

A motion to endorse the 2023 NRG Trail Priorities Document as presented was made by Brian Sirowich, seconded by Jim Stewart, and passed unanimously by the committee.

Project Updates

Torrington held a ribbon cutting for a section of trail between Park Avenue and Palmer Bridge St, along Scoville St. Scoville Street was made one way, allowing for a section of multiuse trail to replace one of the travel lanes. A RRFB was also installed at a midblock crossing of Palmer Bridge Road. This section connects two previously constructed sections and connects the Senior center to the Toro Sports Complex.

Ansonia Routing Study: No update.

Waterbury RAISE: AI Engineers conducting preliminary design, vendor selected for a constructability review. Project on track

Derby/Shelton Bridge: Progress being made. North side of bridge completed, traffic has been shifted so that work can commence on the southern half of the bridge which will feature a pedestrian causeway and bidirectional cycle track. Expected completion Spring 2024.

Derby Pedestrian Bridge: Derby has approved funding to repair the pedestrian bridge on the Housatonic side of the Derby Greenway that crosses RR tracks.

Derby Route 34: Construction is progressing, with a wide sidewalk and parking on the southbound side of Route 34, including trailhead parking.

Kinneytown Dam: CT Brownfield Land Bank is expected to acquire the property within the next several months so that NVCOG and partners can begin dam removal design, and ultimately begin dam removal. Sediments behind the two dams related to the project are being assessed by EPA.

Funding Submissions and Opportunities

DEEP Recreational Trails: Kim Bradley reported that the CT Bond Commission has approved \$10m for the next round of Rec Trails funding. The CT Greenways Council grant subcommittee met, and has updated guidance for applications, but the application itself will remain the same as last round. The Grant round is expected to be opened in early December, with an expected deadline of March 1. There are still a few towns working on contracts with DEEP for their 2023 Rec Trails awards, including Thomaston, Watertown and Waterbury.

Brian Sirowich said that Seymour is expecting to apply for funding for either a routing study or supplement to their CIF grant.

Kerri Stolle is interested in putting together an application in Harwinton/ Litchfield, but will need to meet with stakeholders in Litchfield and Harwinton to plan for that. Rista Announced that she is leaving the City of Torrington for a position at the NHCOC. A meeting will be set up soon to discuss. If any towns would like a letter of support from the committee for a Rec Trails application, please submit that request ahead of the February NRGSC meeting.

RAISE: A funding round is expected this winter. It is designed for large-scale projects that are un-fundable through other sources. \$25 Million cap. Waterbury received a large grant through RAISE for the WATER Phase II project that will construct a section of NRG Trail into downtown. It requires a 20% non-federal share, which can be difficult for a town to come up with when projects are in the multimillions. NVCOC is available to assist with project applications, as long as they have considered where the municipal share will come from.

Aaron explained that NVCOC staff has been talking about the potential to package together several NRG Sections into an NRG application, and NVCOC will reach out to municipalities to discuss further and gauge interest.

Community Connectivity is currently not open, with but there is expected to be future rounds.

Events and Public Outreach

CT Trails Symposium: Rista and Kim gave a recap of the successful event, with over 100 participants that was held in Torrington at the 5 points Arts Center on October 13th. The event was expanded to include a film festival and events over several days. There is an opportunity to host the Trails Symposium next year.

Potential for an NRG bike ride event in 2024: Jason Mangini recounted a 40-mile bike ride that took place in 2012 that was highly successful. John Monroe from the National Parks Service helped organize and attended the event. Jason said he is in touch with folks at the Waterbury Y and would reach out to see if they, or some of his other contacts might be interested in assisting with organizing a future event. A new event could emphasize and promote the work that has been done and is underway and help build momentum.

NVCOC Has materials, posters and reports to help with outreach about the NRG at events. Contact Aaron if you have any events coming at which you would like to promote the NRG.

2024 Proposed Meeting Schedule

Keeping the same schedule as 2023, meeting dates for 2024 will be: February 14, May 8, August 14, November 13.

Other

Rich Donovan explained that NVCOC is working on an [Active Transportation Plan](#) for the NVCOC region.

NVCOC has also received a Safe Streets for All federal grant looking at safety improvements across the region, and planning for implementation of those improvements.

Aaron shared and demonstrated the new [CT Trail Census Data Dashboard](#)

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 a.m. Next Meeting February 14, 2024

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee (present in BOLD)

Municipal Representatives

Torrington	Rista Malanca* Jeremy Leifert
Litchfield	Cleve Fuessenich
Harwinton	Kerri Stolle Joan Kirchner
Thomaston	Stacey Sefcik Amanda Burch
Watertown	Paul Bunevich
Waterbury	Kenny Curran Judy Mancini
Naugatuck	Jim Stewart Vincent Seifert
Beacon Falls	Liz Falzone Josh Carey
Seymour	Brian Sirowich
Ansonia	Sheila O'Malley
Derby	Jack Walsh*

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

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

Jerry Lukowski – Town of Watertown

Jason Mangini

Christine O'Neill – NVCOG

Karen Cook – Town of Oxford

Kevin Ellis – NVCOG

Chris Roberts, CT DOT

Rich Donovan - NVCOG