



Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

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

Meeting Notes

Wednesday May 8th, 2024, 9am Via Zoom

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

Rista Malanca started the meeting, and introductions were made.

Recreational Trails Grant Recap

Aaron noted that the Steering Committee prepared [2024 DEEP Recreational Trails support letters](#) for the following groups: Beacon Falls, Ansonia, Harwinton, NVCOG, Thomaston, Watertown, Oxford, and WestCOG. Aaron invited the project leaders to summarize their projects.

NVCOG – Aaron explained that in connection with the Kinneytown Dam removal, NVCOG applied to design a trail that would span the length (Appx. 2 miles) of the facility property and connect to existing trail networks in Ansonia and Seymour.

Beacon Falls – No one from BF was on the call. Rista mentioned that as a reviewer, she did not recall seeing an application from them.

Ansonia – Mark Jewell noted that Ansonia’s application sought to supplement their award from last year for the Pershing Drive to Wakelee Ave NRG Trail section. It is a two mile stretch.

Harwinton – Rista noted that Harwinton submitted an application for design of the first phase of their trail, from Torrington to Litchfield.

Thomaston – Amanda Burch was unsure if an application was submitted. Aaron thought Thomaston submitted for supplemental funds to complete last year’s design project.

Watertown – Paul shared that Watertown applied for additional funds, similar to what Ansonia did. Last year they received \$300,000, and they requested another \$300,000 for the same project.

Oxford – Aaron noted that Oxford applied to design a trail and parking for a property that they had acquired through CT DEEP’s OSWA grant program. It is adjacent to a blue-blazed trail, and their design concept involved connecting this property to that blue blazed trail.

WestCOG – WestCOG applied for a routing study, Aaron explained, for a planning project investigating routing and feasibility of a trail extending from NY to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, mainly along the old railbed, a portion of which currently carries the Larkin Bridle Trail. Rista noted that WestCOG also submitted a second application as well.

Rista, as a reviewer for these grants, noted that this was a highly competitive round with 96 applications totaling over \$20 million in requests. No applications received low scores. Kim Bradley has positively transformed this program. Rista encouraged the group to start planning now for next year’s round. She hopes that the announcement of the awards will coincide with Connecticut Trails Day (first Saturday in June).

*“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.”*

Active Transportation

Rich Donovan noted that NVCOG's Active Transportation Plan is progressing on schedule, with an existing conditions report slated to be complete shortly. Public engagement is the current focus, including charettes, hybrid meetings, and surveys. The ATP focuses on a three-pronged active transportation approach: the NRG as the "spine" and connecting trails as the "ribs"; on-street infrastructure like bike lanes and sidewalks; and routes on low- and high-volume roads to connect to trails, so that users don't need to drive to the trails. Rich noted that the transportation team has been attending municipal meetings to share the vision and encourage implementation of active transportation. He looks forward to feedback from the Steering Committee on the final report. Rista expressed her excitement at the Plan.

Desira noted that upcoming engagement events for this effort include: 1) 5/23/24 12pm walk along the Waterbury section of the NRG, and 2) pending event 6/11/24 3pm walk/bike along the Derby Greenway.

Next, Desira introduced potential sticker concepts to promote the NRG, each one centering the NRG logo. Rista asked the group to select one design and move forward, so that the branding is uniform. The consensus appeared to be #3, which lists all municipalities on the Greenway. Judy Manicini pointed out that #2 is the only one that writes out "Naugatuck River Greenway," so people would know what NRG refers to. Rista suggested having both #3 and #2 available. The suggestion of creating another design that combines the text of both #3 and #2 would be challenging to implement due to spacing. Rista requested that Desira follow up afterwards via email.

NRG Signage

Aaron shared that there are many NRG signs still available in his office. He reminded trail managers that NVCOG can distribute 18x12 small trailhead signs, 12x48 large trailhead signs, and 3.5x3.5 confidence and directional markers. At some point, Aaron would like to discuss updating the "interpretive panels" (poster with explanation of the NRG). He has two spares for now if anyone needs them.

Last year, Waterbury requested mile-markers for their section of the NRG for emergency services purposes. SignPro has created a proof and a cost estimate. As discussed previously, the markers refer to the mile of the individual town (ex: WTBY for Waterbury), rather than the mile on the full trail, given that it is not yet complete. The cost for 25 markers was \$1,600, \$3,200 for posts, and \$1,750 for installation. Aaron shared this estimate as an example for any other town that is interested in emulating Waterbury's model. Rista referenced the [Design Manual](#) as a resource.

