



Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

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

Special Meeting Notes

Wednesday, November 11th, 2017 – 9 to 11am

NVCOG Conference Room

49 Leavenworth Street, Waterbury, CT

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

Co-Chair Ingrid Manning opened the meeting and introductions were made.

Ingrid announced that Rista Malanca has agreed to take over for Chuck Berger as Co-Chair. Chuck recently retired from the Town of Watertown.

The purpose of the special meeting was to present the findings of the NRG Economic study that has been ongoing over the past year and a half. The presentation has been posted here: <http://nvcogct.org/calendar/nrg-steering-committee-special-meeting>. The DRAFT report can be found here: <http://nvcogct.org/content/naugatuck-river-greenway-economic-impact-study>.

Mark Nielsen gave a presentation detailing the methods and findings of the study. The presentation detailed the organizations and individuals that were involved with funding and conducting the study. He explained how data was collected and analyzed, and gave an overview of the findings. Projected direct economic impacts were presented including those from direct user spending, consumer surplus and health benefits. Economic benefits were calculated using a baseline scenario – construction completed by 2030 for \$77.2 million with 5 million annual uses on the entire trail. With those assumptions, the direct economic benefits are expected to be nearly \$699 million in 2031. This figure consists of direct expenditures (\$85.3M), consumer surplus (the value that consumers are willing to pay over and above what they actually pay for consumption of a good or to participate in an activity - \$94.2M), and Health benefits (\$519.1M). The health benefits were calculated based on reduced incidence of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease from increased activity and using the estimated number of uses, proportion of users meeting recommended activity levels, and proportion of the local population suffering from these afflictions. These benefits and construction costs were then used as inputs to a regional economic model, REMI, to simulate the indirect and induced impacts that they will have on the overall economy, estimating impacts on population, employment, personal income, and fiscal impacts.

Mark explained that NVCOG is working on disaggregating the impacts to estimate the economic impacts that will accrue from each community's section of trail. It is being done based on the length of trail and population within 5 miles of the trail. The disaggregated figures will be presented to each community in a one or two page summary, and through presentations to relevant town boards. Mark explained that there are also sections of the report detailing potential funding opportunities and the obstacles and opportunities that the many brownfield properties along the NRG route may present. The report also lists recommendations made by health, public works and trail management officials during the focus groups that were conducted for stakeholders along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. These recommendations represent a great opportunity to benefit from the experiences of those along a completed trail, to build on their successes and learn from their mistakes.

"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."

A long conversation with those present and on the phone resulted in several comments and recommendations to improve the report and presentation.

Comments:

- The report should also discuss qualitative benefits even if they are not quantifiable:
 - Environmental benefits – ecosystem awareness/ environmental services
 - Social benefits of providing a place to congregate and socialize
 - Psychological health benefits
- Include profile of CCEA and main contributors.
- There should be more discussion about property valuation including references to studies that have been done elsewhere showing increases to local property values in the vicinity of multiuse trails.
- Include information about business and community revitalization related to trail development – possibly include some case studies/ summaries.
- Better clarify when data presented is annual or cumulative
- Explain the REMI model better – especially in the presentation. The model’s assumptions and conclusions are not necessarily clear, and it could lead do dismissal of findings. There should be a slide in the presentation explaining what the model does and what the conclusions mean.
- The funding section should include case studies and examples of how communities have funded and constructed trails aimed at giving communities a better understanding of options.
- Is there information that insurance companies could provide about health benefits?

The consensus of the group was to wait to endorse until changes are made. It will be revisited at the February 8th meeting. Once the Steering Committee endorses it, it will be presented to NVCOG and local community presentations will begin. Mark asked steering committee members to think about the best way to present the information in their community, and explained that the steering committee members will need to help staff with outreach.

Next Meeting: February 8th at 9am

NVCOG Conference Room, 49 Leavenworth St. Waterbury

Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee

Present in **BOLD**

Aaron Budris – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Bill Purcell – Valley Chamber

Bob Gregorski - Naugatuck River Watershed Association & Trout Unlimited

Christopher Way - US Army Corps of Engineers

Chuck Berger – Former Watertown Town Engineer - Retired

Clifford Cooper - Litchfield Community Greenway

Dave Faber – Connecticut Outdoors, LLC/ Naugatuck Valley Outdoors Club

Dominic Sorrentino – Beacon Falls

Fred Messore - Town of Seymour

Ingrid Manning – formerly of CT Community Foundation

Jack Walsh – Derby Greenway Committee

Jim MacBroom – Milone and MacBroom

Jim O'Rourke - Waterbury Y

Jim Stewart - Naugatuck Borough Engineer

Joan Kirchner - Harwinton Conservation Commission

Jolene Podgorski - Watertown DPW

Josh Carey – Connecticut Community Foundation

Kathy McNamara - City of Waterbury

Kenny Curran – Waterbury Greenway Committee

Kevin Zak – Naugatuck River Revival Group

Laura Wildman – Princeton Hydro

Laurie Giannotti - CT DEEP Greenways

Liz Falzone- Beacon Falls

Savannah Judge - Housatonic Valley Association

Mark Nielsen – Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

Melanie Zimyeski – CT DOT

Rich Minnick – Beacon Falls

Rista Malanca - Torrington

Sal Porzio – City of Waterbury

Sheila O'Malley – City of Ansonia

Susan Peterson - CT DEEP Watershed Program

Suzanne Stitch – Town of Harwinton

Vicki Barnes - Watertown - Steele Brook Rangers

Vincent Gualtieri - US Army Corps of Engineers

Will Cummings – Thomaston Trail Committee

Also Present:

Laura Brown, UConn