



Regional Naugatuck River Greenway Routing Study Community Workshop

Tuesday, November 17, 2009
Naugatuck, CT

MEETING SUMMARY

Naugatuck Mayor Bob Mezzo and Beacon Falls First Selectman Susan Cable welcomed everyone to the public workshop. They thanked everyone for attending and voiced their support for the greenway. State Representative Theresa Conroy and State Senator Joseph Crisco spoke about their support for the Naugatuck River Greenway.

Sam Gold, of the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV), next provided a regional perspective of the Naugatuck River and Greenway. He stated that the broad intent of the project was the creation of a non-motorized multiuse greenway trail from Derby to Torrington along the Naugatuck River.

Sam reviewed the vision and benefits of a greenway in this corridor. Sam noted the greenway would likely take a different form in different areas. In some places, non-motorized users would travel on a paved path or stone dust. In others, users would travel on a sidewalk and bike lanes along the roadway.

Sam stated that this project would determine the routing, phasing, and costs of the greenway. The final product would be a document for each of the four municipalities and a compilation document for the COGCNV five-municipality greenway area. He discussed where we are now in the study and the schedule.

Sam noted that the focus of tonight's meeting would be on the towns of Watertown and Thomaston. The purpose of the meeting is to gather input from the communities to assist in the routing determination. In addition, Sam discussed the on-going study on the Waterbury portion of the Naugatuck River Greenway. He noted that Alta Planning + Design, the firm leading this study, is also currently wrapping up the Waterbury study.

Three local representatives provided insights on the status of local greenway planning. Jim Stewart, DPW Director of the Borough of Naugatuck, first explained what Naugatuck has completed to date on the greenway. Next, Anita Parzuchowski, Vice Chairman of Beacon Falls Conservation Commission, voiced her excitement and anticipation for the planning process. Both Jim and Anita recalled the Naugatuck River as being polluted and untouchable in the past and were excited the greenway would connect residents and attract tourists to the now clean river. Ron Napoli, Chairman of the Waterbury Greenway Advisory Committee, then provided an updated on the Waterbury Greenway

Study. He noted that the committee has reviewing a draft document now and expects a final document in December 2009.

Jeff Olson, Alta Planning + Design, next offered a PowerPoint presentation on "How Greenways are Transforming Communities in Connecticut and Beyond." Jeff began by providing background information on greenways, such as who uses them, what their benefits are, and connections that they can provide. He discussed and encouraged public art and environmental opportunities on greenways.

Jeff next provided information on national and local examples of greenways and specific components of each. He wrapped up the presentation discussing opportunities and challenges in the municipalities of Naugatuck and Beacon Falls

A small group exercise followed the presentation. There were two large-size maps of Beacon Falls and two large-size maps of Naugatuck. The attendees were asked to go, in equal sized groups, to one of the maps of their community. The community members were then asked to discuss the following questions and mark up the maps with their suggestions.

1. What are the key places/destinations that the Greenway trail should connect to?
2. Where are the critical gaps between these places and the Naugatuck River?
3. Where along the river are the best places for amenities *besides* a trail, such as a small boat launch, a picnic area, parking, rest station, etc.

After about 30 minutes, each smaller group reported back to the entire group with their recommendations for routing and amenities.

A representative of the U.S. Bureau set up a table at the workshop and answered questions about the 2010 census.

Beacon Falls Comments:

1. Key places/destinations to be connected?
 - Downtown area. Important to connect residents, and tourists, to this area.
 - Naugatuck State Forest, west of the river. This is where most recreational users access the open space.
 - Volunteer Park
 - Tobey's Pond and Recreational Park
 - Small bridge connection from S. Main across river to O&G trailhead
 - Town Hall and Elementary School area
 - Pent Road Recreation Fields (potential connection from Cold Spring Road through private property??)
2. Critical gaps between destinations and river?
 - Major gap, when traveling southbound, is getting to the east side of the river and downtown. Depot Bridge seems the only option for this
 - It would be ideal if there were essentially a "loop trail" through Beacon Falls. The trail can largely be on the west side of the river and utilize

portions of Lopus Road. The loop alternative should head east of the river into the downtown area.

- Build a cantilevered path on the edge of the cliff face north of Black Forest Road in the Naugatuck State Forest
3. Where are the best places for amenities other than a trail?
 - Picnic tables, restrooms, and fountains in the Naugatuck State Forest.
 - Benches sporadically throughout the town, especially near parks.
 - Kayak drop-off and lock-up amenities directly over Naugatuck border.
 - Small boat launches at Riverbend Park, Volunteer Park and just west of the Rte. 8/Cross Street on/off ramp.
 4. Misc. Comments: Can the future Rte. 42/67 connector road be utilized as a greenway connection south to Seymour?

Naugatuck Comments:

1. Key places/destinations to be connected?
 - Former Uniroyal site – convert to park
 - Old Casanova Restaurant (east side of Maple St.) – convert to river observation area and park with old clock
 - Historic town dam
 - Train station (commuter rail)
 - Potential park riverward of tracks near train station
 - Trail network in forest
 - Bridal trail / Larkin State Park
2. Critical gaps between destinations and river?
 - East of river from Maple to Breen is a challenge
 - Between Platts Mill and Pulaski Bridge
 - Between Downtown and State Forest
3. Where are the best places for amenities other than a trail?
 - Canoe launches at Cotton Hollow and Breen Field
 - Bird sanctuary at North end of forest
 - double-sided benches needed in Linden Park and Breen Field
4. Any “special challenges”?
 - Water Street (sight distances/accident history)
 - South of Platts Mill (Rt. 8 pinch point)
5. Green construction ideas
 - Reuse/recycle materials from Uniroyal site
 - Lighting (solar/hydro/green power)
6. Other amenities

- Bird sanctuary at north end of Naugatuck State Forest
- Connectivity
- Boat launches
- Build out Breen Field with other activities & seating that accommodates all fields

7. Other Opportunities?

- Existing walking trail to Waterbury line (single track) from the Rte. 68 bridge on the east bank

Non-Naugatuck Participant Comments:

- Need to connect communities with unified trail design
- Loop connections of varying lengths are important to attracting users
- Safety (real and perceived) is dependant on use. The trail must be attractive and connect destinations to encourage use.
- The trail should stay near the river wherever feasible, but connectivity is most important. The trail can leave the river to achieve connectivity.

The meeting adjourned and Sam thanked everyone for attending.