Project Updates

Ansonia – Mark Jewell explained that the Routing Study is in draft form with the City for review. This is the same section that received a Rec Trails Grant last year for design. Mark is unsure when the study would be finalized.

Waterbury – Judy Mancini said she anticipates receiving a 70% design on the RAISE grant from the AI Engineers next week. Community meetings are underway. Things are progressing very well.

Derby/Shelton Bridge – Jack shared that the bridge's progress is amazing. It should be substantially completed by July, and the Main Street portion should be complete around October/fall. He even sees the construction workers working on the weekends. Mark Nielsen said the long delay for the bridge was caused by utility work.

Derby Route 34 - Aaron displayed some drone images, featuring the trailhead park on the corner. Jack would like to see a trail sign in the kiosk that will be featured there. Pavers along the trail and for parking alongside the road widening are pervasive, creating both aesthetic and low-impact development benefits.

Mark Nielsen shared that NVCOG submitted a RAISE application for the gap section of the NRG in Thomaston. Announcements should be out in June.

Funding Opportunities

Mark Nielsen stated that NVCOG has been working cooperatively with other agencies on the [Transportation Alternatives](#) grant. There are two submissions from our region – one from Ansonia and one from Seymour. The Ansonia section is the same one Mark Jewell referenced earlier (Pershing to Wakelee/Nolan). Mark encouraged anyone from Naugatuck, Beacon Falls, Oxford, Watertown, etc. to submit projects, since NVCOG has some sway over which ones are selected. Applications are due to DOT by June 28th. They fund both design and construction. There is a 20% non-federal share.

The [Microgrant Program](#) is an open solicitation, Rich Donovan mentioned. Towns, school districts, and nonprofits are all eligible. He noted there is considerable funding available still. Bikes, bike-locks, events, and trainers are all eligible expenses.

Rista noted that Round 2 of CT DEEP's Rec Trails grant is expected around the same time next year.

Events and Public Outreach

Aaron recalled previous discussions about holding an NRG event this year. NVCOG is willing to support the idea. He floated the idea of applying for a microgrant to fund the event. Rista is looking for someone who is a cyclist and can pull this together, with permitting and planning support from her and Aaron. She offered to listen to smaller scale ideas as well. Ryan Glick offered to assist with organizing, as a cyclist who has experience with biking trails in the area.

Trails Day 2024 is fast-approaching (first weekend of June). Aaron wondered if any towns are considering hosting walks for this day. NVCOG is happy to try to attend or loan informational/promotional materials. He would love to see NRG posted on the event list.

Aaron noted that NVCOG attended several Earth Day events this year, during which they promoted the NRG trail. They generally incorporate the NRG into general NVCOG outreach, as many people are very interested in the Greenway.

Other Business/ News

Rich Donovan shared that NVCOG has a Complete Street Guidebook in the works. It would be a resource that helps identify LID elements, street furniture, and land use, as well as discussing benefits. He will share the draft with the Steering Committee soon and looks forward to feedback.

Aaron noted that the Kinneytown Dam project is moving forward. EPA has put sediment sampling rigs in the water around O'Sullivan's Island, which may generate some questions from the public.

Adjournment

Rista wondered if the group was interested in a "field trip" for the August meeting. Aaron said we could attempt a hybrid meeting, though the goal would be to get as many people in-person as possible. Suggestions for the location are welcome.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:06 a.m. **Next Meeting August 14, 2024.**

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee (present in BOLD)

Municipal Representatives

Torrington	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

Rista Malanca* – Northwest Hills Council of Governments

Marc McCarthy - Litchfield Community Greenway

Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury YMCA

John Ceretta - Railroad Museum of New England

Josh Carey – Connecticut Community Foundation

Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group

Kim Bradley - CT DEEP Greenways

Mark Nielsen – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Matthew Coleman – US Army Corps of Engineers

Robert Phillips - Northwest Hills Council of Governments

Steve Casey – Railroad Museum of New England

Susan Peterson - CT DEEP Watershed Program

Other Participants

Rich Donovan – NVCOG

Richard Crowther – NVCOG

Desira Blanchard – NVCOG

Christine O'Neill – NVCOG

Mark Jewell – VHB

Ryan Glick - NRRG

Jim Kulpa - VHB

Heidy Coronel – NVCOG

Jerry Lukowski – Town of Watertown

Roy Cavanaugh – City of Waterbury