



Place: Plainville Library
Lower Level Meeting Room
56 E Main St, Plainville, CT 06062

Meeting Notes

Date: May 24, 2017

Notes Taken by: Geoffrey Morrison-Logan

Project #: 42201.00

Re: Plainville and New Britain Planning Public Meeting Summary
Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Gap Closure Study and CT **fastrak**
Connection Study (Gap Closure Trail Study)

The public meeting took place on Monday, May 22, 2017 from 6:00-8:00pm. The meeting consisted of a presentation to report on the findings of the work that had been undertaken since the 2016 Fall Public Workshops. This work included the review of the long list of alignments, the creation of screening criteria, and the development of a short list of trail alignments for Plainville and New Britain. This work also included finalizing evaluation criteria that will be used to further refine and assess the short list of alignments. The presentation, followed by a large group question and answer period, began at 6:15pm and went for approximately one hour. After the presentation, there was an open house segment where members of the Steering Committee and the consultant team were available for one-on-one discussions with the public. Comment forms were distributed at the meeting to gather input on the alignments and evaluation criteria. The PowerPoint presentation and PDF's of the short list alignments have been made available on the project website.

A total of 93 members of the public signed in at the meeting.

1. Call to Order: Geoffrey Morrison-Logan (VHB) called the meeting to order at 6:20pm and welcomed members of the public and introduced Tim Malone(CRCOG). Mr. Malone also welcomed the public and provided a brief overview of the agenda for the public meeting.

2. Public Comment:

a. No one chose to speak at this time.

3. Presentation Overview:

- a. Mr. Malone started the presentation with an overview of the scope of the study and highlighted some of the major deliverables that included:
 - i. Document existing conditions, opportunities and constraints
 - ii. Develop a list of potential trail alignments
 - iii. Screen and evaluate potential trail alignments
 - iv. Identify one preferred trail alignment that completes the FCHT gap
 - Identify one preferred trail alignment that connects to CT **fastrak** in New Britain
 - v. Prepare concept plan
 - Conceptual level design
 - Cost estimates

100 Great Meadow Road
Suite 200
Wethersfield, CT 06109-2377
P 860.807.4300

- Implementation plan
- b.** Mr. Malone provided a summary of the Work Plan that included three phases;
 - i.** Phase 1: Identify Alternative(s)
 - ii.** Phase 2: Refine Alternative(s)
 - iii.** Phase 3: Prepare Concept Plan
- c.** Mr. Morrison-Logan provided a summary of the potential trail alignments that were developed in the Fall workshops. He discussed the outreach efforts that were undertaken as well as a summary of the star analysis exercise that was used to develop the long list of trail alignments. Slides were presented that showed the various alignments and how they pertained to users groups that included:
 - i.** Primary and Secondary Schools User Group
 - ii.** Commuter User Group
 - iii.** Parks and Recreation User Group
 - iv.** Shopping and Entertainment User Group

Mr. Morrison-Logan showed slides of the fourteen (14) alignments in Plainville and five (5) in New Britain that were developed at the previous workshops.

- d.** Theresa Carr (VHB) provided a summary of the screening criteria that was used to get from the long list to the short list of alignments. This included a review of the seven screening criteria, as well as the thresholds associated with each criterion.
- e.** Mark Jewell (VHB) provided a summary of the short list of four (4) alignments for Plainville and the two (2) alignments for New Britain that resulted from the screening criteria.

The Plainville alignments were labeled as follows:

- Alignment A – 2009 study preferred alternative
- Alignment B – Eastern Option
- Alignment C – Western Option
- Alignment D – Eastern Option

The New Britain Alignments were labeled as follows:

- Alignment E – Off-Road Option
- Alignment F – On-Road Option

A summary of the major components of each alignment were provided, such as the percentage of off-road facilities and the total length of the trail.

The following questions and comments were raised by members of the public during this portion of the meeting:

- Concern that on Alignment C, which goes through the Tomasso Nature Park, people walking their dogs on the path could disturb the wildlife. The team responded that this was a good point and would take it into consideration.
- Concern that there could be traffic problems in downtown and asked how you deal with that. The team responded that traffic engineers would pay close attention to such issues when designing the trail.
- Pointing out that it seemed possible to mix and match elements from the various alignments. The team noted that during the evaluation step, each alignment would be broken up into a northern and a southern segment, allowing them to be mixed and matched.
- A question about whether there would be consideration of scenic aspects of the study. The team responded that this would be covered in the evaluation.
- A question regarding costs of each of the alignments. The team responded that cost estimates would be developed during the next phase of the evaluation.
- A note that it was essential that the trail be kept off the road to keep people safe and make them feel comfortable.
- A note that having the trail go through town means that people will stop and spend money in town.
- A question regarding potential property impacts and whether or not any of the alignments would impact private property. The team responded that at this time they were assuming some potential private property impacts on each of the alignments, but that the exact nature of them would not be clear until later in the process when the alignments are developed further.
- A comment that nobody had mentioned eminent domain yet. The team responded that it was too early in the process to discuss the use of this tool. A determination of the use of that tool would be made during the design phase by either the town/city or the Department of Transportation.
- A question regarding whether or not public safety officials have been brought into the discussion. The team responded that a series of focus groups were held in the summer and that public safety personnel were invited.
- A note that in congested areas, cyclists could be instructed to dismount and walk if safety is a concern.
- A question about whether or not the north-south alignment would be prioritized over the east-west one. The team responded that those decisions would be made by the town/city and the Department of Transportation. It was noted that completing the East Coast Greenway has been a priority for the state, which the north-south alignment helps to accomplish.
- A question about where information on the long list of alternatives can be found. The team responded that the presentations from the fall public workshops are available on the project website.

- f.** Ms. Carr provided a summary of the Evaluation Criteria that will be used to further assess the Short List of Alignments. The Evaluation Criteria include:
- i.** Connectivity
 - ii.** Safety
 - iii.** Security
 - iv.** Potential Property Impacts
 - v.** Potential Environmental Impacts
 - vi.** Estimated Costs

Ms. Carr outlined the steps that will be undertaken over the next 1-2 month to evaluate the Short List of Alignments, that include:

- Evaluate the Alignments
- Review Results with Steering Committee
- Recommend Preferred Alignment(s)
- Hold Next Public Meeting

- g.** Ms. Carr presented a summary of the projects next steps that include; refining the alternatives, a public meeting in the summer, followed by preparing the concept plan in the fall of 2017.

4. Open House:

- a.** Mr. Morrison-Logan provided an overview of the format of the open house. Six stations were set up in the room that had a poster-sized board of an alignment. Each station had a flip chart for participants to place general comments. The Steering Committee and the consultant team were available at each of the stations to answer questions about the alignments. Participants were reminded to fill out their comment forms or provide comments online at the project website. Comments received during the open house and on the comment forms will be compiled and made available at a later date.

5. Meeting Adjourned: The open house portion of the agenda ran until approximately 8:30pm.